

TURKEY IN THE GLOBAL ART SCENE: DUAL NARRATIVES
IN THE POLITICS OF INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS AFTER THE 1980s

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This study investigates contemporary art and heritage exhibitions as instruments that kept changing vision of the nation as well as the modern cultural policies to control cultural sphere of the society and representing national identity as a part of social memory of the people in the post-1980s.

This dissertation underlines three transformations. In Turkey's cultural politics, after 1980, the first was the formation of the privatization in art and culture and the rise of the Turkish bourgeoisie, directly related to the neo-liberal capitalist economic formation. While the local Turkish art scale penetrated the international vision of Turkey in the world, the neo-liberal economic and political change triggered the form cultural policy took after the 1980s. The second is the change in Republican art history writing from a statist, monolithic, discourse to a post-modern discourse, based on diversity and multiple pasts. The third is the gradually shifting image of Turkey from a nationalist/Turkist identity into a more cosmopolitan and multicultural one, as designated in international heritage exhibitions and international contemporary art events. In light of this perspective, the study analyzes Turkey's internationally-framed heritage exhibitions and modern art in the age of globalization. I argue that both international heritage exhibitions and modern art exhibitions carry political, social, and cultural implications and are related closely the representation of the Turkish identity and art history.

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Başlık: Küresel Sanat Çevresinde Türkiye: 1980 Sonrası Uluslararası Sergi Politikalarının İkili Anlatısı

Bu çalışmada 1980 sonrasında yurt dışında gerçekleştirilen çağdaş sanat ve kültürel miras sergileri kapsamında değişen milli vizyon, toplumdaki kültürel alanı kontrol eden modern kültür politikaları ve sosyal hafızanın bir parçası olan milli kimliğin temsili ele alınacaktır.

Temel olarak üç değişimin altı çizilecektir. İlk değişim, 1980 sonrası Türkiye'de kültürün ve sanatın özelleştirilmesi sonucunda ortaya çıkan Türk burjuvazisinin kültür alanında neo-liberal kapitalist ekonomik model sayesindeki yükselişidir. Türkiye'nin bölgesel vizyonu, neo-liberal kültürel politikalar nedeniyle uluslararası alanda değişime uğramıştır.. İkinci değişim ise resmi tarih yazımının değişmeyen, tek yönlü söyleminin çeşitlilik ve çoklu geçmişi içeren post modern bir söyleme dönüşmesidir. Son olarak küresel çağda uluslararası kültürel miras ve çağdaş sanat sergilerinde Türkiye'nin milli-etnik kimlik üzerinden kurgulanan imajının kozmopolit ve çok kültürlü yapıya dönüşmesidir. Bu perspektif ışığında, bu çalışmanın amacı uluslararası Türk çağdaş sanatı ve kültürel miras sergilerinde dönüşümü incelemektir. Her iki farklı sergi anlatısının politik, sosyal ve kültürel yansımaları Türk kültürel kimliğinde ve sanatında dönüştürücü etkisi irdelenecektir.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The period of time since the 1980s has witnessed a significant cultural transformation in Turkey. This cultural transformation has changed the way art is perceived by intellectuals, the state, the media and public opinion. The change in perceptions of art is best reflected in museum and exhibition practice. Today, art and heritage exhibitions are understood not only as discrete events, but also as a part of wider cultural context and dynamic trajectories. Especially, international exhibitions reflect selected ideological visions and histories renegotiating cultural borders. The dissertation examines Turkey's history of heritage and art exhibitionism at international exhibitions.

A broad art history and cultural studies literature exists, analyzing the art and heritage exhibitions of the post-1980s period from various perspectives.¹ Museum studies literature has mainly relied on museum theory, its history and politics, the foundation of modern museums, museum and public space, the political-discursive space of the exhibitionary complex, and international exhibitions from mid-nineteenth to twentieth

¹ The following studies can be given as example: Tony Benett. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Emma Barker (ed). *Contemporary Cultures of Display*. (Italy: Open University Press, 1999); Carol Duncan. *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Naire (eds). *Thinking About Exhibitions* (London, New York: Routledge, 1996); Peter H. Hoffenberg. *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001); Sharon McDonald. *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998); Timothy Mitchell. "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order," in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, (ed.) Donald Preziosi. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff (eds). *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses and Spectacles* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Kewin Walsch. *Representation of Past: Museums and Heritage In the Post-Modern World* (London, New York: Routledge, 1992).

centuries. Museum and exhibition books were written after 1980s theorizing the influence of post-modernity and globalization of museum studies. The post- modern perspective provided a critical approach to investigate developments in the Western museum system, covering culture, community and nation, cultural management, and representing the past in museum spaces as well as heritage sites.

However, little has been done on how international exhibitions reflect the changing attitudes in the representation of art and heritage of Turkey. This study mainly argues that the transformation in the cultural policies in the post-1980s period has been related not only to the modern governmental practices but also to the effect of globalization on Turkish society. The overall result of this change is to create a new public sphere of society and to represent Turkey's identity in new ways. In the post-1980s, as an outcome of change in exhibition strategies, two different kinds of models emerged in Turkey, namely-heritage and contemporary/modern art exhibitions in the international arena.

The dissertation aims to illuminate the ideological and political background of international heritage and contemporary art exhibitions after the 1980s underlining two different narratives. The present study has identified two broad exhibition narratives which represent different characteristics of history, identity, and cultural politics in Turkey and elaborates this discursive duality. It is argued that both heritage and contemporary art exhibitions of post-1980s carry symbols and discourses which focus on Turkish history and an aspiration for a global identity. These dual identity discourses correspond to tendencies in organizing international exhibitions. Heritage exhibitions generally realized by the state funds are directly related with the great importance given to Turkish culture and history in the world civilizations. Contemporary art exhibitions, on the other hand, generally reflect the modern

face of the country funded by private entrepreneurs or Turkey's big bourgeoisie. Due to the sensitive political symbols they carry, Turkish state has, until now, kept at a distance to art works that were exhibited in international contemporary art exhibitions. For this reason, the state concentrated on organizing contemporary art exhibitions that were seen as unpolitical. It is observed in this study that both the state and the private business created the duality in the narrative structure and themes of the exhibitions in the last thirty years by controlling how the image of the country is presented and determining what is accepted as a heritage to be preserved.

In this study, the transformation of the basic notions of modernity in the exhibition space is basically discussed in terms of Turkey's changing cultural policy and art historiography, through new representation strategies in the body of the international exhibitions. Shifts from a linear narration to the multicultural representations, from state museums to private museums, and from national image to more cosmopolitan one revealed the transformation in Turkey's international exhibition strategies in the era of globalization.

The post 1980 era is commonly described as a "global period." The term refers to the changing characteristics of politics, economy, the society and culture in the world system. Different entities, such as nation-states, multi-national corporations and international organizations approach the global field with different resources (economic and cultural) and seek to set different agendas. In the 2000s, we have witnessed the nation state and the national culture resisting the negative impacts of globalization.² Tourism and museums preserve the memory of an earlier era of national cultures and international exhibitions have become

² Anthony David Smith, "Towards a Global Culture?" in *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalizations and Modernity*, edited by Mike Fwather Stone (London: Sage Publication, 1995), p.174.

showcases for representing national identity.³ The complex new reality aimed at reconfiguring the national past as a civilizing process and in this way the neoliberal recreation of the aesthetic and ethical values that in the nineteenth century sustained the European project of colonial domination. Now, the project was labeled cosmopolitanism, globalism and the free market in the First World. National culture, history and their material aspects (museum, exhibitions, and heritage site) were indispensable for global cultural interaction displaying the inner sense of the nations.

Especially during this period, with the development of global economic and political institutions, a global culture needed to be constructed. However, it is difficult to construct a global identity and, by extension, a global culture, due to the lack of collective identity. In a globalizing world, nations still cultivate their distinctive characteristics rediscovering their pasts, history, and aesthetic values, seeking to improve their comparative status rankings and enlarge their cultural resources as a basis for the global project.⁴ In this sense, international heritage exhibitions and art biennials illustrate both the value of cosmopolitanism and values of national identity. These exhibitions serve as intermediary mediums through which both global aesthetics and national identity are articulated.

As Stuart Hall argues cultural identities are “far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continual play of history, culture, and power.”⁵ Globalization in this sense has triggered local cultures within particular social, cultural, and historical contexts. The whole process actually thrives on this particular tension between local identity and global culture. Thus the ideas, the global versus local, the international versus the

³ Anthony David Smith, “Towards a Global Culture?”, p.176.

⁴ Smith, p.188.

⁵ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation,” *Framework*, no.36(1989), p.47.

national, and the universal versus the particular are promoted widely.⁶ My argument in this dissertation is that studying Turkey's international heritage and contemporary art exhibitions show us both the transformation in the representation strategies from a local identity into a partly global one, but also the fact that these exhibitions are built on this tension between the local and the global.

The present dissertation emphasizes three major transformations for the period after 1980s. The first is about privatization in art and culture, and changing perspectives in cultural politics. The second transformation is directly affected by the state cultural policy, which has emphasized a new art history writing and a new narrative structure in the exhibitions. And finally, the third transformation is based on post-modern representational strategies that serve to reconstruct the meta-identity of modern Turkey. In light of this perspective, the study is an attempt to analyze Turkey's internationally framed heritage exhibitions and modern art in the age of globalization. I argue that both international heritage exhibitions and modern art exhibitions carry political, social, and cultural implications and are related closely to the representation of the Turkish identity and art history. To restate, this work mainly focuses on three major dimensions: the transformation in cultural policy from a state-centered approach to private sector domination, a shift from the classical version of Turkish art historiography to a global vision of art as a dialogue of cultures, changing identity representation strategies in art and heritage exhibitions as an outcome of globalization.

It should be noted that this topic has hardly been studied in Turkey. The theoretical framework of the thesis will tackle the following issues: the global politics of museum, the development of exhibition strategies, cultural heritage management and cultural policy,

⁶ Roland Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity," in *Global Modernities*, edited by Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash and Roland Robertson (London: Sage Publishing, 1995), p.33.

globalization, and the privatization of culture. Exhibitionism or the politics of the museums have rarely been studied in Turkey, hence there is only a limited number of works that refer to the development of exhibitions, museums, festivals and provide detailed information and theoretical discussion.⁷

One important recent study is by Wendy M.K Shaw. Shaw's study mainly focuses on the visual culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ottoman State, revealing the process of colonialization and Western hegemony in the archeological heritage of the Ottoman Empire. Studies written on fine arts exhibitions in Turkey mainly have covered the early Republican period without analyzing national exhibitions in terms of theory, concept, or visual culture. Recent researches on the International Istanbul Biennials and Istanbul's cultural sphere have provided multi-disciplinary perspective in cultural studies. In the 1990s, academic literature on art sociology, museology, and cultural policy was extremely limited. Academic researches on museum and art management are new fields for Turkish cultural studies. Fethiye Erbay in her books "*Müze Yönetimini Kurumsallaştırma Çalıştırmaları*" (Museum Management and Its Institutionalization) and "*Sanat Yönetimi'nin Boyutları*" (The Dimensions of Art Management) provided a wide range of empirical knowledge and technical information on museum and art management in Turkey as well as in USA and Europe. Especially, the

⁷ The following studies can be given an example: Wendy M.K. Shaw, *Museums, Archeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2003); Fethiye Erbay, *Müze Yönetimini Kurumsallaştırma Çalışmaları* (1989-2009) (İstanbul: Mimarlık Vakfı Enstitüsü, 2009); Fethiye Erbay, *Sanat Yönetiminin Boyutları* (İstanbul: İstanbul Kültür Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009) Mehmet Üstünipek, *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Çağdaş Türk Sanatında Sergileri 1850-1950* (İstanbul: Artes Yayıncılık, 2007); Sibel Yardımcı, *Kentsel Değişim ve Festivalizm: Küreselleşen İstanbul'da Bienal* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006); Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal, İpek Türel, *Orientalizing Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe* (Routledge: London and New York, 2010); Ayla Ödekan, *Cumhuriyetin Renkleri, Biçimleri* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1999).

detailed study on museum management was in this field giving practical information, problem solutions, analysis of Turkish museum in a comparative perspective.

The volume “*Istanbul: Between Global and Local*,” edited by Çağlar Keyderr investigates the process of globalization in the context of Istanbul. The study has inspired many projects on cultural studies. The authors argue that beyond the clichés lie the soul of the city and the identity of its inhabitants. Istanbulities try to accommodate, understand, challenge, and shape the sweeping transformations that globalization has brought to their city. In this volume, Sibel Yardımcı’ study is focused on festivals and art biennials organized by Istanbul Culture and Art Foundation. It is a unique research in the field art sociology. Urban renewal, privatization of culture and festivalizm are analyzed in terms of globalization.

Another recent study is *Orienting Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe*⁸, edited by three authors Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal, İpek Türeli. Istanbul as the European Capital of Culture in 2010 provides an occasion for the authors to discuss how various actors mobilize culture to stake their claims to the city’s past, present and future. The book is divided into five parts Paths to Globalization, Heritage and Regeneration Debates, the Mediatized City, Art in the City, A European Capital? with case studies on art, architecture, urban renewal, heritage preservation, art exhibitions, cinema and literature. This study presents a picture of the course to European integration and globalization manifested in Istanbul’s cityscapes and citizens. As already mentioned, this dissertation analyzes international heritage and contemporary art exhibitions from the perspective of global and local concerns in Turkey. Thus, basing itself on this earlier literature, it takes a closer look at the recent identity politics, art and culture in Turkey.

⁸ Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal, İpek Türeli, *Orienting Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe* (Routledge: London and New York, 2010).

The main reason for the vacuum is that the history of contemporary exhibiting practices is quite new for Turkey. The dissertations written in the fine arts faculties especially have relied on the survey of modern and contemporary art exhibitions basing themselves on newspaper and periodicals searches without offering a critical or theoretical discussion of exhibitions. The primary sources of this study are exhibition catalogues, press conference documents, and media analysis. Additionally, the online sources of the Turkish and foreign press's news and art critiques are indispensable parts of my research.

In the field of cultural studies, visual culture is as promoting a sub-discipline for conducting research in Turkey. The present thesis can be considered as a bridge between cultural studies and Turkey's art history. The study fills a gap in the field of museum studies and visual culture in the cultural and art history of Turkey. For the analysis of the development of exhibitionism in Turkey, in the post-1980s, the study mainly analyzes a) large scale travelling heritage the exhibitions organized by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, b) international modern art exhibits that in Turkey Turkey participates, such as the Venice Biennial as well as the nationally framed group exhibitions organized by the official funds or private cultural foundations. Individual gallery exhibitions are not included in this work. These exhibitions are representatives of individual art and might not reflect trends in the official ideology and identity concerns in art and aesthetics in which the image of the country are coded.

The national self-promotion of Turkish identity from the 1980s onwards will be evaluated in both large scale contemporary art and heritage exhibitions as large scale shows. It should be noticed that interpreting the international exhibitions from a historical perspective, provides us an array of new meanings in order to decipher the diplomacy of international

exhibitions, modes of cultural exchange, and post-modernist discourse on the contemporary art scene.

The title of this dissertation reflects the dualistic nature of the ways in which the Turkish identity is presented through art in the post-1980s. Mainly two different kinds of narratives are seen in Turkey's representation on the international art scene. The first is the heritage exhibitions mainly concerned with the presentation of identities, histories and stories. Heritage exhibitions are often analyzed in terms of the "commodification" of culture and the identification of local/national history for the "tourist gaze." Turkey's overseas heritage exhibitions are basically archeology, history and ethnography exhibitions. These organizations are mainly realized by the political support of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, due to the lack of sufficient financial support of the state institutions, the private sector and foreign states which host the exhibitions also provide funds for realization of these cultural events. By the end of the 1990s, the private sector in Turkey also supported and organized cultural heritage exhibitions on the international scale as an instrument of advertising and promoting company images.

A second type of cultural narrative analyzed in this study is the international contemporary art exhibitions in which Turkish artists participated after the 1980s. Although the state institutions rarely supported contemporary art in and outside Turkey, from 1980s, Turkish private sector interests concentrated very much on this field, to promote the modern face of the country. Contemporary art works in international exhibitions mostly included political messages that present tensions and problems in Turkey's socio-cultural identity, thus the private sector, rather than the state, has been more willing to sponsor these exhibits more concerned with sensitive contemporary issues.

This study is an attempt of rethinking Turkey's international exhibition policies in the post-1980s, through heritage and contemporary art events. In order to understand the complex mechanisms of the representation in international exhibitions during this period, history of museums and exhibitions in Turkey need to be understood. Writing the history of modern exhibitions, which directly were affected by the neoliberal transformation of the post-1980s, in fact, is an attempt to rethink Turkey's globalization from a new angle. The question of this study is: How have Turkey's image and national identity been transformed in the international exhibitions in the global world?

Tony Bennett states that the focus on the relations between museums, fairs and exhibitions is meant to serve as a "device" for understanding the broader political and cultural context in history.⁹ Due to that, post modern exhibitions mostly highlight conveying the ideas, forms, and aesthetic values of the people, national identities and symbols through different societies. From the Foucauldian perspective, the issue of representation constructs for the visitor a way of seeing in which power and knowledge are realized and embodied in a particular place. As Foucault argues, power and knowledge are mutually implicated throughly; power is involved in the construction of truths, and knowledge has implications for power. Power is engaged in displaying strategies. The institutionally embedded relations of government are also target forms of thought and conduct of extended populations, through the social body forms, techniques, and regimes of culture. The production, distribution and consumption of knowledge are always political in this sense. The knowledge involved in the exhibition-making process is a form of what Foucault calls "governmentality", explained as the 'instrument of government instead of being laws, now come to be a range of multiform

⁹ Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, p.6.

tactics.¹⁰ The function of museum and exhibition are understood as some part of these tactics. Hence, Foucault categorizes the museum and exhibitions as disciplinary tools for modern society, using such channels as time-space, destination and narration.

The development of governmental culture in the Foucauldian sense lays not only in political statement, but also in minor details such as in architecture of buildings, symbols, order of the materials. Exhibition spaces are particular forms of representation related with the distribution of power, actual audience and content of the exhibition. According to Bennett, the exhibitionary complex provides a context for the permanent display of power - knowledge. The display of power or the so called “rhetoric of power,” is defined as an ability to organize and co-ordinate an order of things to produce a place for the people in relation to that order.¹¹

The space of representation can be summarized as “showing” and “telling” things, constituting a new arrangement of scientific disciplines: history, art, archeology, geology and anthropology. The historical exhibits are a result of the combination of these disciplines and the various ideological practices which reproduce versions of the past. The Chapter 2 focuses on how exhibitionary forms and techniques enable a certain kind of reading of international exhibitions. It will also discuss the nineteenth and twentieth century history of world art exhibitions. Using a comparative perspective, a history of the birth of the heritage exhibitions, biennials, blockbuster exhibitions will be discussed to shed light on the development of exhibitionism in the world.

The first transformation, namely in the privatization in culture and art, is discussed in Chapter Three. In this chapter, museums and the emergence of cultural centers in the post 1980s will be investigated. Chapter Three will shed light on the privatization of the artistic

¹⁰ Ibid, p.38.

¹¹ Bennett, p.67.

sphere by the bourgeoisie and the changing social/cultural role of the exhibitions, educating the public through the ideology of the dominant class. In this way, the modern art and culture exhibitions held in museums, galleries, and culture centers are claimed to be civilizing agencies of the country, which are instrumentalized by corporations, and the elites of city and the state authorities.

The analysis of Bourdieu about the forms of capital, indicates how the bourgeoisie strengthened its power in the cultural sphere after the 1980s. Bourdieu claims that “economic capital serves as a basis of other types of capital. The economic capital is the core of cultural capital that is a form of knowledge, an internalized code or a cognitive acquisition which equips the social agent with empathy towards appreciation for or competence in deciphering cultural relations and cultural artifacts.”¹² Di Maggio, influenced by Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital, argues that the newly emerging class produced a model of “the cultural manager capitalist” who use the resources of their corporations to raise their prestige in society.¹³ In other words, they include their corporation in the cultural world in order to strengthen their positions in social life. This way, art under the hegemony of the commercial sponsors functions through power and status relations. The costs of blockbuster exhibitions are so high that museums, especially in Britain and the USA, have become increasingly reliant on commercial sponsorship. Therefore, this study will analyze international art and culture exhibitions in Turkey as part of the formation of a bourgeois public sphere in the last twenty-five years. The corporations and social elites support particular types of art events through

¹² Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essay on Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), p.7.

¹³ Chin-ta Wu, *Kültür Endüstrisi ve Kültür Yönetimi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), p.26-28.

their institutions, and legitimize and reproduce the dominant taste through addressing the public. As a result, the bourgeois public sphere dominates the art taste and determines the ways in which exhibitions represent Turkey's cultures in a global world.

In this connection, the function and position of the private museums in international exhibitions will be elaborated. My second task in the third chapter is to evaluate the ways in which the bourgeoisie dominates public art and ask if there a division between the state and the private art spheres. If the division really exists, I will try to find how the patronage relations of the arts can change according to the types of exhibitions-contemporary art, history or ethnography.

In the Chapter 4, the second transformation, namely changing perspectives in Turkish art history writing, will be discussed, since this study observes that there has been a growing tendency to display Anatolian, Turkish and Ottoman history at blockbuster exhibitions in the post 1980s, held in Turkey or abroad. It will be argued that state-centered heritage exhibitions exemplify the development of a new governmental relation to culture in works of high culture. Sharon Mc Donald emphasizes that the political nature and consequences of representation of art and culture are productive arenas in which to investigate questions of cultural production and knowledge.¹⁴ In the global world, the grounds of the growth of the importance of culture are embedded in the socio-cultural practices of neo-liberalism and intensified globalization. Neo-liberal economy policy goes hand in hand with globalization and "commodification of local culture." Keyder argues that capitalism eliminated local economies integrating the local into global one.¹⁵ In regard to local economies, the situation shows that when the local culture is forced to be integrated into

¹⁴Sharon Mcdonald, *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p.3.

international marketing and advertising strategies, its traditional side weakens and loses its soul.

The 1980s mark a turning point in the world in this sense. Culture was discovered as a platform by which people could be represented as an alternative to political engagement. This dissertation focuses on this period and asks how dual narratives were formed and under which circumstances the transformation of the image of Turkish culture is realized in the post 1980s. The main problematic in this study is to reveal the ways in which two different strategies play important roles in international heritage and contemporary art exhibitions. While one narrative emphasizes national/ancient heritage, the other dwells on global culture and intercultural dialogue. In the 1990s, every year Turkey sent two or three exhibitions abroad. However, starting from 2000, the number of exhibition rose to eight to nine .Up until now, Turkey has organized nearly a hundred exhibitions outside Turkey and art works were sent to thirty different countries. Turkey has sent art and history exhibitions mostly Germany, Japan, the USA, Spain, Italy, Malaysia, Holland, and France.¹⁶

Chapter 4 focuses on the collections exhibited in international heritage exhibitions. These range from archeological-pre-historical objects, to Islamic collections, to Turco-Ottoman collections, and Anatolian ethnographical objects. From the foundation of the Republic to the mid-1990s, the state had almost complete hegemony over the museum and exhibition practices, since history and culture were seen as areas that determined Turkey's image abroad. Indeed, the power of the state in the construction of the nation's past and the project of modernity, embodied in exhibitions and national heritage sites, go hand in hand

¹⁵ Çağlar Keyder, "İstanbul'u Nasıl Satmalı?" *İstanbul*, no.3 (1992), p.84-85.

¹⁶ Canada, Austria, Romania, Hungary, Greece, Israel, Macedonia, Turkmenistan, South Korea, Singapore, Portugal, Qatar, Belgium, Slovenia are other countries to host Turkish art and history exhibitions. Interview with Nilüfer Ertan on April 2, 2009 in Ankara, note taking.

with the dominant historical discourses. Redefining or reproducing the past, heritage exhibitions are “memory sites” of the nation, and assume a great role in art historiography.

In the early republican era, the Turkish history thesis and the “break discourse” in Turkish historiography had a great impact on the ideological framework of the exhibitions, so the primary concern of the Chapter 4 is to evaluate the transformation in the strategies of heritage exhibitions. This chapter is intended as a discussion of art history writing, focusing on the transformation of national identity and the tension between Orientalism and self-orientalism in national self-representation. The basic questions to be asked are: what are the strategies of heritage exhibitions? Has there been a shift in art historiography through analyzing the heritage exhibitions? How did the private sector support the heritage exhibitions after the 1990s? What are the expectations of foreign audiences from the Turkish exhibitions? Are there Orientalist attitudes among foreign critique writing about the image of Ottoman history exhibitions? Do Turkish curators in some way prefer self-Orientalization? In seeking answers to these questions, this chapter will display exhibition strategies and institutional relations of the state and private sector in the international heritage exhibitions.

The second type of international exhibitions that the dissertation is concerned with is contemporary art biennials and art festivals. Neo-liberal policies and a booming art market in the 1980s meant that the international exhibition system became increasingly interested in contemporary art and the commercial values of art objects. Several of the large international biennials such as those in Sao-Paulo, Sidney, Kwangju, Cairo and the oldest ones Venice and Documenta Kassel have considerable impact on the art market and artists’ reputations. Biennials involve not only artists in a competition, but also introducing visible parameters for cultural change. For many years, the *Venice Biennial* and *Documenta* have drawn a fixed and

selective map of the art world, with national pavilions in which each country exhibits its own artists and promotes its contemporary art in the global context.

However, in the 1990s, international exhibitions came to demonstrate the boundaries between the global and the local cultures. The influential role played by curators who select themes and artists for international exhibitions has highlighted the issue of representation in national, sub-cultural, international, gender-race specific and regional identities. Starting from the 2000s, international exhibitions are showcases of the ways in which nations are fragmented through sub-cultural identities. They have provided dialects for intercultural communication. Structures, concepts and forms determined by the curators display the general plural identities, and local cultures, and the interaction between the local and global.

Chapter 5 tackles with Turkish artists' participation in contemporary art exhibitions, one of the most used channels for interaction with European art. Due to the scope of this dissertation, only international group exhibitions organized by museums, cultural foundations and the Turkish Ministry of Culture, and the participation of Turkey in the International Venice Biennial were studied. The cultural strategies observed in group exhibitions helped me to analyze the changes in the representations of cultural identity. The following set of questions was of concern: what sorts of objects and art works are represented at international exhibitions? To whom are these constructed images presented? Through whose eye are they filtered before being exhibited? How have the artists from Turkey been presented and evaluated abroad? Why have the curators used certain representational forms and strategies and how have the representational strategies been transformed in the international exhibitions compared those as the 1980s? The selection of group contemporary art exhibitions in terms

and their displaying strategies enables us to realize the relations between global and local art as well as changing themes and concepts in Turkish contemporary art.

“Putting Istanbul on the map of the art world” has become one of the aims of local administrations, private sector foundations and the Turkish governments since the 1980s. Considering the new meanings and images of Istanbul among the world cities, this chapter discusses how the city’s culture has become integrated in the global system through art. Sociologist Sibel Yardımcı argues that the Istanbul Biennial is a chance to create brilliant city image and the city of Istanbul itself acts as a commodity in the international market economy.¹⁷ Considered as one of the most prestigious biennials alongside Venice, Sao Paolo and Sydney, the International Istanbul Biennial would become a mark for the global art scene and compete with in that context. The curators (mostly foreigners) and directors of the biennials, who are selected by the IKSİV committee, generally have developed conceptual frameworks reflecting urban problems, globalization, and multiculturalism and identity issues.

The themes of the Istanbul Biennial both deconstruct and reproduce the dilemma of Turkey’s identity between the East and the West. How Istanbul historically has been recreated through Orientalism and multiculturalism in the discourse of the Biennial will be questioned as well as the way in which foreign curators have engaged in post-modern strategies display İstanbul and its relations with contemporary art at the International Istanbul Biennial.

In addition to the Istanbul Biennial, the Istanbul 2010: Cultural Capital of Europe project was realized as a result of the long-lasting efforts of a volunteer-private committee to introduce cultural heritage as well as the modern face of the city. The reason behind this project is that the city of Istanbul aspires to be categorized in the group of Europe’s global

¹⁷ Sibel Yardımcı, *Küreselleşen İstanbul’da Bienal: Kentsel Değişim ve Festivalizm* (İstanbul:İletişim Yayınları, 2005), p.70,71.

cities such as Berlin, London, Paris and hoped this title would have an impact on the city's international image, particularly on tourism. This strategy, it was planned, would attract first-class wealthy tourists to the city. Within this framework, Chapter 6 will present the Istanbul Biennial and Istanbul 2010: Cultural Capital of Europe events as outcomes of the Turkish state's changing vision for cultural policy. The following question will be asked: which apparatus was used to promote the cultural image of the city in visual arts? In fact, Istanbul 2010: Cultural Capital of Europe primarily was concerned with the use of culture for urban marketing and tourist promotion. Its program contained panel discussions, conferences, workshops organized with the aim of discovering the beauty of the city, and developing cultural tourism. Establishing new museums or renovating museums in this context should be seen as attempts to develop the infrastructure of cultural heritage and museums rather than radical changes in attitudes vis-a-vis art and culture.

Finally, the third transformation is that the reconstruction of Turkey's meta-identity in ways which serve the promotional aims of the Turkish state is presented. The political agendas in internationally framed exhibitions, or cultural diplomacy, will be examined in the chapter 6 as well. This is almost a propagandist deployment of art exhibitions. By controlling how the image of the country is viewed or by determining what is preserved, cultural representations are used to produce national icons constructed by the dominant political views. Whose version of the national culture is being exhibited? What is not shown? and why? As Wallis argues, to use cultural artifacts for public relation purposes, it is necessary to select and juxtapose artworks in such a way that they focus and enhance the national image for foreign consumption, in other words they are designed to "sell" the nations' image in the Western

World.¹⁸ These are self promoting exhibitions displaying an exotic world, carrying a form of propaganda that serves as a bridge between the Third World nations and the First World audiences. Especially since the 1980s blockbuster exhibitions have become a significant phenomenon. The exhibition serves to educate and entertain the public, while bringing prestige and profit to the host institution. With the rise of the neo-liberal era, corporations led by families became especially more involved in the arts and culture through their cultural campaigns and sponsorship.

For the sponsor who promotes the name of the business as a product to be “sold”, exhibitions offer valuable marketing opportunities. As the main concern is publicity rather than direct artistic concerns, such companies are primarily interested in sponsoring a potential blockbuster to raise their symbolic existence in the cultural field. However, such exhibitions tend to display a very narrow range of objects and themes, usually chosen by the sponsors. The demands of the business sponsors may take precedence over the host institution’s own goals. This kind of commercial sponsorship can restrict museums to staging only the most popular kinds of exhibitions. The popularity might become a form of censorship of other groups of art works today.¹⁹ In line with this perspective, I will briefly discuss the relationship between art and economic concerns analyzing commercial sponsorship in line with the promotion of Biennials and blockbuster exhibitions in the Turkish case.

In the post-1980s, the structural transformations in museum and exhibitions around the world directly have affected the representation of identity in Turkish cultural policy. When the political, social, and cultural spheres transformed contemporary art and heritage

¹⁸Brian Wallis, “Selling Nations: International Exhibitions and Cultural Diplomacy,” in *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, edited by Daniel Sherman and Irit Rogoff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p.269.

¹⁹ Barker, p.131-132.

exhibitions, the image of Turkish culture and art were affected. In order to comprehend the main characteristics of the duality in the narrative structure of international exhibitions, the interaction between the globalization and the representation of national culture will be analyzed in relation to the international exhibitions of the period.

As will be seen in the following chapters, museums and exhibitions provide settings for works of culture and also function as social programs aimed at reshaping the general forms of social behavior, such as perceptions of identity, educating the aesthetic tastes of the masses, help building public opinion. The research mainly concentrates on two areas: the international Turkish heritage and contemporary art exhibitions abroad.

Since this topic has not received earlier attention, it was difficult to find sufficient theoretical or empirical works. Some curators were not willing to share their data or their documents. For example, I wanted to gain access to the archives of the director of the Sakıp Sabancı Museum, Dr. Nazan Ölçer; the coordinator of the visual arts department of the İstanbul 2010: European Capital of Culture Project Beral Madra; and art historian Prof. Nurhan Atasoy and also were asked to be interviewed, but none of them accepted. It was able to interview Başak Şenova and Genco Gülan, who were kind enough to share international exhibition catalogues and documents on contemporary Turkish arts with me. For this reason, I was unable to support my arguments with interviews, especially in Chapter Four and Six, I used the interviews of the curators and artists which had been published in newspapers, art magazines and journals. Mrs. Nilüfer Ertan, the head of the Foreign Relations and Cultural Activities department of the Ministry of Culture, helped me to reach specific information and dates about international heritage exhibitions. However, I couldn't access the archive of the General Directorate of Museums and Cultural Heritage; its library includes a number of

exhibition catalogues which give limited details of international exhibitions. In addition, I conducted interviews with Nazan Çimilli and Ömür Tufan, experts from the ceramic section of Topkapı Palace. Most of the exhibitions catalogs are not available in the library and archive of the Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museum. During my research, some of them could be found at the Istanbul Archeology Museum Library, Topkapı Palace Museum Library and Turkish-Islamic Art Museum Library.

The contemporary exhibition catalogues and newspaper archives which were the primary source of the dissertation were gathered from art historian/editor Zeynep Rona, contemporary art curator Başak Şenova, and contemporary artist Genco Gülan's private archives, Istanbul Bilgi University Santral Istanbul Contemporary Archive (closed now), Bilkent University Art Archive (access only to the document from 1987 to 2005), Garanti Gallery Platform Library and archive (periodicals only). These private and institutional archives allowed me to find my first hand sources that were the framework of this dissertation. My secondary sources depended on western literature in cultural and museum studies.

Theoretical and Methodological Concerns

Exhibitionism in the twentieth century is a form of symbolic conquest of cultures. The function of the museum during the modernist period in the middle of the century to the late twentieth century was the mapping of the world through the representation of collections. Meaning making, forms and practices are part of the identification of national culture and a way of symbolizing a cultural ideal. Historically produced cultural practices helped to

construct the nationhood and national culture that creates its identity through symbolic forms in museums, monuments and heritage sites.

The present study focuses on the changing patterns in exhibitionism in Turkey after the 1980s, on the transformations in the public and private cultural policies. Visual culture as a new concept and emerging field of study partakes of social and cultural studies and stands at the intersection of sociology and the history of the fine arts. The concept of “visual culture” helps us examine all the signifying practices, representations and mediations by opening up a new field of study. According to Hooper Greenhill, visual culture, as a field of study, raises theoretical questions about the social practices of looking and seeing works writing a social theory of visual art, focusing on the questions of what is made visible, who sees what and how seeing, knowing and power are interrelated.²⁰ In this sense visual culture theory enables a focus on the relationship between the viewed and the viewer. What the object means is directly related to the meaning of the object within specific intellectual and disciplinary fields; it is in this regard that “vision is socially constructed.”²¹

Visual culture theory studies the construction of meaning in museums based on visual interpretation, through discourses that enable the questioning of the relationship between looking, knowledge, and power. However, visual culture is not restricted to museum space and it also covers art history (paintings, sculpture, architecture) and media studies (advertising, film, television). For this reason, the use of visual culture theories and methods are adjusted to the new conditions formed in museum studies. This chapter will cover theories of exhibitions in terms of visual culture and museums in modern times.

²⁰ Eilan Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p.14.

²¹ C.Jenks, *Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p.10.

The formation of the museum produces a visual environment for the learning of interpretive strategies. At this point, a wide range of questions can be asked about what people look at in the displays and exhibitions. How do they construct meaning from what they see, and how is the meaning influenced by the intentions of the producers of the exhibition? What are the conditions for the construction of meaning in museums, the conditions for the interpretation of visual culture?

These theoretical questions as a central theme will be discussed in the following parts of this chapter. The function and the meaning of exhibitionism in the modern and global world display differences from the exhibition practices in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Exhibitions are a primary site of cultural exchange in the political arena, where signification is constructed, maintained, and partly deconstructed. The growing literature on exhibitionism and museum studies tends to establish strong ties with history, anthropology, sociology and cultural studies. Museums were always didactic and deeply involved with self-representation. This is different from the nineteenth and twentieth century exhibiting, because museums in the new millennium have become much more popular sites, with interactive and visual technologies.

In the first part of the below, in today's world, exhibitions are social events. The definition of exhibitions, are a discussion of issues style of will be provided. Exhibitions are strategically located in the middle of the nations, institutions and artists' transmitting knowledge and meaning. Critic and curator Bruce Ferguson has described exhibitions as "the central speaking subjects in the stories about art which institutions and curators tell to themselves and to us."²²

²² Bruce Ferguson, "Exhibition Rhetoric," in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, edited by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, Sandy Nairne (London: Routledge, 1996), p.176.

Exhibitions have complex structures in which one or more stories or narratives exist at the same time. The condition of exhibitionism today is a matter of concern here. It is impossible to understand the conditions under which an exhibition is interpreted without considering the ways that make a great exhibition. The first determinant of what makes a great exhibition depends on who makes it. The role of curators determines content, form and the way art works are seen by masses. Besides the curatorial effect, the institutional context provides a critical framework for exhibitions creation and reception. Normally curators work with standardized practices for curatorial system. Sometimes they work more independently from art institutions, museums and big galleries, and have more autonomy.

In determining the success of the exhibitions creativity and role is not the only criteria. In addition to the scale of the collection, the duration of the exhibition and marketing strategies also play critical roles. Many of the curators are freelancers or work for institutions that do not hold permanent collections. That gives them a flexibility to break canonical and aesthetic taboos. The historical collections of museums in Europe, of course, should demonstrate the continuities and breaks exhibiting major works and tendencies. Museum collections mostly reflect an overview of a national heritage, an artistic or cultural tradition, a period, a movement, a style or an aesthetic principle.

The scale and duration of the exhibitions show the market driven tendency in the exhibition making process that has been one of the determinants since the 1980s. Exhibition organizers mind the needs of the cultural market in the process of showing and telling art and this restricts the vision of curators and quality of the exhibition. To attract visitors to the museum, galleries and art centers, the duration of exhibition might be kept longer than it

should be and the exhibition space have might be used in rather pragmatic ways.²³ Together with the development of new technologies, and interactive media devices, the museum space is transformed into a more performative environment. According to Emma Barker, the condition of display is fundamental thing in the construction of the category of “art” in the modern western world. In modern terms, promoting specialized aesthetic modes of looking, displaying strategies evoke a form of representation as well as a mode of presentation. But displaying strategies have changed from time to time affecting the logic of exhibitionism through the centuries.

Theorizing Exhibitions in the Twentieth Century

Modern exhibitionism started with the social and economic changes in the early of the nineteenth century. The introduction of modern bourgeois state techniques and the practice of displaying material culture in space indicated the beginning of the public museum and exhibitionary complex in Europe.²⁴ Starting from the eighteenth century, the museum was one of Western culture’s premier theoretical machineries and in many ways the very emblem of national aesthetic desires set into play by the Enlightenment. The formation of royal collections constituted a first step for the emergence of modern museum. The royal collections which were founded in this century, the Louvre, the National Gallery, the Hermitage, the Rijksmuseum, and the Prado became sites of national heritage which were transformed into modern public museums. To this extent, museums in the eighteenth century were royal

²³ Emma Barker , *Contemporary Cultures of Display* (Italy: Open University Press, 1999), p.13.

²⁴ Benett, p.23.

museums, housed in royal buildings, playing out the legacy of the princely gallery and power in the form of royal glorification.²⁵ The emergence of nation states contributed to the formation of the national museums as unique symbols of modernity in the visual culture.

Among the royal collections, the Louvre Museum in Paris opening in 1793 is accepted as the first public museum.²⁶ The museum of museums, the Louvre was formed as a royal collection which was attributed special meaning by the royal House. As being a part of the French Revolution, the museum was the stage of the victory of the French people and their power over the state. The Louvre was opened to the people after the Revolution. By this way, all citizens began to have access to such museums. The Louvre's name was changed to La Musée Central des Arts to express its new identity.

The technologies of the modern state in modern museums, first established at the Louvre, opened a new path for public exhibitionism in the nineteenth century. However, during the reign of Napoléon, the museum once again became a royal collection. In a short time, the Louvre and its characteristics were transformed according to the necessities of the political regime and its legitimization among the people. Ali Artun argues that the tension between the aristocracy and bourgeoisie was a result of a struggle between the absolutist regime and the modern. In this connection, “being enlightened” came first “being noble” came only second.²⁷ Indeed, the museums stood between the effects of the state interests and the needs of democratization in the nineteenth century. The museums also mobilized the masses

²⁵ Nick Prior, *Museums & Modernity: Art Galleries and the Making of Modern Culture* (Oxford, New York: Berg Publishing, 2002), p.35.

²⁶ Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside the Public Art Museums* (London, New York: Routledge, 1995), p.21.

²⁷ Ali Artun, *Tarih Sahneleri: Sanat Müzeler, Müze ve Modernlik I* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006), p.107.

and raised interest in art, providing a powerful cultural base for the newly emerging nation state as well as institutionalizing modern exhibition structure at the end of the century.

The nineteenth century museums were explicitly involved in creating meaning, knowledge, truth, and history which are the materials of cultural politics intended that “speak to the eyes.”²⁸ In the 19th century, museum is the palace where official versions of ideology, are created. It represented common sense, the social world and accepted versions of the past. Questions of meaning in the museum space are closely related to politics: who has the power to create, to make visible, and to legitimate meanings and values? ²⁹ In the nineteenth century, the aim was showing off the physical and symbolic power of the nation state to the outside world. The state as a curator decided how certain forms, meanings, and symbols would interact with the audience. Like maps, museums brought the world into a single, rational framework with unified, ordered, and assigned relationships between nature, the arts and cultures.³⁰

In the mid-1850s, the formation of national museums in the colonized countries was another example of mapping nations, by collecting and displaying their cultural heritages. For example, the foundation of the National Museum of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia, is a great example of adopting a cultural historical approach to the museum in general. Displaying common objects created a cultural background in the museum space which helped create a national consciousness. The colonizer country was involved a strategic way exhibiting the heritage of colonized societies. This was a crucial aspect for colonial museum in creating the

²⁸ Tony Bennett, “Speaking to the Eyes: Museums, Science, Culture,” in *The Politics of Display- Museums, Science, Culture*, edited by Sharon Mc Donald (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp.25-35.

²⁹ Hooper-Greenhill, p.19.

³⁰ Ibid, p.18.

cultural formation of the society. The establishment of the colonial museums also served as a form of communication between the colonizer and colonized nations and reflected the attitudes of power, identity and modernity in the exhibition space.

As modernity came to be associated with a new visual regime, exhibitions opened up ideas that formerly had been invisible in history. The museums that emerged in the nineteenth century were mostly ethnographic and natural history museums, making historical and scientific claims to the rest of the world. The establishment of collections was a symbolic conquest, mapping the world of art history through nation state formation. There were two criteria in forming national collections showing off national culture, developing national history writing, and providing hegemonic tools for the political domination of the Western nations in colonized countries.

The nineteenth century exhibitions and museums served the political and cultural needs of civilized nations. History museums in Europe and the foundation of the National Gallery (British National Museum) in London represented bourgeoisie modernity and change in the identity of aristocracy in British society. Earlier, art collections in eighteenth century Britain had helped separate the aristocratic class from the popular classes. By the nineteenth century, art collections were transferred to the public sphere. This was an evolutionary step for the public museum.³¹ The British museum, after the foundation of the Louvre, symbolized the rise of the national ideals in the formation of the modern museum. Another step taken in the formation of national art collection was the Soviet Revolution of 1917, which gave a new context for the czar's royal collection. As museums were opened to the popular classes, the key notions of modernity realized could be communicated to wider masses.

³¹ Artun, p.116.

However, the formation of the national museums in the USA has a partly different background than the European experience. There, the entrepreneurial class acquired art works with a small portion of their wealth, and this constituted a core of the private art collections in the mid-1850s. The museum was a social place where the upper classes came together and creating a social event in museums became a popular activity at this time. American museums were carriers of the past, with which they wanted to establish ties. Artun argues that Americans founded their own art history on the grounds of ancient European civilization.³² Although the establishment stages American museums also aimed at the construction of a national culture, they attempted to display principles of modernity ultimately. The American elites and bourgeois classes tried to preserve the ancient heritage of Europe in order to be part of the European civilizations and until the twentieth century, the US was almost all of European descent

Modern Art Museums

The modernity of the early twentieth-century state had a highly institutionalized system of political power consisting of both archaic and modern state tools. Theoretically, the modern museums were engaged in a struggle for a new legitimacy for the public display and representation of objects, ideas and narratives. Stuart Hall acknowledges that the nation state

³² Ibid, p.127.

was never simply a political entity. It was always also a symbolic formation- a “system of representation”- which produced an “idea” of the nation as an “imagined community”. With museum representation we can identify and through this imaginary identification, constituted its citizens as ‘subjects’.³³ As mentioned by Hall, the twentieth century museums as well as the exhibitions grounded a system for the representation of culture, reproduction of knowledge, and construction of common identity of the nation state.

Like other nation state theorists, Benedict Anderson emphasizes his theory of “imagined community” best explained by the formation of public identity using the techniques of modernity in creating a linear account of the nation’s past. As he writes, the political and theoretical framework of the construction of a national and autonomous past of the imagined community is related closely to modernity and its tools. In this sense, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century modernist museums represented a European model of the nation state, and aimed at the education of large sections of society. The modernist museum collected objects and placed them on display. Visual statements, constructed through objects placed in carefully fixed relationships, presented aspects of the European world-view. The early modernist museum was imagined as a building with a classical form with columns and a pediment; in contrast to the white cube³⁴ of later high modernist art museums.³⁵

According to Bennett, the emergence of the modern art museum in the twentieth century was related closely to the development of a number of disciplines and institutions- history, and natural science museums, dioramas, panoramas, national and later international

³³ Stuart Hall, “Culture, Community, Nation,” in *Representing the Nation: A Reader Histories, Heritages and Museums*, edited by David Boswell and Jessica Evans (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p.38.

³⁴ The term is used for the exhibition space of the modern museum. The standard presentation of contemporary art has relied predominantly on the white cube to build aura and mystique around art objects.

³⁵ Hooper-Greenhill, p.151.

exhibitions, arcades and department stores which served as links in the development and circulation of new disciplines as well as for the development of new technologies of vision.³⁶ He analysis of modern museum technologies through Foucauldian concepts became the starting point of his theory, “exhibitionary complex”.

Exhibitions form a complex of disciplinary power, as Foucault discusses in *Discipline and Punish*.³⁷ He argues that the disciplinary technologies and forms of observation developed in the carceral system and especially the principle of panopticism, rendering everything visible to the eye power, display a tendency “to become de-institutionalized, to emerge from the closed fortresses in which they once functioned and to circulate in a free state.”³⁸ His concept of “disciplinarity” thus enables us to comprehend important differences in regulating the human body according to the states will. The panopticon as a device for strategy enables us to fully understand the functioning of institutions, of power/ knowledge in the modern state system.

In other words, Foucault’s primary concern is with the problem of order as a part of new forms discipline and surveillance in the modernist museum and exhibition space. In his book *The Order of Things*, he offers a suggestive account of displaying artifacts of natural history. He writes,

The strangeness of animals was a spectacle: it was featured in fairs, in tournaments, in fictitious or real combats, in reconstruction of legends in which the bestiary displayed its ageless fables. The natural history room and the garden, as created in the Classical period, replace the circular procession of the ‘show’ with the arrangement of things in a ‘table’. What came surreptitiously into being between the age of the theatre and that of the catalogue was not the desire for knowledge, but a new way of connecting

³⁶ Benett, *The Brith of the Museum*, p.59.

³⁷ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p.61.

³⁸ Ibid., p.64.

things both to the eye and to discourse. This is a new way of making history.³⁹

The understanding of the work of art was a part of the power-knowledge analyzed in *The Order of Things*. He questioned the logic of representation for the image and its object reached an analytical resolution through the scene of the Velazquez painting of the King and Queen of Spain.⁴⁰ He revealed the position of the representation of the model that is being represented on the canvas of the painters. The gaze of the painters in representing the image was related directly to the condition of the production of knowledge. Foucault's theory shows that ordering the objects for the public is the same as the ordering of the perception of people.

From this point of view, Bennett argues that the exhibitionary complex was also a response to the problem of the order of the objects in a museum which is seeking to transform its message into one culture as well as regulating minds and bodies. In this regard, Foucault's theory brought "the new way, to reduce between things and languages and to bring things observed as close as possible to words."⁴¹ Objects in the museum, like words, carry the meaning and symbolizing ideologies in the exhibition system. Museums, galleries, and exhibitions play a pivotal role in the formation of the modern state apparatus and were fundamental in setting up educative and civilizing agencies.

The nineteenth century was also the age of international exhibitions which brought variety of objects and people together across cultures. The participation of people who were non-civilized in international exhibitions was organized according to the rhetoric of the

³⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p.131

⁴⁰ Michael Kelly, "Michel Foucault," in *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, edited by Michael Kelly, vol.2 (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.227.

⁴¹ David Goodman, "Fear of Circuses: Founding the National Museum of Victoria," in *Representing the Nation: A Reader Histories, Heritage and Museums*, edited by David Boswell and Jessica Evans (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p.260.

imperialist discourse and exhibitions of non-Western cultures were aimed at a rhetorical effect through their representation of otherness rather than producing any disciplinary effects.

In this sense, representation in the modern museum depends on the author, model and spectator that produce the critical apparatus for the permanent display of the power mechanism. The regulation of the masses by the power was realized in the course of disciplinary channels, such as the representation of art works, the architecture of the buildings, and the order of objects, time and space are constructed on a linear line.

While Foucault's perspective is based on the confinement of the public in the body of the museum that opens its door, like prisons and asylums, Bennett does not share the confinement approach. He offers a new perspective "the exhibitionary complex," social controlling in the museum space.⁴² On the other hand, Antonio Gramsci's perspective enables us to understand the relationship between the museum power and the dominant ideology of the modern state. According to Gramsci, museums as an inseparable part of a cultural politics were instruments of the ruling class hegemony.⁴³ In other words, he argues that the state must be conceived of as an "educator", in as much it tended to create a new type of or level of civilization.⁴⁴ The emphasis on the educational function from the Gramsci perspective was new for technology of modern exhibitions. The difference lies in their conceptions of hegemony. For Foucault, hegemony is to be understood as a form of social cohesion achieved by various ways of programming behavior rather than as class mechanism.

Foucault's theory on knowledge/hegemony/truth is on discursive formations covering all strategies of dominant ideology and technologies: practices, institutions, norm,

⁴² Bennett, p.31

⁴³ Ibid, p.91.

⁴⁴ Gramsci, p.247

regulations, and authority that has become a determinant of subject and object of the museum. The museum space- its architecture, history, aesthetics, curatorial practices, and art criticism constitutes the practice of governing. Andrea Witcom offers a wide range of theoretical perspectives sharing more or less the same view as Bennett. His concern is to get away from an interpretation of the museum which is based on a narrative of original theoretical approaches. He argues that the Foucauldian and Gramscain theories are limited in their framing the representational and discursive practices of museum within governmental or disciplinary imperatives. These approaches make it very difficult to move away from an understanding of the museum as an authoritarian institution.⁴⁵ The effort here is to bring about new arguments on museums and exhibitions and to show how cultural theory can be also used to explain the emerging of the museum practices in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In recent years, cultural studies have offered more a social perspective on nineteenth and twentieth museums, regarding museums as public spaces of modernity. This will be analyzed in the following part.

Art and Modernity in the Public Space

The museum space was integrated gradually into the cultural apparatus of the modern state to shape the public according to the political and social needs. During the Victorian period, in Britain, the museum public was represented commonly as an idealized projection of the transformation of the public sphere in modern Europe which began from the

⁴⁵ Andrea Witcomb, *Re-Imagining the Museum: Beyond the Mausoleum* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p.12.

mid eighteenth century London and Paris displayed princely and aristocratic power in galleries to which the common people had restricted access. The National Gallery of London together with the museums of Paris and Berlin actively encouraged visits by the laboring classes.

Carol Duncan, in her analysis of art museums, focuses on demonstrating how art museums offer up values, beliefs and political identity. For Duncan, museum space is made through the medium of ideology. This is conveyed through the use of the museum as a ritual space.⁴⁶ As mentioned before, the Louvre Museum in Paris and the National Gallery in London were the representatives of a transformation that served the ideological needs of the bourgeois nation-states by providing them a new kind of civic ritual. As Duncan explains, art museums are especially important sites for the representation of hegemonic identities:

To control a museum means precisely to control the representation of a community and its highest values and truths. It is also the power to define the relative standing of individuals within that community. Those who are best prepared to perform its ritual- those who are most able to respond to its various cues- are also those whose identities (social, sexual, racial, etc.) the museum ritual most fully confirms.⁴⁷

Her concern with the power in the exhibition space is different from the Foucauldian approach to the museum because Duncan regards museums as discursive spaces rather than as texts or objects. While Foucauldian analyses focuses on questions of power relations, similar to Duncan's view, Sherman and Rogoff examine the policies of exhibitions toward museum publics over time. They attempt an inquiry into modes of cultural construction.⁴⁸ Their aim is

⁴⁶ Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside the Public Art Museums.*, p.2.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p.18.

⁴⁸ Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p.1x-x.

to analyze the unmasking structures, rituals, and forms in which the state ideology is articulated and they continue to represent museums as stable sites for the operation of the dominant interest. Unlike Foucault, Duncan does not analyze the museum as a direct ideological state apparatus, but focuses on the interactive and the social site of the museum and tries to find ideology not in the structure but in the forms and perceptions. Duncan's view on museum is mainly derived from the social side of museum space such as interaction, communication and educational apparatus. Developing interaction between communities, the museum offers a wide range of objects and formations which the visitors experience.

The modern exhibition space in the twentieth century offered visual sites for hegemonic ideological articulations, also capable of organizing counter-hegemony. The museum itself carried a hegemonic approach dealing with the issue of the politicization of culture and art to regulate a society with a well-defined set of rules. Foucault's perspective on museum clearly shows a political vision in the construction of modern and powerful state. Drawing on Foucault's concept of political rationality,⁴⁹ Bennett also argues that the museum space served as vehicles for popular education and their actual functioning as instruments for the reform of public manners. For this reason, museums should be equally open and accessible to all.⁵⁰ The development of the museum as a public institution occurred alongside the organization of the social space in the formation of the bourgeois public sphere.

In eighteenth century France, salon exhibitions were a popular success presenting art in a collective space. The salon represented the popular experience of high art for the bourgeoisie, determined and administered from above and played the role of the new public space. Firstly, artists had to satisfy the immediate demands of elite individuals and groups,

⁴⁹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Allen Lane, 1977)

⁵⁰ Bennett, p. 31.

secondly the needs of larger crowds. People from different social backgrounds were able to visit these exhibitions and have access to bourgeois art. The salon exhibitions provided an open space for both the bourgeoisie and the middle classes.

Thomas Crow argues that the salon was both an art market and workshop for the artists who were supported by the art patrons in France, where state patronage of art was partly absent.⁵¹ This perspective of the salon is political. The institutional purpose of the Academy and aristocracy was to organize the salon as a public sphere of discussion, debate, and free exchange of opinion. Academy students generally participated in the salon exhibitions to show their talent and raise the aesthetic quality of art. However, the criticism that the salon had become a bazaar or a shop for drawings became widespread in conservative circles at this time. However, conservative thinkers did not support the participation of artists in the salon exhibitions.

It is argued that the salon served as a bazaar, for a market place; it was the bourgeois living room which as capitalism developed turned into commercial art gallery.⁵² Its audience was linked directly to aristocratic classes, who were willing to buy the works of art. On the other hand, the mob in the salon was heterogeneous, largely anonymous, unstable visitors for the most part not in the market for pictures. Through the mobilization of the crowd with the art in salons, the aristocracy attempted to create a bourgeois artistic sphere to civilize the mob, and provided the exhibition space for the elite culture on display. The sociologist

⁵¹ Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth Century Paris* (New Haven: New York University Press, 1988), p.13

⁵² Patricia Mainardi, "The Double in the Nineteenth-Century France," *Art Journal*, 48, n.1 (1989), p.23.

Pierre Bourdieu has identified this process as signaling the distinction of that privileged class. In this case, the salon once it opened to all artists, lost its function for academics.⁵³

Starting from the mid-nineteenth century, the state and the bourgeoisie invoked a new kind of authority in the formation of the modern public sphere. In this way the museum emerged as an important instrument for the self-display of bourgeois democratic societies. Bennett discussed the exhibitionary complex developed in the earlier nineteenth century providing new instruments for the moral and cultural regulation of the working classes.⁵⁴ Thus, the museum was a social space that was first private and later public, and provided the transfer of significant quantities of cultural and scientific property from private into public ownership. The reorganization of the social space of the exhibitionary complex occurred along side with the emerging role of museums in the formation of the bourgeois public sphere. Habermas states that in the nineteenth century, the institution had detached already high cultural forms and practices of display and connected them to new social and political purposes; there emerged a public sphere in the Habermasian respect eliminating the distinctive characteristics of the individuals and social groups.⁵⁵

In this way, the introduction of the bourgeoisie as a power not only was established by rendering visible the representation of a certain group of people, but also making its power visible to the rest of the populace. Two significant results emerge in Habermas' concept. The first is that the public sphere constructs itself as a unitary entity, eliminating the distinctive characteristics of the individual, social groups and communities. And secondly, the hegemony

⁵³ This is one of the main thesis of Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Mass. Institute, 1984).

⁵⁴ Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, p.24.

⁵⁵ Harold Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Habermas of Historians," *Journal of Modern History*, 72, n.1(2000), p.163.

of the bourgeois class granted a monopoly over the public sphere, restricting the identity of any social group in the public discourse.⁵⁶ In this sense, the Louvre presented itself as the supreme manifestation of aesthetic ideals shared by all civilized Europeans as well as educated foreign tourists, since the museums not only provided the civilizing function for local groups, but also influenced outsiders who just visited. To argue that present museum practices may have parallels to the nineteenth-century museum practices is to apply Foucauldian accounts of cultural practices and institutions and to interpret late modernity with the same paradigm.

As mentioned before, Duncan argues that the idea of the public art museum as a site of learning was an enormously attractive place that makes visible the ideals of a republican state and frames the public and dramatizes the unity of the nation.⁵⁷ In America, people borrowed the forms of European national galleries, but in the New World, those forms took on American meanings based on political and social prestige for identifying members of the elite social classes. In contrast to Europe, at the beginning, American public museums and art galleries provided elite class boundaries within society, giving them a specific class identity rather than national culture. This was a result of the exclusion of the popular classes from the elite cultural public space. Art collectors, who earned incredible amount of money in America unlike their colleagues in Europe, wanted to return the status, authority, and prestige of founding museums, institution, and public galleries. American museums were organized for the public in order to educate and Americanize the immigrant masses. Compared to European modern museums, American museums provided a space for plural identities and representing multi-cultural dialogue among different communities.

⁵⁶ Mah, p.155,158.

⁵⁷ Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, p.49.

The Globalization of Art and Cultural Heritage in the Post-Modern Era

The post-1980s museums and international exhibitions reflect the changes in theory and practices in the replacement of the nation-state and its ideologies by global capitalist and transnational relations. The linear, singular, and national discourse of the museum and exhibition was transformed into pluralist, timeless, fragmented approaches. Considering the museum practices, the development of private organizations in the field of culture and art in post-1950 period in the USA and Europe clearly transformed the vision of museum and international exhibitions, fairs, and festivals. In the USA, natural and history museums were mainly state founded public institutions. On the other hand, art museums were founded by cultural entrepreneurs and foundations which played a great role in the privatization of culture. Through museums founded by the great private holders and cultural centers, the leading families in the USA and Western Europe have publicized their private collections to strengthen their images and the cultural capital of their corporations and their positions in the new forms of power. Also, corporations and bourgeois families, through their cultural institutions support and legitimize particular types of arts and re-confirm the cultural hierarchy in society.

According to Mike Featherstone, the process of globalization suggests two images of culture. The first image entails the extension outwards of a particular culture (heterogeneous culture) to its limit, the globe. The second image points to the “compression of

cultures.” This first image suggests a process of conquest and unification of global space.⁵⁸ In this first approach, the world becomes a singular domesticated space, a place where everyone becomes assimilated into a common culture. The second approach to be considered is that there are processes of cultural integration, homogenization and unification in order to shape a global culture. Nowadays, the structure of museum and exhibitions shows us the emphasis on the local.

The globalization of culture is an outcome of common forms of industrial production, commodities, consumption and trade in post-modern society. George Ritzer has analyzed this process, which he refers to as the Mc Donaldization of the society and the world. In this view, global culture is consumed as an image, an icon, and a product from a superior global culture which has long represented itself as the center.

There are different kinds of modernity projects in the world. Modernity is not attributed only to the Western civilization; it is now commonly accepted as project of humankind, so the non-Western civilizations carry different modernity projects.⁵⁹ Post-modernism and post-colonialism are constructed by European civilization, knowledge, history and identity. The term post-modernism is an outcome of the symbolic power and cultural capital of the West and itself a development of tradition and modernity constructed from Western experience. According to Frederic Jameson, postmodernism is to be regarded as the cultural logic of late, or consumer, capitalism as a cultural reflection of a new phase of capitalism.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Mike Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism, and Identity* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), p.6.

⁵⁹ See also Nilüfer Göle, *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996) .

Western nations, in order to maintain the isolation their identities from those of other nations, ignore the cultural challenges of the other nations and sustain fantasy images of their own superiority. The term “Orient” is constituted to refer to all the exotic differences and otherness which have been repressed by the West which has sought to construct a coherent identity.⁶¹ The West is granted the duty to guide and educate the others and also understands itself as the guardian of Western values on behalf of a world formed in its own image.

The globalization of culture in this regard tends to produce strong pressures to develop a coherent cultural identity. The process of the homogenization of culture, the project of creating a common culture, must be understood as a process in the unification and elimination of local differences. However there are plural histories in the world, displaying the diverse cultures and particularities which were excluded from Western modernity’s universalistic project.

The effects of the globalization have made us aware that the world itself is a locality.⁶² A local culture is perceived as being a particularity which is the opposite of the global. The local culture is generally referred to as a common identity, collective memories and national cultural forms in opposition to the global. From cosmopolitanism to globalization, constructing national cultures and representing them by specific iconographies is challenged in the post-modern museum and art space by the processes of an economic and symbolic transnationalisation. Arjun Appadurai analyzed this process in five different aspects: population movements, flows of technologies and transnational cooperations, the exchange of

⁶⁰ Frederic Jameson, “Post Modernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” *New Left Review*, 146 (1984), pp.52-92.

⁶¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978).

⁶² Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism, and Identity*, p.92.

multinational financiers, the images and information distributed through newspapers, magazines, television channels, and the concepts of Western modernity such as democracy, liberty, well-being, cultural rights.⁶³ The cosmopolitanism of Middle Eastern artists resulted, in most cases, in the affirmation of their self-identity. A national consciousness has existed and the foreign influences were translated and relocated in their national identity. In this case, the art fairs and the biennials contribute to this multicultural game.

In light of globalization, the museum practices in the post-1980s emerged with a variety of distinctive practices and methodologies. The concept of “live museum”, “communicating museum”, “interactive museum”, and “virtual museum” became widespread.⁶⁴ The practices and reflections of the museum following the post-1980s, especially in the 1990s, presented the basic transformation in the perception of the idea of museum and its theories through the practices of globalism and multiculturalism. Especially in the USA, local cultural groups such as Mexican Americans, Afro-American and Native Americans founded community cultural centers and local museums to protect and display their cultural richnesses.

The first change in the museum practices after the 1980s has been an increase in the number of the museums, mostly in Western Europe and the USA. The new museums especially of modern art, have been opened with the funds of great co-operations and cultural organizations. The international capital holders would reinforce their images as cultural capital. In this sense, the museum is perceived as a cultural space that can be managed to

⁶³ Nestor Garcia Canclini, “Remaking Passports: Visual Thought in the Debate on Multiculturalism,” in *Grasping the Idea of the Museum*, edited by Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago. (England: Asgate Publishing, 2003), p.703.

⁶⁴ Eilan Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), p.127.

make an alternative profit.⁶⁵ The increase of private investments in the body of the museum increasingly has shown the hegemonic power of the globalization of the first world countries. The marketing and advertising activities of the international companies showed the power of the first world countries in the global cultural arena, because wealthy countries allocated their budget in culture and art.

The concepts offered by the sociologist Bourdieu such as, “cultural capital” and “symbolic power of elites” in art, indicate the relation between art investments and the increase in the number of the museums. Art museums that have been initiated by corporate interventions have been subjected to power relations in the post-1980s. Bourdieu approaches the cultural capital which emerged within the context of art and cultural affairs, as the instrument of domination.⁶⁶ In contrast to the nineteenth century, the number of private collection holders in the Western world has increased gradually and museums are willing to represent their collections on a global scale. The “taste” of the capital holders, in this sense, is not necessarily national. The emergence of the art collections of international corporations in the USA and Europe is one aspect of seeking to put the power of art in international relations.

Today, museums have become cultural centers in which the main components are placed as the café, shop, restaurant, cinema, in the course of which visitors may spend longer amounts of time. In this sense, visitors have become the customers of the museums and the museums are markets for culture and art in the global age. The process of the McDonaldization of museums signifies the process of marketization and globalization in the post-1980s era. The acceleration of globalization and the transformations in capitalist production to

⁶⁵ Chin-Tao Wu, *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention since the 1980s* (London: Verso, 2003), p.12.

⁶⁶ Bourdieu, “Social Space and Symbolic Power,” p.129 and P. Bourdieu, A. Darbel, and D. Schnapper, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and Their Public*, translated by Nick Merriman (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1997), p.88.

more transnational, flexible, disorganized and consumer led-forms are involved in the logic of the museums. As an example of this kind of development, the Tate Modern, established in 2000, is a modern art gallery located in London. It is Britain's international modern art gallery and forms part of the Tate group together with Tate Britain, Tate Liverpool, Tate St. Ives and Tate Online. The structure of the Tate Museums reflects the post-1980s politics of transnational economic networks and multicultural social construction in the museum practices rendering the space a laboratory of culture industry.

In addition to the Tate Modern, the Guggenheim Museum in New York is an internationally renowned art museum and one of the most significant architectural icons of the twentieth century. The Guggenheim Museum was founded in 1937, and it opened the Museum of Non-Objective Painting in 1939, its first New York based venue display for art. The museum was founded by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, which has focused on the preservation and research of modern and contemporary art since 1937. The global network that began in the 1970s when the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, was joined by the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, has expanded since 1997 to include the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, the Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, and opening in 2013, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. Each constitution unites distinguished architecture with great works, a tradition that has become a Guggenheim hallmark. The mission of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is to promote the understanding and appreciation of art, architecture, and other manifestations of visual culture, primarily of the modern and contemporary periods; and to mission through exceptional exhibitions, educational programs, research initiatives, and publications, and strives to engage and educate an increasingly diverse international audience

through its network of museums and partnerships.⁶⁷ The Tate Modern and Guggenheim are the most important examples of the post modern museum that is the major form of intercultural communication. Museums in the USA and Europe continue to forge international collaborations and develop their collections with art marketing activities, conservation efforts, educational initiatives and scholarships for artists.

Globalization is inscribed within particular social, cultural and historical contexts. Within this framework, curatorship has taken on a very different meaning since the selecting of the works of art in an exhibition has become more and more a political question. Until the 1950s, curators in smaller art institution could have only responsibility for the acquisition and care of objects. The curator made decisions regarding what objects to collect and oversaw their care and documentation, and conducted research based on the collections. However, after the 1950s, in the larger institutions, the curators acted as subject specialists, with the expectation that they would conduct original research on objects and guide the organization in its collecting. Developments in post-modern museums and art institutions had a direct impact on the responsibilities of the curators. Due to enlarging art institutions in the world, most of the museums and institutions now have multiple curators, each assigned to specific collecting areas and operating under the head curator.

In contemporary art, curators select and often interpret works of art, also writing catalogue essays and supporting the content of the exhibition. However, nowadays the role of the curator is different in the museums. The curators select what they want to present and determine the aim of the art project. The role of the curator in the museums used to be a kind of intermediary between museum and artist, and the act of the curator was the act of selecting the works of artists. They were enriching also the collection of the museum with the

⁶⁷ <http://www.guggenheim.org/guggenheim-foundation/mission-statement>.

acquisition of new objects in the market. Due to the development and specialization of the exhibitions in the post 1980s, the change occurred in the conception, the management of works and presentation have become the center of the curatorial practices. Wu argues that “the curators have no time to assimilate, still less to understand, the artistic production in any one place.”⁶⁸ With rapid change in the structure of biennials and international exhibitions, curators are acting as directors, dealers, and representatives of the art and heritage.

In the post-modern museum, the production of events and exhibitions enables the incorporation into the museum of many voices and many perspectives. The exhibitions form part of a nucleus of events which take place both before and after the display. These events usually involve the establishment of community and organizational partnerships, and the production of educational programs.

As Bourdieu states, “taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed.”⁶⁹ In this way, the elite taste and its domination of the global art world are revealed in the exhibitions making visible the choice of art of the co-operation and entrepreneur class. Western hegemony in the cultural field determines the relationship with the global and the local. The Western art and heritage collections after the 1950s clearly symbolize the superiority of the art taste of the Western nations compared that of the Eastern in the fields of art and history.

⁶⁸ Chin Tao Wu, “Biennial Without Borders”, *New Left Review*, 107, n. 57 (2009), p.115.

⁶⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Massachusettes: Harvard Univeristy Press, 1984), p.6.

The second fundamental change in museums is grounded on the time and space formation. Before the 1980s, the representation of objects was defined in chronologic order and laid on a linear and deterministic pattern. However, the organizational characteristics of the post-modern museums involve different modes of representation and signification. The spatial and temporal constructions in the museum in the post-1980s indicate the turn in perceptions of time and space of post modernism. The organization of time and space in the museums, embedded in the linear and progressive characteristic of modernity, changed. Thus, the construction of the temporal and spatial are designed in the conditions of the museum rather than following the classic linear and progressive discourse.⁷⁰ Theorist of post-modernism, David Harvey writes that the conditions of the late capitalist society directly affected the time and space in post- modern society. In this way, social geography and temporality in post-modern museum space showed different experiences in different places.⁷¹

The shift realized in the space and time orientation of the museum mapped the visual culture of the 1980s. In addition to time and space perceptions, instruction of the new media and its technologies resulted in fundamental changes in the representation of history and art. New forms of visual media such as films, television, photography, and the Internet correspond and generate new needs of the post-modern museums. According to Stuart Hall, before post-modernism, museums were locked up in symbolic national boundaries. The effects of cultural industry and aesthetic practices carried modern post modern technologies in the museum space.⁷² The museum has been now turned into a space in which knowledge of

⁷⁰ Kervin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representations*, 69 (2000), p.218.

⁷¹ David Harvey, *Postmodernliğin Durumu*; trans. Sungur Savran (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1999), p.7.

⁷² Stuart Hall, "Modern Sanat Müzeleri ve Tarihin Sonu," in *Tarih Sahneleri: Müze ve Eleştirel Düşünce*, edited by Ali Artun (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006), p.302.

the past is presented to the next generations. Nowadays museums function as both educational/ touristic places and sites of new experiences by the spectators. Urry writes that

There has also been a marked change in the nature of the museums themselves. No longer are visitors expected to stand in awe of the exhibits. More emphasis is being placed on a degree of participation by visitors in the exhibits themselves. ‘Living’ museums replaced ‘dead’ museums, open-air museums replace those under cover, sound replaces hushed silence, and visitors are not separated from the exhibits by glass.⁷³

The practices of the visitors such as touching objects and using media devices in the exhibitions provides the opportunity to develop their visions and experience new developments and new sensorial images.

The Globalization of Museums and Heritage Exhibitions

Through the weakening of the boundaries of the nation state, the people enlarged their vision about world art and history. The introduction of new technologies reinforced the idea of leisure time activities in daily life. In addition, the spread of the mobility of information has doubled compared to the mid twentieth century. The information, image, product and ideologies spread faster and the museums have become transportation vehicles for visitors with using interactive media technologies. The methods of showing and telling have been transformed into a new interactive structure. Adorno ties the word “*museum*” with “*mausoleum*” since the museum keeps the objects to which the observer has a vital

⁷³ John Urry. “Gazing On History,” in *the Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary* (London; Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1990), p.130

relationship and which are in process of dying.”⁷⁴ The power relation in the visual space of the post-modern museum was partly different from the modern museum in that it reflected transnational corporate networks’ concerns for symbolic power and multicultural identities. The Canadian Museum of Civilization, the National Museum of Australia, the National Museum of the American Indian in California, the Mexican Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago, and the African American Museum in Philadelphia are some examples of the post-modern multicultural museums in the world.

By the 1980s the flourishing of heritage exhibitions concentrated on alternative and multiple memories of individuals and subgroups whose histories had not been represented earlier. The cultural heritage practices and the heritage industry mainly in Western Europe and the USA were widespread by the 1970s and 1980s. Cultural heritage appears to have emerged with the motivation of the preservation and conservation of historical places and monuments as well as displaying them in the exhibition spaces. The basic reason behind the preservation of the past was to give a sense of the present; because the negative influence of the past ever-present modern life sometimes eradicates the sense of the past.

In the post-1980s, the re-production and reconstruction of the heritage sites not only started to take place in the museums but also the spaces seemed to facilitate the commodification of culture and history. Typically, international heritage exhibitions are based on an ordering and representing narrative structure of the exhibition text. Especially with the influence of globalization, the cultural activities and tourism drew once again the boundaries of heritage sites and the narrative structure of the heritage exhibitions started to reflect the

⁷⁴ Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Postmodern World* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992), p.64.

ideological change in terms of diversity, multiculturalism, and an emphasis on authentic local culture.

Cultural heritage practices turned into an industry, institutionalized within the framework of the international projects of UNESCO and the MEDA project of the European Commission in the 1980s and 1990s.⁷⁵ These international organizations set the criteria for the historical and cultural assets of the world that would be listed formally and acknowledged. The organization of this common list emphasized historical assets with outstanding universal value. Therefore, the major concern of the protection of historical and cultural assets was whether they carried universal values and were a part of a civilization in world history. This situation shows that heritage conservation politics depended on universal values and goals.

Urry mentions that the practices of the conservation of the historical sites reflect the agenda of heritage tourism that promotes a mythical harmony in the global community and a romanticized as well as glamorized past.”⁷⁶ In the heritage conservation discourse, the heritage sites are used as profit making institutions and instruments for global tourism. Heritage exhibitions and sites are part of the current visualization of history. Before the 1980s, heritage sites were the national pride of countries showing off their cultural richness. Globalization has often weakened national discourses and the conservation of heritage efforts is now based on a more universal discourse titled “world cultural heritage.” As a result of Western universalism, the heritage exhibitions organized in this sense after the 1980s were the showcases of world cultural heritage and the common heritage of human kind.

⁷⁵ Seçil Yılmaz, “*Visualization of Culture, History and Memory in Turkey: Museum Politics in the Post-1980s*” (MA thesis, Boğaziçi University 2005), pp.65.

⁷⁶ Urry, *Consuming Places*, p.155.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF WORLD ART EXHIBITIONS

“What is an official exhibition? It is the nation putting itself on display. It is the sudden exaltation of a country that wants to give the world an example of its civilization, its imagination and its productive forces.”⁷⁷

Jean Giraudoux

This chapter builds upon the question of what international exhibitionism is.

International exhibitionism, from the 1850s and to the 2000s, sheds light onto the later discussions for the Turkish case. First of all, I will mention the emergence of international exhibitions which were closely related to the nation-state formation in the mid-nineteenth century. Together with the nation state model, art and culture reached a central position in the formation of the modern state structure. In these circumstances, the need for formulating solutions that could incorporate both art and exhibition techniques arose. Internationally framed exhibitions transformed itself according to the development of the emergence of the nation state in the mid-nineteenth century and technological innovations led to further development in the organization of exhibition space and its structure. Chapter 2 will focus on how exhibitionary forms and techniques enable a certain kind of reading of international exhibitions. It will also illuminate the nineteenth and twentieth century history of world art exhibitions. Using a comparative perspective, a history of the birth of the heritage exhibitions, biennials, and blockbuster exhibitions will be discussed to shed light on the development of exhibitionism in the world.

⁷⁷ Shanny Peer, *France on Display: Peasants, Provincials, and Folklore in the 1937 Paris World's Fair* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), p.1.

Nineteenth Century Exhibitionism

“No, this is not to future world, countries mingled, races mixed, vices and virtues crossed: it is the colonial exposition”.

Paul Morand

From 1750 to 1914, exhibitions created and offered selective visions and histories about nation-and-empire-building and functioned as a social control mechanism. To represent their industrial-power, industrial exhibitions offered living pictures of the nation and empire. The administrators, entrepreneurs or artists who mounted exhibitions often aimed to create innovative displays of art and to engineer new modes of visibility. In this way, visitors were agents in the construction of this national and imperial public sphere. As Hoffenberg states, “international exhibition creating a Eurocentric and modern sense of imperial structure and knowledge had shaped the material culture necessary for the public memory of colonial nationalism.”⁷⁸ Colonial museums like the Smithsonian Institution and its museums in the USA, the National Museum of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia, the Colonial Cottage Museum in Wellington, New Zealand, represented the national heritage of the colonized nations and preserved the past in the mid nineteenth century. These museums were some of the best memorials of the imperial past and showed off national rhetoric.

Before World War II, international exhibitions were dominated by the industrial super power nations. The first exhibition “The Great Exhibition of the Worlds of All Nations” was organized at the Crystal Palace; London in 1851 and marked a historical beginning for the world exhibition movement. The 1867 Paris Universal Exhibition, the 1873 Vienna Universal

⁷⁸ Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War*. Berkeley (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), p.27.

Exhibition, the 1876 Philadelphia Exhibition (A Hundred Year Anniversary of American Independence), and the 1889 Paris Universal Exhibition organized by different states followed. The 1893 Colombian World Exhibition was the last grand exhibition of the nineteenth century organized to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America.⁷⁹

Exhibitionism is based on a complex system of socio-political and cultural events in the historical context. The international exhibitions held around the world between 1851 and 1939 signify the age of exhibitions, the age of empires, nation-states, subjects and citizens. Approximately every two years, world expositions were organized in which more than twenty nations participated until WWI. These mega events attracted millions of visitors to the exhibition sites, where all nations on the earth took part by sending objects for display and by erecting buildings of their own. In 1889, the Paris Exposition attracted more than 32 million visitors the Chicago Colombian Exposition held in 1893 was visited by more than 27.5 million people.⁸⁰ Visitors became part of the imperial, colonial, and national pictures along with the economic products and works of art at the exhibitions and they actively participated in ceremonies and artistic displays acting as tourists and historic agents.

“Exhibition mania”⁸¹ started with the Crystal Palace exhibition (or Great Exhibition) and soon spread throughout Europe, North America, and the British Empire. The nation’s self representation heavily depended on a single question of who was civilized and open-minded. Urban centers were re-planned for the national pavilions where miraculous pieces of engineering technology, masterpieces of art and ethnography, tribes of primitive peoples,

⁷⁹ Burçak Madran, 19. Yüzyılda Uluslararası Sergiler, *Yapı*, no.225 (August 2000), pp.56-65.

⁸⁰ Bennett, *The Birth of Museum*, p.83.

⁸¹ Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley and Los Angeles:University of California Press, 2001), p.xiii.

reconstruction of streets, exotic places, theaters, sport stadiums were displayed. The English editors of London Illustrative Weekly News write in the year 1862:

We have exhibitions of nearly all possible and impossible things under the sun- exhibitions of pigs of paintings, of performing fleas, of parrots, of steam engines, and international gatherings, local, vocal, and rural shows. The list seems all but complete; yet, as there is nothing more fertile than the imagination of exhibiting mankind, fresh agenda continue to drop in everyday.⁸²

The concept of exhibitionism is the product of imperial domination of the West on the colonized or periphery countries, and was intended to promote external commonwealth and internal nationalism. International exhibitions were dominated by the imperial rule, became a popular and influential mode of representing the wealth of the nation abroad and strengthened national common sense in inside. While the industrialized countries used certain discourses for differentiating and raising competition among and within communities; they attempted to create an idealized civilized type of modern society rather than a tribal one. Exhibitions were the place of the part of the fluid national and imperial identities articulating with the colonialism that gave the shape of nineteenth century visual world.

As an imperial practice, the “A World’s Fair” idea fashioned colonialism into a new entity, or a collection, based on the classification of visible difference. As in Walter Benjamin’s theory of historical materialism, showing cultural treasures and ethnographic collection at the exposition created ties with the past that exploited national symbols according to the will of the colonial power.

Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate. According to traditional practice, the spoils are carried along in

⁸² Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display*, p.13.

this procession. They are called cultural treasures and a historical materialist views them with cautious detachment. For without exception the cultural treasures he surveys have an origin which he cannot contemplate without horror. They owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great minds and talents who have created them, but also to the anonymous toil of their contemporaries. There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism.⁸³

Hegemonic European control over power and representational systems practiced and as mythologized by colonial discourse were at the core of the Orientalist logic. The first colonial collection display was held in the fifteenth century. Exhibited objects were mainly taken from the newly founded places in America, put into enlightened museum places. In this way, colonial objects would be a part of Western culture and the colonizer legitimated its political power by showing off the uncivilized world.

According to the anthropologist Burton Benedict, human displays at the world fairs were organized into national and racial hierarchies.⁸⁴ As items of display, objects were seen to be less interesting than human beings and through the medium of display human beings were transformed into objects. In the case of native villages and the construction of prototypical towns, European nations controlled the imperial vision building and displays of colonial peoples, legitimized imperial conquest and justified European expansion. And visitors were also agents in the construction of the national and imperial public sphere according to an “historically organic” and “arbitrary” defined past. Paul Greenhalgh argues that colonial exhibitions were “human showcases”⁸⁵ in which modernism appeared as a way to represent

⁸³ Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” in *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p.256.

⁸⁴ Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-century World Fairs* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), p.19.

the newly emerging nation state model. The representation depended on a civilized image of the world nations to be used for national image making process. As the part of the new imperialism, “national” pavilions promoted national grandeur, transforming patriotism itself into a commodity on display and in this way, the nation state became a consumer of culture.⁸⁶

The first colonial exhibition went back to 1851 when the representatives of the British Empire came together at the Crystal Palace to show off their modern technological devices to France, Germany and the USA, which were highly industrialized countries at that time. In this way, the British Empire symbolically consolidated the power of Western domination over the other parts of the world. Curtain walls and iron and glass roofs formed architectural masterpieces where new technologies combined with the old forms. Similar to the Crystal Palace, Napoléon III ordered the construction of an exhibitionary complex for the 1855 Exposition Universelle called *Palais de L’Industrie* was the ground for the organization of exhibition space.

The fine arts were the most popular aspects of the international exhibitionism in the nineteenth century. The first international fine art exhibition, *Exposition Universelle des Beaux-Arts*, was taken as a part of the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1855, one of greatest in the whole tradition of exhibitionism at that time. The fine arts section attracted 906,530 visitors. As compared to the fine arts section, more than 3.5 millions people visited the machine hall.⁸⁷ The reason behind the organization of the fine art section was that France

⁸⁵ Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World Fairs, 1851-1939* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), p.82.

⁸⁶ Susan Buck- Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1989), p.89

⁸⁷ Buck-Morss, p.198.

aimed at visualizing its power both in the industrial and aesthetic fields to overcome the British hegemony at the exhibitions.

At international exhibitions, fine arts brought status to the exhibited country, showing paintings in oil or water-color, sculpture architecture, drawing, and the engraving of metals and precious stones or prints. Among other visual art forms at international exhibitions, painting occupied the central position. The fine art sections were usually divided into two parts: one belonging to the host country and the other to foreign nations. The exhibition space in the Paris Exposition as divided into four different areas, respectively oil painting, water-color, engravings and architectural drawings. The art represented at this exhibition was heavily imbued with the political and ideological debates on freedom, individuality, rationality and emotions. However, the exhibition jury sometimes did not accept the works of art with propagandist images that could challenge the ideal imperialist image of the state.

In addition to modern painting, photography exhibitions provided real images for the visitor. Photography at the nineteenth century world expositions further democratized the reception of visual images by bringing art masterpieces to mass audiences. The reproduction of art works and reality challenged the power of painting for the first time in history. As a result, according to Walter Benjamin, painters attempted to defend themselves against the new technology. They thereby overlooked the real threat to their cultural creativity, the effects of the capitalist market. The window arrangements of commodities as ward writes “displayed art in service of the salesman.”⁸⁸

In France, throughout the nineteenth century, the universal expositions in which fine art sections were organized occurred in 1885, 1867, 1878, 1889 and 1900. These exhibitions opened a new path for the emancipation of the fine arts and became the dominant

⁸⁸ Buck-Morss, p.134.

vehicles of French culture. These provided a proto-history for the blockbuster exhibits in the art world, showing us how exhibitions could turn into entertaining spectacles.⁸⁹ The exhibition form separated the sites of art in the various spheres civic, commercial and social, and each had different kinds of display strategies.

As a metaphor, the Crystal Palace was described from the perspective of international artistic criteria in terms of organizational structure, reconciliation and edification, as a “Temple”, and the exhibition was written about as a “practical peace gathering”; as an educational phenomenon it was a “Museum” or “Treasury”, while the exhibition was a “collection”, a “statistic”, a ‘survey’ or “great industrial congress”; as a popular entertainment it was a “Fair Land” possessing Utopian qualities.⁹⁰ In this regard, the fine arts sections in any international exhibition were important sections showing value systems and aesthetic modernity of the nations. “Without a fine art section, an exhibition became a trade fair”, says Paul Greenhalgh.⁹¹

One of the most important points is that the fine art practices at the international exhibitions had hierarchical dimensions based on ethnicity and region. The European fine arts, especially painting and sculpture, dominated the center of the exhibitions. Only a limited number of art works come from the colonies like India, Australia or Egypt, accommodated in the display areas only if the work could be conceptually fitted. The fine arts section showed the masterpieces of the Western art tradition, whereas art from various colonies and

⁸⁹ Martha Ward, “What’s Important about the History of Modern Art Exhibitions?,” in *Thinking About Exhibitions*, edited by Reesea Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p.455.

⁹⁰ Pieter van Wesemael, *Architecture of Construction and Delight: A Socio-historical Analysis of World Exhibitions as a Didactic Phenomenon (1798-1851-1970)* (Rotterdam: O10 Publishers, 2001), p.209.

⁹¹ Greenhalgh, p.198.

dominations were categorized as a “*craft*”, “decorative arts” and even “raw materials.”⁹²

Actually, only the absence of Western art in the painting and sculpture of colonial countries could be represented. Orientalism in the fine arts opposed to primitivism was an important phenomenon for the expositions of 1878, 1889, and 1900 at Paris where the art works were shown in authentic environments. In contrast to the nineteenth century, France in the early twentieth century concentrated on temporary art exhibitions rather than museum collections. The exhibitions were important to anthropologists and ethnologists because the primitive art for the first time influenced the Western painting.

On the other hand, in the imperial sections of the Expositions Universelles, the avant-garde exhibition was one of the influential sources for the progress of the modern movement.⁹³ Without fine arts section, the nineteenth century world expositions would not have been satisfactory for creating an actual impact on the art world in Britain, France as well as the USA. The Venice Biennale, held in 1895, played an important role in the decorative art exhibitionism. Exhibitions became more international from 1907 on, as several countries started installing national pavilions at exhibitions. As a result of the influence of world exhibitions, the creation of Carnegie International⁹⁴ in Pittsburg founded in the year 1898 signified the new age for international exhibitions at the end of the nineteenth century.

⁹²Greenhalgh, p.209.

⁹³ Ibid, p.223.

⁹⁴ Carnegie International is the oldest North American exhibition of contemporary art and the second in the world. It was first organized at the behest of industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1896. He built a collection through the purchase of the ‘Old Masters of Tomorrow’ who would be represented in exhibitions. The exhibition continues to enrich the museum’s permanent collection and inspire a dialogue about social and aesthetic concerns. In 1896, the show was established as a yearly survey and presented as the *Annual Exhibition*. Over the years, the presence of such prominent figures as Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Pierre Bonnard, Thomas Eakins, Robert Henri, and Winslow Homer on its juries of award was testament to the scope of Carnegie Institute’s ambitions. However, relatively few avant-garde works appeared in these exhibitions. It was not until Henri Matisse’s work won first prize in 1927 that a modern artist was truly recognized at the *International*. During and immediately following World War II, from 1940 to 1949, the museum presented annual exhibitions of American

Twentieth Century Exhibitionism

International exhibitions in the twentieth century had enormous impact on the institutionalization of the fine arts museums, galleries and art centers, since with these events temporary art exhibitions grew into large scale organizations. Also, exhibitions offered the objects and activities of mass education and entertainment, providing the public culture necessary for building history, memory, identities. Until WWI, imperial and colonial societies inventing themselves at the exhibitions, redefined their political borders in national identity and history offered “a living picture”⁹⁵ of the Empire, nations-states, and the world. However, post-war world exhibitions presented the tension of Western and Eastern countries. These exhibitions carried both political and social developments representing the material and ideological devices of the Western hegemony. Reconstructing traditionalist tendency in the postwar exhibitions showed the national heroes in the history that triggered struggles between colonialization and decolonization. Nationalist and imperialist ideologies represented their national idols and symbols to societies at international exhibitions in order to overcome moral battles.

The first exhibition of the twentieth century was organized in Paris, in the year 1900. After that the 1904 Louisiana Exhibition, the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exhibition in San Francisco, the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition, the 1937 Paris Worlds on Exhibition, New York Worlds on Exhibition 1939-1940 were held in the first half

art, returning to the *International* in 1950. The Carnegie Prize was reinstituted in 1985, awarding \$10,000 for outstanding achievement in the exhibition in the context of a lifetime of work. New to the *Carnegie International* in 2008 is the Fine Prize, which will complement the Carnegie Prize and be awarded to an emerging artist in the exhibition. The Carnegie International, <http://blog.cmoa.org/CI08/the-exhibition/history.php>

⁹⁵ Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display*, p.203.

of the twentieth century.⁹⁶ One of the basic characteristics of the exhibitions was that nations participated in them to celebrate the products of industry and technological progress as well as to show the native cultures, anthropological objects and fine arts in the form of consumption.

Especially, the Exposition Universelle 1900 in Paris, where African and other colonial geographies were on display under the all-seeing eye of the Eiffel tower was the starting point of a changing vision in twentieth century exhibitionism. This was a new exhibitionism like Disneyland or Euro-Disney, where the national identity and ethnicity of the people were reduced to the most cliché forms and offered for the consumption of masses. The nineteenth century exhibitions mainly centered on the imperial and hegemonic stories and their domination of the cultures of the world.

Before World War I, the exhibition of contemporary artists who worked in Britain and France dominated the fine arts exhibitions. Paris art salons were still centered on the academic art work; in London the situation was more or less similar. Art historians recognize Paris Salon exhibitions as a proto-history for today's blockbusters exhibitions.⁹⁷ The most notable exhibition practice was the Paris Salon, first established on a regular basis in 1737 that was the century of modern exhibitionism. The Paris Salon exhibition provided a new insight into the art public sphere in eighteenth century France. For the first time, the concept of exhibitions had a civic form in the cultural arena to make art visible for its audience and developed the art-movement show which became the dominant trend by the 1890s.

The Salon shows were seen as functioning in relation to everyday life and they were accorded roles in promoting artistic and social developments. In the nineteenth century, many of them served as art markets. The exhibition space was not only an education place, but also

⁹⁶ Burçak Madran, 20. Yüzyılda Uluslararası Sergiler, *Yapı*, n.226, (September 2000), p. 58-62.

⁹⁷ Ward, p.454.

an art market for selling modern art to the bourgeoisie. In 1932, “Whistler’s Mother”⁹⁸ traveled from the Louvre to the Chicago World Fair, visited by over 2 million people.⁹⁹ The exhibition was accepted as the first state-sponsored blockbuster exhibition in the 20th century. The political message of the exhibition was the unity of mankind and the triumph of Western civilization over economic, political, and military conflicts and competition.

The Royal Academy of Arts continued to organize their traditional exhibitions, but the turning point was at the end of the nineteenth century, when the role of art galleries such as the Grosvenor Gallery in London and Durand-Ruel in Paris and private exhibitions which promoted new art in Europe became increasingly important. Major group exhibitions occurred between 1905 and 1969 in Europe, America, and Japan, tracing the rise of the avant-garde in expanding the art market. The central mode of this exhibition, where artists, critics, dealers, collectors and the general public met and responded to what artists had done in pre-war time. The two post-impressionist exhibitions organized by Roger Fry of 1910 and 1912 were the first independent (artist groups) Modernist exhibitions at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, artists very often organized exhibitions of advanced art, for example, in France the Salon D’Automne marked the debut of Fauves, and the first International Dada Fair in Berlin in 1920 was one of the leading private exhibitions which were organized by independent artists had no ties to galleries or academies.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ The Artist’s Mother, famous under its colloquial name Whistler’s Mother, is an 1871 oil-on-canvas painting by American born painter James Mc Neill Whistler. It is owned by the Musée d’Orsay in Paris. It occasionally tours worldwide. Although an icon of American art, it rarely appears in the United States.

⁹⁹ Judith Huggins Balfe, “*Artworks as Symbols in International Politics*,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 2, n. 1 (Winter 1987), p.198.

¹⁰⁰ Emma Barker, *Contemporary Cultures of Display* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p.105.

¹⁰¹ Alexandra Anderson-Spivy, “Twentieth-century Exhibitionism,” *Art Journal*, 55, n.4 (Winter 1996), p.105.

Between the two world wars, the Paris Exposition Internationale on May, 1937 included a wide ranging fine arts exhibition that was the most effective giving direction to political art at that time. The Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques presented contradictions between nationalism vs. internationalism, tradition vs. modernity, and the problem of state control and the role of propaganda. The exhibition represented the political struggle of the late 1930s. The political polarization of Europe was represented in the form of art displaying the tension through ways of exhibiting culture and technology. The Pavilions and rooms usually contained art works that were samples of the official art and the propaganda of fascist against modernist regimes. Dawn Ades argues that “the German, Soviet, and Italian pavillions constituted important cultural statements to present visual propaganda and a construct mythical narrative of national identity.”¹⁰² The exhibition also opened a path for the Surrealist exhibition in 1938 displaying avant-garde attitudes in fine arts.

At the Exposition Internationale 1937 in Paris an exhibition displayed the latest trends in museum design, noting the movement towards viewing art as an “autonomous, individual (and) purely formal” phenomenon:

The modern sensibility, no longer in a work of art an historical witness but an individual aesthetic phenomenon, has led museums to efface themselves behind the masterpieces they display. Walls stripped of decor may be seen; those objects are well-spaced in order that the visitor may examine each one without distraction, all in keeping with the demands of the modern aesthetic.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Dawn Ades, “Paris 1937, Art and Power of Nations,” in *Art and Power in Europe under the Dictators 1930-1945*, edited by Dawn Ades, (London: Hayward Gallery, 1996), p.123.

¹⁰³ Andrew Mc Clellan, *Art and Its Public: Museum Studies at the Millennium* (Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2003), p. 38.

In this way, the spirit of modernism and its influence of art were related directly to the political conjuncture of the 1930s. For the first time, the promotion of art as a signifying practice in support of cultural and national identity promoted the growing development of the commercial traffic in the art world, and the expansion of a modernist doctrine that positioned art as a form of international exchange represented it as a “universal language.” This situation indicates that the Paris 1937 fine arts section, in many ways, contributed to the formation of a new vision for exhibition practices as well as a stark confrontation of opposing ideologies. During the Nazi Era, the exclusion of “degenerate art”¹⁰⁴ was the title of an exhibition mounted by the Nazis in Munich in 1937. Modernist art work included such artistic trends as cubism, Dadaism, Fauvism, and surrealism while authoritarian regimes inflamed public opinion against modern art.

After the 1950s, the patterns of international exhibition were transformed into two different forms: a) art and culture exhibitions and b) “expos” (international industry exhibitions) where exhibitions are typically held in purpose-built structures for commercial purposes. The structural division directly reflected on the fine art exhibitionism in the post-1950s signifying the era of biennales. In 1955, a single largest periodic exhibition of contemporary art was created as an antithesis of the earlier propagandist exhibitions in the German city of Kassel. It was the first contemporary art exhibition held at the Museum Fridericianum that had been ruined during the Second World War, and that had been provisionally reconstructed.

¹⁰⁴ “Degenerate art” was a term adopted by the Nazi regime in Germany to describe virtual in all modern art. Such modern art was banned from the exhibitions. They identified degenerate artists who then were subjected to sanctions. These included being dismissed from teaching positions, being forbidden to exhibit or to sell their art, and in some cases being forbidden to produce art entirely. Also see, *The Challenge of Avant-Garde*, edited by Paul Wood.

The exhibition was called a “counter exhibition”¹⁰⁵ organized around the antifascist. Documenta 1,¹⁰⁶ organized in 1955 in Kassel, Germany, took a decisive stand in relation to the Degenerate Art exhibition to free modern art from all kinds of politics and restrictions. However, the modern art in Documenta I was not apolitical. It could not be apolitical because national socialism and its authoritative forms forced the counter tendency in the arts. It was awakening of abstraction by making its essential political contribution through the de-politicization of art.

The Tate Gallery was the key institution staging contemporary arts founded in 1945 supported by central government and the Arts Council of Britain. It aimed at keeping culture and art in the same hand, allocating resources for raising the number of independent art galleries. This movement also pushed the idealized thematic display of contemporary art in Europe establishing national museums (the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and the Moderna Museet in Stockholm) and private institutions ‘the Kunsthallen in Berlin and Basel and the Institute of Contemporary Art in London.

Starting from the mid-1960s, the tremendous growth in the art market and dealer’s galleries contributed to an expansion of independent galleries and private art institutions which was one of the most important impacts of the 1968 social movement. It gave a greater freedom to the contemporary art scene for organizing exhibitions without a privileged institution and curatorial voice. In this way, the artist could create their own “alternative

¹⁰⁵ Walter Grasskamp, “‘Degenerate Art’ and Documenta I: Modernism Ostracized and Disarmed”, in *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, edited by Daniel Sherman and Irit Rogoff (Mineapolis: University of Minesota Press, 1994), p.165.

¹⁰⁶ Documenta is one of the most important exhibitions of modern and contemporary art which now takes place every five years in Kassel, Germany. It was founded by artist, teacher and curator Arnold Bode in 1955. The first documenta featured many artists who generally were considered to have had a significant influence on modern art.

spaces” in which to perform their artistic tendencies without facing the social, cultural, and political discrimination that was imposed by the state or private foundations. At the same time, the flourishing avant-garde art in this atmosphere protested against the thematic approach and the curator-made structure, at both the national and international level of exhibitionism. The emergence of new exhibition types and a shift away from clear-cut artistic approaches and classifications led Western contemporary art into more popular place. Public art museums and independent art galleries started to change their educational programs and offer a wide range of exhibitions allowing for greater interaction with visitors by encouraging them to develop their own responses rather than acting as a passive audience.

A whole of “alternative” exhibitions and projects in the 1970s extended the vision of international art and exhibition practices, challenging the gallery space as well as the single dimensional proper vision of art. For instance, the Space project in local Toronto apartments, Stephen Willats’ participatory art projects in London and the 1976 *Rooms* which drew upon the architectural qualities of an old school building are well known art projects from that period. Trend changes in the arts offered new perspectives in space, form, and techniques and restructured the artistic discourse of exhibitions.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the use of new and multiple exhibition locations transformed the vision of the contemporary art in the global art. The standard exhibition- a display of an artist’s recent work in the gallery space is typically a one man show transformed into a different format. A group exhibition-selection of artists according to a unifying theme and a certain trend in the museum is also the traditional style. Along with the increase in the number of gallery and museum spaces, alternative exhibition areas such as discarded buildings, parks and train or metro stations became new places for contemporary art.

As mentioned above, the emergence of a “culture of exhibitions” is an outcome of commercialization and the privatization of art in the public sphere. To promote art the global scale, foundation and institutions have organized large-scale exhibitions and set up art prize, and advertising campaigns for foreign tourist attraction. Exhibitions are central to the economic and social system of the neoliberal cultural development of the Western countries. Britain in Europe showed the dynamics of capitalist development under the form of popular and democratic control with the Arts Council, the body that was administering the British art as a whole. The Visual Arts Department in the Arts Council partly determined the ways of expressing contemporary art in the public sphere involving a variety of activities through the establishment of the Institute of New International Visual Arts.¹⁰⁷ In spite of the fact that governing all kinds of artistic structures under a single body eliminated the plurality in the art sphere and made it into a single dimensional strategy at the national level, the council provided for the professionalization and institutionalization of art in the state level.

In addition to this structure, it demonstrated a particular emphasis on art education through involvement with the Curating and Commissioning MA at the Royal College of Art. In the USA, the financial support came from regional cultural foundations that played a great role also in the foundation of large national institutions and started to collect and exhibit a wider range of contemporary art in the 1950s. The growing interest in modern art pointed to an increase in the number of private art collections which would be a part of the permanent collections of modern art museums in the 1980s.

¹⁰⁷ Jonathan Harris, *Cultured into Crisis The Arts Council of Great Britain, in Art Apart: Art Institutions and Ideology Across England and North Africa*, edited by Marcia Pointon (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), p.187.

Biennials and the Global Art World: The Formation of Global Art

After the Second World War, the nation state model was shaken by the impact of American capitalism and the new Europeanism prepared the ground for globalism. Anthony D. Smith argues that the global cultural identity is a kind of the formulation of the new cultural imperialism. The discussion on the fall of the nation state is connected directly to the emergence of continental or global networks.¹⁰⁸ The 1950s' galleries and art fairs had transformed place of representation of art into a commercial space rather than remaining as museum-like spaces. That is actually the starting point of the formation of large-scale exhibitions referred to as “mega exhibitions” and “biennials”. These various exhibitions differentiated themselves from the typical group, museum and gallery type activities.

Until the 1980s, the two Biennales, Venice, which was the first perennial international salon of contemporary art inaugurated in 1895, and Documenta began in 1955 in the hope of rehabilitating the image of post-war Germany. These two events dominated the contemporary art world as mega events and had a positive effect on the forthcoming biennales and blockbuster shows all over the world. Even though Venice and Documenta did not share the same political background, they contributed to the plurality of contemporary art practices, providing popular access for the public. The political formulation of the Biennials brought together regional art themes and perspectives with aesthetic values in a global framework. It can be argued that exhibitionism in both heritage and contemporary art after the 1980s was directly connected to the art world through global culture and the Biennials served this purpose.

¹⁰⁸ Anthony David Smith, *Towards a Global Culture*, in *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization, and Modernity*, edited by Mike Featherstone (London: Sage Publications, 1990), p.174.

Globalism at the turn on the twentieth century pushed the traditional boundaries of contemporary art beyond the national level. As mentioned above, the cultural topography of contemporary art exhibitions, at the end of the twentieth century played an active role in “the globalization of the domestic and the domestication of the global.”¹⁰⁹ This phenomenon which transformed art in the global culture, presents different modes and repertoires in the new exhibition techniques. The idea of the international exhibition in the post-1980s produced a new genre of exhibition, accommodating both the artists’ needs and audience’s demands, building a new dialogue between institution and the public. The formation of art institutions in Europe and the USA has had positive effects: first they empowered exhibitionism to free itself from state control over the form and techniques. Second, they provided a set of criteria for art critics and challenged the curators to develop exhibitions that explore and transform the politics of identity in art.¹¹⁰ International exhibition structures are organized by curators as well as art institutions, which still carry national and cultural identities. For this reason, the curators are responsible for the political vision of art.

Especially, the global boom of biennales offers a critical discourse on the post-colonial identity that was critically formulated to produce artistic tendencies. A biennial, in order to be culturally and artistically significant, has to embody the negotiation between the global and the local. In this sense, exploring creative and innovative possibilities is only possible if artists are invited from various areas of the world. However, artistically, biennials reflect the dominant “mainstream culture” that caused enormous changes in the local culture.

¹⁰⁹ Bruce W. Ferguson, Reesa Greenberg, and Sandy Naire, “Mapping International Exhibitions”, in *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-Wall Europe*, edited by Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005), p.56.

¹¹⁰ Ferguson, Greenberg, and Naire, “Mapping International Exhibitions”, p.56.

All major biennials are important interfaces between art and a global public. It is an important thing that the biennials have become agents in the planetary redistribution of art, also serving the growth of the local economy of cities since the 1990s.

Under the influence of capitalism, recently a number of recurring biennials and international survey exhibitions have appeared in non-Western, often previously colonized, capitals. The spectrum of difference exhibited at these shows suggests varying relationships with the West of that particular culture. The works in these shows are often based on post-Modernism, but the curators' residual sense of a center emanates a continuing Modernist aura. The oldest of the non-Western biennial-type shows are the New Delhi Triennials, begun in 1968. The fact that they precede other non-Western biennials reflects the fact that many Indian artists and intellectuals had come to accept the legitimacy of the multicultural heritage by 1960s.¹¹¹

Nowadays, the Venice Biennial provides an assembly of national representations accompanied by an international exhibition. The biennial focuses on the national representation system in country pavilions. The selection of nations and artists is not completely related to the quality of the works. To move beyond Europe, the Venice biennial no longer aimed at carrying on the role of maker and protector of the European canon. The nationalist tendency in pavilions and non-questioned synthesis of the current state of art was gradually questioned in the twentieth century.

After Venice, the Documenta, organized every five years, began in 1955 to rehabilitate the image of the post-war German city. It is considered as one of the most prestigious mega exhibitions with radical and new displaying strategies, to reduce the effects

¹¹¹ Thomas McEvilley, "The Third World Biennials," *Artforum*, 12, n.3 (1992), p.114.

of “the white cube.” In the beginning, Documenta has drawn the “anti-universalist model”¹¹² to broaden the vision of modern exhibitionism, while in time it became overwhelmingly involved with a Eurocentric perspective of visual art in the last twenty years. The transformation of Documenta from a spectacular visual art exhibition to the hybrid site for the representation of Eurocentric forms is the result of the political engagement in the form of aesthetic production.

In the Western world, we see a proliferation of biennials that mark a break in the global cultural politics of modernity and modern art. The biennale’s played an important role in fashioning new media, video and contemporary art in non-Western countries where contemporary art usually arrived in the 1980s. Documenta, in this sense, aimed to expand the boundaries of art which had been constructed by the governmental strategies of the 1950s.

The 1970s brought decisive changes such as the arrival of the curatorial system, the white cube, and the new abstract art movements in the art world. The biennale of Sydney exhibitions started in 1973 and until this time, the work of 1355 artists from 82 countries have been presented at the exhibitions. Along with exhibition activities, it has created opportunities for artists’ direct contact with curators, art institutions, art fairs, and critics, the peripheral countries. The biennial gave a chance to Australian artists to develop a direct contact with the newly established global system.

In contrast to other biennials that were held in the West, the Havana Biennial was established in 1984. Its first edition was centered on artists from Latin America and the Caribbean who lived or had cultural roots in these Third World countries. After the first version, in 1986, the 2nd Havana Biennial extended its boundaries to Africa and Asia

¹¹² Anti-universalism is a kind of formation against Western aesthetic-oriented art model.

becoming an international exhibition. Its status made it an important meeting place for artists from non-Western countries.

With the globalization of art after the 2000s, the Third World biennials were officially expanded to the world and tended to reflect a reaction against the economic and politic dependency on the West. The aim of these biennials was to develop different strategies in international art and reinforce it in a local-Third World perspective in order to break down the cultural hegemony of the First World biennials. The Gwanju Biennial started in September 1995 in the city of Gwangju in the province of South Korea. The purpose of this biennale is the globalization of art and respecting diversity rather than uniformity. Every two years, the biennale hosts more than 500 artist and performers from 60 countries, foreign curators and critics and approximately more than 200,000 people visit the art show. The city symbolizes the culturally “in-between”, and the political situation that divides the land makes this geography a politically unstable area for art production.

After the rise of the Asian economies in the world, the Taipei Biennial became another Asian Biennial organized in Taiwan until 1998. The aim of the exhibition was to explore new fields and create a platform of discussion for the future projects. Like the Istanbul Biennale, the Tapei biennale is centered on the development of the city image for tourist attraction as well as representing the cultural vision of the city. Its program includes not only art exhibitions but also festivals, international symposiums. The organization committee expects high rate of artist and visitor participation, sponsor’s support, and city advertising. Such Western biennials as Venice, Documenta or Manifesta are visited by approximately 500,000-750,000 people.¹¹³ In fact, the number of visitors in the Asian Biennials Tapei,

¹¹³ *Dissecting Documenta 12: Hito Steyerl and the Bad Curators*, February 12, 2010
<http://artintelligence.net/review/?p=316>

Shangai and Gwanju...etc is no less than 500,000. These biennials, like their Western counterparts, attract a wide and diverse audience.¹¹⁴

The Asian biennials, given the dominant structure of the Western cultural world, aimed to dissolve the supposed boundaries between artistic and curatorial practices, discourses and reception. They question the global power that was deployed and contested and also to invoked specifically the politics of art. The Asian Biennials serve as alternative stages for Eastern artists who situate art beyond the Western geographical boundaries. The Gwanju, Tapei, Shangai Biennials show that economically powerful Eastern countries could become well known in art events in late 2000s.

For the first time in 1996, Manifesta, an alternative biennial, was organized under the name of the European Biennial of Contemporary Art, to be inaugurated as a platform for cultural exchange between the countries of the newly unified post-Wall Europe. The aim of the biennial was to increase the dialogue between artists, institutions, and curators across Europe and imagined an alternative museum project. One of the basic differences is that Manifesta was not geographically fixed. Every year, this exhibition was to be held in a different peripheral European city. Unlike the Venice Biennale's nationally fixed pavilions, the exhibition space in Manifesta does not consist of a standard forms and techniques. The ideology behind the exhibition was never the outcome of an art institution, a state's cultural policy, and or global economic tendencies that dominated the form and specificity of large-scale international exhibitionism. The organizational committee actually abandoned the white cube accepted as a vital element for international style exhibitionism.

¹¹⁴ *Gwanju Biennial*. Accessed May 19, 2009.
<http://www.domusweb.it/en/art/10000-lives-in-images-in-gwangju/>

The works of art displayed at Manifesta's exhibitions are selected by a group of curators rather than by a single curator. This allows them to reflect the tension, resistance, and conflict the contemporary art scene. In contrast to large-scale exhibitions, Manifesta claimed to ask a question¹¹⁵ that would stand against the dominance of Western modernity's structure and the legitimization of the white cube's effect. More specifically, a Manifesta exhibition included the issues addressing homelessness, hospitality, diasporas, borders and immigration that were crucial issues for the intellectual, cultural, and political debates of the 1990s. By collaborating, local art institutions, independent artists, academics, and local thinkers gave the thematic approaches of the show. Manifesta can be considered as an experimental platform for large-scale exhibition practices. For example, the curators of the Manifesta 6 decided to hold it in Nicosia, which is a geographically isolated, culturally and politically divided area of the Middle East.

Art sociologist Chin Tao Wu argues that that contemporary art practice is still understood in terms of the artists' nationality and place of birth, at a time when there is so much talk of globalization, hybridization, transnationalization, world markets and so on. The work of Third World artists are mainly seen as "authentic", generally under the pressure of European art movements. Underlying this assumption is the idea that modernity is an expression of "European Spirit" which could only be authentically manifested in the works of white artists. The European artists were those who had followed the mainstreams developments in modernism and post-modernism. Their works were well recognized, historicized. However, most third world artists were pushed outside the modernity in the internationally framed exhibitions. Selected works of Third World artists in the exhibitions

¹¹⁵ Elena Filipovic, "The Global White Cube" in *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-Wall Europe*, edited by Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005), p.71.

mainly deal with identity issues, struggling with belated modernity and Third Worldness in international exhibitions. As a result of this attitude, Western curators and critics expect them to produce art works which carry national symbols and concepts.

In his studies of global cultural flows, the anthropologists Arjun Appadurai uses the terms “artscape” to replace the term “ethnospace,” to characterize the space through which flow uninterrupted people-including artists, curators, and critics. He emphasizes the growing planetary interdependence and intensification of social relations.¹¹⁶ Cultural foundations and municipality cultural centers in Europe financially supported artists from periphery region in order to access the Western art centers. The process of globalization in art is linked directly to the process of economic globalization. Multinational cooperations in the USA, Britain, and France, support in based private art foundations like the Smithsonian, the Guggenheim, and the Tate Modern as well as the cultural institutions of the EU, invested substantial amounts of time and money in order to establish themselves as centers of art. The biennial, the most popular institutional mechanism of the last two decades for the organization of large-scale international art exhibitions still reflects the power structure of the contemporary Western art world. The difference is that in the last two decades, the concept “Western” was has been replaced replaced by “global”. The domination of Western artists, critics, curators as well as art dealers in the last three decades hosted to the biennialization process being regarded as so-called westernization and globalization in this mind. Within the framework, the blockbuster exhibition will be analyzed in the following part as an outcome of the globalization of art and culture.

¹¹⁶ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp.33-37.

Blockbuster Exhibitionism

The blockbuster show or so-called mega art event became a popular phenomenon after the 1980s. As a relatively recent phenomenon, a blockbuster show is defined as “a large scale loan exhibition which people who normally don’t go to museums will stand in line for hours to see.”¹¹⁷ The definition in some cases is unclear since this sort of large scale public art exhibitions are concerned mostly with shows of Western art, primarily paintings and modern art. Secondly, when at least 250,000 visitors participate, the art event is counted as a blockbuster event. Thirdly, the host institution always needs a commercial sponsorship to help cover the costs of the exhibition, so only economically strong and well-known institutions can organize these kinds of large scale public art events.

The history of modern blockbuster shows dates back to the late 1960s and 1970s. At this time, major American art museums were recognized as elitist and discriminative institutions due to their exhibition policies and the directors of the museums decided to transform their exhibition strategies based on mainly elite taste, and shifted their mission to reach and educate as large public as possible. Rather than focusing on the upper class taste, making exhibition for the people was the dominant tendency of the 1970s, because blockbuster exhibitions were tools for attracting local tourists and promoting foreign cultural tourism in the USA, Britain and France.

Technically, the blockbuster exhibition served to introduce the key issues in the 1980s: the art canon, the curator, the critic. These three components existed in the post-

¹¹⁷ Barker, “Exhibiting Canon: The Blockbuster Show,” in *Contemporary Cultures of Display*, p.127.

modern museum composed the logic of the blockbuster exhibition. Until this time, blockbuster exhibitions had not been so popular among modern art museums. Major factors were that rising insurance costs, high tax rates, the risk of potential damage to works of art were potential threats for organizing blockbuster exhibitions in the USA and the UK. The first blockbuster exhibition was mounted by the British Museum in 1972. It was called The Treasures of Tutankhamun and was visited by 1,649,117 people over nine months. The exhibition can be regarded as the forerunner of the blockbuster exhibitionism. The exhibition was seen also at many American cities and traveled in Europe. One of the basic characteristic is that early blockbuster heritage exhibitions show generally promoted important artifacts of ancient civilizations or important foreign collections of traditional objects. As Brian Wallach argues, early blockbuster exhibitions functioned as a form of cultural diplomacy, and served as vehicles for national self-promotion from the mid 1970s. Also, the shows helped to promote the image of host-institutions and museums to maintain “cultural democracy” and funds for supporting the foundation of new culture organizations. In addition, in the 1990s, Henri Matisse (Museum of Modern Art, 1992-3) and Claude Monet, 1840-1926 (Art Institute of Chicago, 1995), and Monet (The Royal Academy of Arts) were the most highly attended exhibitions of paintings, each attracting nearly a million visitors.

Until the 1970s, in the USA, the majority of museums had been supported by relatively small numbers of wealthy private donors and local culture institutions. Organizing a blockbuster show needed more funds which were directly given by the government, agencies and cooperation. For this reason, after the 1980s, the museums or art institutions were organizing exhibitions the costs of were which covered by sponsors. This development opened a new stage for exhibitionism, which went along with a partial privatization of public

institutions in line with the political agenda of the conservative governments in the UK and the USA. This is a crucial point that starts the commercialization of blockbusters. It gave art institutions a greater economic freedom to realize highly attended public art shows. The museum system which mainly depended on the financial support of companies and private institutions, transformed the image of the museum and the structure of blockbuster exhibitionism. In the 1990s, museums, notably in the USA and Britain have been increasingly reliant on commercial sponsorship. Companies, a majority of them oil and companies such as Esson, Mobil, Shell, offer art sponsorship and support a number of blockbuster exhibitions: “*Origins of Impressionism*” at Metropolitan and “*Picasso and Portraiture*” at MOMA in 1996.

This form of funding has potential negative effects on museum politics in many ways. The commercial sponsorship can become a form of restriction or censorship that determines museum politics and attributed a public image for promoting the museum. As Victoria Alexander writes “museums clearly have some discretion in balancing mass-appeal shows with smaller, more academic shows” which do not have external funding.¹¹⁸ Sponsorship is also criticized on the grounds that the selection of art works which are displayed at exhibitions is directly chosen according to the sponsor’s preference. This situation reduces the aesthetic level of the art works and the principles of art sponsorship have produced a kind of rhetoric to making art marketable and accessible to the public.

The commercial character of the blockbuster exhibitions has more or less determined the modes of exhibition: its structure, form, and the strategies used to choose the art works. Especially, modernists and old master paintings gained reputations by setting new standards at internationally framed exhibitions. For example, the Tate Modern mounted a new

¹¹⁸ Barker, “Exhibiting Canon: The Blockbuster Show”, p.132.

exhibition campaign to publicize the 1996 Cézanne exhibition with advertisement headlines such as “Cézanne hits town” and “Hot ticket for culture vultures.” The massive campaign was one of the most successful ones in the 1990s, using advertisements in every field of the media. By this way, advertising became an indispensable part of popular culture events.

As mentioned above, blockbuster exhibitions turn art into a product to be “sold” and art itself becomes a part of consumer culture. The costs have become increasingly reliant on commercial sponsorship and to increase the number of visitors who attended the exhibitions organize several types of business activities. As Chin-tao Wu mentions sponsorship is a kind of commercial commitment and a payment is made to an art institution in the name of a business to promote their products and services.¹¹⁹ Art sponsorship not only creates the enlightened business image, but also offers tax reductions for companies that need to reduce their expenditure. Art sponsorship is utilized heavily to change the vision of the politicians, public opinion, and state official’s rather supporting art itself.

Adorno argues that advertising and the cultural industry both technically and economically will merge with each other. Propaganda has a vital impact on promoting art and culture in the public sphere. The culture industry can become a part of mass demonstration of popular culture and the loss of consciousness in the society to model masses according to the needs of capital system.¹²⁰ In twentieth century exhibitionism, the blockbuster shows was the sign of the hegemony of the culture industry over the visual arts. Critics often argued that the museum merchandises (T-shirts, scarves, fridge magnets) took attention from the works of art. Besides, the single most important commodity of blockbuster shows: the catalogue, offers valuable marketing opportunities for both museums and publishing companies.

¹¹⁹ Wu, *Kültürün Özelleştirilmesi: 1980’ler Sonrası Şirketlerin Sanata Müdahalesi*, p.214.

¹²⁰ Theodor W. Adorno, *Kültür Endüstrisi, Kültür Yönetimi*, pp.103,119.

The style of catalogues is often designed according to the consumer's preference. It mostly consists of art illustrations and picture reproductions that are easy for people to understand. The writers preferred to use standard language rather than "literary and sociological terminology" for the art history writing. Art museums' exhibition strategies developed a narrow range of subjects mainly canonical modernist painting, that is one of the reasons for exhibiting proto-typical art works. Despite the success of the majority of blockbusters, the shows devoted to the international exhibitions of Old Master paintings hinder the exhibition of contemporary art world wide. The narrow range of topics such as Monet and Picasso retrospective staged at USA and British art museums reflected "simple" autobiographical documents rather than an academic survey of the artists and periods. In the blockbuster shows, only a few women artist's works were exhibited, and this is one of their major limitations.

The visitors of blockbuster exhibitions are mainly people who regularly attend exhibitions, and art lovers who are travel long distance in order to attend important ones. However, the number of these types of visitor is not enough to cover the cost of the exhibition. The ticket price needs to be affordable, but exhibition committee raises blockbuster exhibition prices so high that unemployment people and students afford them. To attract visitors to a blockbuster show, museums promote exhibitions as once-in-a-lifetime experience and cultural capital for the middle class.¹²¹

Most people in the Western world enjoy the blockbusters, looking at the works of art and deriving a sense of excitement. But, in general, the situation makes a problem that such blockbuster shows can be seen as a popular entertainment in which high art is represented. For, as Emma Barker points out, "the blockbuster show can be seen as an aspect of

¹²¹ Barker, "Exhibiting the Canon: The Blockbuster Show," p.140.

commercialized culture of spectacle and turns people into blind worshippers at the shrine of art.”¹²² As we have seen, the negative implication of the blockbuster phenomenon sometimes leads to difficulties operating the expense of the art show. The economic pressures on museums pushed them to find new money sources to contribute their activities. Although the sponsors fear to damage their images in front of the public due to its negative sides, they go on supporting blockbusters.

Visualizing “Otherness” at Blockbuster Exhibitions

Curators at blockbuster exhibitions develop art projects to interrogate categories of European knowledge and art works developing dominant texts and a range of new approaches for interpreting visual representation. The central notion of the post-modern exhibition is that representation is culturally constructed. For this reason, each curator points out the meanings and historical and cultural associations of specific images and signs. Especially, blockbuster exhibitions, centered on non-western art canon, carry different visual meanings, contextualize cultural codes, exposing the stereotyping cultural difference, and identify political implications of modernity.

Particularly, the attribution of cultural “otherness” that is the key issue that the non-Western traditional art exhibitions, tackle with the representation of the otherness in “exhibition space,” can be explored through the analysis of the relationships between texts and objects in particular exhibitions. Hallam writes that “exhibitions are discrete events which

¹²² Ibid, p.144

articulate objects, texts, visual representation, reconstructions and sounds to create an intricate and bounded representational system.”¹²³

In museum spaces, texts are deployed in the form of introductory text panels, labels, captions, catalogues and visual images such as photographs, all of them guiding the viewers in their interpretation of objects and images on display. The uses of texts in museum spaces reinforce dominant concepts and histories through analyzing cultural background of civilizations. According to Hallam, the uses of texts in museum spaces tend to function as part of cultural politics which reproduce certain forms of power relations with regard to “other”.¹²⁴ It means that the texts transmit important information about objects and their history that would be written in the form of Western ideology.

One of the most important exhibitions was held at the Royal Academy of Arts call Africa: The Art of a Continent and Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. These exhibitions were a part of the Africa95 Season,¹²⁵ a large scale program of a cultural event which was held in Britain in the autumn of 1995. The first exhibition, Africa: The Art of a Continent, which was hyped in typical blockbuster fashion in the 1990s that was the largest and the most expensive project until that time. It costs more than £1.5 million and the exhibition included more than 800 objects. Unlike the traditional form of non-Western traditional art blockbusters, this remained a kind of an art exhibition

¹²³ Elizabeth Hallam, “Text, Object and ‘Otherness’: Problems of Historical Process Writing and Displaying Cultures,” in *Cultural Encounters: Representing ‘Otherness’*, edited by Elizabeth Hallam, Brian V. Street (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 269.

¹²⁴ Ibid p.269.

¹²⁵ Africa 95 was the name both of a ‘season celebrating the arts of Africa’ and of the temporary, non-profit organization which coordinated it in partnership with 40 odd arts institutions in the UK. The programme of events included the visual arts, music, drama dance, cinema, literature, conferences, broadcasts. The season put emphasis on ‘the artist’s voice and the process of art making today. The visual arts of the program included not only the exhibitions of modern and contemporary African art, but also artists’ work shops and discussions on African art. Elizabeth Court, “Africa on Display: Exhibiting Art by Africans,” in *Contemporary Cultures on Display*, p.159.

rather than ethnographic showcase in which the native objects were exhibited. The structure of exhibition was organized according to regions on the basis of reflecting cultural groups and avoiding the classification of the African nations. Visual objects included the canonical forms of “African Art” such as masks, power figures positioned the story of African people without emphasizing cultural differences as well as creating a sense of otherness.

“Africa: The Art of a Continent, Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa” was significantly centered on twentieth century modern art in Africa, introducing a wide perspective on specific movements or connections that had affected the twentieth century modern art in Africa rather than showing the individual representations of the artist. Although many critics seem to have had problems with the presentation of modern art practices at the exhibition, Seven Stories marked a decisive challenge to the old view on African art. Before the “Africa 95 Season”, a series of African art exhibitions had been held in the twentieth century. The first major art museum presentation was the exhibition of “African Negro Art” at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1935. Fifty years later, in 1984, MOMA staged “Primitivism’ in the Twentieth Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern”, curated by William Rubin. It showed more than 200 African anthropologic art objects and 150 works of Western modern art.¹²⁶ The exhibition was to reconstruct and represent the formation of African tribal art collection in the twentieth century supported by a modernist Western curator in order to create a Western type of African modern art style. The perception of African art was shaped by Western cultural assumptions that mainly depended on the issues of race, gender, and power to place the objects in the certain categories.

As mentioned above, art historian and critic Ivan Karp argues that this exhibition turned the makers of the non-western objects into “modern artists,” who lack only the

¹²⁶ Court, “Africa on Display: Exhibiting art by Africans,” in *Contemporary Cultures of Display*, p.153, 154.

individual identity and the history of modern art.¹²⁷ The reason is that the Western curator and audience have expected to see a clear difference in art works originating in Third World countries. Attributing otherness to the periphery culture shows the elimination of the non-Western culture from the world of representation. The practices utilized by curators, who come from generally the center, hindered the dialogue, emphasizing difference among cultures, displaying cultural inequalities more than parallels. The blockbusters consisted both heritage and art exhibitions, creating bridges between the local traditions and modern art, ethnography, and history.

In sum, three issues in the blockbuster exhibitions have occurred in the last three decades. First, there was an attempt to “totalize” non-Western cultures in the international exhibitions. The strategy of situating periphery culture in the global art scene largely failed because the curator and organizers could not understand variety and difference in the world cultures. For example, exhibitions developed the theme of the primitive cultures of Africa and South America generally recognized as peripheral art. For this reason, the Third World’s cultural heritage was seen as primitive culture that was attributed to “otherness” by the West-born curators. A second objection addressed “curating the other” as a result of the domination of the West on the periphery cultures. And the final objection is related to the exhibition venues of blockbusters, which are typically the centers of the global world such as London, New York, and Paris. These cities are mainly located in the USA and Europe, one of the world finance and culture. The place of the exhibition was chosen in terms of its theme, geographical origin and cultural identity of the continents from which they came. It should be considered that these three issues which were given above in the last decade more or less

¹²⁷ Ivan Karp, “How Museums Define Other Cultures,” in *Aesthetics*, edited by Susan Feagin and Patrick Maynard. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.152.

continued to be basic problematics for international blockbusters exhibitions as well as the art biennials in the world.

The next chapter will focus on the transformation in cultural policy and art history writing in Turkey, accepted and defined in terms of a “nationalist” perspective until the 1980s and transformation into multicultural perspective in the 2000s. It will be shown that the new art history was constituted as a result of a “global” perspective, which was different from the national art history writing. Within the framework of the transformation of the international exhibition, exhibitions were released from being abstract and imaginary elements and became concrete and real entities.

CHAPTER III

CULTURAL POLICY AND PRIVATIZATION OF CULTURE IN TURKEY

Museums and cultural institutions are indicators of the cultural policy of the modern state. Transformations in the structure of the museums reflect the main components of the changes in national culture. The changes in museums and exhibition strategies also are directly related to the impact of socio-political developments on the cultural field. This chapter examines the production of cultural policy in Turkey through the study of museum projects, particularly in the experiences of the Late Ottoman and Turkish Republic eras. Although the general framework of the dissertation covers the post-1980 era, it is observed that there are continuities, basically rooted in the modernization of Turkey. Theoretically, the examination of museum practices in those periods sheds light on the cultural policies of the state as well as the structure of national and international exhibitions. Analyzing state and private museums demonstrates how cultural identity, power politics and memory practice are transformed.

Museum practices in Turkey can be analyzed in five periods. According to the periodization of Madran and Önal, the museum in Turkey took its initial steps between 1840 and 1880. Following this period is the era of Osman Hamdi Bey, between 1880-1910, followed by the Early Republican Era, between 1920-1950; the political transformation period

between 1960 and the mid-1970s, cultural transformation period in the 1980s, and last the multicultural transformation period starting from the 1990s until now.¹²⁸

The museums and collections will be analyzed in this chapter in three different frameworks. Firstly, the formation of the late Ottoman and the early Republican museums which is directly related to the nation state formation and the construction of identity will be discussed. The collections formed in the Ottoman museums reflected the competition between the Western and the Eastern nations to gain power over the representation of the past. Secondly, after the 1980s, opening private museums and cultural centers were outcomes of the rising Turkish bourgeoisie in fields of art and culture, in a neo-liberal era. The basic questions are how the investments of bourgeoisie in culture and art gained importance after the 1980s and in which ways the newly founded institutions reconstructed and legitimized their role in the local art system. Thirdly, the collections and exhibitions of the private museums that indicate global strategies and mechanisms that were used in the formation of museum collections and the organization of international exhibitions in Turkey will be analyzed. In doing this, I have chosen to examine the histories and strategies of the private museums and cultural centers in the post 1980s: Sadberk Hanım, Sakıp Sabancı Museum, Pera Museum, Istanbul Modern, Yapı Kredi Vedat Nedim Tör, Kadir Has University Rezzan Has Museum, Proje 4L Elgiz Contemporary Art Museum, Garanti Gallery Platform, AK Sanat, Yapı Kredi Sanat, and İş Sanat.

¹²⁸ Burçak Madran and Şebnem Önal, “Yerellikten Küreselliğe Uzanan Çizgide Tarihin Çok paylaşımlı Vitrinleri: Müzelere ve Sunumları,” in *Tarih Yazımı ve Müzecilikte Yeni Yaklaşımlar: Küreselleşme ve Yerelleşme* (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2000) ,p.173.

Political Tendencies on Museology and Art: From Empire to Republic

After the 1860s, the modern understanding of art and heritage developed in the Ottoman Empire through the use of cultural heritage and museums. During the same years, the empire found itself caught between European colonial imperialism and the rise of nationalism. With the reform period that started with the Tanzimat Edict, the conservative tendency on visual arts, especially painting, was transformed into a universal discourse of representation associated with the modernization of the Empire.

Visual arts offered a kind of mechanism to construct and control the use of national identity and encouraged a national spirit in an ongoing relationship with the past. Hüseyin Zekai Pasha was an Ottoman painter who wrote the first book about Ottoman art in 1913, introducing new concepts and definitions in the realm of imperial representation.

The newly introduced art of painting, which carries great importance among civilized nations in terms of its procurement of many public funds, is an open and clear public/universal (umumi) language that brings forth the strength of imagination that allows all peoples to understand. It is a type of writing.¹²⁹

This statement indicates that a painting symbolized and depicted representational strategies, mapping nations and cultures on the world stage. World trade fairs, with their sections on art influenced the development of visual arts in the Ottoman Empire. Seen in this light, the national spirit was brought by the vehicle of art closely linked with the grand narrative of the Empire.

According to Shaw, as in the US, Europe and their colonies, museum display was a new language of power in the Ottoman Empire. The collecting of historical and artistic values

¹²⁹ Wendy MK Shaw, *Museums and Narratives of Display From the Late Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic, Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World*, vol. 24 (2007), p.253.

became the symbolic power of the European colonizers. Art exhibitions began to carry the power to construct a national and historical narrative mode within the exhibition and thus developed a direct relationship with modernization, nationhood, and history.

The first museum in the modern sense was formed in the Ottoman capital, when a weapon collection was displayed at St Irene, located in the outer courtyard of Topkapı Palace.¹³⁰ The Ottoman Empire began to collect and exhibit the archeological and military objects of what would become a collection of the Ottoman Imperial Museum. The reason behind the foundation of the museum for the Ottomans was not only the protection of their treasury but also to claim the Greco-Roman past as well as the fixation of their national borders against colonial powers. The Greco-Roman heritage would link the Ottomans to the origins of European nations.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as a result of the archaeological activities carried out by European archeologists in the territory of the Ottoman Empire, a cultural policy on the preservation of historical artifacts and the protection of ancient treasure was gradually made. A draft called *Asar-ı Atika Nizamnamesi* (The Law for Protection of Ancient Treasury) was passed into law in 1874 in order to protect the ancient heritage of the Ottoman geography from the pillage of German, British and French archeologists. Osman Hamdi Bey was the founder and director of the first Imperial Museum (*Müze-i Hümayun*) and he wanted to regulate cultural policy and museums in line with the logic of the modern state.

However, the law for Protection of Ancient Treasury (1874) did not make a clear definition of “historical artifact” and thus did not solve issues of property and transportation. For this reason, a 1884 law introduced a rigid state politics on the control of the international

¹³⁰ Sümer Atasoy, “Türkiye’de Müzecilik” in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996), p.1467.

trade of historical pieces and classified ancient treasury in five different categories.¹³¹ All categories consisted of objects, monuments and art works which had historic value and depended on an archeological past. For the first time, smuggling, damaging and unauthorized transportation of all kinds of archeological objects were prohibited in the Ottoman state. The law also gave the right to the state to seize private properties to protect the ancient and imperial past. Unlike the 1874 law, the new law included both portable and unmovable archeological and historical objects into the imperial wealth and aim to control the past through protecting its visual culture.

Shaw argues that as a result of this law, the legacy of civilizations that had lived in the territory of the Ottoman Empire were associated with the Ottoman cultural heritage. After the 1884 law, European archeologists established a new relationship, with the old civilizations that had lived in the territory of the Ottoman Empire and started to change their tactics in order to protect the Hellenistic heritage in Anatolia.¹³² The protection law for the ancient heritage consolidated the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire on Hellenistic culture and heritage that controlled the imperial power against Europe expansionism. The crucial point is that the state was deemed responsible for controlling and coordinating all kinds of archeological activities in the territory of the empire. This was gave an opportunity to collect and display antiquities for reasons of status and consolidation of power. The collection of the Imperial museum mainly consisted of Greek and Hellenistic art works and indicated the link to European civilization. However, the second law for the protection of antiquities couldn't

¹³¹ Füsün Kılıç, "Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planları ve İcrasında Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzelerin Değerlendirilmesi," in *4. Müzecilik Semineri: Bildiriler 16-18 Eylül 1998* (İstanbul: Askeri Müze, 1988), p.28

¹³² Wendy M.K. Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2003), p.146

prevent imperial privileges and led to unauthorized transportation of antique heritage because the law did not regulate the private heritage collection of the Ottoman sultans. For this reason sultans could give antique works as gifts to European rulers and aristocrats.

The third and the last version of the law¹³³ was passed in 1906, and defined the museum as an institution that was responsible for the protection of art works' historical values on behalf of the Sultanate. The law indicated that only the state had a right to find, protect, collect, and display objects at the museum. The policy also emphasized governmental power of the state over its land. Islamic art works as sign of the link to the Islamic world were also protected by the 1906 law. Thus, the Ottomans also undertook the guardianship of the Islamic heritage. During the formation of nation state, intellectuals drew special attention to civilizations that had lived on their respective territories. Collecting antiquities became a tool for controlling the past and the sign of protector of the civilization in the Ottoman Empire. By protecting both Hellenistic and Islamic works of art, the Ottoman Empire demonstrated its role as a protector of the Greco Roman past and its right to empire.

The first step was the foundation of an Ottoman imperial military collection (*Eslîha-i Atika*), which was put on display at St. Irine Church. This collection displayed the military power and grandeur of the Empire. Then, the Imperial collection was moved to the Tiled Pavilion (*Çinili Köşk*), which had been into as a museum place. Starting from 1877, archeological collections would be displayed as separate entities independent from the military collections as they continued to play an important role in Ottoman and Turkish

¹³³ The 1906 antiquities law stayed in effect the rest of the Ottoman period and the Republic of Turkey also adopted the law and maintained in effect with only minor modifications until 1973.

museums. When Osman Hamdi Bey¹³⁴ was appointed director of the museum, the newly founded Ottoman institution gained an ideological vision to represent modernity.

Osman Hamdi Bey was an archeologist, painter, and museum director. The son of İbrahim Ethem Pasha, a high-ranking Ottoman administrator, he had returned a decade earlier from Paris where he had begun his education in law but completed it as an artist trained in a studio. He was also director of the Academy of Fine Arts (*Sanay-i Nefise Mektebi*) opened in 1883. Osman Hamdi was an influential figure in the development of Ottoman museology and Western style painting. Through his efforts, the first Ottoman archeological excavations were done at Nemrut and Sidon in 1883.

At this point, Shaw insists that Osman Hamdi used the museum as a means of expressing a collective Ottoman identity that would include classical civilization as part of its territorial heritage, thereby constructing a meta-narrative of identity with intrinsic links between the Empire and Western civilization.¹³⁵

The Ottoman Imperial museum was constructed on a meta-narrative, based on territorial identity. In terms of the structure of the museum, the narrative was divided into six different categories: Greek, Roman, Byzantine antiquities and then Assyrian, Caledonian, Egyptian, Phoenician, Hittite works of art; Islamic fine arts collection; forth ancient coins; and natural history. The sixth section was the museum library. First and second sections were organized for building the past and archeological memory of the state that had claimed right to protect the antiquities under its territory.

¹³⁴ Osman Hamdi Bey was an influential figure in the development of Ottoman museology and Western style painting. Through his efforts, the first Ottoman archeological excavations were done at Nemrut and Sidon in 1883.

¹³⁵ Wendy M.K. Shaw, “ Museums and Narrative of Display From The Late Ottoman Empire to The Turkish Republic”, *Muqarnas: Annual on the Visual Culture of Islamic World*, 24 (2007), p.257,258.

The third section, Islamic works of art, provided symbolic power for the unity of all Muslims in the Empire. During the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid, the Empire needed to use Islamic symbolism to compete with nationalist symbols. The identification of Islamic works of art became increasingly important to the development of a sense of “an Ottoman national identity.” In order to prevent nationalist movements, a redefinition of the Islamic past was needed that would enable a construction of a narrative structure by presenting multiple cultures, parallel in space and time. The display of Islamic arts and the presentation of Islamic hall treasuries was an act of resistance to the European cultural hegemony as well as being the symbolic proof of being the ruler of the Islamic world.¹³⁶ A decade later, the official collection of Islamic art became the core of the Ottoman antiquities in Topkapı Palace which reflected secular notions of Islam.

In 1910, Osman Hamdi died, ceding his place as administrator of the Imperial museum and the academy of fine arts to his younger brother, Halil Eldem, who played an important role in developing antiquities and the restoration project of the early Republican period. In the years of the second constitutional period (1908-1918), as a result of the growth of the collection of the Imperial museum, display spaces, plans, and exhibition narratives were reformulated according to the ideological aspiration of the Young Turk regime. The focus on the the fine arts collection represented the new vision of the Progress and Union to the cultural policy and underlined the vision of aesthetic and modernism in painting. In addition to developments in fine arts section, the Young Turks were interested in the preservation of historical sites and collecting antiquities as explained in the following note,

Since it is necessary to protect the objects of value, old and new, of the mosques in Istanbul and outlying areas, the Ministry of Education is

¹³⁶ Wendy M.K. Shaw, “Islamic Arts in the Ottoman Imperial Museum,” 1889-1923”, *Arts Orientalis*, vol.30 (2000), p.60.

prepared to consider the proposition of guarding old objects in the Tiled Pavilion provided that the Ministry of Pious Foundations takes measures to preserve recent works; and in order to prevent the transfer of even one of the stolen objects from the recent theft (various lamps and vases from several mosques of Bursa and Eskişehir) to European museums, the Ministry of Education is charged with reporting the matter to the office of Customs under the Ministry of Finance.¹³⁷

Obviously, the Young Turks paid special attention to Turkish objects such as carpets and tiles as a part of displaying the ethnic identity of Turks, because these works of art depicted the historical roots are Turkish civilization that was at the center of Ottoman civilization, too.

As mentioned before, museums and collections were part of the national heritage construction in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. The nationalist discourse of Young Turk ideology influenced very much the Ottoman museal project in the 1910s. There was a shift in collecting art works from Islamic to Turkish ones. It should be noted that the Young Turks reflected their ideologies in the formation of ethnographic collection and the foundation of the first natural collections including animals and plants.

Another important step took place with the foundation of *Sanay-i Nefise Mektebi*, later converted to the modern Republican art institution called Academy of Fine Arts (Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University), in 1882. The root of the academy was rooted in the Imperial Museum; there was a great necessity to found a fine arts academy in Istanbul. Due to the lack of a higher education institution in Istanbul, art students had to study in Paris, Berlin and Vienna. Until then, the departments of painting, sculpture, architecture, and engraving were organized under the *Sanay-i Nefise Mektebi*.

The academy later opened an Academy for Girls, *Inas Sanay-i Nefise Mektebi* in 1914, founded on the grounds of the Imperial museum. The students of the school engaged in

¹³⁷Shaw, "Islamic Arts in the Ottoman Imperial Museum," p.64.

a curriculum based on École des Beaux Arts, one of the leading art academies in France in the early 1900s. However, these developments did not lead to the public to experience the museums for many years, because people lacked education in the arts. The foundation of the Turkish Republic signaled a new era for Turkish museums, as discussed below.

New Museums for A New Nation: Museum Policy in the Early Republican Era

From 1923 to 1933, Kemalism as the official ideology aimed at shaping the new national identity and raising the cultural level of society, along with economic and social development. In this sense, the cultural policy makers of the Republican regime attached particular importance to the fine arts and museums, encouraging a new perspective of Turkish modernization as well as visual culture. The early 1920s was a time for breaking from the values, traditions and culture which were the carriers of the Ottoman past. The leading figures of the modernization process believed that the Turkish revolution could achieve a great transformation only by partly denying the Ottoman heritage and adopting Western forms and techniques in the fine arts.

It should be noted that three main theoretical frameworks, nationalism, populism and etatism, played influential roles in the transformation of museums and the visual arts. In regard to the nation state building process, nationalism attempted to reduce the sense of cultural inferiority against the Western power. After the foundation of the Republic, Ankara as a capital city became engaged in redefining the imperial institutions and planning in the line

with nation state model. Characterizing the shared national culture of state, museums were places where citizens would come together and visualize a common entity as well as identity in the establishment process.

During a time of war, the early Turkish museums were products of individual efforts and were categorized as one of the most significant spaces for the education of new generations according to the needs of the nation state. Several officials were interested in preserving the works of the new nation as early as the 1920s. The first museum, a small museum of Revolution, was opened in Eskişehir in 1921 with the support of the Ankara government. The fortress, located in Akkale Tower in Ankara, was chosen as a safe depot for the collections. Halil Nuri (Yurdakul), who was one of the individuals interested in preserving works for the new nation as early as 1920, managed an archeology collection based on archeological artifacts, historical signet rings, small collectibles, and embroideries, lacework, printed fabrics and costumes as well as a military stint.¹³⁸ Although the museum was established in 1921, it was opened four years later (1925) and the works of art reorganized and displayed in terms of representing the culture of nation. The museum was soon renamed the Ankara Archeological Museum and since its collection expanded to include the Neolithic age, its name was changed to the Anatolian Civilizations Museum in 1967.

Aslı Gür indicates that the shift in the name of the museum introduced the position of the museum functioning as a tool in order to legitimize the existence of the Turks in Anatolia.¹³⁹ It can be imagined as a part of the project in which the Republican elites formulated the national culture. In this way, they sought to establish national history as well as

¹³⁸ Sümer Atasoy, “Türkiye’de Müzecilik,” p.1464.

¹³⁹ Aslı Gür, “Üç Boyutlu Öyküler: Türkiyeli Ziyaretçilen Gözünden Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi ve Temsil Ettiği Ulusal Kimlik,” in *Hatırladıkları ve Unuttuklarıyla Türkiye’nin Toplumsal Hafızası*, edited by Esra Özyürek (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006), p.220.

shape the perception of national historiography. Clearly, the early Republican museums were in line with the ideology of the government, founded on a linear and chronological perspective narrating a cultural history.

The museum politics in the early Republican area can be examined in terms of dominant ideologies of the period: nationalism, populism, and etatism. The museum activities and the politics of aesthetics conservation and collection strategies operated in terms of Kemalist ideology. With the foundation of the Republic, the government was planning to open an ethnography museum, a museum of revolution, and an archeology museum was at last established in Ankara. The Directorate of Culture and the Cultural Commission were instituted in 1925, aiming at protecting the national culture and raising a youth in the realm of state order. In modern times, as Foucault writes the museums are to be examined in the public sphere, because the modern museum space is regulated by the state's power in order to regulate the masses that was the strategy of representing the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. The Turkish bourgeoisie wanted to create a discourse of national culture in two different ways: the selection of memory and education practices, through these means provide visualization of the past in the present forms.

The first step was taken by the conversion of Topkapı Palace and the Mevlevihane in Konya into national museums in March 1924. Through the conversion of the imperial palace into a museum the memory of the Ottoman past was erased and a new path opened for Turkish museums.¹⁴⁰ Topkapı Palace was no longer more the symbol of Ottoman dynasty; it had now become a common cultural value of the newly founded Republic. These spaces were considered to be memory spaces that could now be converted into new spaces. The political

¹⁴⁰ Madran and Önal, p.178.

regime used aesthetics and culture in its creation of history, while exhibitionism established a common back ground for history writing practices.

Early republican intellectuals paid special attention emphasizing Turkish civilizations in national history education. At the opening speech of a new museum, Hamdullah Suphi explained his view on museums in the following sentences: “Our Ankara, which carries so many recent memories old and new, painful and sweet, I am laying the foundation of the state museum. And my imagination is content with seeing monuments of knowledge, art, and history such as this, following one after another in the corners of the country.”¹⁴¹

In the early years of the Republican regime, the space of museums and the various branches of the People’s Houses were designed according to the educative goals of the nation state. The ruling People’s Republican Party designated the People’s House as a party organ that organized meetings, gatherings and exhibitions to educated the public in the line with modernization and Westernization. Exhibitions which were held at the People’s Houses mainly displayed Turkish folk culture, ornamental art, and early examples of fine arts. These exhibits reflect early exhibition strategies of the period. From this point of view, being local was more important than being international, but local art and culture had to be integrated into an international one.¹⁴²

Madran and Önal argue that the most significant aim was centralizing the national identity in the museum space and promoting the cultural identity of the early Republic aimed at raising the consciousness of being a nation. The minister of public education consulted

¹⁴¹ Hamid Zübeyr Koşay, *Etnografya Müzesi Kılavuzu* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1963), p.2.

¹⁴² *Fert olarak millet olarak millet olarak kendine inanmanın ve güvenmenin, sanatta milli damgayı taşıyan en iyi eseri verebilmenin, en güzeli yaratabilmenin imkanlarını da ancak bu suretle sağlayabiliriz. Ülkümüz olan milli uyanış ve yükseliş böylece gerçekleşebilir.* Madran and Önal, p.180.

Hungarian Turcologists J. Mészáros, who had taught at Istanbul University, and was the director of the Hungarian National Museum. He expressed his suggestions in a 1924 report that included archeological research to establish a scientific museum and organizing missions around Anatolia to gather objects for the museum.¹⁴³

As mentioned above, museum practices in this period went hand in hand with a nation building and social engineering process. The construction of museums should be analyzed in different categories, namely the Imperial Treasure (*Hazine-i Hümayun*), the Museum of the People (*Halk Müzesi*), the National Museum (*Milli Müze*), and the Folk Museum (*Hars-Ethnography Museum*). The Museum of the People aimed at spreading a sensitivity to promote historical value to the public, at the protection of historical monuments around the People's Houses and preserving Turkish folk culture and ethnography through panels, conferences, and publications.¹⁴⁴

Hence, since the revolution, museums and exhibitions have taken a role as the indispensable symbols and tools of the new regime. At the 1935, 1939 and 1943 Party congresses, the RPP decided to open Museum of Revolution (national museum) where personal archives of revolutionary men, photographs, maps, flags, arms, soldier' uniforms would be exhibited in the line with national history. The model of Turkish revolution consisted of before and after stages of the homeland, and the Atatürk corner.¹⁴⁵ The revolution exhibition of models in the People's Houses represented not only the official narrative of the Revolution, but also revealed the new "critical" symbolic world of the new regime

¹⁴³Madran and Önal, p.265.

¹⁴⁴ Sefa Şimşek, *Bir İdeolojik Seferberlik Deneyimi: Halkevleri 1932-1951* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2002), p.87.

¹⁴⁵ Şimşek, p.123.

distinguishing it from the symbols of the previous regime. The People's House museums were the new memory sites invented by the Republican regime. The ideological formation of the Republican museum mainly depended on two dominant narratives: the Turkish History Thesis, adopting modern approaches in search of the origins of the Turkish civilization; and the Sun Language Theory, which was a linguistic hypothesis developed in Turkey in the 1930s that all human languages are descendants of one Central Asian primal language. It also proposed that only language remaining more or less the same as this primal the language was Turkish.

The history thesis aimed to lighten the history of Turks. According to this theory, the historical existence of the Turks dated back to ancient civilizations. The Turks were organically linked to the Hittites in the museum of Hittites and later Turkish archeology museums, which was one of the greatest civilizations to have existed in Anatolia, as they were claimed to be the ancestors of the Turks migrating from Central Asia. David Smith argues that the Golden Age discourse in the nation building process¹⁴⁶ is a key to understanding the bases of the Turkish history theory that centered on the past of the Hittites. Gür argues that the cultural policy and the political ideology based on the Turkish History Thesis changed with time. Starting from the 1970s, the national identity which was adjusted on the national territory resulted in the change and the memory practices enacted in the museum.¹⁴⁷ The construction of a chronological, linear, deterministic history became one of the bases of Turkish historiography and formed the ground in developing museum practices and creating 'past' in modern sense.

¹⁴⁶ Anthony Smith, "History and Modernity: Reflections on the Theory of Nationalism," in *Representing the Nation: A Reader Histories, Heritage and Museums*, edited by Boswell, David, and Evans, Jessica (London, New York: Routledge, 1999), p.48.

¹⁴⁷ Gür, p.221.

In addition, the Sun Language Theory proposed that all human languages are descendants of one proto-Turkic primal language and all other languages can essentially be traced back to Turkic roots. In the oral tradition of the Turkic people in Anatolia, the Turkish Language Thesis was a must for the establishment of the relationship of the geography and people living on the land of their ancestors in the ethnography museums. Hence, similar to the language theory, the Turkish History Thesis inserted the linear narration of the Turks in Anatolia without necessarily considering the influence of Anatolian civilizations.

Archeological and ethnographical museums were memory places in the early Republican era. It is clear that the visualizing the nation and its culture was a tool to insert in the concept of the museum through the Turkish History and the Sun Language Thesis. Narrating the past of the Turks in Anatolia, the Ethnography Museum officially opened on July 18, 1930 and remained in its original form until 1939.¹⁴⁸ The museum was located in the Namazgah district of Ankara, which had been a Muslim district, but after the construction of the new building, the museum moved to the new site of the Ankara Painting and Sculpture Museum. The formation of the folk life through the museum was strongly tied to the process of modernization that directed the ways of seeing in the museum space. Its collection basically consisted of traditional handcrafts, and costumes from different regions of Anatolia. The museum displayed the daily practices of the Anatolian people in the rural areas, while also drawing upon their prehistoric roots and the contemporary national identity, to celebrate the nation's folk heritage. Rather than referring to the knowledge of the past, the basis of the narration provided the daily life practices of the Turkish people who lived in Anatolia.

As an example of early archeology museums, the Hittite Museum located in the *bedesten* (safe deposit bank) and offices in the *han* (commercial hostel), finally opened in

¹⁴⁸ Enver Behnan Şapolyo, *Müzeler Tarihi* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitapevi, 1936), p.76.

1945-1946. Güterbock who wrote the catalogue and pointed out that the Hittite Museum provided an opportunity “unparalleled in any other museum of the world to see and compare works from various stages of Hittite history and contributed to the notion of Ankara as a ‘natural’ capital city associated with the Hittite History, “which he explains as “not a specific people, nor a state, but an Anatolian-Syrian culture as a whole.” The catalogue helped to view Hittite culture as a comprehensive prehistoric identity of the new nation.¹⁴⁹ By 1968, the museum was generally known as the Ankara Archeology Museum, and finally renamed the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations. This change also indicates a transformation of the cultural policy of the state. Although the old exhibition technique depended on especially the Hittite past, the new one was to be based on following a trajectory from prehistory to the Hellenistic Era.

In this way, the visitors felt the sense of a uniform historical progression of Anatolian people through a narrative of national unity. Although a universal understanding of history in museum space features history and the movement of time and space, in the early Republican museums, it was setting on a single geography that moved across time. In the 1930s, at the first Congress of the Advisory Committee for Antique Pieces, Hasan Ali Yücel determined the process of the accumulation of objects in the collections as the indicator of the Republican Regime’s policy.¹⁵⁰ The collection of pieces and the construction of museum were perceived as the symbolic power of the new regime and the expression of the Republican cultural superiority over the Ottoman identity.

¹⁴⁹ Wendy Shaw, “The Rise of the Hittite Sun: A Deconstruction of Western Civilization from the Margin,” in *Selected Remembrances Archeology in the Construction Commemoration, and Consecration of National Pasts*, edited by Philip L. Kahl, Mara Kozelsky and Nachman Benyehuda (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago, 2007), p.169.

¹⁵⁰ Hasan Ali Yücel mentions that whereas the collected pieces in the directorate of Osman Hamdi until the foundation of Republic was 109,000, twenty years later, the number of objects increased to 759,000. in Atasoy, p.1467.

Joseph Strzygowski was an Austrian scholar who suggested an alternative modernization project for Turkish museology that would combine the grand narrative of the Western museum and the national sense of the Turkish museums in the same organization. According to his project, the Istanbul Archeology Museum showed the Hellenistic and Roman past; the Topkapı Palace represented the Ottoman era and its glorious history and St. Irene, a Byzantine church, was the symbol of the Byzantine-Roman as well as Christian Ottoman culture. All civilizations which had lived in Anatolia before the Turks were visualized in the museum space as a result of the Republic desired to show its cultural values. As a result, it was felt that a history museum, probably a Turkish civilization museum, needed to be established in Ankara as a symbol of the nation and the center of Republican Turkey to symbolize the greatness of Turkish civilization in Anatolia.

Strzygowski in his project put a special emphasis on the Central Asian past of the Turks, which he accepted as the starting point of Turkish pre-Islamic art. Returning to the ancestral past, the mythology of the national spirit was developed to pass on to future access next generations, while the Seljuk and Ottoman Dynasties could be evaluated in the form of Islamic past of the Turkish nation. In terms of the Turkish History Thesis, the museum that would be founded in Ankara would fit with the Turkish sense of nation and its collection would be formed out of objects that came from archeological excavation sites in the Soviet Union and China, the ancient homelands of Turkish civilization. As proof of his unrealized project, in the Archeology museum in Ankara, some stages represented the nomadic life of Turkic tribes on the Central Asian Plateau between 1030 and 1040s. As Shaw argues, Strzygowski's project on the Turkish museum had a conceptual problem. His discourse relied heavily on the contextualization of artifacts through the narratives of history, not of art

history. This is the basic point, that Turkish museums would be the center of the narrative of history rather than an art history discourse.¹⁵¹ Strzygowskian's model of Turkish history is well illustrated by the recent exhibit *Turks: A Journey of A Thousand Year* in London (January-April 2005) that was the first Turkish blockbuster exhibition. The exhibition which will be discussed in the next part of the thesis is deeply embedded in the grand narrative of Western history.

As mentioned before, nationalist historiography under the influence of the Turkish History Thesis created museum collections for creating Turkish culture, because the early Republican Turkish museums aimed at using art for constructing links between the cultures, the Republican pan-Turkic narrative and the dynastic model of history writing. The history of Turks started from the nomadic tribes and then the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine periods appeared on the stage. The modern history of Turkey has been analyzed beginning with the Anatolian Seljukid period and the era of the classical Ottoman Empire appeared as an Islamic period in Turkish history. The logic behind the museum exhibitions actually reflected the ideological construction of the nation state.

Apart from the state museums, the People's Houses Museums are the best places to reconsider the social function of the early Republican museums. Through them, the citizens learned the relationship of their country of the geography to history. As Foucault argues, the museum practices in modern times are representations of the hegemonic power of the state and its governmental techniques. The introduction of the museum and the exhibition branches indicate that the museum branches carry the central authority to the periphery through the regulation of the museum practices controlling the visual culture. As described by Duncan, the

¹⁵¹ Shaw, "The Rise of the Hittite Sun," p.180.

symbolic meaning of the material exhibited in the museum is a mediator between the citizen and the state.¹⁵²

In this sense, the People's Houses museums are acted as educational centers and regulating institutions. Remzi Oğuz Arık mentions that the operation of branches differed from region to region but they shared certain common bases in their regulating practices.¹⁵³ According to the annual reports of the museum branches, in 1934 and 1936, the People Houses aimed at collecting all objects in their locality and gathering people and volunteers for seminars and temporary exhibitions. Especially in Western Anatolia, Archeological and ethnographic objects were gathered by the local people and volunteers and sent to the capital city to be added to the national museum collection.

The branches mainly performed two functions. One was the celebration of national days and participating activities in the Houses. Native Goods Week was one of the popular activities in the 1930s, organized to encourage the consumption of domestic goods, and discouraging foreign goods in order to support the national economy.¹⁵⁴ The educational function of the branches played a crucial role in exhibiting local art, hand crafts, and agricultural products introduced the role of national goods during the Great Depression. Arık writes that national culture, the public education system, and museum politics would come together to establish the consciousness, equipping the individual with state ideology. Volunteer participation in the People's Houses as museum could be considered as the duty of citizenship, and a part of the new identity of people.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Duncan, p.26.

¹⁵³ Remzi Oğuz Arık, "Halkevlerinde Müze, Tarih, Folklor Kolumun Amacı Nedir?", in *Halkevlerinde Müze Tarih Folklor Kolumun Amacı Nedir?* (Ankara: CHP Halkevleri Yayınları, 1947), pp.111-123

¹⁵⁴ *Halk Evlerinin Faaliyet Raporları Hulasası* (İstanbul: Hakimiyeti Milliye Matbaası, 1934), p.16 and p.73.

Murat Katoğlu describes the People Houses' museum branches centers for the common people,¹⁵⁶ as a place for cultural negotiation and the unification of the people. Until the year 1951, the People Houses' museum and exhibition branches stood at the center of Turkey's museum policy. Turkish nationalism served as the mainstream ideology in the formation of the Turkish museum policy in the early years of the Republican period.

Cultural Policy between 1950 and 1960: The Unplanned and Single-Dimensional Period

Turkey's transition to the multi-party system in 1945 is one of the basic political changes which determined the cultural policy of the state in a more liberal way. The DP advocated economic liberalism and legitimized an unplanned, partly independent, cultural program. The alteration of the cultural policy reflected more or less the DP's overall policy of liberalism and the role of the state in cultural practice somewhat declined.

The cultural transformation of the Republican regime would be like a Renaissance opening up a new age for the society and artists. The elites agreed that the newly emerging Turkish states opened up a new path for national culture and gave a special importance to aesthetics under the direction of the Party.¹⁵⁷ To achieve this goal, the Party contributed both to the cultural mobilization of the people and the establishment of state institutions. The

¹⁵⁵ Arık, p.121.

¹⁵⁶ Murat Katoğlu, "Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarında Sanat ve Kültür Hayatının Oluşumunda Kamu Yönetiminin Rolü," *Sanat Dünyamız*, 89 (Fall 2003), p.188.

¹⁵⁷ Kenan Ali Yontu, *Heykel Sergisi Kataloğu* (Ankara: CHP Neşriyatı, 1941), p.1

cultural practices mainly centered on individual efforts and private institution. One of the most important characteristics of the 1950s was to open up private art galleries with a considerable rise in the number of retrospective exhibitions.

Yaman notes that private galleries opened their doors in the 1950s, without the financial support of the government.¹⁵⁸ Although the first state art gallery was opened in İzmir in 1952, the state did not aim at being directly engaged in gallery activities in the cities. Art exhibitions were held in foreign ambassadors' offices and cultural centers in Taksim, since the number of exhibition spaces available was limited in Istanbul. Similar conditions held in the case of state fine arts exhibitions and state sponsorship for artists.¹⁵⁹ The fact that the DP government did not pursue any official cultural policy, an individualist discourse on art and culture rose and contributed to the privatization Turkish art scene. The DP's cultural policy or lack of it, led to a break in the planned cultural policies of the early Republican state.

Compared to the single-party era, the years between 1950 and 1960 did not witness much progress in the realm of arts and culture. This period showed more conservative tendency. Especially, the shutting down of the People Houses by the government in 1960 was a turning point for the museum practices. As stated earlier, the museum and exhibition branches of the Houses contributed to museum practices by educating people, collecting historical pieces, and organizing exhibitions in the local areas.

However, in many ways, museums had become isolated from the public and addressing a rather limited audience in the time of the RPP. To attract visitors to the museum was one of the purposes of the DP. Ethnographer and archeologist Hamit Zübeyr Koşar

¹⁵⁸ Zeynep Yasa Yaman, "1950'li Yılların Sanatsal Ortamı ve Temsil Sorunu," *Toplum ve Bilim*, 79 (Fall 2003), p.130,131.

¹⁵⁹ Yaman, "1950'li Yılların Sanatsal Ortamı ve Temsil Sorunu," p.99.

offered a solution to make museums lively places, introducing the concept of open air public museums. Museum theory in the 1950s was determined by the memorial aspects of the national history of Turkey.¹⁶⁰ However, this was the period when modernism in fine arts and literature clearly emerged in Turkey. The transition of the political system and integration of Turkey into UNESCO and ICOM¹⁶¹ were two of the main reasons for the transformation of the cultural policy. Signing agreements with international organizations, for the first time, the Turkish state took legal responsibility under the international authority for protection of the heritage sites of Turkey.

The cultural atmosphere of the 1950s, a modernism emerged, was determined by rapid industrialization and massive migration. The migration was the starting point to change the socio-cultural atmosphere of Republican Turkey. The RPP mainly had constructed storages for archeological objects and founded the Hittite Museum in Ankara. Due to the result of political change, the DP paid special to attention found open air archeology museums to attract people to Anatolia. The importance of the ethnographical museums in this period left its place to archeological museums and archeological research. Yenişehiröğlu writes that “by 1950s, the visual and constructed collective memory for those of the Republican citizens were already present. In this sense, the material environments loaded by those set of memorial

¹⁶⁰ Seçil Yılmaz, *Visualization of Culture, History and Memory in Turkey: Museum Politics in the Post-1980s* (M.A Thesis Boğaziçi University, Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History, 2005).

¹⁶¹ ICOM is the international organization of museum and museum professionals which is committed to the conservation, continuation, and communication to the society of the world's natural and cultural heritage, present and future, tangible and intangible. Created in 1946, ICOM is non-governmental organization (NGO) maintaining formal relations with UNESCO and having a consultive status with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council. ICOM's activities respond to the challenges and the needs of the museum profession and are focused on the following themes: professional, cooperations and exchange; dissemination of knowledge and raising public awareness of museums; training pf personnel; advancement of professional standarts, elabration and promotion of professional ethics; preservation of heritage and combating the illicit traffic in cultural property. *Museum Mission Statement*. Accessed April 8, 2010. <http://icom.museum/mission.html>

backgrounds were ready to be consumed and reproduced by the Republican citizens.”¹⁶²

Similar to this view, Shaw sheds light on the perspective of Turkish museums in the following: “The function of the museum in Turkey in contrast to the model of the West functioned not to bring together material culture into a systematic grand narrative of heritage but rather to provide each aspect of heritage with a separate relationship to national identity.”¹⁶³

As mentioned, the strategy that underlined the function of the museum was determined mainly by the national identity of the Republican elites. Bringing the museum as a Western institution, the early Republican cultural policy centered on Western-type museum. Dolmabahçe Palace was opened to public as a museum in 1952 and in Topkapı Palace, the Pavilion of the Mantle of the Prophet displaying the symbolic power of Caliphate, was opened to the public in 1962. The dynastic history of the Ottoman Empire and the symbolic power of the Caliphate were recognized by the state after the 1950s.

At the beginning of the 1960s, 58 museums and 12 museum stores were located in several different regions in Turkey.¹⁶⁴ By the year 1965, the museum practices spread throughout Anatolia. New museum projects were undertaken as a result of planned cultural practices. The storage areas created for the People’s Houses’ museums were opened again for objects, acquired from new archeological excavations. City museums that had closed in the early Republican era due to the lack of personnel and budgets were reopened in this period.¹⁶⁵ The opening of the Anatolian Civilization Museum formerly the Hittite museum in 1968 was

¹⁶² Madran and Önal, p.181.

¹⁶³ Shaw, *Museums and Narrative of Display*, p.273.

¹⁶⁴ Madran and Önal, p.181.

¹⁶⁵ Atasoy, p.1465 and 1466.

a second important step for Turkish museums after the 1950s. Objects found in excavations in various part of Anatolia were exhibited in a linear narrative structure that indicated the continuation of the Turkish history thesis.

Until the 1960s, no new museum buildings were built due to a resource shortage and works were stored and exhibited in storage spaces or restored buildings.¹⁶⁶ While there were 33 museums and 7 museum storage facilities in 1956, the figures rose to 87 museums and 13 storage facilities by the end of the 1973.¹⁶⁷ The First Five-Year Plan did not cover culture in a separate section, whereas the Second plan had a goal to use culture and the arts to blend modernity with the traditional social structure of the country.¹⁶⁸ For this reason, the museum policy of the Republic became of secondary importance due to a lack of central administration, budget, staffing, and educational programs.

The 1970s began with the effects of military intervention and rising tension between the left wing and right wing intellectuals. The cultural policy in this period was less conservative in the political sphere, shaping cultural activities which were directly supported by the state. The Third Five-Year Development Plan (1973-1977) included for the first time plans to devote a section for culture and art that includes developments in the fine arts, the establishment of the folklore institute, educating emerging artists, the reorganization of archives and archeological works. The emphasis on institutionalization in the Third plan, no

¹⁶⁶ Atasoy, p.1468.

¹⁶⁷ Deniz Ünsal, "Museum Establishments and Cultural Policy in Turkey," in *Introduction to Cultural Policy in Turkey*, edited by Serhan Ada and H. Ayça İnce (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009), p.166.

¹⁶⁸ Aylin Seçkin, "The Political Economy of Cultural Policies," in *Introduction to Cultural Policy in Turkey* edited by Serhan Ada and H. Ayça İnce (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009), p.128.

concrete steps were taken, the investment in art and culture remained limited compared to those in Western Europe.¹⁶⁹

In general, in the 1970s, the arts began to gain some autonomy from the state. In this process, a Ministry of Culture was established, but the art scene continued to struggle to create autonomous areas. Rising intentions in the field culture and art at the structural level in the West, the Ministry of Culture firstly established in 1971. This event was expected by the artist and intellectual classes. Talat S. Halman was the first. The Minister of Culture of the Turkish Republic. In his first speech, Halman mentioned that they faced several problems during the foundation of the ministry of culture since culture had been neglected for several years. Problems were expected to be solved and also the lack of institutional budget inhibited an institutional transformation in the field of culture during the 1970s.¹⁷⁰

The first cultural development plan included organizing an advisory committee, preparing a documentary film presenting Turkish culture to European and American audiences, and publishing books and art albums for promoting Turkish tourism to foreign countries. The purpose of the establishment of the Ministry of Culture, in the 1970s was concerned with various sides of the social structure opposed to all kinds of restriction in the political atmosphere. The most crucial point is that social realist tendency in the visual came into existence and partly affected the cultural policy of the state. Visual Artists Associations (*Görsel Sanatçılar Derneği*) was an act of solidarity to take guard against anti-liberal applications.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p.129.

¹⁷⁰ Ahu Antmen, *Türk Sanatında Yeni Arayışlar(1960-1980)* (Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, PHD Thesis, 2003). “Önce karşı karşıya bulunan bir kuruluş var. Sonra, oldum olası ihmale uğramış konular, çözüm bekleyen problemler....Ve nihayet tamtakır deyimi ile belirtilebilecek bir bütçe.”

During the 1970s, the Ministry of Culture was only an institution that represented the state in cultural field. Due to the lack of a well-prepared cultural policy, visual arts remained an untouched field. A small number of art galleries and fine arts faculties contributed to art in the country. In 1977, a symposium call Fine Arts towards the 2000s was organized by Mimar Sinan University. During the symposium, academicians, artists, and intellectuals discussed the role of state in directing art and culture at the international level.

Leaving cultural policy to the control of state led to negative consequences. The first and the most important result was that the implementation of autonomous art institutions failed. Various government instruments and policies put pressure on art and culture applying restrictions in the budget and activities. The fact that the state's cultural policy was not controlled by the intellectual community blocked the development of an autonomous art in the 1970s.

Under these circumstances, the Ministry of Culture decided to change the law on the acquisition and exhibition relation of cultural assets. The law prevented the transfer and commerce of objects without permission of the state. Until that time, the state had been the unique authority to open the museum. Because of legal restrict on opening private museum in Turkey, no private museum and exhibitions existed in Turkey until 1973. The law was revised in 1973, 1983, and 1984, indicating that museum practices were regulated in terms of Western cultural practices and modern visual politics.¹⁷¹ It is not a surprising thing that the emergence of private collections in the hands of Turkish bourgeoisie contributed to the structural change in the museum practices in Turkey. The law, applied to the private museums and collections of the pioneering bourgeois families, such as Sabancı and Koç, to be opened in the form of

¹⁷¹ Hüseyin Karaduman, "Eski Eser Yasalarında Özel Müzeler, Koleksiyonculuk, Ticaret ve Müzayedeler," in *4. Müzecilik Semineri: bildiriler 16-18 Eylül 1998* (İstanbul: Askeri Müze, 1998), pp.4-15.

private museums. Opening private museum and cultural centers was an alternative ways for Turkey after the 1980s, brought its advantages and disadvantages.

Philanthropic Activities in Art and Culture after the 1970s

The development of philanthropic activities on the personal and institutional levels started in the mid-1970s as a result of the increasing financial power of the private sector. As a result of the flow of international capital to the Turkish economy, in the 1980s the new order, globalism, transformed not only politics and economy, but also culture and art. The bourgeois families became willing to transfer their wealth for cultural and education of the public. Having acquired sufficient wealth, the bourgeois families developed, transformed and while ‘civilized’ society while creating a legitimate social image for themselves.

The impact of neo-liberal economic policies in the 1980s led to reform in the concept of public administration. The Deputy Secretary of Culture and Tourism, Zeynel Koç, explains the reason for the shift from the public to private in cultural activities:

Up to now, the state policy has been to transfer money to several cultural activities that have been approved. But this method, as you admit, is exposed to any subjective opinions of the elites who held the power and is not embracing of wide segments of society as well as not efficient because of some difficulties in distributing the scarce resources. Despite this, it is still of but it is not sufficient. What is fundamental is not the participation of the state in cultural development directly, but to prepare the base for the people to get involved in cultural development directly, but to prepare the base for the people to live and enrich their own cultures.¹⁷²

¹⁷² “Bugüne kadar devlet politikası, devletin uygun bulduğu bir takım kültürel faaliyetlere para aktarmak yöntemi olmuştur. Oysa ki bu yöntem, zaten kıt olan kaynakların paylaştırılmasındaki zorluklar nedeniyle verimli olmadığı gibi, toplumun geniş kesimlerinin yararlanmadığı, ve devleti yöneten erkin yada gücü bulunduran erkin

The need for increasing the number of private foundations in art and culture was also a result of decreasing funds to strengthen infrastructure in this sector. State institutions were stepping back their resources in this field to access private institutions. The tendency of the state was supported also by the private sector entrepreneurs, and leading industrialist Sakıp Sabancı:

We cannot expect everything from the state. The state and private sector must cooperate on this issue. If each fulfills its own duty it means that we also fulfill our civic duty. The government has limited facilities and so does the private sector. It has its own schedule. However, if the state acts in a positive way helping the private sector and not being obstructive to the institutions that have the opportunity to invest in culture, briefly if the government cooperates with private sector then it will be much easier to promote our culture.¹⁷³

Sibel Yardımcı argues that the desire of corporations to take the symbolic economy of the city on themselves through sponsorships complements the wish of state for the privatization of services as far as possible to respond to the requirements of the market economy.¹⁷⁴ The past 30 years have brought a decisive economic transformation in Turkish society; with social stratification becoming clearer and clearer. In this connection, industrialist families like Sabancıs, Koçs, and Eczacıbaşıs have led the structural change from

sübjektive görüşlerine açık bir yöntem olduğunu kabul edersiniz. Bu yöntem, böyle olmasına rağmen kullanılabilir bir yöntemdir, ama yeterli bir yöntem değildir, devletin halkın kendi kültürünü yaşayıp, zenginleştirip, geliştirebileceği bir zemini hazırlayabilmesi olduğunu düşünüyorum.” Pelin Başaran, *The Privatization of Culture and Development of Cultural Centers in Turkey in the post 1980s* (Boğaziçi University Atatürk Institute, 2007), p.88.

¹⁷³ Zahir Güvemli, “Önsöz”, *Sabancı Resim Koleksiyonu: The Sabancı Collection of Paintings* (İstanbul: Ak Yayınları, 1984) “Herşeyi devletten bekleyemeyiz. Devlet ve özel sektör bu işde elele verilmeli. Her biri kendine düşen payı üstlenirse ancak o zaman biz yurttaşlık görevimizi yerine getirmiş oluruz. Devletin imkanları kısıtlıdır. Özel sektörün de öyle. Kendine göre bir program var. Ama devlet, imkanı olanları engellemeyecek, onlara yardımcı olacak şekilde davranırsa, yani özel sektörle elele verirse o zaman kültürümüzü tanıtmak daha kolaylaşır.”

¹⁷⁴ Sibel Yardımcı, *Kentsel Değişim ve Festivalizm: Küresel İstanbul’da Bienal* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), p.105.

philanthropic activities to cultural ones, in line with global trends. The remaining part of the chapter focuses on the leading private foundations that established museums and cultural centers and contributed to the cultural sphere starting from the 1980s. Then a summary of the history and activities of art museum and cultural centers will be provided.

The Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization founded in 1973 by seventeen businessmen and art enthusiasts who gathered under the leadership of Dr. Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı¹⁷⁵ with the aim of organizing an international festival in Istanbul. The idea of organizing a festival in Istanbul emerged in the mid-60s. Eczacıbaşı believed that every business man had a social responsibility to promote art and culture and contribute to the cultural development of society. In order to realize his dream, he worked for many years, inviting experts in festivals and art organization in Europe. After the Ministry of Culture was established in 1971, Eczacıbaşı had a chance to realize his dream, acquiring the support of the state to bring together the principal founders of İKSV, consisting of a number of businessmen and art enthusiasts: Afif Tektaş, Reşat Aksan, Bülent Tarcan, Aydın Gün, Yıldız Kenter, Prof. Mazhar Şevket İpşiroğlu, Ercüment Berker, Cüneyt Gökçer, Mükerrrem Berk, Mehmet Önder, Semih Günver, Cemal Süreya, Kazım Eke, Cengiz Altuğ, Ambassador Muharrem Nuri Birgi and Cevat Memduh Altar.

The official establishment was achieved by the efforts of the committee. The first İstanbul Festival was realized in 1973, as part of the celebrations of the Turkish Republic's 50th anniversary. On the national and international level, the Istanbul Festival was recognized

¹⁷⁵ Dr. Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı, the leading figure in the establishment of İKSV, was born in İzmir, on 5 January 1913. A dedicated enthusiast and supporter of culture and arts, Eczacıbaşı became acquainted with arts when he was playing violin in primary school years. After graduating from Robert College, he went to Germany for his undergraduate studies. Eczacıbaşı returned to Turkey in 1940s, and founded the Eczacıbaşı Pharmaceutical industry in Turkey. with the aim of organising an international festival in İstanbul. He supported the establishment of other foundations Dr. Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı Foundation and İzmir Foundation for Culture, Arts and Education (İKSEV). He gathered his memories in his two books *Kuşaktan Kuşağa* (Generation to Generation, 1982) and *İzlenimler, Umutlar* (Experiences and Expectations, 1994).

with an award by the Council of Europe in 1974. After the organization of the Istanbul Festival, İKSV included other artistic fields in its program such as theatre productions, film screenings, jazz and ballet performance, and art exhibitions in historic venues.

A series of festivals in different artistic fields began to be held in the 1980s. “International Istanbul Film Days” in 1983, a film week was transformed into the International Istanbul Film Festival in 1989; the Istanbul Biennial opened a new path in visual arts after 1987; in 1989 the International Istanbul Theatre Festival was started; in the music field, the International Jazz Festival in 1994, in the same year, apart from the International Jazz Festival, the International Film Festival changed its name to the International Istanbul Music Festival.¹⁷⁶

In the 2000s, İKSV turned to organizing small scale art events as well. Fim Ekimi (a week of film screening in October) was realized in 2002, Phonem by Miller (alternative rock and electronic music performances in November) and Minifest (3 days of children’s activities in the summer) have become some of the most attractive music festivals. İKSV also has assumed the organization of the bi-annual Leyla Gencer voice competition.

İKSV also has spent efforts to present Turkish art and culture on the international level by bringing different cultures together and opening up a platform for multicultural dialog. In this respect, İKSV has organized a series of international festivals in major cities in Europe as follows: “Şimdi Now” in Berlin (2004), “Şimdi Stuttgart” in 2005, “Turkey Now” in Amsterdam (2007), Rotterdam (2008), Russia (2008), Vienna (2009). “The Cultural Season of Turkey in France” was held in Paris between 1 July 2009 and 31 March 2010 organized by İKSV to promote Turkish culture to strengthen ties with France during the EU integration process organized the pavilion of Turkey at the Venice Biennial in 2007, 2009 and 2011.

¹⁷⁶ İKSV Tarihçesi. Accessed February 15, 2010. <http://www.iksv.org/english/tarihce.asp?ms=1|1>

The foundation has been acknowledged by the European cultural authorities for these wide ranging projects. The KulturPreis Europe 2003 (European Award for Cultural Achievement) announced that “the 2003 KulturPreis Europe has been presented to the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts for helping in the past 30 years to build understanding, tolerance and trust between the East and the West, Islam and Christianity, through works of culture and the arts.”¹⁷⁷ İKSV also has supported the foundation of the first modern art museum in Istanbul, called Istanbul Modern, which will be discussed in the following part.

The Sabancı Family is another family which has contributed greatly to the Turkish economy with industrial investments and the establishment of Sabancı Holding and Sabancı Group companies in 1967. The group has placed a lot of importance on the value of social and cultural institutions. The Sabancı family members have become prominent figures in these activities. The Hacı Ömer Sabancı Foundation (Sabancı Fondation) was established in 1974 by the sons of Hacı and Sadıka Sabancı.¹⁷⁸ Sabancı Vakfı (*Sabancı Foundation*) is an important attempt at establishing the family foundation in Turkey. Its philanthropic activities cover educational institutions, sport facilities, organizing social and cultural activities, scholarships and awards. The main mission of the program and investments are “to promote social development and social awareness among current and future generations by supporting initiatives that create impact and lasting change in people’s lives.”¹⁷⁹ Family members and

¹⁷⁷ *Kultur Forum Europa*. Accessed December 25, 2010.
<http://www.kfe.de/index.php?navi=2&submenu=2&year=2003&id=1165967981>

¹⁷⁸ *Sabancı Vakfı Tarihçesi*. Accessed February 15, 2010.
<http://www.sabancivakfi.org/eng/?hakkinda/hakkinda.html>

¹⁷⁹ *Sabancı Vakfı Tarihçesi*. Accessed February 15, 2010.
<http://www.sabancivakfi.org/eng/?hakkinda/hakkinda.html>

companies contribute regularly to the foundation, which enhances its services and programs. Up to now, VAKSA has founded 121 permanent institutions the total value of which is approximately 893 million YTL, in 51 localities throughout the country.¹⁸⁰

The Sabancı Foundation supports various festivals and contents to promote art and culture in the country. In addition, it has established more than sixteen cultural centers where people can meet the spirit of different fields of art throughout the country. Every year, nine students in total who hold the top three ranks among the graduates of the painting, sculpture and traditional Turkish arts at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University are honored with the Sakıp Sabancı Art Awards.”¹⁸¹The Award is a cash payment in Turkish lira equivalent of 40 Republic gold coins for the champions, 25 Republic gold coins for first runners-up and 15 Republic gold coins for second runners-up; in addition to a certificate issued in each student’s name.

Other activities taking place under the financial support of VAKSA are the national Youth Symphony Orchestra, the International Sabancı Adana Theatre Festival, the 5th International Disabled Youth Festival, the Ankara International Music Festival, the Mehtap Ar Children Theatrical Company and financial support for archeological excavations (for instance, Metropolis digging). In addition, VAKSA distributes many prizes and scholarships in the fields of folk dance, theatre, education, and sports. It declares itself to be “the largest foundation declared by any single family in Turkey,” and strenghtens its international

¹⁸⁰ Pelin Başaran, *The Privatization of Culture and the Development of Cultural Centers in Turkey in the Post-1980s*, p.27

¹⁸¹ *Sabancı Vakfı Sanat Ödülleri*. Accessed February 15, 2010. www.sabancivakfi.org.

relations by being a member of the European Foundations Center and the Council of Foundation.¹⁸²

The Vehbi Koç Foundation was founded in 1969 by Vehbi Koç in order to revitalize the old endowment tradition of Turkish society. It was the first major private foundation of the Turkish Republic and brought about a revival of the age-old tradition of the Vakıf –philanthropic endowments for the public goods. The Foundation works in three areas: education, health, and culture. In the first years, the foundation used its resources to fund the Sadberk Hanım museum, the Private Koç High School and American Hospital, pioneered major not-for-profit institutions in different focus areas. The foundation established Turkey's first private museum, the Sadberk Hanım Museum in 1980, further extending its activities in the field of culture with the establishment of the Vehbi Koç and Ankara Research Center (VEKAM) in 1994, the Suna-İnan Kır   Research Institute on Mediterranean Civilization (AKMED) in 1996, the Kalei  i Museum in Antalya's old city quarter in 2000, under the aegis of Ko   University, the Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (RCAC) in 2005.¹⁸³ Besides these institutions, the Project Support department and TOFAS/FIAT Fund have supported many projects such as the Atat  rk Library, the restoration of nineteenth century century buildings in Istanbul and the Archeology Films Week.

The Suna Inan Kır   Foundation was established by Suna Kır  , İnan Kır   and İpek Kır   on 27 October 2003 to contribute to society through a series of undertakings in the fields of education, healthcare, culture, and arts. The foundation concentrated on three different cultural complexes. First, Pera Museum opened its doors in 2005, and one year later,

¹⁸² *Sabancı Vakfı Sanat   d  lleri*. Accessed February 15, 2010. http://www.sabancivakfi.org/eng/?oduller/sanat_odulleri.html

¹⁸³ *Akdeniz Ara  tırmaları Derne  i*. Accessed March 12, 2010. <http://www.akmed.org.tr>

the Istanbul Research Center at Pera became an academic environment providing archives and library materials to academicians as well as researchers. Istanbul Research Center aims to follow the traces of the civilizations from the center (Near East) towards the periphery, focusing on the cultural structure and the human profile, including the Byzantine, Ottoman and Republican periods of Istanbul. In doing so, the Institute aims to develop and support projects.

The Suna-İnan Kır   Institute on Mediterranean Civilizations (AKMED) is an international organization endowed within the Vehbi Ko   Foundation and is chartered to research, document, preserve and restore the historical, archaeological, ethnographic and cultural assets of Antalya and its surroundings regions. Furthermore, it supports scientific study and research on these subjects and on the interpretation of relations in the Mediterranean region. The Institute maintains a printing house focused on the archeological and ancient history of the region. Lastly, the Kır   Foundation aims to establish an international art and culture center to be built in the T  YAP area in Tepeba  , which currently holds the building of the Turkish Radio and Television (TRT), and the planning offices of the Metropolitan Municipality. The foundation signed an agreement with the architect Frank Gehry for the construction of a cultural complex costing 160 million US dollars. The project will cost around 500 million US dollars to be allocated by the foundation.

These bourgeois families have contributed to Turkish art and culture in Turkey as well as abroad showing the increase of socio-cultural awarnesses through cultural organizations. The Turkish bourgeoisie have applied a new hegemonic strategy to control economic interaction in Turkey. Pelin Ba  aran writes that there is a close relationship between the rise of philanthropic investments of bourgeoisie in the country, the import substitution

industrialization model and the populist strategies implemented in the 1960s period. Populism as a symptom of undeveloped countries could be used to describe the philanthropic activities in Turkey after the 1970s.¹⁸⁴ To be more concrete, bourgeoisie families aim to be recognized in the public. The Sabancı, Koç, Eczacıbaşı families have articulated themselves to these populist policies although they originate from different traditions; they followed parallel stages on the issues of corporate “contribution” to the social and cultural spheres. The most significant point in regard to the emergence of these private institutions has been emphasizing a discourse “for the good of the public.” Sakıp Sabancı described his objective and mission in the presentation of the catalogue of his collection:

Today it is no longer possible to think of the businessman apart from culture and art services. It is necessary to define businessman clearly. I’am businessman and, for my part, it is to establish factories, but also to construct schools, to open dormitories, establish museums. One should not expect all from the state. The state and the private sector must work hand-in hand.¹⁸⁵

In the light of this perspective, Rıfat Bali states that the post-1980s bourgeoisie was involved in the cultural sphere to uphold the image of the businessman who had relations with the public.¹⁸⁶ The bourgeoisie families tried to articulate their “cultural preferences” in society. The decentralization opened the space for the alternative memories and narrations. The privatization of culture in the post-1980s, shows a transition of the wealthy class

¹⁸⁴ *Günümüzde iş adamlarının kültür ve sanattan ayrı kalması düşünülemez. İş adamının tanımlamak için gerekidir. İş adamı olarak ben fabrikalar kurmaya, okullar inşa etmeye, yurtlar açmaya ve müzeler kurmaktayım. Herşeyi devletten bekleyemezsiniz. Devlet ve özel sektör beraber çalışmalıdır.* Pelin Başaran, *The Privatization of Culture and the Development of Cultural Centers in Turkey in the Post-1980s* (MA thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2007), pp.9,20.

¹⁸⁵ Rıfat Bali, *Tarz-ı Hayat’tan Life Style’a: Yeni Seçkinler, Yeni Mekanlar, Yeni Yaşamlar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), p.62.

¹⁸⁶ Bali, p.62.

involvement in society from philanthropy to cultural entrepreneurship and its attempt to reconstruct its hegemony through its cultural investments.

Thus, the entrance of the bourgeoisie into the fields of culture and art field brought about a new dimension in the search for diffusion of the power politics in the 1980s and 1990s. The corporations invested in culture by elaborating the discourse of liberalism, freedom and individualism. The corporations became cultural arbiters in the fields that they established hegemony over them. They were specialized in high art and legitimized their involvement by presenting their institutions as civilizing and progressive agents. In this way, their cultural institutions would provide the high prestige and status in society. Following the 1980s, the museumization of the private collections was the newly emerged perspective in the field of arts and culture. The private museums indicated a different development in this period introducing a variety of alternative collections. The private investments in art and culture were basically categorized in institutions: cultural centers and private museums. These will be investigated in the following part to explore the cultural policy of the state after the 1980s.

The Corporate Cultural Centers

Akbank Sanat (Akbank Arts) was established by AKBANK, one of the Sabancı Group corporations founded in 1993. Without pursuing any commercial goal, the center has hosted more than 700 artistic activities from exhibitions to modern dance, from film displays to theatres, from classical music recitals to jazz concerts and from panels to master classes

with the mission “a place where change never ends.”¹⁸⁷ The center’s building has six floors; in each floor, cultural activities are held such as galleries, multipurpose salon for the concerts of world-class musicians, screenings, theater performances and panels, contemporary art shop, music room, a contemporary art library, and a dance studio.

The first and second floors are used as galleries for contemporary art exhibitions that are organized through the advice of an advisory board which is composed of Ali Akay, Hasan Bülent Kahraman and Levent Çalikoğlu, who are the leading curators. The galleries host six to eight exhibitions in a year and many conferences are organized in related to topic of the exhibitions. The Contemporary Art workshop composed of serigraphy and lithography, workshops, aims to support contemporary art. In addition to contemporary art activities, Ak Sanat funded four different theatre groups: Production Theatre, Yeni Kuşak Theatre, Çocuk Theatre.¹⁸⁸ As outside activities, Ak Sanat funds the Akbank Chamber Orchestra, the Akbank Jazz Festival, a Short-Film Competition, a painting collection, and sponsorship of exhibitions and biennales. Especially the painting collection of Akbank is one of the oldest painting bank collections after İş Bank and Ziraat Bank includes 1827 works of 500 Turkish painters. Akbank publishing produced exhibition catalogs and art anthologies in several years.

Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center, located in Beyoğlu, was founded in 2001 as an institution of Garanti Bank which was “to act as a central meeting point in the city for cultural exchange between contemporary artists, curators and critics.”¹⁸⁹ The coordinator

¹⁸⁷ *Akbank Sanat*. Accessed March 12, 2010. http://www.akbanksanat.com/web/196-6466-1-1/akbank_art/general/top_menu/about_us

¹⁸⁸ *Akbank Sanat*. Accessed March 12, 2010. http://www.akbanksanat.com/web/196-6466-1-1/akbank_art/general/top_menu/about_us

¹⁸⁹ Başaran, p.102.

of the center is Vasif Kortun, a well-known international curator. The center contains a gallery, artists archive, research and lecture spaces and the Istanbul Residency program. The gallery was closed in 2009 and a branch of Garanti Bank opened in its place. It hosted national and international exhibitions from 2001. The library and archive are unique in the country, holding books, DVDs, posters, catalogues and other materials related with contemporary of in the last twenty five years in Turkey. The library consists of more than 8000 international books (2500 books from Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin's library) and 1000 DVD/CDs and its archive covers more than a hundred contemporary artist's folios, and contemporary exhibition files. In the following years, the library also will add Turkish architecture and design books and documents in its collection.¹⁹⁰

The Istanbul Residency Program is open to contemporary visual artists, critics and curators of contemporary art for a period between three and six months and funded by international arts organizations from the Middle East and Eastern Europe. According to Vasif Kortun, this center has two main characteristics: it has an international program to provide cultural exchange and focuses on the "present" and "future."¹⁹¹ There is no target group of the cultural center, located on İstiklal Street open to public from every age. Garanti Bank provides only the expenditure of the infrastructure and the other costs of residency program and exhibitions. Next year, the center will probably move to the new building of the Ottoman Bank Museum in Karaköy giving a proper place for displaying contemporary art. The Platform gallery on İstiklal was established in 1987. The first institution of the center; it will focus on architecture and city planning in the following years.

¹⁹⁰ *Garanti Galerî Platform*. Accessed February 12, 2010. <http://ggaleripplatformg.blogspot.com/>

¹⁹¹ Başaran, p.103.

Yapı Kredi Cultural Center was founded in 1964 by Yapı Kredi Bank with the establishment of the Kazım Taşkent Art Gallery, which is a leading gallery for culture and art that shifted its vision from folklore to contemporary art in 1992. In the same year, the Nedim Tör Museum opened its doors visitors with permanent collections: coin, folkloric objects, Karagöz theatre. In addition to the gallery and museum, the Sermet Çifter Salon hosts photography exhibitions of the leading famous artists. In contrast to the Garanti Platform Gallery as a palace for working contemporary artist, there is no special interest in contemporary art in exhibitions, along with modern art, the center organized contemporary art activities. Yapı Kredi Publishing was structured under the Yapı Kredi Culture and Art Publishing in order to “make culture and art more prevalent” in 1992. Up to 2010, the number of the books increased to 2957 and the center published regularly art journals.¹⁹²

Kazım Taşkent, who was the founder of the bank used to call the Yapı Kredi Bank “A Culture and Art Bank.”¹⁹³ The director of the center, Veysel Uğurlu, said that “we have conceived capital as the best advertisement of culture and art. Before, it was only a hobby. We have made for it to be taken seriously.”¹⁹⁴ This indicates that the cultural centers were professional organizations in Turkey providing advertising and marketing opportunities for their companies.

Another private culture foundation in Beyoğlu, the Borusan Center for the Cultures and Arts, was founded by Borusan Holding in 1997. The center’s objective is “to produce and to promote Turkish culture and abroad through art activities and centralize,

¹⁹² *YKY Kültür-Sanat Hakkında*. Accessed February 15, 2010.<http://www.ykykultur.com.tr/hakkimizda/>

¹⁹³ *YKY Kültür-Sanat Hakkında*. Accessed February 15, 2010.<http://www.ykykultur.com.tr/hakkimizda/>

¹⁹⁴ Başaran, p.105.

coordinate and thus increase of productivity of the support of arts”.¹⁹⁵ The center focuses three fields: music, contemporary art exhibitions and publications. The Borusan Philharmony Orchestra started to perform under the Conductor and Permanent Music Director Gürer Aykal in 1999. It gives concerts twice a month acquainting the masses with classical music. In the field of music, the center also founded the first private music library based on classical music consisting, 8.500 books, 7000 notes over 10.500 CDs and became a member of an international network called ISCM (International Society for Contemporary Music).¹⁹⁶ In addition to the music field, Art Center/Istanbul is a project of contemporary art realized in 2008 that aims to make art a part of everyday life. One of the objectives of the center is to support contemporary artists is to allocate studios for their art production.

İş Sanat Cultural Center is located at Levent, which is the financial district of Istanbul. It has been putting on musical and stage performance productions since 2000. The center has been recognized as one of the most prestigious arts and culture center of Turkey. So far, over 250,000 people have attended art events of İş Sanat; jazz, Turkish music, world music, dance performances, and theater plays.¹⁹⁷ Its focus is very limited, the center generally focuses on jazz and classical music. İş Sanat also assists the collaboration of Turkish and international artists, promotion and performance of Turkish composers’ works, and provides performance opportunities for young talent. The center also has two art galleries: the Kibele Art Gallery, which is located on the main floor and has three exhibition halls mostly host the

¹⁹⁵ *Borusan Sanat Hakkında*. Accessed March 25, 2010.
http://www.borusansanat.com/___Hakkimizda/Kurucumuzun_Mesaji.aspx#

¹⁹⁶ *Borusan Sanat Müzik Kütüphanesi*. Accessed March 25, 2010.
http://www.borusansanat.com/___MuzikKutuphanesi/Kutuphane_Tanitim.aspx

¹⁹⁷ *İş Bankası Kültür ve Sanat*. Accessed February 20, 2010.
<http://www.issanat.com.tr/en/about/>

Turkish modern art exhibitions. İş Bank's art collection and many artists's shows, sculpture and photography exhibitions have been exhibited since 2000.

Private Museums in the Global Age

Up until the 1980s, the “strong state notion” determined the structure of museums and state policy. Starting with the neo- liberal period, the number of non-governmental organizations increased and private foundations' began to dominate art and culture in Turkey. Under the Ministry of Culture, museums were entrusted to the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums in 1982. Twenty years later, the name of this directorate was organized under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism with the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums in 2003.

The general directorate exercises a wide authority, ranging from permitting and inspecting archeological excavations, to issuing museum opening permits, from undertaking the discovery, maintenance and repair of cultural heritage abroad to monitoring the duties of the preservation committees from the development of museums and the preservation of culture to documentation and cultural investment.¹⁹⁸ The general directorate consists of the central organization in Ankara, and in every province, it has branches to coordinate local museums and organizations. Although the central administration museums are reconstructed by the state, the lack of museum professionals, bureaucratic challenges and the limited budget

¹⁹⁸ Law 4848 “The Organization and Duties of Ministry of Culture and Tourism,” *Official Gazette*, n.2509329, April 2003.

complicate the new administrative system.¹⁹⁹ The central authority has no direct administrative and financial links to the city and regions. There is a strong need to reform the public administration system that should be run in the state museum.

Today, the difficulties of public museums can be described as: lack of educated staff, inadequate storage conditions, insufficient budget to meet the needs of public museums, and a lack of infrastructure to use media and communication devices.²⁰⁰ All problems that has existed in the 1960s continue today even during the period of integration the EU. In the last 20 and 30 years, the role of the state in art and culture has declined compared to the rising power of private culture entrepreneurs. In the 2000s, the decisions taken on museum and cultural centers by the AKP government have shown continuity with global trends. The gentrification project of “re-construction” of the Atatürk Culture Center and museum projects such as the foundation of the theme park “MiniaTurk,” the Panaroma 1453 Conquest Museum and Istanbul Islam, Science and Technology Museum are some of the culture projects of the AKP government.

In Turkey museum practices following the 1980s fundamentally changed as a result of technological developments. Regarding the political and economic conjuncture in the beginning of the 1980s, museums were transformed into museum politics that melded culture and art in economy and politics in a system that depended on three approaches. First, the investment in museums was in the hands of big capital holders that carried out new museum practices and competed with other investors in this field. Second, the power relation was exercised not on the local scale; the participation of Turkey in international exhibitions and

¹⁹⁹ Hale Özkasım, “Financial Problems in the Museums of Republic”, p.15.

²⁰⁰ Deniz Ünsal, “Museum Establishments and Cultural Policy in Turkey” in *Introduction to Cultural Policy in Turkey*, edited by Serhan Ada, H. Ayça İnce (Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2009),p.173.

the convention of world heritage a reconstructed the representation of the past in museum space. The remapping of tourism methods brought new museums and adapted to the daily life practices in the context of 1980s. Thirdly, nowadays, the visualization of culture refers to a kind of narrative structure in the exhibitions organized in the framework of the multicultural and coexistence with the current ideological movements. Basically the representations of history and culture have enriched the modern perspective without dealing with nationalist tendencies.²⁰¹

The emergence of the private museums appeared one of the significant tendencies in the post-1980s period. The withdrawal of the state from the public sphere has been replaced by the newly emerging bourgeoisie. The private collections of bourgeoisie show the cultural taste of elites as well as their changing approach to Turkish art. In this sense, it is clear that the exhibition of the private objects in the private museums imply the power of the bourgeoisie. Bourdieu writes that “a work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses cultural competence that is the code, into which it is encoded”.²⁰² The representation of the objects which are exhibited in the spaces include a variety of meanings. For example, the representation of Ottoman calligraphy pieces by Sakıp Sabancı and pre-Islamic archeological objects by Suna Kır   were strategic choices of cultural capitalists who reflected their visions via their collections. The context of a museum is generally determined by its collections appearing as a set of identities and where the objects represents a general history of antique, pre-Islamic, or Ottoman periods. It can be claimed that the private museum collections are not

²⁰¹ Se il Yılmaz, *Visualization of Culture, History and Memory in Turkey: Museum Politics in the Post-1980s*, (MA thesis, Bo azi i University Atat rk Institute, 2005), pp.46-48.

²⁰² Walsh, p.184.

only representations of culture and history but also construction of the collection holders' identities.

After the 1960s, four kinds of private museum collections emerged in Turkey: ethnographic (1960s), classical Ottoman/Islam (in 1960s, 1970s), Turkish modern art (1980s, 1990s) and Turkish contemporary art (after the 2000s). Specialization in art and heritage collections brought a new vision for Turkish bourgeoisie to follow the Western mode of the privatization of culture and art. The preferences of the bourgeoisie in art and heritage collections generally reflect the cultural taste of the cultural elite. Turkish collectors at the beginning of the 1960s started to collect ethnographic works such as textiles, kilims, carpets, and handi crafts, which were easily found at that time. This choice was also the symbol of the national consciousness in the Turkish bourgeoisie. The heritage approach determined the scale and theme of the ethnographic collections displayed in private museums.

In late 1960s and the 1970s, Turkish entrepreneurs who made investments in cultural heritage were willing to invest in classical Ottoman and Islamic works of art as cultural propaganda. Most of the objects were directly bought from foreign collectors and in this way, the lost cultural treasures were returned to Turkey. The Ottoman and Islamic heritage gave a sense of the protector of the ancestral past to their collectors in order to represent the glorious past of modern Turkey to Western nations. Possessing Ottoman and Islamic art collection was a strategy for the Turkish bourgeoisie to return to its roots and underline its philanthropic and social concerns.

The 1980s brought a new perspective for the Turkish bourgeoisie. For the first time, the works of prominent modern Turkish painters were sold in art galleries and at art auctions. Modern art collections, which represented the modern face of the country became

extremely desirable art works in the mid-1980s and the 1990s. In addition to the modern art collection of the private museums, in the last decade, there has been a growing intention in contemporary Turkish art collection. Especially the younger generation of Turkish art collectors tend to such new art media as video, installation, photography. The reason behind this trend is that they are looking at these new kinds of collections in order to follow the Western art movement in the area of the global art scene. This situation shows the Western influence on Turkish art and antiquity collectionism as well as the formation of the museums.

These developments in Turkish museums and private collections mainly have been realized on a private scale due to the increasing investments by capital holders in museums. Without taking the context of globalization and neo-liberalization into consideration, museum policy in Turkey cannot be evaluated in the privatization of cultural sphere. This part of the chapter will introduce histories and the formation of collections in Turkish private museums under the light of the privatization of art and culture.

Sadberk Hanım Museum

Sadberk Hanım Museum, the first private museum in Turkey, opened on October 14, 1980 in Istanbul. The art works had been collected by Sadberk Hanım, the wife of the renowned Turkish industrialist and businessman, Vehbi Koç. It occupies two separate buildings. The original building is a three-story wooden mansion built in the late nineteenth century, “Azeryan Yalısı,” which had been purchased by the Koç family in 1950. The

museum has become an international cultural institution, and with the assistance of her daughter, Sevgi Gönül, Sadberk Hanım has continued to work hard to develop and expand the collection of the museum through purchases and donations. The museum supplies information to visitors through chronological displays showing which civilizations existed from prehistoric times up to the twentieth century. In 1988 it was awarded the Europa Nostra award²⁰³ as an outstanding example of modern museum architecture and design.

The art history section exhibited at AzaryanYalısı includes covered coins, Islamic art, the Ottoman period, women's costumes, and traditions. In addition, the archeological section includes lamps, jewellery, sculpture and steles, glass objects, beads, coins from Anatolian civilizations, Ion and Helen civilizations, Roman civilizations and Byzantine. The Sadberk Hanım museum also has published more than thirty-five books in both Turkish and English on ancient coins, ceramics, prehistoric weapons, and Turkish hand crafts. Many ethnographic pieces which are exhibited in compositions representing moments of traditional occasions such as *Kına Gecesi* (Henna Night), *Lohusa Odası* (Chielbed Customs) or *Sünnet Odası* (Circumcision Bed).

Sabancı University Sakıp Sabancı Museum

Every Exhibition begins as a complex puzzle, in solving which is learnt and discovered, and new friendships are forged with colleagues around the world. Every exhibition also leaves behind a permanent legacy by throwing light on some of the hundreds of uncharted areas in humanity's shared saga of civilization.²⁰⁴

The above quote is from the Sakıp Sabancı Museum's director, Nazan Ölçer. Today the Sabancı Museum is the leading institution in art and culture presenting a museological environment with its rich permanent collection. The museum is located in Emirgan where was one of the oldest settlement on the Bosphorus. The main building of the museum was used as a summer house for many years by members of the Hidiv family. After that the industrialist Hacı Ömer Sabancı purchased, and it became known as “*Atlı Köşk*,” or the Horse House, from the statue of a horse that was the work of French Sculptor Louis Doumas in 1864.

After the death of Hacı Sabancı in 1966, Atlı Köşk began to be used as a home by his son Sakıp Sabancı and for many years it housed Sabancı's calligraphy and painting collection. In 1998, the house was allocated to Sabancı University to be transformed into a museum. The exhibition areas of the museum were opened to visitors in 2002 and this area was extended in 2005 in order to bring the museum to international standards to host blockbuster exhibitions. Sabancı museum has a cultural complex that covers conservation units, model educational programs, concerts, conferences, seminars and art events.

The museum has rich permanent collections of calligraphy, painting, archeological/stone works, furniture and the decorative arts. Sabancı says that the transformation of these collections into a museum had been a long process over many years in the framework of many negotiations between professionals.²⁰⁵ The Sabancı Museum collection of Ottoman Calligraphy presents spectacular examples of 500 years of Ottoman art. This is one of the richest calligraphy collections among Turkish museums consisting of more

²⁰⁴ Sakıp Sabancı Museum, *The Image of the Turks in the 17th century Europe* (12 July- 9 October 2005), (Istanbul: SSM, 2005), p.12.

²⁰⁵ Sakıp Sabancı, “Preface” in *Sabancı Koleksiyonu*, edited by M. Uğur Derman, Kıymet Giray, Fulya Bodur Eruz, (Istanbul: Akbank, 1995), pp.7-11.

than 500 manuscripts copies of the Holy Qur'an dating from the fifteenth to twentieth centuries, albums, panels, official documents (decrees, grants of appointment, privilege, and tools used in the practice of art.²⁰⁶ The collection is exhibited on the upper floor of the Atlı Köşk.

The painting collection of the Sabancı Museum represents the artistic dimension of the museum policy composed of selected examples of early Turkish paintings as well as paintings by foreign artists who worked in Istanbul. The collection includes more than 352 pieces reflecting the development of Turkish painting dating from 1850 to 1950 the works of Osman Hamdi Bey, Şeker Ahmed Paşa, İbrahim Çallı, Feyman Duraman and Fikret Mualla as well as those of foreign artists like Fausto Zonaro and Ivan Ayvazoski.²⁰⁷

In the garden of the Atlı Köşk, visitors also see archeological and stone pieces from the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman eras. Three rooms on the entry level feature with furnishings and decorative art objects. According to Ali Artun, the quality of the collection should be critiqued as an assembly and “a reminder of repertoire of the famous auctioneer who advised the family and supplied many of the artifacts than articulate conception signifying a university.”²⁰⁸

The mission of museum is to serve as a university museum and its publications support the education function of the museum. It has two main catalogues: permanent and temporary exhibition catalogues.²⁰⁹ In addition, every national and international exhibition has been held

²⁰⁶ *Sakıp Sabancı Müzesi Koleksiyon*. Accessed February 15, 2010.
<http://muze.sabanciuniv.edu/collection/collection.php?lngCollectionID=5>

²⁰⁷ *Sakıp Sabancı Müzesi Koleksiyon*. Accessed February 15, 2010.
<http://muze.sabanciuniv.edu/collection/collection.php?lngCollectionID=6>

²⁰⁸ Başaran, p.78.

in the Sabancı Museum published in a well-prepared catalogue. Furthermore, Sabancı museum utilized its goal to provide educational facilities for primary school children and organizing School Group Tours, the Children Workshop Activities. In addition the Guided Tours of Exhibitions, and the Adult Workshop Activities are given as social responsibility projects. Museum education services are to tend about the artists, interpret their works, and develop creativity of children.²¹⁰

By the beginning of 2010, the museum had hosted seventeen exhibitions. Four out of the seventeen were national scale exhibitions namely Travel to the West- 70 Years of Turkish Painting (1860-1930), The World of Abidin Dino, European Porcelain at Topkapı Palace, and Partnership of Power: Man and Horse. The museum also has hosted collections of prominent European artists as well: “Joseph Beuys and His Students-Works From The Deutsche Bank Collection,” “Flow/Debi,” “Lisbon Memories from Another City,” “Salvador Dali: A Surrealist in Istanbul,” “Istanbul, Isfahan, Delhi Three Capitals of Islamic Art Masterpieces from the Louvre Collection,” “Blind Date- Istanbul,” “In Praise of God- Anatolian Rugs in Transylvanian Churches 1500-1750,” “Genghis Khan and His Heirs, The Great Mongol Empire,” “Master Sculptor Rodin in Istanbul,” “The Art of the Book from East to West and Memories of the Ottoman World Masterpieces of the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum,” “Picasso in Istanbul,” “The Image of Turks in Europe in the 17th Century,” “Paris- St. Petersburg Three Centuries of European Fashion from the Alexandre Vassiliev Collection,” “From Medicis to the Savoias Ottoman Splendour in Florentine Collections,” and “Apuntti Allo Stadio Soccer Sketches”. Among these exhibitions, those of Rodin, Picasso and Salvador

²⁰⁹ Permanent collection books cover Masterpieces of Ottoman Calligraphy by M. Uğur Derman and Selected Work from the Painting Collection by Kıymet Giray.

²¹⁰ *Sakıp Sabancı Müzesi Hakkında*. Accessed February 15, 2010.
<http://muze.sabanciuniv.edu/content/default.php?lngContentID=1219&bytLanguageID=2>

Dali have special importance due to being blockbuster exhibitions. Everyday approximately 1000 people visited the museum.²¹¹

From its foundation to 2011, Sakıp Sabancı Museum has hosted national and international scale modern and contemporary art exhibitions. The museum's exhibition policy covers a wide range of topics such as modern European painters and sculptor, contemporary European art and traditional Islamic art as well as history based. Instead of specializing in any area of art, Sabancı museum has focused on attracting visitors to the museum, organizing large scale international exhibitions.

The "Picasso in Istanbul Exhibition," the first solo show of any major Western artist in Turkey, was held between November 11, 2005 and March 26, 2006. The exhibition included 135 works by Picasso from the Picasso museums in Paris and Barcelona, the Lille Modern Art Museum, FABA and family collection selections made by Ruiz-Picasso. The director of Picasso Museum, Bernard Ruiz-Picasso, Almine Ruiz Picasso (FABA), Marta-Volga Guezala (Images Moderness), Dr. Nazan Ölçer (Sakıp Sabancı Museum Curator) and Selmin Kangal (the museum's foreign relations director) were the curators of the exhibition.

During the exhibition, a selection from Picasso family albums and photos of him taken by internationally renowned photographers were put on display. Documentary films and conferences accompanied the exhibition. Exhibition catalogue included articles from John Richardson, Marilyn McCully and Michael Leiris, who are known for their biographic works on Picasso. "Picasso in Istanbul" attracted nearly 254,000²¹² visitors, a record number in

²¹¹ İstanbul Özel Müzeleri Çok Sevdi". Accessed July 10,2011. <http://www.haber34.com/istanbul-ozel-muzeleri-cok-sevdi-2789-haberi.html>.

²¹² *Milliyet*, 27 Ağustos 2008, p.23.

Turkey. During the final weeks, more than 6,000 art lovers visited the event in one day. Nazan Ölçer said that,

The visitors realized that Picasso was a master of classical painting as well and they therefore joined in the great master's adventure. In fact, this great interest suprised me a bit. It's a big deal to bring such an exhibition to Turkey. From now on, people will refer to event as "after Picasso" and "before Picasso." In a way this event is a turning point in terms of art exhibitions in Turkey.²¹³

"Picasso in Istanbul" as the first blockbuster show in Turkey is an indicator of quality in terms of collection. Other activities were held in the exhibition spaces, incuding marketing campaigns public relations. The museum prepared a documentary on the exhibition accompanied by narration and music. The exhibition could in this way be viewed virtually in the documentary. Although the Picasso exhibition opens a new path for Turkish museums and it was the pioneer of blockbuster shows, the exhibition was criticized by artists and critics.

Genco Gülan, contemporary artists of the, described the exhibition as follow:

The Picasso exhibition is not the spectacular art history in Turkey, but it is the largest advertising campaign. I have some important criticism about the Sakıp Sabancı Museum. First of all, a museum should have its own art collection and specialize on it after the museum exhibits its own collection. All private museums in Turkey financed the marketing activities that are realized to exhibit loaned works of art rather than to purchase their own collections.²¹⁴

This is a common gap for private museums in Turkey that have made further effort to acquire new art objects in the collections. Instead of developing their own collections, private museums tend to bring blockbuster modern art exhibition from prominent European

²¹³ *Turkish Daily News*, 26.03.2006, <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=-574576>

²¹⁴ "Picasso Sergisi Türkiye'deki Gelmiş Geçmiş en büyük sanat sergisi değil, ama sanat alanındaki en büyük reklam kampanyasıdır. Öncelikle, tanımı gereği, bir müzenin uzmanlaşması, koleksiyon oluşturmaları ve daha sonra koleksiyonundan seçkiler sergilemesi gereklidir. Türkiye'deki tüm yeni müzeler, koleksiyona değil- ödünç aldıkları yapıtlar ile gerçekleştirdikleri sergileri- pazarlama iletişimine para yatırıyorlar." Levent Çalıkoğlu (ed.), *Çağdaş Sanat Konuşmaları 4: Koleksiyon, Koleksiyonerlik ve Müzecilik* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2009), p.115.

museums. Big promotional campaigns and the advertising of the museums in the blockbusters shows attract visitors to the museums. However, exhibiting European modern art is not so educational and functional for the Turkish art audience who are not well informed of European art history. Some of the people who visited the Picasso exhibition did not know him well enough to understand his art. They found his paintings gloomy and drear and evaluated this exhibition as follows:

I think our own artists are much better. If their exhibitions were as well advertised as many people would come to see our pictures. We have much better artists. We think our artists are more talented than him. I know old Turkish painters and familiar with their art. If the museum promoted this exhibition before it had been opened, we had chance to have basic information about Picasso and his art.²¹⁵

Organizers hoped the exhibition would further enhance Western ties modern Turkey. It provided a reputation for the Sakıp Sabancı Museum in Europe and the USA. Following the Picasso the next fascinating exhibition was Rodin who carried the European tradition of sculpture out of the sentimental romanticism of the 19th century into the 20th century. The exhibition included 203 pieces of both the smallest and most imposing monuments and also drawings, photographs, and some ancient statues from Rodin's private collection. The story of the exhibition describes his artistic life from the works of youth to those of his maturity and his collection of antiquities.

The museum also hosted one of the twentieth century's most important artists and representative of the Surrealist movement Salvador Dali in September 2008. The retrospective of his works consisted of 270 works of oil paintings, drawings and works of graphic art,

²¹⁵ "Bizim kendi resim sanatçılarımız çok daha iyi bence, onların sergileri bu kadar çok tanıtılsaydı, bizim resimlerimizi görmeye gelenler de bu kadar çok olsaydı aynı sükseyi yapardı sergi. Bizim kendi çok daha iyi sanatçılarımız olduğunu düşünüyorduk...Eski Türk ressamlarımız var beğendiğim tanıdığım. Eğer ön tanıtımlar yapılsaydı, bilgilnseydik ona göre gelirdik, daha iyi olurdu." Abdülkadir Günyaz, "Picasso Sergisi Nedeniyle İster İstemez Bir Değerlendirme," *Artist*, February 2006, p.75.

manuscripts, photographs, and documents. Compare to the Picasso exhibition, Dali exhibition was less attractive for Turkish visitor. Approximately 210,000 people visited this exhibition.²¹⁶ The exhibition was realized with the cooperation of the Gala–Salvador Dali Foundation, and had the distinction of being the largest temporary exhibition of the artist’s work to be mounted outside the foundation. The curator of the exhibition, Montse Aguer Teixidor, stated that

For the first time, we present Salvador Dali in Istanbul as a unique, innovative, peculiar, brilliant and different artist. We wish to be able to bring the spirit of such museum, so everyone can understand and get a closer look at Dali’s thinking, his obsessions, his iconography, and the dreamy and surrealist world of a universal, provocative and unique artist.²¹⁷

The peculiarity of the show was presenting an art movement like Surrealism and its leading representative. The retrospective covered not only art works but also anecdotes about Dali’s personal life and Surrealism in the mid-1950s. Zafer Kurtul, the General Manager of Akbank which sponsors the exhibition, said

We are celebrating the 60th anniversary of Akbank with a great art event like the Dali exhibition. The exhibition has great importance both for us and our country since it is the major exhibition organized outside Spain by the foundation. Being one of Turkey’s innovative companies we support innovative organizations and the artists, as well as protect the local and international cultural heritage, which is the most important social responsibility act. We sponsor those that offer innovative and analytical thinking to the next generations. The idea to present a genius, who had the courage to redefine reality, to the Turkish art lovers is a result of our belief in diversification and creativity. We are proud to congregate Salvador Dali’s fascinating world with our community.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ *İstanbul Özel Müzeleri Çok Sevdi*. Accessed July 10, 2011. <http://www.haber34.com/istanbul-ozel-muzeleri-cok-sevdi-2789-haberi.html>.

²¹⁷ *Sakip Sabancı Müzesi Sergiler*. Accessed February 15, 2010. <http://muze.sabanciuniv.edu/exhibition/exhibition.php?lngExhibitionID=85&bytLanguageID=2>.

²¹⁸ *Salvador Dali at SSM*. Accessed February 15, 2010. http://www.artknowledge.com/Salvador_Dali_exhibition.html

The heritage exhibitions at the Sabancı Museum mainly cover Islamic cultures and Euro-Ottoman relations in the sixteenth centuries. The museum hosted an important exhibition, the opening of which coincided with the enlargement of the museum's galleries and a new identity. This exhibition had a special importance due its name "Image of The Turks in 17th Century Europe." It examined the impact on the art of relations between Europe and Ottomans. It was open on July 12, 2005 and visited until October 9, 2005. The timing of exhibition was also important as Turkey was trying to strengthen political relations with European. Before the Image of Turks, the Sabancı museum had hosted an exhibition entitled "From the Medicis to the Savoias Ottoman Splendor in Florentine Collections," which had been was sponsored by Akbank and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and organized jointly by the Italian Cultural Center. The exhibition presented 120 pieces, a selection of Ottoman and Islamic art used or exhibited over a time period extending from the Medicis to the Savoia that included paintings, tiles, carpets, weapons, fabrics and metalwork dating from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries from the collections of Uffizi, Argenti and Guidi families.

The transformation of the fear of Turks in Europe during seventeenth century was reflected the portraits and clothes of Turks, Ottoman artifacts acquired as spoils of war, gifts or commercial goods documentary importance. Under the grant vizierate of the Köprülü family, the Ottoman and European states sought peace and a new order following the Thirty Years of War in the seventeenth century. In the "Image of Turks in 17th Century Europe" exhibition, drawings and paintings reflected the details of the observation of Western artists. As the official member of the embassies had influence on the Turquerie movement, on their clothing a new fashion that made its mark in areas ranging from art to literature and music to

architecture spread throughout Europe. The influence of this fashion can be observed in almost all the countries engaged in political, social or trade relations with the Ottoman Empire. Particularly, it is pictorial art that reflects “Turquerie.” Drawings and pictorials were exhibited recopied with local images of Ottoman people. These paintings depicting seventeenth century Istanbul and a series of nobles dressed in Ottoman costume-some realistic others incorporating exotic elements, a time when looking like a Turk was fashionable. This large collection was by the Ptuj Regional Private Museum Archive and Library and the Koper Private Museum in Slovenia, and by the Porec Museum in Croatia.²¹⁹ All in all, the dialogue between Turkish and European museums has been strengthened mostly through the efforts of private institutions.

The permanent collection of the Sabancı Museum depends on Sabancı family’s passion for collecting antiques, which began in the mid-50s. Sabancı family realized the importance of culture and the changes, in the public meanings of culture, and that investment in cultural artifacts would bring them reputation and honour in the society. Sadun Tanju, in the autobiography of Hacı Ömer Sabancı, mentions the interest in art and antiques among members of Sabancı Family. Apparently, Hacı Ömer Sabancı was the first collector of European antiquities, used to hire art consultants who followed the antiques market for him. He was an open-handed collector who specialized in European statues, vases, and classic furniture. According to one story, Muammer Bey, who was a close friend and worker of Hacı Ömer Sabancı said, ‘That’s right, I do not understand what you do. You have started to use your money for something else differently. What do you like in this statue?’ Hacı Ömer laughed like a child and said: “Beautiful, very beautiful Muammer Agha, what more do you

²¹⁹ Sakıp Sabancı Museum, *The Image of the Turks in the 17th century Europe* (12 July- 9 October 2005), (Istanbul: SSM, 2005), p.12.

expect?”²²⁰ Now, the objects he purchased are a part of Sakıp Sabancı Museum’s collection and it has gained value through time. Like his father Hacı Ömer, Sakıp Sabancı paid special attention to collecting Ottoman calligraphy and paintings, which became the core collection of the Atlı Köşk. Especially, the 1980s neo-liberal economic model helped to create a bigger and stronger bourgeois class which sought investing in forming their own collection in order to transform their capital into cultural value.

The Atlı Köşk is a kind of museum that is a symbol of the accumulation of wealth in a private family collection. In the beginning, the collection represented the power and wealth of the family. Apparently, the father Sabancı was inspired by foreign cooperations and wealthy families that created their own collections and supported art and culture. Later Sakıp Sabancı followed in his footsteps in creating the family collection. He hoped that the Sabancı collection would be a spiritual achievement and gained satisfaction presenting Ottoman-Turkish culture to Western world. Sakıp Sabancı. In his autobiography, explained the reasons for his involvement in arts as follows:

I could not understand what he (the owner of a bank in Germany) was saying since I was not a bank employee. He mentioned about the painting collections of their corporation, and the scholarship awarded by them. He woke me up. Now, if I talk to a European person who started his journey a long time ago before us about, “I produce so....cement so....cloth” the numbers might seem funny him. But he got confused when he seen that I, as a businessman from Turkey, is also interested in our traditional art, calligraphy, paintings, philanthropy and art.²²¹

²²⁰ Sadun Tanju, *Hacı Ömer* (İstanbul: Apa Ofset, 1983), p.175.

²²¹ “Bankanın genel müdürü bankacılıkla ilgili birşeyler) Anlatsaydı da ben bankacı olmadığından anlamazdım. Bana tablo koleksiyonlarının zenginlerinden, hangi meşhur ressamların tablolarına sahip olduklarından, verdikleri burslardan söz etti. Benim gözüme açtı. Şimdi, ben bizden yüzlerce yıl önce yola çıkmış Avrupalı’ya “Şu kadar çimento, bu kadar bez üretiyorum” desem rakamlar komik gelebilir. Ama o adam çok eski öz sanatımızdan, resimlerden, hayır işinden, sanattan anladığımızı görünce, Türkiye’den gelmiş bir işadaminin de bu konuda ilgisini görünce şaşırdı.” Sakıp Sabancı, *Bıraktığım Yerden Hayatım*, 9th edition (İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 2004), p.398.

Sakıp Sabancı witnessed the development of philanthropic organizations particularly in North America and Western Europe in the 1970s. As a result of the industrial achievements of the Sabancı Group that gradually invested in collecting masterpieces of Turkish traditional art, Sakıp Sabancı began to dream about a museum that carried the name of his family.

Sakıp turned into a museum watchman living in the treasury of culture and art by aggregating the charming artistic and industrial objects from Europe that his father had collected with the objects from our traditional culture. He loved every object on his wall, but he could not escape from the feeling that none of them belonged to him. These valuable things could not be used for beautifying and decorating a small and private world of people. Art would serve its real objective when it aimed at the benefit of society. Maybe, this house would be turned to into a museum in the future.²²²

A decade later, Sakıp Sabancı realized his dream and converted his mansion into a museum. The dream that had begun in the mid-1960s was realized in the 2000s and achieved international success in traditional and modern art in Turkey as well as in the world.

The Pera Museum

Suna Inan Kıraç Foundation established The Pera Museum in June 2005 for the purpose of providing cultural service. The building (known as the old Bristol Hotel) constructed in 1893 by Achille Manoussos in Tepebaşı, was completely renovated to serve as

²²² “Sakıp, babasının topladığı 19. yüzyıl Avrupa sanatı ve sanayinin gözetimci güzellikteki eşyası yanına, bizim öz kültürümüzle yarattığı san’at güzelliklerini de toplayıp biraraya koyarak kültürün ve sanatın ortak hazineleri içinde yaşayan bir müze bekçisine dönmüştü. Satın alıp evinin duvarlarına astığı herşeyi seviyor, fakat yine de bütün bunlar onun değilmiş gibi bir garip duyguyu içinden söküp atamıyor. Bunlar onun değildi. Böyle değerler kişilerin küçük ve özel dünyalarını süslemek, güzelleştirmek için kullanmazlardı. San’at da herhengi bir büyük iş gibi toplumun yararına dönük olduğu zaman asıl amacına varmış sayılırdı...Günün birinde, belki ondan sonra, bu ev bir müze olurdu.” Sadun Tanju, *Hacı Ömer* (İstanbul: Apa Ofset, 1983), p.247.

a museum and branch of a cultural center project. The first and second floor of the Pera Museum houses three permanent collections belonging to the Suna and İnan Kır    Foundation, with the Sevgi and Erdo  an G  n  l Gallery on the second floor. The third, fourth, and the fifth floors are devoted to multipurpose exhibition spaces.

The collection of Suna and İnan Kır    Foundation has three parts: Anatolian Weights and Measures, K  tahya Tiles and Ceramics, and an Orientalist art collection. The first floor of the museum displays selected examples from the foundation's collection of Anatolian Weights and Measures that show the development of the devices used to weight and measure in Anatolia since the earliest time. On the same floor the foundation's collection of K  tahya Tiles and Ceramics from the fourteenth century is on displaying.

The Orientalist art collection consists of more than three hundred paintings, bringing together important works by European artists inspired by the Ottoman world from the seventeenth century to the early nineteenth. The collection includes works by Osman Hamdi Bey presented a visual panorama of the last two centuries of the Ottoman Empire. Osman Hamdi Bey's paintings are regarded by art historians as the genre's only "Native Orientalist", in 2004 Pera Museum bought his famous paintings "Kaplumba  a Terbiyecisi" (the Tortoise Trainer) for 5 million TL the highest rate paid for an art work in Turkey up to now. The permanent collection also includes portraits of sultans, princes, and other members of the Ottoman imperial family, foreign ambassadors and their families' portraits. Many paintings of the Sevgi Erdo  an G  n  l's private collection also have entered the Pera Museum collection and to honor their names the museum gave their names to the exhibition gallery. The building hosts multipurpose exhibition spaces, an auditorium, lobby, and activity spaces for visitors. Pera Museum also has a film center where every month films from Latin America, China, East

Europe as well as the Western world are shown. Everyday more than 600 people visited Pera Museum in 2010.²²³

The Istanbul Modern

The Istanbul Modern was the first private modern art museum to organize contemporary art exhibitions in Turkey. The root of the idea of founding a modern art museum in Istanbul goes to the 1st Contemporary Art exhibitions in 1987, known today as the International Istanbul Biennial one of the most important events in Istanbul's art scene. Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı founded the modern art museum at the Feshane, a former textile manufacturing site and the 3rd Istanbul Biennial was held there. However, the Istanbul Municipality refused to allocating this building to İKSV as an modern art museum. The idea of modern art museum in the early 1990s was an important contribution for Turkish art considering insufficient state support and funding for such an enterprise.

After a decade, the modern art museum project was again taken into consideration. This time the fourth warehouse²²⁴ on the Galata pier, near the Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University served as the main exhibition hall of the 8th International Istanbul Biennial. In 2004, when Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan gave his approval for the permanent use of

²²³ *Deposunda Picassolar ve Osman Hamdiler Var.* Accessed July 10, 2011.
<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2006/06/27/pazar/apaz.html>

²²⁴ The exhibiton hall is 8.000 square meter dry warehouse, owned by the Turkish Maritime Organization was transformed into a modern museum bulding with all functions that need to reach international standarts. The current building was reconstracted as awarehouse during the realization of the 1957-58 Project, which was designed for Tophane Square by the prominent architecture Sedat Hakkı Eldem. *Istanbul Modern Hakkında.* Accessed February 20,2010.http://www.istanbulmodern.org/en/f_index.html

the site, Eczacıbaşı's dream came true. The main political reason of allocation of this area for the Istanbul Modern was improving Turkey's EU membership and chances for cultural relations with the EU. The museum opened on December 24, 2004 which was also the date for the starting of the membership negotiations. At the opening speech of the museum, Erdoğan stated that the opening of the museum was a late but an important step for Turkish modern art that further steps were needed for representing Turkish art abroad.²²⁵ Although the museum was not complete it opened without a sculpture garden or temporary exhibitions.

Nowadays, along with permanent and temporary exhibition halls, the museum offers a wide range of facilities such as a photography gallery, library, cinema center, café and design store as well as educational and social programs. The Istanbul Modern has two important goals for the Turkish art scene: to foster appreciation for the arts in the masses and to stimulate active engagement in the arts.²²⁶

The Istanbul Modern is a well known example with its popularity among Turkish people. Every year, the museum attracts approximately 500,000 visitors,²²⁷ the highest number of visitors to any private Turkish museums. Over the past five years, the number has reached a total of more than 2,250,000 visitors. As a popular site for tourists and locals, the Istanbul Modern has come to symbolize the encounter of art and society.

The Istanbul Modern art museum uses marketing strategies such as advertising and sales of merchandise, Oya Eczacıbaşı, the chair of the Board of Directors, states the vision of Istanbul Modern as "the museum is rapidly moving ahead on this path to becoming a

²²⁵ "İstanbul Modern Açıldı", Radikal, 12 December 2004.

²²⁶ *Istanbul Modern Hakkında*. Accessed February 20, 2010.
http://www.istanbulmodern.org/en/f_index.html.

²²⁷ *Hürriyet Pazar*, 13. 12.2009, p.6.

recognizable world-wide brand name; a brand name that embodies the Turkish contemporary art scene.”²²⁸ “Being the changing face of Turkey” is the motto of the modern art museum, which is a candidate for Istanbul’s image as a major cultural capital. The museum has hosted foreign officials and leaders visiting Turkey such as Britain’s Queen Elizabeth has visited to there in 2004.

The museum has two exhibition spaces. The permanent collection is housed in the upper floor galleries. To create alternative vision for the visitor every year, the museum changes the art works in this section and organizes it in a different way. The lower floor gallery hosts three to four Temporary Exhibitions annually. These include a Retrospective Exhibition, a survey of modern artists, and an international Contemporary Art exhibition. In addition, to the temporary exhibition galleries, the educational programs of Istanbul Modern coordinated with exhibitions to develop the art consciousness of children.

According to the New York Times:

With a collection of abstract paintings, portraits, sculptures and photographs from private and state collections, the new museum, Istanbul Modern, aims to foster innovative exchanges between Turkish and Western art. ‘The intention is for it to be meaningful for the place it was born, as well as a point of interaction, a platform to both receive and to send art,’ said Rosa Martinez. The museum was attracting 17,500 visitors the first week.(in 2005 averaging 4,500 visitors a day)²²⁹

Comparing Istanbul Modern to Pera Museum and Sabancı Museum, averaging 1500 people in weekdays and 2500 people in weekends visited Istanbul Modern. From 2004 to 2011, more

²²⁸ *Istanbul Modern Hakkında*. Accessed February 20,2010.
http://www.istanbulmodern.org/en/f_index.htm

²²⁹ Arnold Reisman, *The Transformation of Istanbul: Art Galleries Reviving Decaying Spaces* (Washington D.C: Turkish Cultural Foundation, 2009), p.112.

than 2,5 million people visited the museum that is the highest number among the private art museums in Turkey.²³⁰

Up to now, the Istanbul Modern has hosted the following modern and contemporary art exhibitions: The Making of the Istanbul Modern, New Acquisitions, the Fikret Mualla Retrospective, the Sculpture Garden, Observation, Interpretation, Center of Gravity, Memory and Scale, Two Generations of the Rainbow, Intersecting Times, Venice-Istanbul, Is This Fiction, ...Dreams are Dreams, Time Present Time Past, Bridge, Love and Politics, the Cihat Burak Retrospective, Design Cities, Modern Experiences, and Site. These exhibitions have been in the temporary exhibition spaces organized by curators in two ways. First, the masterpieces of Turkish and contemporary artists works were permanently showed as retrospectives in this place. Sometimes the museum has preferred to host foreign private collections of contemporary art as well as art works which were exhibited in international biennials.

Photograph and video art exhibitions are held on the lower floor as follows:

Appearances As We See, Rendez-Vous, Video Program, Cityrama, Nothing Lasts Forever, In the light of the Republic, True Stories, Painting As a Way of Living, Right Place Right Time, Double of Life, 60 Years of Magnum, Turkey by Magnum, Andreas Gursky, Who Are You? Ahmet Polat, Quiet Resistance, Pinhole Photographs, Occupying Territory, the City Rises, Held Together with Water, Human Conditions, Pureblood Reflection, the City Rises, In Praise of Shadow, 10th Video Program, Room Project, and When Angels Fall, New Works, New Horizons, Yao Lu's New Landscapes, and Paradise Lost.²³¹ For the first time, in Turkey a

²³⁰ "İstanbul Modern: Oya Eczacıbaşı ile Söyleşi". Accessed July 10, 2011.
<http://www.istanbulburda.com/Istanbul-Modern-23861>

²³¹ *Istanbul Modern Hakkında*. Accessed February 20, 2010.

museum has allocated space for photography and video exhibitions, offering a broad perspective of contemporary media art for its visitors. These exhibitions explore the way contemporary artists address a number topical issues of globalization and its consequences, post modernism, immigration, transformation of cultures, multiculturalism, ecological changes, the rise of technology, identity, sexuality, and human experience.

Proje 4L The Elgiz Contemporary Art Museum

The Elgiz Museum of Contemporary Art is a private contemporary collection museum that was founded by Sevda and Can Elgiz in 2001. Formerly, under the name of “Proje 4L-The Istanbul Museum of Contemporary Art,” the space provided three years of useful reconstruction of the former building. The museum then changed its name and format in order to accommodate essential works from “The Elgiz Collection.” In 2009 the Museum moved to its new premises in Maslak and continues its activities with the same mission. The main objectives of the museum are to facilitate the globalization of contemporary Turkish art and familiarize the public with Turkish contemporary art. For the first time a museum focuses on only contemporary art in Turkey promoting Turkish artists in the international arena. Through its eclectic collection which illustrates over fifteen years of development in contemporary art, the museum invites Turkish people to view major international art, rarely seen before in the country. Similar to other private museums, the Elgiz Contemporary Art Museum organizes lectures and seminars in its conference space by inviting art collectors, contemporary artists and art critics. Exhibitions that have taken places in the museums are as follows: “I’m So Sad to Kill You” (2003), “Becoming a Place” (2001), “Look Again” (2002), Coming Under Light

(2002), “Under the Beach: The Pavement” (2003), “Women Who Wear Wings” (2002), “Stop for a Moment: Painting as Narrative” (2002), “Organized Conflict” (2003), “Loud and Clear” (2004), “Now New: New Works” (2010), “The Dawn of Tomorrow” (2008), “Selection 2007,” and “Meltem of Istanbul.”²³²

The exhibitions include a wide range of video and installation, breaking down the boundaries between fashion and art. Most of the exhibitions explore different visual experiences, making use of new technologies, diverse materials and methods. Foreign artists and a younger generation of Turkish artist have a chance to exhibit their works of art and explore important questions such as urbanization, migration, identity conflict, public sphere, marginality and so on. The museum has realized the series of exhibitions with the support of the Italian Culture Center, Turkish Airlines, Garanti Bank, and Siemens, but no state institutions.

The Kadir Has University Rezzan Has Museum

The Rezzan Has Museum is not based on an existing collection. At present, the structure of the museum is made up of its main collection. The museum is established on the site of the Cibali Tobacco Processing and Cigarette Factory, which was converted into Kadir Has University in 2003. The Byzantine cistern called “The Dark Fountain” (*Karanlık Çeşme*) and the ruins of a Turkish bath that dates back to the Ottoman classical age are part of the museum. The museum’s main policy is organizing its exhibitions concentrating on the Haliç theme incorporating the traces of Byzantine, Ottoman and Republican periods due to its

²³² Elgiz Contemporary Art Museum. About Us.<http://www.proje41.org/EN/muzebilgisi.html>

location. The main building of Kadir Has University was awarded the 2003 Europe Nostra Prize for Cultural Heritage as the best preserved building.²³³ Up to now, the Rezzan Has Museum has hosted twelve exhibitions, four of them dedicated to modern art and the rest focusing on ancient Anatolian art, early Turkish painting, and Atatürk's photographs. In addition to exhibitions, the museum has an educational branch aiming at developing children's artistic creativity, designing their own art works. Although this private museum mainly focuses on ancient art history and modern Turkish art, the museum has published books on the history of Haliç, children's art books, Anatolian bead work.

The Yapı Kredi Vedat Nedim Tör Museum

Starting from the mid-1950s, Yapı Kredi Bank believed in investing in culture and arts, in those areas to help society reach higher level of modernity. The Vedat Nedim Tör Museum was established in 1992 for the purpose of scientifically assessing the Bank's collections and exhibiting them to contribute to the country's cultural life.

Vedat Nedim Tör, a prominent artist and an intellectual of the early Republican era, conducted Yapı Kredi's culture and art activities until 1977. He worked on large scale research, competitions, and publications to strengthen the position of the bank. Art collections, ancient coins, ethnographic works, fabrics, calligraphy, and special Atatürk photographs were accumulated by bank from the 1950s. The museum has three collections. Its coin collection

²³³ *Rezzan Has Müzesi Hakkında*. Accessed February 15, 2010.
<http://www.rhm.org.tr/en/tarihce.php>

consists of the 55,000 pieces of coins from an array of civilizations since the sixth century B.C. Initiated by Nuri Pere the curator of that time, the collection has evolved over the years. Many valuable pieces were added to the collection through purchases from the well known collectors. Ethnographic works hold a large place in Yapı Kredi's collection. Traditional textiles and folk dancing clothes, carpets, woven fabrics, and Karagöz figures are the best examples of local art in Anatolia.

In conclusion, the role of the museum in the public sphere and its relationship with state and society has been determined by the political and economic structures of the day from the Ottoman period to our time. From an empire to a newly established Republic, the museum has been a space embodying the relationship that the state forms with society. The museum practice in the context of the late Ottoman and early Republican eras indicate that the museum functioned as one of the significant spaces where modernism went hand in hand with nation state ideology. The narration of the birth of a nation and the uniqueness of a culture that basically depended on the roots of this identity, were subjected to the construction of national and cultural identities. The construction of national identity and ordering of cultural codes in the museum appeared in a variety of differentiated forms of representation.

Today, compared to Europe and the USA, private museums in Turkey relatively are a new phenomenon. The latest developments, technology and theoretical concepts trigger transformation of the cultural identity through museum practices in the visual world. The application of the liberal economic model in the cultural sphere provides financial opportunities to cultural institutions, transforming the classic structure of the Turkish state museums. We are facing a cultural policy that has emerged and aims to revive museums with

localization and privatization and in this way to transform them into important instruments and spaces of daily cultural life.

In recent years, the transformation of state museums has been centered around privatization or localization in Turkey. In the 1990s, the goals of cultural policy were to turn the state museums into autonomous cultural centers, getting rid of the unproductive official museum system. However, the privatization of museum brought the hegemonic power of the capital holder, these marketing strategies of which would determine the representation of culture and art. From the state to the private, the shift in power relations discovered a second way to transform the local to the global in terms of representation. Conducting internationally framed exhibitions, the privatization of cultural institutions and museums has made Turkish art visible on the global scale.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHANGING PERCEPTION OF TURKISH HISTORY AT INTERNATIONAL HERITAGE EXHIBITIONS

Sakıp Sabancı said the following on the condition of the Turkish image in the world in the 1980s:

Today, by opening the museum, we pay our debts. We display national wealth, calligraphies, carpets, rugs, pictures, valuable articles relics of the past which were accumulated during a life time. We strain every nerve to clear the image in the Western mind that Turks are barbarian and for showing we have a civilization, too.²³⁴

One of the most important developments of the representation of Turkish cultural policy in the international arena was the heritage exhibitions. These exhibitions were an important process of component of the reconstruction of the Turkish history and cultural identity in abroad. As seen in Sabancı's words, the importance of reconstructing the Turkish image in the last three decades must be emphasized. Although the Turkish Republic participated in international heritage exhibition later than its European counterparts, Turkey partly transformed its national image in a positive way. This process took nearly three decades due to the changing preferences in cultural policy and the new developments in historiography.

This part of the thesis examines on cultural heritage exhibitions that show how a notion of history writing can visualize the past in terms of art and culture. This chapter will focus on how the state ideology has played an extensive role in the making of a visual

²³⁴ “Bugün müze açarak borcumuzu yerine getiriyoruz. Ömür boyu derleyip topladığımız hazinler değerindeki milli servetimizi, güzel yazılarımızı, ecdat yadigarı halılarımızı, kilimlerimizi, resimlerimizi, değerli eşyamızı gözler önüne seriyoruz. Batıdaki Barbar Türk imajını silmek, bizim de bir medeniyetimiz olduğunu göstermek için çırpınıyoruz.” Zahir Güvemli, *Sabancı Resim Koleksiyonu: The Sabancı Collection of Paintings* (Istanbul: Akbank'ın Bir Kültür Hizmeti, 1984).

representation in the international arena applying the cultural policy of the nation state after the 1980s. Heritage exhibitions are the showcases of the states. Three different narrative structures will be analyzed in heritage exhibitions. The first narrative model is ‘myths’ which are the name of Anatolian archeology exhibitions. As a second model, “dreams” indicated Ottoman history exhibitions namely the sixteenth Golden Age from 1987 to 1999. The last narrative in international heritage exhibition is “realities,” as an outcome of post-modern history writing. These three approaches will be investigated in this part of the study.

In Turkish classic historiography, there are four basic assumptions that have hindered hindered writing of objective, modern historiography in the twentieth century. The first problematic issue is the disregarding of the Ottoman past in national history writing. In order to legitimize the new Republican ideology, the national historians preferred to eliminate the Ottoman/Islamic period in Anatolian Turkish historiography. In this regard, architecture historian Uğur Tanyeli argues that Turkish modernity faced the necessity of creating an “other” so it did so by constructing the Ottoman as its “other”. The Ottoman is not the only “other” constructed by Turkish modernity.²³⁵ As an example that which is defined as “the West” for generations in Turkey is conceptually not far from that which are expressed as “the Orient”. The communities of Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbs and Arabs who lived under the Ottoman rule are also the “other.” In this sense, the former Ottoman geographies are not fully represented in art history writing due to being the other.

In the early Republican period, Turkish nationalist historiography was faced with a dilemma in constructing a national art history. The Ottoman periods provided extensive

²³⁵ Uğur Tanyeli, “History of Ottoman Architecture and The Historiographical Model of Decline and Fall”, in *7 Centuries of Ottoman Architecture: A Supra-National Heritage*, consisted of the papers presented to the international congress which took place at ITU Taşkışla Campus, edited by Afife Batur, Nur Akın, Selçuk Batur (İstanbul: Yem Yayınları, 2000), p.43.

material for that purpose. However, Turkish nationalist historiography had to construct a national history with nationalist inclinations. For this reason, the pre-Ottoman Turkish and pre-Turk Anatolian histories had to be included in this historical construction and the Ottoman history was thus no longer the unique owner of the past. The new Republican ideology primarily represented itself during a radical change in the political system and built a strong argument proving the Ottoman failure in the modernization. The ‘other’ Ottoman had been unsuccessful, but the new Republic would succeed.²³⁶

Until mid-1990, in the international heritage exhibitions, Ottoman history was given a secondary importance in the construction of modern Turkish identity and history. A series of Anatolian heritage exhibitions realized in the 1980s placed the lesser art works of Seljukid and Ottoman civilization, compared to the pre-Islamic period of Anatolia. Especially, the pre-Ottoman Turkish and pre-Turk Anatolian histories were included in this historiographical construction. In this way the Republican ideology established a national art history without writing about the “glorious Ottoman past.”

This is the second assumption in national historiography. Art historian Prof. Ayda Arel argues that “a general paradigm of the sixteenth century golden age is a discourse when the Empire’s military, administrative and cultural acquisitions were utmost and also that the Empire has expanded both its boundaries and its treasury to its limits has seldom been questioned.”²³⁷ The writing of past victories and successful state administration in the imperial time is a must for national historiography because the historical analysis provides a source of

²³⁶ Tanyeli, p.44.

²³⁷ Ayda Arel, “Inaccuracies, Commonplace Statements and Marginality: The History of Ottoman Architecture Revisited”, in *7 Centuries of Ottoman Architecture: A Supra-National Heritage*, consisted of the papers presented to the international congress which took place at ITU Taşkışla Campus, edited by Afife Batur, Nur Akın, Selçuk Batur (İstanbul: Yem Yayınları, 2000), pp.30-33.

legitimacy for the new regime. For this reason, the Republican ideology itself showed a dichotomy in the long run, due to disregarding Ottoman history in the Turkish national historiography.

In addition to a “golden age” discourse, the third general assumption derived from time and geography orientation of Ottoman history writing. In the official art history, there is a differentiation between “Ottoman” and “Turkish.” For example, the monuments, public buildings and art works built under the Ottoman rule are considered to be Ottoman, the houses of the Ottoman period are categorized as Turkish. The division indicates that it is only the military and political aspects of the Ottoman Empire which have been institutionalized by the official history, while the nation’s cultural and social past has been and still are located along the linear route which links Turkic ancestry in Central Asia to Anatolia.

Similar to Tanyeli’s view on the representation of non-Muslim and other people of non-Turkic origin, Arel insists that the ordinary citizens who lived in the Middle-Eastern, the former Western, the north African and the Balkan regions have been ignored in the Ottoman art historiography.²³⁸ As a geographical orientation, Istanbul and the court of the Sultan have been the center of Ottoman history writing, but the other regions except from Anatolia are a secondary space for classical historians.

In terms of chronological order, the generally accepted periodization in Ottoman history is the well-known Foundation/Rise/Stagnation/Decline articulation, with the sixteenth century as a classical period in Ottoman art at its apex. This formulation is the main framework for classic Ottoman history writers, who disregard transformations and changes in the dynamics of political history.

²³⁸ Arel, p.31.

Nowadays, these paradigms are strongly criticized by revisionist historian in post-modern historiography. The current discourse of official history, compared to the classical one, regards the history of the Ottoman Empire as a multinational history. However, the ethnocentric issues which I mentioned above obviously originated from the wish to demonstrate the specific place of the Turks within universal culture and to emphasize distinctive aspects for the nation states ideological mission. Arel questioned the results of ethnocentric patriotism imposing a simple model, shaped for local historiography. In official Turkish historiography, constructing of the Ottoman identity as the other means that is throwing the burden of the historical heritage of the Ottoman Empire from the shoulders of the Republic. Also Being “Turk” and being “Muslim” are again fundamental elements in Turkish national historiography, because Turkey’s place within the world culture became more and more important today.²³⁹ However, Ottoman cultural identity is still valued in the Middle East as well as the Balkans. The multi-cultural and multi ethnic character of the Ottoman Empire is gradually being reconsidered and evaluated by art historians. The nationalist discourse in Turkish historiography disregarded Ottoman and Seljukid visual culture in the writings of national historiography. Necipoğlu said that “our art history is a multicultural rather than national one.” Turkish scholars have turned to Turkish art history and closed the door to the Balkans and the Middle East. The Anatolia region has become the center of their studies.²⁴⁰ When multinational art history is reduced to a single parameter, “nation”, the definition of art directly is related to the nationalist paradigms.

²³⁹ Arel, p.32.

²⁴⁰ Baha Tanman, Gülru Necipoğlu Kafadar, Uşun Tükel, “Söyleşi:Türkiye’de Sanat Tarihi,” *Arredamento Mimarlık*, n.10 (1998):38-45.

Tanyeli argues that “the Ottoman should carry out to a historical and geographical ground (or grounds), it has to be freed from being a ‘historical creature of its own’ defined in the context of a model valid for itself only.”²⁴¹ In this regard, the fourth assumption of Turkish art historiography positions Ottoman art history in world art historiography. In Western academic literature, Ottoman art generally is positioned in the Islamic arts. However, Turkish civilization in Anatolia carried eclectic elements that were partly different from Islamic art heritage. The forms, aesthetics, and structure of Islamic art in Middle East changed from place to place and time to time. For this reason, we cannot talk about unique form of Islamic art.

Kuban argues that in the Middle East, Islamic art was founded on universal cultural values; however, when we talked about national forms in Islamic art culture, there was no any sufficient research realized in the 1980s. Generalizations in Islamic art in the enormous geographical area led to false descriptions in defining Islamic culture and art. In this respect, categorizing Ottoman art within the Islamic arts eliminated variety and difference in the Ottoman identity and geography.²⁴² Kuban claims that

Turks who founded the Ottoman Empire never sought an ethnic identity. The Ottoman identity was formed throughout centuries and steppes to the Balkans. Today, the problem in cultural identity realized in art history does not come from Ottoman heritage. The difficulty in determining the identity of the past is either insufficient academic information or ideological reasons behind the interpretation of history. If we briefly interpret Ottoman history, the fundamental problem in Turkish historiography is the state ideology.²⁴³

²⁴¹ Tanyeli, p.49.

²⁴² Doğan Kuban, *Türk ve İslam Sanatı Üzerine Denemeler* (İstanbul: 1982), p.2,3. See also, Doğan Kuban, *Sanat Tarihimizin Sorunları* (İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları,1975).

²⁴³ “Osmanlı devletini kuran Türkmenler bir kimlik aramıyorlardı. Osmanlı kimliği yüzyıllar içinde oluştu. Bileşenleri Asya bozkırlarından Balkanlar’a kadar her coğrafi bölgeye yayılır. Bugünkü kültürün sorunu Osmanlı kimliği değildir. Devrini kapatmış bir tarih döneminin kimliğini saptamakta zorlanmak, ya yeterli bilgi olmamasındandır, ya da yorumları saptıran ideolojik nedenlerden ötürüdür. Bizim Osmanlı üzerinde, doğru yorumlandığı zaman, yeterince bilgimiz vardır. Türkiye’de temel tarih sorunu ideolojiktir.”Doğan Kuban, *Sanat Tarihi Defterleri: Metin Ahunbay’a Armağan*, Özel Sayı no.8 (İstanbul: Ege Yayınları, 2004), pp.1.

This perspective indicates that the writing Ottoman art history is a process of the elimination of Islamic and Byzantium culture from Ottoman culture. Although Ottoman art and architecture had strong ties with the late Byzantium culture, in 1930s dominant state ideology refused the idea that there was a cultural continuation between late Byzantium and the early Ottoman art. For this reason, the influence of Byzantine culture was disregarded in Turkish art historiography.

As mentioned above, art history writing in Turkey is problematic arena for scholars due to the fact that nationalism, the lack of theoretical resources and insufficient methodologies are the main reason behind controversial structure of Turkish art history. The international heritage exhibitions that are a reflection of art historiography in Turkey that will be evaluated in this chapter shows the basic paradigms of Turkish history. History in the heritage exhibitions is codified in the objects, and visual materials display the inner meaning and structure of the story.

In this point of view, Hayden White argues that history, because of its nature, determines writing as a kind of device for communication; written text in the exhibition is realized in a form of icons.²⁴⁴ History writing as a practical language is formed in order to construct each part of the narrative structure which makes up the whole story in the exhibitions. Plot structures according to which the visitor analyzes the narrative structure through reading, consists of multiple references directed by the curator.

Curators use a specific plot structure according to the theme, geographical space and chronology. The curator represents legitimacy under the scientific and spatial authority on behalf of the state ideology. Given this perspective, the history exhibitions that have been held

²⁴⁴ Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1973).

abroad since 1984, would be regarded as platforms displaying cultural symbols to show the wealth of the Turkish nation. Reading the past through these exhibitions reflects the state-centered history writing practices on the agenda of nation-state formation.

Before I discuss international exhibitions from the 1980s onwards on the world scale, I will briefly introduce “national exhibitions” during the late Ottoman and early Republican periods. These two periods show more or less a continuity to understand the representation of the nation as well as the concepts of the West and the East in the history of Turkey’s exhibitions. In the following part of this chapter, the historical background of heritage exhibitions will be analyzed.

Ottoman and Early Republican Exhibitions: The Nation, the West, and the Orient

The nineteenth century saw the emergence of the nation-state, rapid industrialization, and technological innovations throughout world. Beginning in 1851 in London, exhibitions, held in many cities in Europe and North America, became in the words of Eric Hobsbawn, “great new rituals of self-congratulation,” directly linked to the economic and industrial transformation of the nations.²⁴⁵ The issue of cultural self-definition for every nation during the nineteenth century was particularly related to “modernity and change.” Similar to other Muslim nations, starting from the 1860s, the Ottoman state participated in world expositions to represent itself as a “modern state.” During the reign of Abdülaziz, an industrial exhibition

²⁴⁵ Zeynep Çelik. *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at nineteenth-century World’s Fair* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p.1.

was organized in Istanbul in 1863, and major Ottoman displays were assembled in Paris in 1867 and Vienna in 1873. During the reign of Abdulhamit II, the Ottoman Empire participated in the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris.²⁴⁶

According to Selim Deringil, the cultural policy of the Ottoman state consisted of two main elements. First, there was the aim of presenting the Ottoman art as the leader of the Islamic world, yet a modern member of the civilized community of nations. Second, constant vigilance aimed to repel any slight or insult to the Sublime State's prestige.²⁴⁷ The most important aspect of Ottoman participation in the world fairs was that the Ottomans wanted to show the world the Ottoman self image as "modern" and "normal."

As Deringil emphasizes, the Ottomans aimed to play down the exotic and present a "civilized" image of their subjects.²⁴⁸ The symbolic power of the Ottoman image at the international exhibitions was deeply concerned about promoting the cultural richness of the empire. The Ottoman administrators used the exhibition complexes as symbolic places in which exhibited Janissary models that played an important role in emphasizing a modern image of the Ottoman Empire separated from its past. Wendy Shaw writes that, similar to most of the Orientalist practices in the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire also displayed exhibition galleries to represent its past as the "timeless other".²⁴⁹ The Ottoman Empire in these exhibitions represented its history in frozen Orientalist forms. For example, after the

²⁴⁶ Çelik, p.6.

²⁴⁷ Selim Deringil. *The Well Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London and New York: I.B Tauris, 1999), p.154.

²⁴⁸ Deringil, p.164.

²⁴⁹ Wendy M.K Shaw. *Osmanlı Müzeciliği: Müzeler, Arkeoloji ve Tarihin Görselleşmesi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), p.58.

abolition of the Janissaries corps, in order to keep the national memory alive, models of Janissary soldiers were displayed in the exhibition spaces to visualize the recent past.

During the universal expositions, the Ottoman administrators paid special attention to the self-promotion of the empire while designing interior space of the Ottoman pavilion. At the 1867 Paris World Exhibition, the Ottoman pavilion represented authentic images of the East constructing a mosque, a Turkish village, and a bath.²⁵⁰ In this way, the Ottoman Empire condensed images of its cultural and social life in a selection of building types. In addition, the Ottoman display in 1867 was enriched by numerous photographs by the Abdullah brothers of Istanbul depicting Turkish life; by French artist's paintings of Ottoman subject; and by three works of the Ottoman painter Osman Hamdi (Gypsy Camp, Zeibek on the lookout, and the death of Zeibek).²⁵¹ The object represented in the Ottoman pavilion was frozen in an ambiguous and distant past. The Islamic and national identity of the empire at the universal was presented as change and advancement in civilization.

The changes that occurred from 1867 to 1900 at the universal expositions marked a great change in the exhibition strategies of the Ottoman Empire. The reconstruction of Islamic and national past was one of the aims of the Ottoman sultans on behalf of the European nations. Apart from the international exhibitions, the Westernization of Ottoman art in the mid-nineteenth century opened a new path for nationally framed art exhibitions. "Sergi-i Osmani" (*Ottoman Exhibition*) covered all kinds of such artistic objects as jewelery, wooden and handicrafts which exhibited the wealth of traditional Ottoman art. At the 1873 World Exposition in Vienna, a photographic album of the Ottoman clothes entitled the *Elbise-i Osmaniye: Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie* (*Ottoman Clothes: Popular Costumes*

²⁵⁰ Çelik, p.85.

²⁵¹ Shaw, *Osmanlı Müzeciliği*, p.124, 194.

from Turkey) was designed as a showcase of a prestigious Eastern Empire. The Elbise album comprises seventy-four photographic plates, each featuring a group of live models dressed in regional outfits. Ahmet Ersoy argues that the Ottoman subjects represented in the Elbise were thought of as revealing the social order and harmony of the empire.²⁵² The purpose of the imperial discourse was to show “variety in unity” in a multicultural state, representing a more homogeneous Ottoman identity that was reformulated by the Tanzimat Reforms.

Edward Said argues that “there is no vantage outside the actuality of relationships between unequal imperial and non imperial powers, between different others, a vantage that might allow one the epistemological privilege of somehow judging, evaluating, and interpreting free of the encumbering interests, emotions, and engagements of the ongoing relationship themselves.”²⁵³ Said mentions above the unequal relationship of the East and the West realized in the exhibition spaces after the mid 19th century. The atmosphere of the international expositions displayed the power strategies that were used to overcome the tension between the West and the East. The mode of pure and authentic representation in the exhibition spaces actually corresponded to the general aims of European Orientalism. European nations expected the Eastern nation to represent themselves in Orientalist approaches and accepted being “the other” for the West.

The East and the West were historically constructed categories determined by the imperial power in nineteenth century. Where the East is and where the West is should be questioned. Geographically the East is the non-Western world. The hall area was seen as the East as well as barbarian, undeveloped, and primitive countries. Seeing the East as a frozen

²⁵² Ahmet Ersoy, A Sartorial Tribute to Late Tanzimat Ottomanism: The Elbise-i ‘Osmaniyye Album,” *Muqarnas*, v.20 (2003),p. 195.

²⁵³ Edward Said, “Representing the Colonized: Anthropology’s Interlocutors,” *Critical Inquiry*, Winter 1989, pp.37-47.

past was the classical view of the West that showed in the international fairs. The East had broken the barriers of Western world to discover an alternative past to realize in modern way rather being primitives or domestic marginal. In summary, the visualization of the otherness was the ideological reason of the international fairs to make a clear cut definition of where the Eastern and the Western nations came together to display their cultures in unequal time, space and narrative. While creating a Eurocentric and modern sense of imperial historical structure and knowledge for the East, the overseas exhibitions provided nationalist language, symbols for imperial past, and its control for the West.²⁵⁴

International Cultural Heritage Exhibitionism during the Republican Period

The institutionalization of archeology in Turkey became a state project in the early 1930s with the direction of M. Kemal Atatürk. The mobilization of National Archeology was part of the supporting project of the Turkish History Thesis, embracing all civilizations which they had lived in Anatolia. The foundation of the Turkish History Association in 1931 marked an archeological excavation. Behind the development of national archeology the RPP demonstrated the power of the nation in founding and protecting national commodity to show historic roots of Turks to the West. Particularly, under the directorate of Hasan Rıza Çambel, the early Republican archeology concentrated on prehistory and the Hittite Empire, which was regarded as the ancestor of Turks. Prof. Afet İnan, as an advocate of the Turkish History Thesis, insisted that the Turks were the children of a Central Asian race that had founded all of the ancient civilizations in Iran, Iraq, Anatolia, Egypt, and the Aegean.²⁵⁵ At this point, the

²⁵⁴ See also Özlem Kumrular (ed.), *Dünya'da Türk İmgesi* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005).

Republican regime paid special attention to exhibiting historical artifacts that were the symbols of the Turkish nation to develop its national identity and ancient past.

In the 1950s, exhibitions were organized as a part of museum collections such as the Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Exhibition held in 1958 at Topkapı Palace. The purpose of showing the Ottoman treasury was for visitors to imagine the splendor of the age of the Kanuni Sultan Süleyman. An introductory document declared that “the number of documents and objects dating from the time of Sultan Süleyman is a very large. Exhibiting Ottoman/Islamic heritage is one of the purposes of our museums, the visitors can benefit from the scattered traces of this glorious past in the exhibition hall.”²⁵⁶ This indicates that in 1950s, the cultural policy of the state generally centered on local exhibitions in order to educate public in history and the culture of old civilizations, which were survived through centuries in Anatolia.

International scale exhibitions started in 1960 one of the biggest exhibitions featured realized that about 300 important cultural artifacts, from the Neolithic Age through the Ottoman Empire, was shown to the Japanese public for the first time through the courtesy of the Turkish government.²⁵⁷ Art Treasures of Turkey was the first Turkish blockbuster. This travelling exhibition organized by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C traveled to ten American Museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the National Gallery of Art between 1966 and 1968.²⁵⁸ The exhibition covered ancient and historical objects

²⁵⁵ Gül Pulhan, “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin Arkeoloji Seferberliği”, *Sanat Dünyamız*, n.89 (Fall 2003), p.174.

²⁵⁶ “Müzemizde Sultan Süleyman zamanlarından kalma eşya ve vesikaların sayısı mühim bir yekün tutar. Kanuni Sergisi’nin maksadı müzemizin arşiv, seksiyon, ve depolarına dağılmış bulunan bu şerefli mazinin izlerini teşhir salonunun viüs’at ve imkan nispetinde topluca ziyaretçilerin istifadelerine arz etmekten ibarettir.” *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Sergisi* (İstanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Yayınları, 1958), p.2.

²⁵⁷ *Land of Civilization, Turkey* (Tokyo: Heibonşa Press, 1985), p.12.

transferred from the Museum of Archeology in Ankara and Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum, the Museum Turkish and Islamic Art, the Ethnographic Museum and finally, Konya Museum. This collection contained works of art belonging to all these cultures, from settlements dating back to the seventh millennium B.C to the Turkish Seljuk and Ottoman periods and attracted the interests of the American public as it offered a summary of the history of world civilization and knowledge.

It is an important point at that during the mid-1960s, Turkey's foreign policy was not so stable, and the political relations with the USA had certain difficulties due to the Cyprus problem, military bases of the USA in Turkey. In this connection, the "Art Treasures of Turkey" exhibition contributed to a better understanding between the Turkish and American nations. It offered a chance for the American people to deepen and strengthen their understanding of a land and people with whom they had many things in common. The center of the exhibition was Anatolia, the land of civilization that represented its history in a classical understanding. The exhibition succeeded in representing Anatolian civilization in the USA for the first time. Unfortunately, six objects did not return to Turkey after the travelling exhibition had finished. The metropolitan museum were added these objects in the museum collection.

The main reasons behind the prohibition on travelling art treasures are smuggling ancient art out of Turkey and the fear of loss or damage objects during exhibitions. In a series of illegal excavations that were conducted in Töltepe, Güre, Aktepe in the 1960s, great pieces from the Lydian treasury were smuggled out of the country and first entered the USA during

²⁵⁸ *Art Treasures of Turkey* (Washington D.C: Smithsonian Institution, 1966), p.5.

1966-1967.²⁵⁹ According to the Turkish government, some objects were stolen when Turkey sent art works to the United States in 1965.

In 1970, it was announced in the press that the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York had acquired an important group of antiquities, the majority of which were made of silver. Burhan Tezcan, at that time Deputy Director General of the Department of Monuments and Museums, sent a request to the Director of Metropolitan Museum of Art asking him as a colleague to supply information about and photographs of the objects that recently had been shown. In 1973, the Turkish Embassy in Washington made a request through diplomatic channels to the American Foreign Affairs Department for all the necessary assistance to be given for an investigation into the import. To preserve and protect national wealth, in 1971 the law stipulated that certain movable treasures could not be temporarily exhibited outside the country. The reason behind this law was that the stolen treasury of Lydian art had already been exhibited in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum and published as a part of their collections. Until the 1983, only private collections that were outside Turkey had travelled to be exhibited in the USA and Europe. The strict protection of cultural heritage was an outcome of coup d'état that did not approve of national treasures being temporarily exhibited abroad because the military regime wanted to restrict accession of information on Turkish history and art abroad.

In the post-coup era, the Motherland Party aimed to represent the modern face of Turkey abroad. The party program extensively relied on the reconstruction of Turkey's vision at the international level. The liberalization of such economic practices as foreign exchange, free trade, and support of private enterprises was accompanied by the socio-cultural

²⁵⁹ The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, General Directorate of Monuments and Museums, *Cultural Riches are Best Seen in Their Original Settings* (Ankara: The Ministry of Culture, 1995), p.4.

reconstruction of the country. In order to strengthen foreign relations with the USA, Britain and the European Union, the Özal government organized reforms in domestic affairs. As a part of the representation of Turkey among modern nations, cultural heritage exhibitions had strategically importance in publicity activities.

In 1982, the first minister of culture of Turkey affairs and former delegate to the United Nations, Prof. Dr. Talat Halman actively campaigned in favor of sending art exhibitions abroad, acknowledges that smuggling ancient art out of Turkey still occurred. The pieces were not large, as in the past, but were more often such transportable items as old coins or head of statues.²⁶⁰ The Turkish authorities were aware of the public relations value of major art exhibitions such as the Tutankhamun show (1979) from Egypt and “The Search for Alexander” (1980) from Greece. Minister of Culture and Tourism İlhan Evliyaoğlu said that “Our aim is to enable those people who cannot visit Turkey to see our culture and resources.”²⁶¹ He declared that his ministry was in favor of displaying Turkey’s heritage abroad.

In the 1982 constitution, Article 63 states that “the government is responsible for ensuring the protection of historical, natural and cultural assets and support to take measures for conservation and against archeological smuggling.”²⁶² A year later, the Protection for Culture and Cultural Heritage Act (No.2863)²⁶³ and Article 32 of this law were prepared

²⁶⁰ Marvine Howe, “Turkish Art Treasures May Come to the USA in ’85,” *New York Times* (Late Edition), August 29, 1983, p.13.

²⁶¹ Howe, p.13.

²⁶² Özgen Acar, “Anadolu’da Tarihsel ve Kültürel Miras Yağması,” in *Cumhuriyet’in Renkleri, Biçimleri*, edited by Ayla Ödekan (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1998),p.233.

²⁶³ Republic of Turkey, “Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu,” *T.C. Resmi Gazete*, no.18113 on 23 July 1983.

according to the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage Law based on overseas exhibitions which consisted of antiquities. According to the law, the country or sent to the demands of the exhibition application in accordance with the diplomatic process started. Protection of art works in the international exhibitions was the responsibility to the host-country authorities. The country had to ensure of all of the objects which were to be displayed in the exhibition. The heritage objects were property of the Republic of Turkey. For this reason, the Turkish state wanted a written agreement from the host country. This agreement included the regulations of the travelling overseas exhibitions and technical details of transportation, including a signed protocol between the two countries.²⁶⁴ The only conditions set by the law that the antiquities be returned to Turkey and be guaranteed and insured by the authorities of the receiving country against any possibility of damage, harm, threat or attack. The most valuable objects and collections such as the holy relics of the Prophet Mohammed (his mantle, swords, the hairs from his beard and several teeth in Topkapı Palace) or Spoonbill diamond (Kaşıkçı Elması) are not sent abroad.

Since its foundation in 1949, the Council of Europe has been working to promote awareness of a European identity based on common values. The Council of Europe exhibitions organized since 1954 have played a key role in this. In 1983, the Council of Europe decided to organize an art exhibition in Istanbul centered on Anatolian history and its connection to Europe. The exhibition was a turning point for Turkish exhibition policy to open a path for promoting Turkish art and culture in Europe. “The Art of Anatolia” included everything from prehistoric objects and Greek, Roman and Byzantine artifacts to Ottoman

²⁶⁴ *Taşınamaz Kültür Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu*. Accessed April 15, 2011.

Republic of Turkey, Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu, p.15.

<http://www.kulturvarliklari.gov.tr/Genel/BelgeGoster.aspx?F6E10F8892433CFF20F60137B44E34F5907B2819D2941289>

manuscripts, embroideries and pottery and served as a kind of showcase from future travelling exhibitions. The exhibition used works of art to highlight the cultural importance of Turkey and the emphasis was on the interaction between Anatolian art and society in the past and present. The collection of the exhibition was divided into three sections in order to see historical continuation between civilizations: the Neolithic Age of the Hittites was held in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic art, the Greek/Roman/Byzantine section was presented at St. Irene and the final section on Seljuk and Ottoman art was held in Topkapı Palace between May 22, and 30 October 1983.²⁶⁵ More than ten museums contributed objects for the Anatolian Civilization exhibition that was the first blockbuster cultural heritage exhibition. The term “Anatolian Civilizations” in the following years formed discourses such as “Anatolia the Land of Civilizations” and “Intersection of Civilizations: Anatolia” for promoting the cultural tourism of Turkey.²⁶⁶ Prof. Dr. Nurhan Atasoy, art historian and former dean of Istanbul University, was the head of the organization committee of this exhibition. Working in unison, curators and art historians ensured that it served as a tool for intercultural dialogue. Mercedes Benz-Otomarsan sponsored the exhibition and opened the era of art sponsoring in Turkey. The exhibit also presented a multi-vision show to represent the wealth of Anatolian culture.

In 1984, the first international exhibition was opened in Malaysia Kuala Lumpur as the pioneer of an exhibition tradition, focusing on Islamic art after the new legislation, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Smithsonian Institution’s Freer Gallery in

²⁶⁵ Republic of Turkey, *Avrupa Konseyi 18. Avrupa Sanat Sergisi: Anadolu Medeniyetleri I,II,III* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1983)

²⁶⁶ Filiz Çalışlar Yenişehirlioğlu, “Tarih, Tarihsellik, Taihseleçilik ve Kültürel Tüketim” in *Bilanço 1 (1923-1998): Siyaset, Kültür ve Uluslararası İlişkiler*, edited by Zeynep Rona (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), p.176.

Washington which had been engaged in formal approaches to the Turkish authorities over art work for previous last two- and the half-year years. However, Turkish government was skeptical about to sending objects to the USA museum due to ongoing problems with the Metropolitan Museum of Arts, involving the return the Lydian Treasury's return to its home land. William B. Macomber, president of the Metropolitan Museum and former ambassador to Turkey, showed keen interest in the Ottoman exhibition and sent a representative to view the Ottoman collections.

Organizing an exhibition takes approximately two to three years. UNESCO advised organizing exhibitions according to cultural agreements between countries as well as international rules that were determined by the executive committee of UNESCO. First, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs applied to the Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museum in Turkey giving a list of objects that they wanted to exhibit at their museums. The Turkish directorate found a commission whose members were the director of museums, archeology professors and art historians to decide which objects were to be sent abroad. The scientific committee gives a report to allow for the travelling of objects to other counties. Second, the directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums asked for state guarantees to protect ancient treasuries during the transportation and at the exhibition site. Third, the insurance policy was held by the host country to protect the collection from smuggling, accidents, natural disasters, terrorist attacks. After signing bilateral agreements (regarding such details as exhibition space, exact date, the list of collection, and duration) between the Turkish Foreign Relations and Cultural Activities Department and the hosting country's foreign relation department, the exhibition protocols are sent to the museums in order to prepare the collection in the following stages: labeling, packaging, customs procedures transfered under the control of the exhibition

commissioner. The commissioners prepared weekly reports about the condition of the exhibition and the problems that they faced with the organization.

The following part focuses on three discourses that are the outcomes of the state politic of Turkey. The logic behind the exhibition is shaped according to the aim of the curator who is indirectly selected from among the state officials. History exhibitions are analyzed in terms of state discourses, geopolitical idea and the writing of national history.

The Myth: Anatolia The Land of Civilization

The concepts of history writing and heritage management directly are related to the formation of a nation and the nation state thus rendering indispensable a brief glance at the international exhibitions in the light of discovering the roots of the nationalist project. As is well known, in the early Republican era, the discourse on the land of the Anatolia in terms of geography and space was closely connected to the political project of nation-building. The great loss during the First World War was a catastrophic experience for the formation of the nation state, and led to the drawing of the boundaries of the newly established state. “Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power.”²⁶⁷ says Michel Foucault. A multi-ethnic empire spread over three continents reduced to an Anatolian nation state determined the way space was analyzed and the border of the nation were fixed.

²⁶⁷ Paul Rainbow, *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p.53.

The Turkish nationalism of the 1930s rhetorically could be translated as the reshaping of geography through history. Along with the formation of the nation state, and the authoritarian spatial policies, the Turkish history thesis attempted to use the idea of Central Asia/the motherland as a tool to rewrite the historical geography of Anatolia.²⁶⁸ Together with the Turkish History Thesis, the dynamics of geography and space were searching its roots in Central Asia, the supposed motherland. The thesis wanted to make a clear definition of the origin of the Turks and reshaping of the territories in which the Turks lived.

In Foucault's view on state and power relation, maps are for the nation state. They are one way of rendering its subjects and territories visible. In the sense of the Panopticon, while securing the invisibility of the political authority, the state gaze becomes visible. This power strengthens its visibility.²⁶⁹ Indeed, international heritage exhibitions show the increasing visibility of a state's power. Nations focusing on territorial history make sense of the past in the collective memory geographical nationalism of the Turkish History Thesis.

In the mid-1980s, a series of exhibitions took place in Japan, Germany, and Italy under the title of "Land of Civilization, Turkey" tracing the 10,000-year long history of Turkey, regarded as a contact point of the civilizations of the East and the West. The Turkish government paid special attention to international history exhibitions to promote cultural tourism and created a positive image of the country. The first exhibition visited three cities in Japan: Tokyo April 2 – June 2, 1985; Osaka June 19- July 21, 1985 and Fukuoka August 3- September 1, 1985. More than 400 treasures were exhibited showing the history and civilization of Turkey, highlighting the distinctive colors of the "respective" civilizations dating from the Paleolithic Age to the present. The exhibition committee selected 376 art

²⁶⁸ Büşra Erşanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih: Türkiye'de "Resmî Tarih" Tezinin Oluşumu (1929-1937)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009).

²⁶⁹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p.187.

works from more than 20 museums and art galleries. This was a very broad wide-scale introduction to Turkish civilization, conceived as centered on a “total history” in the Annales tradition. These objects were exhibited in a chronological order starting from the Paleolithic Age or about 8,000 B.C., to the fifteenth and sixteenth century Ottoman Empire.

The myth of Turkish civilization is that “the land of Anatolia can be rightly be called ‘A Crossroads of Civilization’ serving as a land bridge connecting Asia with Europe throughout its history. The Turkish people have gone through the process of assimilating various foreign cultures and attained a civilization quite peculiar to itself and this exhibition testifies to it,”²⁷⁰ said Takahito Mikasa, president of the Middle Eastern Culture in Japan. The process of assimilation is a critical argument for Anatolian civilization. It is not assimilation, showing the will of being hegemon over the past civilizations which lived in Anatolia long centuries ago.

The general view of the state centered history is that Turkish civilization is embedded in all other civilizations that have existed in Anatolia since 12,000 B.C. The order of the exhibition followed Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Laccolithic, Old Bronze Age, Middle and Late Bronze Ages and continued into the Hittite, Urartu, Frigian, Lydian, Ion City States, Persian city states. The empire periods cover: the Hellenistic Age, Roman Age, Byzantine Age, Seljuk Age, Ottoman age. The use of the word “age” might lead to a misunderstanding, because in this context it refers to empire, not to a century, and covers the biggest empires in the Near East. The distribution of the exhibition artifacts according to time period was unbalanced. The biggest part of the exhibition was reserved for art works of ancient civilization, then Ottoman-Seljuk heritage taking second rank and the Greco-Roman Byzantium past taking the third rank of the exhibition.

²⁷⁰ *Land of Civilization, Turkey*, p.5.

Following “the Land of the Civilization, Turkey” exhibition in 1985, the directorate of Museum and Culture organized a series of exhibitions more or less similar to it. “Turkey: Splendour of the Anatolian Civilization” was displayed by the Canadian government in Quebec at The Musée de la Civilisation from February 15 to May 6, 1990. Visiting Canada, Japan, Italy, the Netherlands and Denmark, the exhibition bore eloquent witness to the high level of development attained by the civilizations that have succeed one another in Anatolia from prehistoric times. Roland Arpin, Canada National Museum’s General Director emphasized the role of the exhibition showing the achievements of mankind as follows: “In a museum of civilization, visitors see spiritual and human value that leads us to reflect the development of the human being throughout the centuries and contribute to the development of the arts in the world. Future generations may flourish on the same ground.”²⁷¹

Themes like sedentary life, nomadism, urban life and the advent of writing were as much a part of the way of life of migratory peoples as the great empires and kingdoms in the confines of East and West that shared between them the territories of Anatolia. Although the territory remains the same, the agents of history have changed. In each period, the visitor saw different images and places from Anatolian history: the Trojan War, King Midas, Croesus, and Alexander the Great, and Süleyman the Magnificent. All of these great figures in the same exhibition show a linear understanding of history. The progress of human beings throughout the centuries was displayed in the exhibitions as the stories of the past. This also formed the history of world civilization. In this way, ancient civilizations help to promote renewed, mutual understanding. The exhibition also arouse the passion of historians and archeologists since it represented the human experience through man’s achievements,

²⁷¹ Republic of Turkey, *Turkey: Splendours of the Anatolian Civilizations* (Quebec: The Musée de la Civilisation, 1990), p.3

initiating an internal dialogue between today's visitors and the people's of the immemorial past.²⁷²

The geography of Turkey has played an important role as far as the relations between eastern and western civilizations are concerned. Having a bridge-position between Asia and Europe connecting various civilizations, it has made rich contributions to the common cultural heritage of mankind. Turkish culture itself did not create a unique civilization in this particular geography, but Turks influenced the Seljuk and Ottoman civilizations, while not assimilating sub-cultures. In contrast to South American and African culture, Turkish culture does not have well defined, unique form. It is a mixed culture that is product of a combination of pre-Islamic, Central Asian, Greco-Roman, and Anatolian- Seljuk culture.

Thus, speaking of Turkish culture, rather than the apotheosis of Anatolian civilization, it should be perceived as a synthesis of Anatolian culture. The root of this notion came from the Anatolianist views (*Anadoluculuk*), which refused the definition of the nation and nationalism by Ziya Gökalp. According to *Anadolu*, a journal published in 1924, the new Republic was given name as "Anadolu" not Turkey. The reason behind is that "Turk is not only the name of a nation. It is the name of a race within which many nations have flourished."²⁷³ Turks have lived in Anatolia through the centuries, so Anatolian civilizations is rooted in Turkish origin. For this reason, Turks were only the makers of these civilizations, they had a right to adopt the cultural heritage of all Anatolian civilizations. This statement indicates that the Turkish Republic not only geographically but also historically was hegemon

²⁷² The Turkish Ministry of Cultural Affairs, *Turkey: The Splendours of the Ottoman Civilizations* (Canada: Quebec City Museum, 1990), p.7.

²⁷³ Etienne Copeaux, *Tarih Ders Kitaplarında (1931-1993) Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), p.268.

over the nations who had lived in Anatolia. In the international exhibitions after 1980, Turkey wanted to prove its cultural power over the history and geography of this region.

Similar to “the Anatolia the Land of the Civilizations” exhibition held in Japan in 1985, one year later, “Treasures From Turkey” was exhibited in Holland at the Rijk Museum. It covered thousands of years of Anatolian history. Through this large-scale exhibition, for the first time, Turkey offered the people of the Netherlands and European visitors, the opportunity of promote the Turkish heritage in Europe. Turgut Özal, former prime minister and president, emphasized the role of Turkish civilization in the exhibition catalogue as follows:

The individuals and their societies living with a rich cultural accumulation and progressive level of civilization have always been oriented for the good, the right and the beautiful.....This exhibition includes beautiful samples of the works of art of the civilizations that have blossomed and developed in Anatolia. The Turks, who have been living on this land for almost a thousand years, have perceived and evaluated the previous civilizations and merged them with their own culture. Conscious of being the major defender and promoter of this cultural heritage, the young Turkish Republic, founded more than six decades ago by the great leader Atatürk, has succeeded at fulfilling its historical and cultural obligations.²⁷⁴

The statement indicated that the prime minister of Turkey, in taking the leading role in protection and promoting cultural heritage in 1980s, referred to M. Kemal Atatürk’s view on national history and culture to legitimize his efforts. Özal’s emphasis on the greatness of Turkish culture as well as attributing to Turkey the protector of Anatolian civilizations is a rejection of a right-wing *Anadoluculuk* (Anatolinism) typical of the 1980s Turkish Islamic synthesis idea. As prime minister, Turgut Özal published a book entitled *La Turquie en*

²⁷⁴ “Bireylerin ve onların içindeki yaşadıkları topluluklar kültürel birikime ve uygarlığın gelişimine odaklanarak her zaman yararlı, doğru ve güzel olandan yanadır. Bu sergideki sanat eserleri Anadolu’da yeşerip gelişen uygarlıklara ait güzellikleri gösterir. Türkler bu topraklarda yüzyıllardan beri yaşayan geçmiş uygarlıkları algılayıp değerlendirerek kendi kültürleriyle kaynaştırmışlardır. Bu büyüklükteki kültürel birikimin koruyucusu ve kurucusu olan Atatürk tarafından kurulan altmış küsür yaşındaki genç Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin tarihsel ve kültürel yükümlülükleri yerine getirmekte başarılı olacaktır.” *Schatten Uit Turkije, Treasure From Turkey* (Holland: RMO, 1986), p.3.

Europe²⁷⁵ (*Türkiye’de Avrupa Kitabı*) with his signature as a part of the propaganda and official rhetoric for Turkey. In the political arena, Turkey had lost its confidence to the European Parliament due to its support of the Armenian problem in 1987. Özal and his close friends especially worked on a new Anatolianism, which initially had flourished in the early 1950s as part of a left wing ideology. After the 1980s, Anatolianism came to close Turkish Islamic Synthesis rather than a left-wing ideology. Özal’s book tried to express that Turkish civilization was rooted in Anatolia and Anatolian civilization was the origin of European civilization in return. The word ‘we are’ is the symbol of attachment to this land.²⁷⁶ According to Etienne Copeaux, the book was a tool for propaganda in order to reconstruct the image of the Turks as well as Turkey on the eve of European integration.²⁷⁷

“Anatolia. Images of Civilizations-Treasures from Turkey” (Anatolia: Immagini di civiltà Tesori dalla Turchia) offered a wide and representative spectrum of a score of cultures and civilizations that have flourished in the heart of Anatolia over a period of ten thousand years. This exhibition was a different version of the Anatolian civilization exhibition opened in Italy in 1987. Similar to Turgut Özal’s view, Vahit Halepoğlu, then minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, explained, the role of Anatolia in world civilizations as follows:

The theme covers the wide range of civilizations which sprang from the fertile Anatolian soil. The Anatolian peninsula, span Asia and Europe with its ideal geographic position, nurtured culture, arts and sciences. The Anatolian peninsula which has been cradle of civilizations, also accomplished a perfect synthesis of Oriental and Occidental cultures. The samples displayed at this Exhibition are only some of the many unique decorations of how these

²⁷⁵ Turgut Özal, *La Turquie en Europe*, 1988. Cited in Etienne Copeaux, *Tarih Ders Kitaplarında (1931-1993): Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk İslam Sentezine* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), p. 268.

²⁷⁶ Etienne Copeaux, *Tarih Ders Kitaplarında (1931-1993): Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine* , p.268.

²⁷⁷ Copeaux, p.268.

successive civilizations and cultures interacted. Anatolia, throughout history, with geographic location and strategic position between East and West have acquired great importance, enormous power and wealth and produced remarkable samples in all forms of art.²⁷⁸

In the catalog of the exhibition was depicted a Hittite deer or Hittite Sun, typically perceived as the symbol of civilization and art of Anatolian civilization as well as the symbol of Turkish culture. “Turkey: 7000 Years of History”²⁷⁹ exhibition in 2007, together with other commemorative activities of the 150th Anniversary, travelled to Italy. Similar to the 1987 version, the exhibition illustrated the deep- rooted historical heritage, with ties strong to Italian civilization. The 2007 version of the exhibition similar to the older one introduced Anatolia as a land of civilization showing the pieces from Hittite civilizations and ceramics to the nineteenth century Ottoman court in the linear time way, leading to an overlapping of the sense of time and place. According to Foti and Stefo Benlisoy, the situation was inevitably result of underdevelopment or unable to complete the process of nation state formation. As seen particularly in Greece’s arguments, cultural and historical ties to the cradle of Europe, it brought a vision for the nation state model as a civilized nation.²⁸⁰ In Turkey’s case, these exhibitions carried the heritage of Anatolian civilizations with their historical and cultural ties to the roots of Europe, and an open a window for connecting to world civilizations.

²⁷⁸ “Sergilenen eserler, verimli Anadolu topraklarından birbiri ardına fışkıran uygarlıklarını kapsamlı bir örneklemesini teşkil etmektedir. Asya ile Avrupa kıt’aları arasında bir köprü olan Anadolu, kendine özgü bu coğrafi konumuyla, kültür, sanat ve bilimim filizlenerek gelişmesine yol açmıştır. Bir dizi medeniyete beşik olan Anadolu, aynı zamanda Doğu ve Batı kültürlerinin de mükemmel bir sentezini oluşturmuştur. Bu sergide teşhir edilen örnekler peşpeşe gelişmiş bu kültür ve medeniyetlerin birbirlerini nasıl etkilediklerini gösteren birçok seçkin örnekten ancak bir kısmını teşkil etmektedir. Doğu ile Batı arasında işgal ettiği eşsiz coğrafi ve stratejik konumuyla Anadolu, tarih boyunca büyük önem, güç ve zenginlik kazanmış ve sanatın her dalında takdire şayan eserler yaratmıştır.” *Anatolia. Images of Civilizations-Treasures from Turkey* (Anatolia: Immagini di civiltà Tesori dalla Turchia). Italy: *1987), p. 14.

²⁷⁹ *Turchia: 7000 Anni di Storia* (Italy: Mondo Mostre, 2007).

²⁸⁰ Foti and Stefo Benlisoy, “Yunan Tarih Yazımında Geçmiş Algıları ve “Azgelişmişlik Bilinci,” *Toplum ve Bilim*, n.91 (Kış 2001-2002), p.242-279.

Objects belonging to Hittite civilization have been adopted to core of Anatolian civilizations in Turkey's history and typically have been displayed in all international exhibitions. The "Homeland" centered historical narrative of Anatolia brought different figures throughout history; Trojan warriors, King Midas, Alexander the Great, Byzantine Emperor Constantine, Suleyman and could be seen in the same exhibition in different rooms. In my point of view, this situation led to a geographically-based nationalist historiography that was shown in the did not truly reflect on the actual development of humanity and cultural heritage. The multi-cultural dialogue of different civilizations in Anatolia could be an instrument for the propaganda of the Republic of Turkey in the international arena. Starting from the mid- 1980s, Anatolian civilization exhibits represented the continuation of nationalist identity politics in Turkey. The aim of the historians and curators in these exhibitions was to show Anatolian civilizations as being a part of Turkish national history as well as its civilization.

The Golden Age Discourse: Ottoman Turkish Identity in the Twentieth Century

A second narrative style, the golden age discourse around the sixteenth century Ottoman civilization, became a theoretical base for international exhibitions in the 1980s. The first Turkish blockbuster show, The Age of Suleyman the Magnificent, opened on January 25, 1987 at Washington's National Gallery, Washington D.C. It was as much an exercise in

statecraft as an exhibition of art. Dr.Esin Atıl,²⁸¹ the curator of the Age of Suleyman the Magnificent exhibition, had worked on a series of Islamic art exhibitions in the 1970s at the Freer Gallery of Art. The cost of the promotion campaign was about \$10 million²⁸² and was covered by the Philip Morris Company, the main sponsor of the exhibition. The Turkish government was willing to send the exhibition to the USA after the widely acclaimed of Tutankamun Show in 1979 that was one of the greatest blockbuster heritage exhibitions to be held in London, triggered other blockbusters in the Western world. The Suleyman exhibition was a highly respective exhibitions that reached the status of the first Turkish blockbuster exhibition in Europe and USA.

The culture and civilization of the Ottoman period reflect a synthesis of the cultures of East and West. During the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent, who ruled between 1520 and 1566, the Ottoman Empire became one of the leading states of the world, not only in the political and military arenas, but also in the cultural and social fields. Suleyman was a patron of the arts and personally oversaw the activities of the court artists. Under his reign, the imperial studios were established, creating high standard arts that spread favored themes from the capital to provincial centers and represent unique blend of Islamic, Turkish and European traditions. The imperial art workshop (*Nakkashane*) had worked on the production of religious, literary and historical manuscripts, book bindings, calligraphy, illuminations, and

²⁸¹ Dr. Esin Atıl took a BA in literature, drama and art history and received her MA in Europe art and her Ph.D in Islamic art at the University of Michigan. In 1970, She joined the Smithsonian Institution as the Curator of Islamic Art at the Freer Gallery of Art, a post she held for fifteen years. Dr. Atıl's career is punctuated by numerous exhibitions she organized and curated. She published nearly twenty books on the artistic tradition of Islamic world. Between 1985 and 1987, Dr. Atıl was Guest curator at the National Gallery of Art, where she published Süleymanname and organized the Age of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent (1987) to accompany the travelling exhibition of the same title. In 2002, Dr. Atıl retired from her position from at the Sacchler Galleries of Islamic Art, the Smitsonian in Washington D.C.

²⁸² Sultan Suleyman courts America(traveling exhibit of treasures from the Topkapı Palace), U.S. News&World Report, February 9,1987. <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-4629339.html>

illustrations as works of art. This period saw the synthesis of European, Islamic, and Turkish traditions, giving birth to an artistic vocabulary that was unique to the Ottoman world.²⁸³

The exhibition offered a wide range of Ottoman art most of them masterpieces of artistic tradition in the Golden Age. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the imperial power reached its peak and the Ottoman Empire controlled a geography that spread to three continents. The historical perception of the Ottoman Empire in the West was based on a fear that was an image due to long lasting wars and expansion through Europe. Today, in Turkish history writing, the reign of Suleyman is regarded as the climax of a glorious past that showed the power of Turks to Europe as well as to the world. The choice of time period by Dr. Atıl in this exhibition is strategic to represent the glorious period of Ottoman history.

The Age of the Suleyman exhibition was a travelling blockbuster in the 1980s, it started its journey at Washington, moving to New York and Chicago in 1987 and continued its tour to the British Museum in London in 1988; Sidney, Australia, in 1990; Budapest, Hungary, in 1994. After that the blockbuster exhibition was one of the turning points of Ottoman art exhibition to reveal the Turkish historic identity with international scale exhibitions. The majority of the works of art belong to Topkapı Palace museum promoted the wealthiness of the Turkish museum.

In 1991, Memphis production company in a unique partnership with the National Geographic Society launched “Wonders: The Memphis International Cultural Series” presented exhibits from past international and cultural events such as those of Ramses the Great, Catherine the Great, Splendors of the Ottoman Sultans, the Etruscans, Napoleon,

²⁸³ Esin Atıl, *The Age of the Suleyman the Magnificent* (New York: National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1987), p.24.

Titanic, Ancestors of the Incas, and WWII through Russian Eyes.²⁸⁴ These exhibitions attracted over 12 million people in several American venues.²⁸⁵

The curator of the “Ottoman Sultans” exhibition, Prof. Dr. Nurhan Atasoy²⁸⁶ focuses on the sultan as statesman, military leader and in daily life court. In contrast to the Suleyman exhibition, Dr. Atasoy considered a wide range of centuries while selecting the works of art and instead of attributing a special role to Suleyman the Magnificent, she centered on the Ottoman dynasty as the source of power. Although she argues that “The Ottoman Empire is misunderstood in the West, being frequently thought of as nothing but an aggressive military machine-although the Ottoman sultans were poets, musicians, lawmakers, and patrons of art and learning as well as rules and leaders of a people who wielded awesome power,”²⁸⁷ the exhibition carried in terms of an identity represented the Ottoman civilizations. In the part of the sultan as a statesman, the Ottoman state structure briefly defined throughout centuries giving the family tree of the Ottoman dynasty. Gold, jewelry, iron helmets, gold swords, ceremonial shields, ceremonial kaftans, fermans, and tugras depicted the powerful image of the sultan and scene of his life. As a second part, the sultan as a military leader was

²⁸⁴ *International Culture Series: Wonders*. Accessed April 15, 2010. <http://www.cityofmemphis.org/framework.aspx?page=45>

²⁸⁵ *Broughton International Inc*. Accessed April 2, 2010. <http://www.faberge-exhibition.com/jbroughton.html>.

²⁸⁶ Prof. Dr. Nurhan Atasoy received her B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from the Department of Fine Arts and Art History in the Faculty of Letters at Istanbul University. She served as a Department Chairman in the Department of Fine Arts, Archeology and Art History and finally as a Dean in the Faculty of Letters. She retired from Istanbul University in 1999. During her academic life, Prof. Dr. Atasoy attended and lectured at many international congresses and symposiums, and participated in research and international meetings on Turkish art and Islamic art throughout the world. She has numerous publications, including 80 articles and 20 books and holds many awards and titled from many esteemed national and international institutions such as a medal of Pro Merito from the Council of Europe, Award for the outstanding performance in Turkish Museums and Archeology, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Turkey, and Senior Fellowship of the Department of Landscape at Harvard University. Who is Who?. Available on April 8, 2010. http://www.turkishculture.org/person_detail.php?ID=154

²⁸⁷ Nurhan Atasoy, *Splendour of the Ottoman Sultans* (USA: The Memphis International Cultural Series, 1992), p.11.

responsible for protecting the country Atasoy discussed the sultans's heroism and shrewdness in battle, showed the stories about Mehmed II's success at the conquest of Constantinople, Selim I's Eastern Campaign of 1514, and Suleyman the Magnificent's death at the fortress of the Szigetvaradin.

The splendor of the Ottoman army was exhibited with a series of swords, steel guards, wicker shields, and handguns which were dated sixteenth and seventeenth centuries used for advantage against their enemies. Then, in the third part-the sultan as patron of the arts reflected the Ottoman world's wealth and increasingly cosmopolitan outlook. Fine and decorative arts became crucial to the Ottoman state as its mode of self-expression, means of legitimization and ritual language.²⁸⁸ The value of art and crafts indicate a high standard of civilization and its splendor combined with glorious past victories show the sovereignty of the empire. The court life in the exhibition presented a vivid picture of weddings, royal births, ceremonies, and winter entertainment. The harem was again the center of the interest, so ceremonies that took place in the harem were given in detail. Princes and their lives were presented from birth to taking the imperial throne, their education, ceremonies, and duties and were given in the court life section.

As done in Italy in the 16th century exhibit, the Ottoman Empire was represented in pictures and manuscripts using totally different concepts such as "fear," "wonder," "deep admiration," "curiosity." As considering the European description of "Turks" or "Ottomans," modern history exhibitions carry such dilemmas even today. Particularly, the European representation of Ottoman women or their description of harem life in written texts as well as paintings was reconstructed by Turkish curators in the international exhibitions. "Orientalising the East" is a common theme for Ottoman history exhibitions that does not offer a way to

²⁸⁸ Ibid, p.127.

escape from this dilemma either. For European artists, especially Italians, the Oriental themes from Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century were so attractive that Turkish miniature paintings, precious fabrics, weapons, carpets and sultan portraits were some of the most valuable items for European collectors. Italian artists paid particular attention to depicting the Janissaries in flashy clothes, to arouse “fear” and evoke the “Splendor” of the East.²⁸⁹

Indeed, a series of Ottoman history exhibitions were held from the mid-1980s to the early 2000s. In nationally framed exhibitions, the multiethnic structure of the Ottoman Empire was mostly reduced to a homogeneous entity that gave no chance to depicting the plurality in Ottoman society. Through the description of items and promotional efforts as products of the glorious history of exhibitions abroad, the Turkish nation was used to reinforce the Oriental narrative to promote its cultural richness.

Ottoman history exhibitions ignoring the multiethnic cultural make up of the Ottoman society heavily emphasized Islam and Islamic culture. Purifying “National history” from non-national elements is the basic approach to promoting national history abroad. The Turkish nation was used a central issue of the national narrative rejecting the Ottoman-Islamic past, starting with the 1930s, however, the spatial and temporal gaps in this past were later filled with the Turkish-Islamic synthesis ideology in the 1980s. The effort to create a glorious history of the Ottoman Empire of the sixteenth century was an outcome of Turkish nationalism in national history. Turkish intellectuals viewed the Ottoman golden age as a point of national myth. The Ottoman Turks as the maker of this glorious history gained a privileged position on the behalf of Western civilization.

²⁸⁹ Burcu Alarşlan, “Türk İmajının Görsel Yansımaları,” in *Dünya’da Türk İmgesi*, edited by Özlem Kumrular (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005), p. 146.

The following exhibition that aimed at representing the splendor of Ottoman Turkish culture was one of the best examples to promote Turkish cultural tourism as well as national myths. “Treasures of Topkapı Palace and Magnificent Ottoman Dynasty” opened August 1, 2007 in capital Tokyo, Japan. A total of 140 items were showcased with 111 pieces from the collection of Topkapı Palace and the rest from the Istanbul museum of Turkish and Islamic Art. The pieces were estimated to be worth \$65.6 million.²⁹⁰ The exhibition received the greatest interest from art enthusiasts and was visited by 200,000 people in Tokyo, 100,000 in Kyoto and 70,000 Nagoya.²⁹¹

Interest in Ottoman art and Topkapı Palace led to a series of exhibition to be held in Japan starting in 1985, “the Land of Civilization, Turkey,” continued to “The Splendour of Turkish Civilization: Ottoman Treasures of the Topkapı Palace” (1988), “the Treasures from the Topkapı Palace: The Ceramics of the Sultans Loved” (1995), which showed the splendor of the Ottoman dynasty. Topkapı Palace itself as a source of the civilization, accumulation of wealth and power for a long time attracted the Japanese people whose civilization had also a dynastic origin. Prince Takahito Mikasa emphasized the role of the Topkapı palace as follows: “Today the myriad splendors of this palace museum rise above the stains of the past history. This great treasure house and some of the finest art works of human invention were put on display before all of the peoples of the world.”²⁹²

The exhibition consisted of four collections: the magnificent sultans, Topkapı Place court, the treasury, and fascination with Far Eastern Porcelain. Similar to the earlier Ottoman art exhibition, this exhibition presented the splendid armor and weapons that symbolized the

²⁹⁰ Topkapı Treasures Draw Japanese Tourists *Turkish Daily News*, March 17, 2008,

²⁹¹ Japan Asks Turkey for New Exhibitions, *Turkish Daily News*, March 17, 2008.

²⁹² *The Treasures of Topkapı Place and the Magnificent Ottoman Dynasty* (Japan:, 2007), p.6

empire's power, along with the treasures owned by the sultans. Among the items were kitchen utensils such as coffee pitchers, soup bowls, trays and plates, bathroom items such as Turkish bath bowls, bath pans and jugs and accessories such as emerald earrings, necklaces, bangles and jewelry boxes. These items for daily use adorned with gold, silver, and huge jewels surely provided viewers with a sense of the splendor and wealth of the Ottoman Empire.

In the Islamic regions of the world, for the rulers of these regions possession of Chinese objects was considered a symbol of their prestige and authority. A special Chinese collection in Topkapı Palace was a symbol of prestige for the Ottoman dynasty. Japanese viewers also got the chance to see Hurrem Sultana's deed of trust, Sultan Mahmut I's signed title deed, Sultan Mehmet IV's signed mandate and Sultan Selim III's signed deed of assignment in the exhibitions.

At the end of the exhibition catalogue, a map of the historic peninsula showed the historical sites and information about the touristic places and photographs of Istanbul for tourism promotion. The catalog described the Topkapı Palace Collection, with more than 86,000 masterpieces²⁹³ from the collection of Topkapı Palace, which spoke of the long history of the Ottoman Empire and for the rich culture developed by a society in which many ethnic groups co-existed. This was is a new narrative including diversity in unity. As the center of the narrative, Topkapı Palace was the driving force of the cultural development of Istanbul, and it played an essential role in the refinement of the Turkish culture core of the exhibition.

Exhibitions taking place abroad centered on the treasure of Topkapı Palace was such as "Treasures of the Sultans: Masterpieces From The Topkapı Palace"²⁹⁴ The Museum of

²⁹³ *The Treasures of Topkapı Place and the Magnificent Ottoman Dynasty*, p.217.

²⁹⁴ *Treasures of The Sultans: Masterpieces From the Topkapı Palace Istanbul, Turkey* (USA: The Museum of Fine Arts Press, 1995).

Fine Arts, Houston April 23-June 11, 1995; “Turkish Delights: Treasures from the Land of Sultans and Kings,”²⁹⁵ The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; “From the Land of the Ottoman Sultans”²⁹⁶ and the Asian Civilization Museum, Singapore-September 3-December 5, 2004. The structural framework of the Ottoman exhibitions designated three sections: might of the empire, (military might, power of the pen, symbols of power); the commander of the faithful; and court life (food-hospitality, harem, art-pleasure).

The Ottoman History exhibitions reflect the Oriental vision in Ottoman art exhibitions; for the visitor a story is narrated about the sultan the most powerful man who conquered lands, made rules, and protected art and artists to show the splendor of their empire. Referring to Turkish culture, hospitality and diversity of art and culture were stressed. A number of objects which did not belong to Ottoman art such as Chinese porcelains, Iranian weapons and arms that had been sent as gifts for the sultan had been also shown as a part of the Topkapı Palace treasury.

As far the life at court is concerned, the harem was very attractive to foreigners as a site of authentic life. The dreams of European travelers about the harem were the source of the tension to represent the personal life of the Sultan. The image of the harem on the eyes of European people was exotic and an attractive place in the palace life. Thus, the tension between the real and imaginary in the exhibition narrative was a very critical aspect in terms of depictions of the women in the harem.

The works of art did not connect with a comprehensive structure, various objects such as spoons, coffee cups, bundles, calligraphic works, Qur’ans, samples of Turkish ceramics were displayed in the same place in chronologic order. The classical the logic of the

²⁹⁵ *Turkish Delights: Treasures from the Land of Sultans and Kings* (Israel: The Israel Museum Press, 2004).

²⁹⁶ *From the Land of the Ottoman Sultan’s* (Singapore: Asian Civilization Museum, 2004).

exhibitions focuses on the sultan, not other people at his court and the daily lives of the various common people among the Ottoman society (millet). The visual power of the Ottoman Empire drew the interest of the foreign visitor, regarding the daily lives of people outside the palace, plurality and simplicity represented in society can be observabled by the foreign audience.

An Alternative History Writing Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years (600-1600)

Apart from the golden age discourse of the Ottoman history exhibitions, there is a second approach called the primordial's (principle/ ancient history) narrative style. In this context, the Ottomans are presented as carriers of a civilization that came from the depths of history and continued to flow into the future. Ottoman history is seen as a stage in the history of the Turkish nation and the Turks are represented as the descendants of the Ottoman heritage. The exhibition "Turks: Journey of a Thousand Years 600-1600" is as example of the primordialist approach in history exhibitions after 2000s. Arranged by the London Royal Art Academy it opened on January 22, 2004 and was open until April 12, 2005. The demand for the exhibition came from the Royal Academy of Arts which spent a total of 2 million pounds on the exhibition, which consisted of 370 pieces belonging to or created by Turkish civilizations from the years 600 through 1600.²⁹⁷

From the Nomadic Uighur people of Chinese Central Asia to the Ottoman splendor of Sultan Mehmed III in Istanbul, "Turks" illustrated how they had adopted the other cultures

²⁹⁷ An Exhibiition to Remember, *Turkish Daily News*, 19 June 2005.
<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/h.php?news=an-exhibition-to-remember-2005-06-19>

they encountered and sometimes conquered. The exhibition was curated and organized by Filiz Çağman-Director of Topkapı Palace Museum, Nazan Ölçer Director of Sakıp Sabancı Museum; Norman Rosental, General Secretary of the Royal Academy; and Adrian Locke, Curator of Royal Academy Art.

More than an exhibition, “Turks” was a promotional campaign for Turkey in the process of integration to the EU, and the showed diversity of Turkish culture from Central Asia to the Balkan regions. In the catalogue, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan writes “Cultural diversity is a source of richness for all nations. This exhibition comes at a most propitious time, as Turkey’s aspirations towards membership in the European family of nations in the European Union are at center stage.”²⁹⁸ It underlined that the civilization of Turks had always looked to the West and had been shaped by Western values and ideas. The Foreign Ministry’s Abroad and Presentation Affairs General Director Ambassador Şule Soysal in the press meeting introduced the exhibition and stated that the theme of the exhibition was very important considering Turkey’s position today. Soysal argues that “they accepted the offer because they wanted to prove how creative the Turkish nation was.”²⁹⁹

The frequently asked questions are: Is Turkey really a European country? Did Turks make their own civilizations and can a secular country with a Muslim population be a full partner in European association of countries? Of course, the exhibition did not answer these questions; it made a sense of the past and the role of Turks in the development of Eastern and Western civilizations. Roxburg notes that “to describe the array as eclectic and diverse would be the merest understatement. Nothing can prepare you for the sheer oddness of fusion.”³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Year* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2004), p.9.

²⁹⁹ Turkish Art Exhibition at London, *Turkish Daily News*, 16.01.2005.

According to “Turks” catalog editor David J. Roxburgh, a Harvard professor of history of art and architecture, the exhibition covered the development of art through 1000 year in Western China, the Central Asian Republics, Persia, Iraq, Turkey and the Balkans. A series of exhibitions had been held in the USA and Europe in the previous twenty-five years. However, “Turks” was the most impressive one in terms of geographical boundary, chronological sequence and diversity of exhibition collection.

From this point of view, “Turks” as a protectorate of art, Nazan Ölçer states that until then, only Ottoman Arts had been recognized in the West, but this exhibition showed the incredible civilization formed by the Turks during the ages in Central Asia.³⁰¹ The logic of exhibition depended on a tale of “assimilation” and “adaptation” of in the exotic landscapes crossed by the Silk Road, the ancient network of trade routes between Asia and Europe. After the abolition of the Ottoman Empire, the foundation of the Republic based on nation state paradigm, the new regime demonstrated that the Turks were at the base of all civilizations. Turkish origin was identified with the cradle of world civilizations.³⁰²

In fact, the origins of the Turkish nation are not easy to find. It is generally accepted that the Turkic people were among the Asian steppe tribes with nomadic lives and in the Far East Asia among the Asian steppe tribes, with their nomadic way of life. Judith Herrin argues that taking 600 AD as a starting point, the Far Eastern features of things Turkic are very prominent, including much art regularly “Chinese.” Ending at 1600 AD permits the exhibition to conclude with Süleyman the Magnificent and the Golden Age. It is almost

³⁰⁰ Art; The Turks’ travels; An alluring show samples a sprawling culture and the rise of its arts. John Daniszewski, *Los Angeles Times*, February 20, 2005, p.40.

³⁰¹ Turkish Art Exhibition at London, *Turkish Daily News*, 16.01.2005.

³⁰² Büşra Erşanlı Behar, *İktidar ve Tarih: Türkiye’de Resmi Tarih Tezinin Oluşumu (1929-1937)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003), p.67.

impossible to sustain a direct link between the Asian Turkic groups and the Ottomans. There is no attempt to create a time-line connecting the earliest with the latest so-called “Turks.”³⁰³ Using the term “Turks” for the predecessors of the Ottoman Empire, an entire exhibition can be questioned because Byzantine Empire, had controlled the land of Anatolia before the battle of Malazgirt (1071). The exhibition did not ask, if the Turks really acted as patrons of art in this region or how they combined the Eastern cultures with Anatolian culture. It only carried on imperialist view of conquest of new lands as cultures that would be assimilated into a stronger one.

The exhibition covered six parts ordered chronologically as follows: Central Asia 600-1000, the Seljuks of Iran and their Successors, the Seljuks and the Artuquids of Medieval Anatolia, Muhammad of the Black Pen and His Paintings, the Timurids and Turkmen, and the Ottomans: From Mehmed II to Murad III. The first part started with the Uighur, an initially non-Muslim empire of nomads that first rose to prominence in the seventh century. The linguistic achievements of the Uighur are seen in *The Book of Dead* that was written with black ink on paper in Chinese style. The section also included Uighur frescoes, silk banners and reliquaries from the sixth to eleventh centuries.

The most important works in this show were entirely dedicated to the work “Muhammad Siyah Qalam” (*Muhammad of the Black Pen*) who he was and where he worked remain obscure. He used Chinese models and depicted animals, nomads, and nomadic life style musicians, and dancers. These pictures made upmost of the works of Black Pen, and had never travelled outside Turkey before.

³⁰³ Judith Herrin, “History at Large, Turks: A Journey of A Thousand Years, 600-1600,” *History Workshop Journal*, no. 61 (2006), p.238.

The second empire, the Seljuk, sprang from another group of nomads who linked Central Asia with Eastern Mediterranean. During the Great Seljuk period, Turkic literature was illustrated with figurative paintings although this was generally discouraged by Islam. The Islamic elements in the exhibition started with the Seljuk period. The Seljuk Turks were the first to convert and their buildings, manuscripts, decorated ceramic and wooden objects all reflect their faith. The Seljuks also adopted the double-headed eagle as their symbol. Their tiles, carpets, metalwork and illuminated books all impress with their originality. The Seljuks as spiritual ancestors of the Ottomans affected their political and administrative system. This particular representation of the Seljukids reflected a certain ideological outlook and that was different from earlier models. Turkish civilization has rooted in Central Asia and flourished in the Near East as it continued its journey to the West. In the earlier narrative style, the Turks did not associate with the Seljuks and the Ottoman heritage was regarded as the protector of Anatolian civilizations. Due to the break discourse in Ottoman/Turkish historiography, the Seljuks and Ottomans were regarded as Islamic civilizations rather than Turkish civilizations. Now, the Turks exhibition covered the Islamic past of the Turkish people in the Near East.

The third empire was founded by Timur, who controlled Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Anatolia and Northern India. From the thirteenth century onwards, there was a mass movement of Turkic peoples called Mongols from China to the West. They established two khanates: one north of the Black Sea (the Golden Horde) and one based in Persia ancient (the Ilkhanate). Timur was the patron of all sorts of artists. The empire created a repertoire of decorative motifs such as Arabic or Uighur calligraphy, flowers or fantastic animals that can be seen in many objects of ceramic, metalwork, jade and wood in textiles, carpets, paintings and illustrated books. During the twelfth century, the Seljuks who already had settled in the

West, fought the Mongols for domination of Anatolia. After the battle of Ankara, Timur (in the exhibition identified as a Turk), invaded Anatolia and control led it for a short time. After taking control of Anatolia, the Western Turks won a crucial victory against the Eastern Roman Empire. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 is considered to be the founding moment of Modern Turkey.

The Turkish tribes in the narrative of the exhibition were divided into two sections: Eastern and Western Turks. For the first time in an international exhibition, the Eastern Turks, called Mongols, were represented as the destructive force of Turks showed their effects in the making of Anatolian history. On the other hand, the curators visualized the glorious victory of the Western Turks, who established their own state and Asian Turkish people who succeed in Islamizing the Balkans, and North Western Anatolia. Thus, the narrative in the exhibition is built on “the Grand Turks” who ruled in three continents for nearly three centuries.

Before “Turks”, the Royal Academy of Art had hosted “International Persian Art Exhibition” (1991), “Africa: Art From A Continent” (1995), and “Aztecs” (2000), which were prominent blockbuster exhibitions in the UK. One of the curator of “Turks” Adrian Locke, found the exhibition exciting for two reasons: the collection was exhibited for the first time outside of Turkey, and the pure beauty of Turkish art visualized the inner sense of culture and art coming from the Eastern world.

Sibel Bağcı writes that, “Turks” was a legendary exhibition for visitors drawing a line to follow the path of the history of Turkish civilizations. Each part of the exhibition showed the uniqueness of the Turkish culture. Bağcı continued her comments on the Turks as follows:

Exhibitions like “the Turks”, offer a mind-expanding experience in order to perceive and interpret culture within its unity. Exhibited art works provide a specific context and continuity in the exhibition allow obtaining details to be able to observe a view for visitor that is comprehensive and holistic. You

can see the things that are pleasant for your eyes and heart and you will establish the connections when the memory boxes independently that existed in your mind come together.³⁰⁴

Actually, it is difficult to make this kind of interpretation, since the collection was a kind of loose are of things that carried Turkic elements. Of course, the Turks had played a great role throughout the centuries in the Eastern and Western worlds. The curators used this holistic view in order to show the definition or boundaries of Turkish art and states founded by Turks mixed with the soul of Near Eastern civilization. Geographically, the Near East was one of the centers of the world civilizations, many empires and states had flourished in these lands. Turkish culture, language and art played intermediary roles in the making of Arab, Persian and, Caucasian states for centuries. For this reason, the time and space construction of the Turks exhibit indicated what it meant to 'be Turk' and how Turkish culture influenced the Near Eastern civilizations.

Following a time span from 600 to 1600 A.D., from the nomadic Uighur people of Chinese Central Asia to the Ottoman splendor of Sultan Mehmed III in Istanbul, "Turk" illustrated how successive groups learned from the cultures they encountered and sometimes conquered. The show embraced the Uighurs, the Timurids, the Seljukids, and the Ottomans and to call them all "Turks" was somewhat a generalization. Briefly, the exhibition covered a history of Turkic peoples and their contacts with other cultures.

In spite of the fact that "the age of Suleyman" and "the Splendor of the Ottoman Sultans" focused only on the Ottoman classical age, the contents covered six hundred years.

³⁰⁴ "Türkler gibi sergiler, bir kültürü bütünlük içinde algılayabilmek, yorumlayabilmek için zihin açıcı deneyimler sunarlar. Sergilenen yapıtların belirli bir bağlam ve süreklilik içinde izlenmesi, ayrıntıları gözleyebilmenin yanında kapasıcı, bütünlüycü bir bakışın edinilmesine imkan tanır. Hem gözüne gönline hoş gelen şeyleri izlersiniz hem bağlantıları kurarsınız; zihninizdebelki de birbirinden bağımsız hatıralar olarak varolan kutucuklar bir araya gelir." Serpil Bağcı, "1000 Yıllık Yolculukta Duraklar," *Milliyet Sanat*, n.551(2005):34-35.

The “Turks” exhibition went into new artistic and cultural territory. “Although the Turks were not always the makers of art, they played an important role in the formation of new artistic traditions and presided over polyglot societies that were characterized by dynamic cultural exchange,”³⁰⁵ says Norman Rosenthal. The most important point was the perception of the exhibition within the discourse of the ideal civilization. In doing so, Turkey proved itself as a culture making country and prospective member of the EU.

The exhibition was strongly criticized due its theme, time and geographical scale. The exhibition covered ten centuries as well as three continents, making it difficult to represent all civilizations affected by the Turks. In addition, some works of art which were displayed in the Central Asia that came from the South China probably did not belong to Turkish civilization. The scope of the blockbuster exhibition was extremely fragmented and divided into several parts in terms of time and geography. Despite the criticism about the exhibition, one of the curators of the Turks exhibition and former Topkapi Place Museum director Filiz Çağman gain: “We remain objective and we only pointed out that the Turks were the protectors of art in the Near East from the sixteenth and seventh centuries was explored.”³⁰⁶ The narrative of Turks was based on the assumption that Turkish civilization played a great role in the formation of Near Eastern civilizations. For this reason, compared to other international Ottoman heritage exhibitions, the Turks attributed a modern and civilization maker image to Turkey the early in 2000s.

In a sense, with the representation of the exhibition, the curators hoped to objectively

³⁰⁵ *The Economist*, p.91.

³⁰⁶ *Müzelerine Evleri Gibi Baktılar*. Accessed April 8, 2010.
<http://sanat.milliyet.com.tr/muzelere-evleri-gibi-baktilar/muze/haberdetay/10.09.2009/532426/default.htm>

reflect that Turks were a physically and culturally strong nation and had been accepted as the patron of the Near Eastern art since the seventh century. Similar to Çağman, Nurhan Atasoy points out the image of the Turks in Europe as follows: “People always interested in the political history of Turks. However, we can give a more positive message in terms of cultural history. For example, Mehmed the Conqueror was a patron of the arts; there is a picture of Mehmed II depicted him a rose, when it is showed, everybody is impressed.”³⁰⁷ The curators view on the selection of the works generally determined to show positive image of Turks to the foreign people as well as depicting the human side of the Ottoman sultans.

To conclude, the nationally framed heritage exhibitions with their historical perspective, not only as a social memory, provide array of new meanings interpreted in order to decipher the diplomacy of international exhibitions, ways of cultural exchange, post-modernist discourse on the contemporary art scene. In what follows, from the 1980s onwards, the national self-promotion of the Turkish identity will be evaluated in both contemporary art and traditional art exhibitions as large scale shows. The visual representation of the nation is a part of new social and political formation that carried the civilizing mission on the road of European integration. The Turkish state as a protector of the Ottoman/Islamic heritage displayed its cultural richness as one of the contributors to these civilizations in Near East. The strong historical ties with both the Eastern and the Western nations enabled Turkey to make a synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures. This will promote the image of the country in the twenty-first century among developed countries. From now on, the developments that

³⁰⁷ *Müzelerine Evleri Gibi Baktılar*. Accessed April 8, 2010. <http://sanat.milliyet.com.tr/muzelere-evleri-gibi-baktilar/muze/haberdetay/10.09.2009/532426/default.htm>

occurred after 2000 that have influenced post modern history writing will be analyzed. In this way, what happened to the international heritage exhibitions also will be investigated.

Multicultural Historical Representations

1999 marked the 700th anniversary of the foundation of the Ottoman Empire celebrated in Turkey as well as Europe and the USA through exhibitions. The Ottoman world was culturally rediscovered by foreign countries. The 700th anniversary of the foundation of the Ottoman Empire was the turning point for culture exhibitionism in Turkey.³⁰⁸ “Ottoman Exhibition” showed in Versailles Palace in Paris and official parts of the 700th anniversary celebration, “Masterpieces from the Calligraphy and Painting Collection- Letters in Gold” were on display at Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Harvard University, the Arthur M. Sackler Museum and the Louvre Museum in Paris between 1998 and 2000. In addition to the Sakıp Sabancı Calligraphy Collection, the Koç and Suna İnan Kıraç Foundation organized an Islamic Art exhibition “Splendor of Ottoman Ceramic” in Jacquemart Andre Museum, Paris as a part of the Ottoman Festival.³⁰⁹ Private collections, for the first time, were exhibited in Paris and signalled new period for Turkish festivals on the international level organized for cultural promotion.

“Topkapı at Versailles” (Topkapı a Versailles) was the sign of the new period in the representation of Ottoman history on the international level. This exhibition offered a new

³⁰⁸ Burçak Madran and Şebnem Önal, p.183.

³⁰⁹ Nevsever Aksoy, “Pariste Türk Sanat Etkinlikleri”, *Sanat Çevresi*, no.259 (May 2000), p.53.

concept for museum and exhibitions depicting the foundation of the Ottoman civilization rather than representing the Eastern Empire as mystic or oriental. In globalized world, national and local exhibitions promote the local on the global scale from the national to the international community. For the first time, the bureaucratic, administrative, military structures of empire were given along with the personal life of the sultan in the same structures depicting life at the Ottoman court in the classical era.

The exhibition was designed in three parts. The first part started with the military culture of the Ottoman army, its physical structure and soldier' recruitment then it continued with the sultan and court formation of the bureaucracy, the evolution of the state court, the Sultan's personal life, costume collection. The selection of the Ottoman palace included Chinese porcelains and culinary art. The area on Topkapı Palace art displayed calligraphy, selection from the library of Ahmet III, and kiosques at Topkapı Palace. The final part focused on life in the harem, the palace school, "Enderun", and political receptions at court. These were central themes of the exhibition shedding light on the administrative and bureaucratic system of the empire. Instead of classifying treasures according to a time schedule in the exhibition, the curator, Nazan Ölçer preferred to adopt the Ottoman state structure in the making of a scientific framework and gave intensive information about historical facts rather than narrating the history itself. The curators of an exhibition focused on the topic of Mehmed II in order to present the great military leader in an unfamiliar light that of Renaissance patron, art connoisseur, philosopher and linguist. A report on the exhibition in the *New York Times* suggested that this European image of the great Ottoman leader might serve as an appropriate

focus for modern Turkey's desire to retrieve some of its European roots and influences in its new turn toward Europe.”³¹⁰

The Sakıp Sabancı Collection of Ottoman Calligraphy included works dating from the fifteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries and was one of the largest such private collections in Turkey exhibited “Topkapı at Versailles.” Among the many of glorious arts of the Ottoman period, pride of place was given to calligraphy, which was regarded as the most prestigious form of art. The Ottoman sultans had supported calligraphers in much the same way as princes and wealthy patrons in the West sponsored painters.

The travelling exhibition started in New York at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in September 1998, giving visitors a chance to see some of the best examples in the largest private collection of calligraphic work in Turkey. Sakıp Sabancı, in a speech during the opening of the exhibition said, “I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to exhibit a selection of Ottoman calligraphy from the Sakıp Sabancı Collection at such prestigious, world-renowned institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. It is particularly satisfying for me to be able to share with an American audience this remarkable art that is so emblematic of my own national heritage, but which is still little known in the West.”³¹¹

Among the variety of works in the exhibition are lavishly illuminated copies of Holy Books (*Kurans*) and other manuscripts with religious contents; murakkaas (calligraphic albums, often of horizontal format) and individual leaves from such albums (called *kit'as*), frequently framed with marbled paper borders. The exhibition also included large

³¹⁰ Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), p.8.

³¹¹ Signatures of the Ottoman Sultans, *Turkish Daily News*, 02.06.1999, p.2.

calligraphic compositions of pious inspirations called *levhas* (panel), including one by Sultan Mahmut II from the nineteenth century, another vertical panel called *hilye* which were usually mounted on wooden boards, and finally a number of long scrolls containing official documents such as imperial edicts, firmans, warrants and patents.

Another special exhibition was “Palace of Gold and Light: Treasures from the Topkapı Palace,” curated by Tülay Artan.³¹² The travelled to three cities in USA : the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC-March 1, June 15, 2000; the San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, CA July 14-September 24, 2000, and the Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, FL October 15, 2000-February 28, 2001. The USA has already played host to major exhibitions on Ottoman art and culture including the blockbuster “The Age of the Suleyman” and “The Splendours of the Ottoman Sultans” the 1990s. Artan asked a critical question “In what way might this one be different?”³¹³ She believed that they had been able to come up with some significant conceptual and material novelties. The entire collection underlying this exhibition was designed and verbalized in a new way. This corresponded to a certain logical change of emphasis in the range and richness of the actual objects displayed that marked the era of Mehmed II in the second half of the fifteenth century. Artan made the effort to create a more user-friendly exhibition that provided access for the general public to the “special language” of Ottoman art and culture. In contrast to the general view on Ottoman art exhibitions “where the Eastern oriental society is traditionally pigeonholed as ‘strange’ or ‘inscrutable’, our approach in presenting beautiful objects to American audiences has been not just stun them

³¹² Tülay Artan was taking her BA in Art History and MA degrees in architecture at Middle East Technical University, 1980 and 1982 respectively; continued her graduate education at MIT and completed her Ph.D. in 1989. Her area of interest Ottoman art history in 16th and 18th centuries, consumption and identity, family life, and historiography. Dr. Artan has taught at Sabancı University, Department of Social Sciences since 2000.

³¹³ Tülay Artan, *Palace of Gold&Light: Treasures from the Topkapı Palace*, Istanbul (USA: Palace Art Foundation, 2000), p.12.

through an array of exotic sights and colors, but also to enable them to cross this outer threshold into an inner world of meanings to help them relate to what they will be seeing to other, familiar frames of reference.”³¹⁴

The exhibition depicted the Ottoman civilization through its power structure, legitimization of rulers, hierarchies, ceremonies, procedures, and performers in a kind of matrix in the daily life of palace. Due to changes in historiography after the 1980s, cultural history become dominant in the field. The historians regarded “history from below” perspective that promoted an increase in humanizing, universalizing the interest in identities and cultural traditions. In contrast to the traditional concept in Ottoman art exhibitions namely high art, curator Artan preferred to look from a different perspective and age to the big picture through answering the following questions: What was the Ottoman Empire? How was power constituted and exercised, rulership legitimized and maintained? How did they live in daily life at the court? And how did the political power evolve its “aesthetic of power”? Compared to the exhibitions which were focuses the 16th century (Ottoman Gold Age), the exhibition focused on in the era of Mehmed II, formation of the bureaucratic state and background of Ottoman art in the 15th century that showed changes in Turkish-Islamic history to cope with geography and time. The transformation and structure in art and life style offered a window that opened a new path to understand Ottoman history at international exhibition.

With new tendencies in cultural history writing, Ottoman history and art exhibitions changed their direction to more thematic concepts compared to the 1990s versions. Under the light of the new perspective, the following exhibitions depended on a selected theme or a minor issue in history writing which post modern perspectives introduced in theoretical organization of exhibitions. “Style and Status: Imperial Costumes from Ottoman Turkey”

³¹⁴ Artan, *Palace of Gold&Light: Treasures from the Topkapı Palace*, p.12.

exhibition opened in Washington DC. in 2005. It became a total of 70 pieces mostly from Topkapı Palace and the rest from the Mevlana Museum in Konya and the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. The curator, Nurhan Atasoy explained the selection of costumes according to their historical value. The exhibition was intended to celebrate Ottoman creative genius, and its success in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in transforming silk into an expression of an aesthetic at times bold and assertive, at times gentle and lyrical. Both silk clothes and costumes played major roles in Ottoman public ceremonies and in elite culture. The costume tradition was an important vehicle for the transmission of artistic ideas and a key factor in diplomatic gifts. Thus silk textiles came to symbolize the Ottoman imperium for foreigners.³¹⁵ Including the caftans of sultans such as Yavuz Sultan Selim, Süleyman the Magnificent and Sultan Beyazıt II illustrated Ottoman creativity in art and how silk textiles became the symbol of power and wealth. The costumes were accompanied with şalvar, crowns, helmets, kilims and silver accessories.

A more political exhibition, “The Ambassador, the Sultan and the Artist: An Audience in Istanbul”³¹⁶ was opened at the Rijks museum in 2007 in Amsterdam, Holland. The exhibition was a diplomatic one, and acted as a showcase for the Ottoman-Dutch relationship in the first half of the eighteenth century. Paintings in the exhibition were painted by Jean Baptise Van Mour, an Orientalist Dutch painter who had already been working in the capital of the Ottoman Empire for almost thirty years, finding the majority of his clientele in the diplomatic world of Istanbul. Van Mour’s paintings give a unique depiction of palace life in the mid eighteenth century and also diplomacy culture between the East and West. The Ambassador and Sultan exhibition has focused on the reign of Ahmed III and depicted the

³¹⁵ *Style and Status: Imperial Costumes from Ottoman Turkey* (UK: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2005), p.1.

³¹⁶ *The Ambassador, the Sultan and the Artist: An audience in Istanbul* (Amsterdam: Rijks Museum, 200*).

Ottoman bureaucracy, state officials, divan meetings, official ceremonies, the reception of foreign ambassadors, imperial gifts for the sultan in the Ottoman court.

Displaying symbols of wealth and splendor the Ottoman ceramic collection constituted one of the largest treasuries of the Topkapı Palace. In South Korea, “*Crossroads of Ceramics- Turkey Where the East and the West Meet*”³¹⁷ had symbolic meaning for representing cultural interaction aimed to reflect the centuries old magnificent Turkish culture and porcelain works that had survived long centuries. 173 works of art reflected the feelings, ideas, traditions; creativity of people introduced the strong legacy of Turkish cultural and social life to Koreans. The exhibition was an opportunity to reflect on the meanings of exchange in the realm of ceramics between the East and West through the dynamic story of porcelains.

After the early 2000s, archeology exhibitions transformed to the idea of “local” in order to illuminate Anatolian history, instead of the centuries old classic narrative. “Anatolia’s 12,000-Year-old History” opened in 2007 in Karlsruhe in Badisches Landenmuseum. It was described ‘the Neolithic Period, the start of civilization’s journey from Anatolia tor Europe 12,000 years ago. In contrast to the general style of archeology exhibitions, the exhibition focused on southeastern Mesopotamia, the famed Fertile Crescent. The artifacts on display had been excavated at Çayönü, Halan Çemi, Köriktepe, Cafer Höyük, Nevalı Çöri, Göbeklitepe, Gürcütepe, Mezraa Teleilat and Akarçaytepe. Curator Clemens Lichter chose the Southeastern region as a topic after his visit to the Istanbul Archeology Museum one of the which biggest museums in the world. Ninety-five percent of the objects came from eleven

³¹⁷ *Crossroads of Ceramics-Turkey where the East and the West meets* (South Korea: World Ceramic Exposition Foundation, 2007).

museums in Turkey including Anatolian Civilization, Şanlıurfa and Diyarbakır Museums. 387 objects not only shed light on the Neolithic Age but also on the Assyrian and Hittite Empires.

The general Manager of Museums in Turkey, Orhan Düzgün, emphasized that while many people around the world have visited the exhibition in Germany, people in Turkey should see the works in the exhibition.³¹⁸ This can be seen as advertising for Anatolian culture. People showed great interest especially in the less known areas in the Southeastern part of Turkey which had very rich history. It is also the center of world history. Up until now, archeology exhibitions have focused on the works of Anatolian Civilization Troy, Hittite, Urartus, and Çatalhöyük. This time the curator wanted to focus on the “Neolithic Revolution” 12,000 years ago and the first settlements in Anatolia where agriculture started for the first time and spread from there to the World. Günther H. Oettinger described the role of the Anatolian region in world history as follows: “Today, Anatolia has a historical core for the Mediterranean countries for thousands of years as well as all of Europe.”³¹⁹ During the exhibition, archeological excavations held in the 1960s were also shown on slides. It was neither a package exhibition nor a travelling one. It was organized by the Baden Museum for only one exhibition.

An exhibit featuring new archeological artifacts from ancient Troy and treasures from Turkish museums called “Troy: Dream and Reality” held in Germany in 2002 was a one of the concept exhibitions in the field of archeology. This was an important exhibition as the German archaeologist Manfred Korfmann had recently worked on the Troy excavation. About 300 objects never displayed before had been excavated by teams working under Korfmann

³¹⁸ *Hurriyet Daily News*, 10.10.2007

³¹⁹ *Vor 12,000 Jahren in Anatolien: Die Altesten Monumente der Menschheit / 12,000 Yıl Önce Anadolu İnsanlığın En Eski Anıtları* (Germany: Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe, 2007), p.397 .

since 1988. Korfmann drew upon the work of the nineteenth-century German archeologist Heinrich Schliemann who had begun his 12-year excavations in 1870. After surveying the land, Korfmann first declared a hilltop in western Turkey to be the site of ancient Troy. The site lies near the entrance to the Dardanelles, the gateway from the Mediterranean Sea to Asia. Although the city seemed small, Korfmann found indications in Schliemann's work that the city was actually larger and used modern technology to reveal ancient buildings. His team enlarged the excavation site and found a trade center with 5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants. That city, which flourished from 1700 to 1200 B.C., would have been the Troy described in the *Iliad* one of the two epic poems attributed to Homer, written about 700 B.C. Troy was destroyed in an earthquake in 1200, rebuilt and a few years later destroyed again in a war. The archaeological site of Troy was added to the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1998.

Korfmann declared that the role of his excavations revealed key features that corresponded with Homer's description of Troy-walls, towers and temple sites. The exhibition presented 850 objects, including ceramic vases, amphorae, bowls and cups, which were symbols of a highly developed domestic culture. Most of the works had never been seen outside Turkey. The exhibit was to travel to the German cities of Braunschweig and Bonn.³²⁰ Korfmann said that the exhibition's specific topic would deal with only one settlement in Anatolia. The *Iliad* gives the soul of the city that was represented during the exhibition.

The governments of Turkey and Japan agreed to designate 2003 as "The Year of Turkey in Japan" in April 2000. Various events were held in Japan promoting Turkish culture and history offering the Japanese people a view of Turkish civilization. Four exhibitions were organized: the exhibition of three Empires, the Sadberk Hanım Museum collection, "Women of Ottoman Age" and "Turkish- Japanese Relations" exhibition. "Selected Works of the

³²⁰ *Troia: Düş ve Gerçek* (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2001), p.36.

Cultural Heritage of Turkey, Sadberk Hanım Museum Collection” opened in Tokyo on February 18, 2003 includes 621 works that represented the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk and Ottoman periods. The exhibition also travelled to Kagawa, Yamanashi, Hokkaido and Yokahama. The exhibition was launched with a large promotion campaign, including the sale of metro and phone cards with related pictures on them and TV programs and also daily activities organized to introduce Turkey to the Japanese people.

“Women in Anatolia: 9000 Years of the Anatolian Women” was held at Topkapı Palace Museum on November 29, 1993-February 28, 1994. It opened on the 70th anniversary of the foundation of Turkish Republic and was curated by Günsel Renda.³²¹ The exhibition was the primary source for another exhibition entitled “Mothers, Goddesses and Sultanas” that opened in Brussel at the Palais des Beaux-Arts on October 6, 2004 and run until January 16, 2005. The women of Turkey are evoked by means of 360 sculptures, paintings, prints, manuscripts, garments, jewels and furnishings-dating from the 9th millennium BC to 1935 AD. The works come from 37 Turkish institutions, including Topkapı Palace as well as 17 European Museums and libraries.

The curators Nazan Ölçer and Filiz Çağman³²² presented a new dimension of women’s rich contribution to the culture of Anatolia. The cultural legacy and dynamism of Anatolian civilization has passed from age to age through women, who are the true curator of civilizations as well as the principle vehicle of modernization. The exhibition took the visitor on a journey in time around Anatolia, showed a great diversity of artifacts, works of art and

³²¹ *Women in Anatolia: 9000 Years of the Anatolian Women* (Ankara: T.C. Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 1993).

³²² Dr. Filiz Çağman was an art historian specialized in Ottoman art history. In 1964, Dr. Çağman started to work at Topkapı Palace as an assistance in the department of manuscripts. She has worked in several projects, wrote books and articles. After the retirement from Topkapı Palace in 2005, Dr. Çağman is the member of advisory board of Sabancı University, Sakıp Sabancı Museum.

archeological material. Throughout Anatolian history, a woman has appeared as a goddess with creative and protective powers, as a ruling monarch, as a patriotic citizen, patron of the arts, teacher, and writer and at all times guiding as mother her family. When we examine the Neolithic Age culture, the female goddess was the dominant element in the equation with power, birth, life and death. In other words, the woman was the central figure in the first religion devised by mankind. The mother goddess figure associated with the sun at Kültepe was contrasted with the bull as a symbol of male virility. In the section on classical Greek, Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine culture, the mother of goddesses were still honored in Anatolia in the Hellenistic period. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were written in Ionian dialect of Western Anatolia symbolizing power of women.

The exhibition was quite contradictory because a big part of history in this region was shaped by Greek culture. However, little interest in Greek and Byzantine civilizations did not fit in with the logic of the history show. However, Anatolian women in the ancient period were studied in the daily life practices. The Western perception of Ottoman women was very limited, as Jean-Marie Birist stated. According to Birist, Ottoman women were “the bird in the golden cage or the harem. Matriarchal traditions were strong in Anatolian cultures. But he also treated women as second-class beings, as concubines, as slaves to housework in the shadow of male glory.”³²³ In contrast to this view, these exhibitions of Anatolian women represented non Orientalist images in Anatolia through the centuries that marked a change in the representational attitudes of the Turkish curators who emerged in self-orientalization.

The exhibition, entitled “Three Great Civilizations in Turkey: Hittite, Byzantium and Ottoman” officially opened on August 1, 2003 by the Minister of Culture and Tourism Erkan Mumcu, was organized within the “Year of Turkey” activities in Japan. The exhibition,

³²³ Jean-Marie Birist, “Lifting the veil on Turkey”, *Focus*, October 2004, p.7.

which started in the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, moved to the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum between October 12 and December 7 and then to the Osaka Museum of History between December 20 and February 16. The Japanese Television company NHK and film company Toei sponsored the exhibition. Both companies insured the most precious piece of the exhibition, the Topkapi dagger,³²⁴ for \$50 million. Besides the Topkapı Dagger, the bust of Alexander the Great taken from the Istanbul Archeology museum, the statue of Artemis from the Ephesus Museum, the sword of Kanuni Sultan Suleyman and the portrait of Barbaros Hayrettin Pasha were the most prominent objects the Hellenistic and Ottoman periods.

There were around 226 pieces from 18 museums peculiar to Turkey in the exhibition.³²⁵ Most of the pieces that were shown during travelling exhibitions were masterpieces in particular from the Ankara Anatolian Civilization Museum, the Istanbul Archeology Museum, Topkapı Palace and Turkish Islamic Art Museum. The exhibition was visited by around 3,000 people during the week days and by some 5,000 people on weekends and by more than 100,000 people in a month.³²⁶

The curators focused on the three great empires that had flourished in Turkey, Hittite, Byzantine and Ottoman, inspired by the multicultural vision of Anatolia. The logic of the exhibition depended on the motto: “Crossroads of Civilizations,” which described the

³²⁴ The Topkapi dagger, one of the Topkapi Palace's greatest treasures, was made famous by the popular 1964 film “Topkapi”. Crafted before 1747 as a gift to the Persian King Nadir Shah, the dagger never reached its intended recipient, who was killed in an uprising before the Ottoman emissary crossed the border into Iran. The dagger features three unusually large emeralds in its handle, with an eight-sided emerald cover at its top concealing a small watch (made in London). Along both sides of the handle are rows of diamonds, and the back of the handle is covered in mother-of-pearl and enamel. The dagger is a piece showing the supreme power and wealth of the Ottoman Empire.

³²⁵ *Türk-Japon Kültür Yılı*. Accessed December 25, 2010.
<http://www.turk-japan2003.org/3empires.asp>

³²⁶ *Turkish Daily News*, September 4, 2003

land, Anatolia, where the various races had migrated and cultures integrated. At this point, the minister of Culture and Tourism Erkan Mumcu, stated that

Anatolia has hosted many great civilizations and its geography seeing its future in the light of its past. Therefore, it is inevitable to bring these magnificent heritage and cultural values to the attention and the admiration of the world. Moreover, Anatolia, as an open-air museum, is waiting to be discovered.³²⁷

Emphasis was given to the ancient history of Anatolia, the Hittite empire, one of the greatest civilizations that survived between 18th B.C and 1200 B.C. The Hittites were a tribe that had migrated to Anatolia from elsewhere, and their language belonged the Indo-European language group. The Hittites created a unique cultural world that was based on traditional Anatolian heritage. Their civilization was a source of the Anatolian spirit as well as cultural resources of modern Turkey which leaders and academics sought to use in the making of the Turkish History Thesis. The Hittite Sun, the symbol of the modernity and lit the future of Turkish nation was exhibited during the exhibition as masterpiece of the Hittite culture. In addition, ceremonial vessels, a beak-spouted pitcher, and a prism seal were exhibited as unique examples of that time.

The section devoted to Byzantium presented the era as a political continuation of Roman Empire in the East which had flourished for 1,000 years. Byzantine art and culture, based on the convergence of several traditions developed its own unique style although Greek culture played a pivotal role. From the fourth century to fifteenth century the “millennial city” Constantinople was the center of a Christian culture that bloomed under the reign of the Byzantium Empire that merged with the existing Anatolian culture. The cultural heritage of the Byzantium was partly the source of classical Ottoman history. The exhibition then ended

³²⁷ *The Three Great Civilizations in Turkey: The Hittite Empire, Byzantium Empire and Ottoman Empire* (Tokyo: Toei Company, Ltd., 2003), p.3.

with the Ottoman section, which referred sixteenth century to only glorious age depicting its high civilization and interaction with the Byzantium cultural heritage, establishing a historical continuation between Byzantium and the Ottoman Empire.

Istanbul: The City and the Sultan

The exhibition, titled “Istanbul: The City and the Sultan,” opened on December 14, 2006 in Amsterdam with a ceremony attended by Queen Beatrix of Netherland and Turkish Minister of Culture and Tourism Atilla Koç, and a number of top level politicians. The exhibition attracted around 165,000 visitors. The exhibition was a part of the activities of the Turkey Now festival which was organized by İKSV and the Minister of Culture and Tourism in 2007.

The exhibit was held at Amsterdam’s Nieuwe Kerk Museum and featured nearly 300 objects from Turkish museums, from Topkapı Palace Museum, the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, the Sadberk Hanım Museum and the Sabancı Museum as well as portraits of sultans, religious artifacts, kaftans, carpets and gifts that had been purchased sultans; scientific and literary works, calligraphy, paintings and miniatures featuring important historical events, mystical object, musical instruments, and folkloric clothes. The exhibition also included different sections showing daily life in the Ottoman Empire called “Bazaar,” “coffee house,” “Turkish bath,” “mansion,” “cemetery,” “mosque,” “dervish lodge,” “library,” “life at Topkapı” and “women’s quarters”.³²⁸ For the first time, the Karagöz shadow-puppet theatre

³²⁸ *Istanbul: The City and the Sultan*, (Amsterdam: De Nieuwe Kerk, 2006)

has been represented in Holland. The exhibition also featured Istanbul panoramas, Jean Baptise Vanmour's paintings depicted the eighteenth century image of Istanbul.

The Turkish Minister of Culture, Atilla Koç, said the following: "The development of relations between different cultures lays the groundwork for mutual understanding between peoples. This communication will enable the establishment of the alliance of civilization, which is most needed by the world. The exhibition that we opened today will enable our Dutch friends to more intimately know our cultural heritage dating from the Ottoman period, and know the Turkish people."³²⁹

The exhibition, which focused on Constantinople as the capital of Eastern Roman Empire focuses mainly the city era during the Ottoman age of glory. A map of the Ottoman Empire in the first page of the exhibition catalog, showed the borders of the Empire during the sixteenth as well as at the beginning of the twentieth century. This is an important point that Ottoman exhibition that was held in the 1980 and 1990 showed only the golden age to represent political and military power of the empire.

In this sense, the logic of the exhibition focused on the historical ties between Ottoman Empire and Turkey. The organizers made an important choice that played a decisive role in the representation strategy- visitors walked through Ottoman Istanbul, highlighting three themes: life in the old city center, life at court, and certain aspects of the city's religious and academic life.

The presentation of modern Turkish history together with Istanbul and the image of the Ottoman sultans as national symbols are a post-modern representation. This indicates that the break between modern Turkish and Ottoman history did not continue in the construction

³²⁹ Turkish Daily News, April 17, 2007, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/h.php?news=8216istanbul-the-city-and-the-sultan8217-exhibit-lures-crowds-2007-04-17>.

of narrative international exhibitions in the last decade. Strongly based on the historical continuation of civilizations, the main sponsor of the exhibition, Mustafa Koç said that they opened an exhibition featuring Ottoman civilization in Istanbul, which had a significant place in Turkey's rich cultural heritage and had been the capital of three empires.³³⁰ Selling the image of Istanbul in international heritage exhibitions depicted both the modern and historical face of the city was a strategy for tourism and promoting Turkish culture.

On the other hand, restricting Ottoman art and history to the oriental representation of Istanbul had been limited to a profile of imperial history. The great regions under the Ottoman rule in the sixteenth century, Balkans, Anatolia and part of the Middle East had carried out various different concepts in terms of art, architecture, and life style. For this reason, due to a lack of primary sources, geographical limitations drew the boundaries of the theme in terms of time, space, and historical actors.

Up until the 2000s the multicultural character of the Empire was not emphasized in the international history exhibitions. "Istanbul: The City and the Sultan," for the first time, made visible the ordinary people in Ottoman history, revealing unknown parts of everyday life as well as rewriting cultural history. The multicultural representation of Ottoman history showed a new understanding for the international heritage exhibitions.

From Byzantium to Istanbul: One Port for Two Continents
(De Byzance A Istanbul: Un Port Pour Deux Continents)

The exhibition titled the visitor through 8.000 years of history of the "city of a hundred names," known as Byzantium, Constantinople, and Istanbul. It focuses on the role of

³³⁰ Ibid., <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/h.php?news=8216istanbul-the-city-and-the-sultan8217-exhibit-lures-crowds-2007-04-17>

Istanbul linking Europe and Asia as being one part of two continents Asia and Europe. The 464 works of art from museums in 14 countries in Europe, Turkey and Qatar were shown in the exhibition, which had been designed by Spanish architect Boris Micka, reflected the spirit of the periods of history. It was opened, October 2009 until January 25, 2010 attracted approximately 241,000 visitors.³³¹

Istanbul has always been a multicultural city, with many different languages, ethnicities, religions,” said Nazan Ölçer,³³² director of the Sakıp Sabancı Museum in Istanbul and curator of the exhibition. In an interview, she said her intention was “I bring also this colorful face of the city to the exhibition. Maybe, you know, you cannot change all the prejudices with one exhibition only, but at least you can try to open a window to the visitor, to ask him to think differently.” “From Byzantium to Istanbul: One Port for Two Continents” covered three different time periods. The first period started in the Neolithic Age and continued the 8th century B.C., where covered it Greco-Roman cultural heritage in the city. The marble head of the Greek god Heracles and a bust of the Roman Emperor Constantine, the founder of Istanbul as the capital of the Eastern Christian Empire in the fourth century were the major works in the exhibition. Golden icons decorated with precious stones and pearls showed the long Christian past of the city. Then, Ottoman period was handled on the second floor of the exhibition, focusing on Ottoman art, but also on different periods of Turkish art. In this way, the visitor could visualize the array of cultures that had shaped the

³³¹ *Cumhuriyet*, 29.01.2010.

³³² Nazan Ölçer was born in Istanbul, in 1942. She studied at the Austrian Girls’ Lycee before going on to study art history, ethnology and history at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich. She began working at the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art in 1972 and became director in that capacity until her retirement 32 years later. During her tenure, the museum became the first Turkish museum to receive the European Museum of the Year Award. She herself has received honors from the French Cultural Ministry and the presidents of Germany, Poland and Italy.

city. While Ölçer was organizing this exhibition, she explained her strategy in the following sentences:

The strategy was this. We all sometimes tend to simplify many things. If Byzantium was a Christian capital, so we think it's only a Christian capital. If we say after the conquest, after the fall, all of a sudden it became an Islamic capital. No. It was not like this. Istanbul has been always a multicultural city.³³³

The strategy is a key to understanding the logic of the exhibition that explored the history and myth of the city. Its name changed throughout the centuries as Lygos, Byzantium, Nouvelle Rome, Constantinople, Konstantiniyye, Islambol, and Istanbul has show characteristics of the ages that inherit symbols, stories as well as works of art. The organization of the exhibition was centered on three different periods namely: Byzantium, Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. Especially, the Byzantine and Ottoman cultural heritage covered more than ninety percent of the exhibited art objects.³³⁴ Each section of the exhibition catalogue was written by well-known academics who were specialized their fields provided extensive knowledge for each period.³³⁵ The story started from the Neolithic Age to the Roman showing the foundation of the Eastern Roman Empire through maps, plans of monuments, statues of the Byzantium Emperors, monumental sculptures, objects used in funerals, religious icons, architectural plans of Hagia Sophia, special works of art in gold, silver and wood that constituted first part of the exhibition. Golden icons and crosses as well as chalice decorated with precious stones and pearls evoked the spirit of Constantinople.

³³³ *Hürriyet Daily News*, 25.10.2009, p.12 .

³³⁴ *De Byzance A Istanbul: Un Port Pour Deux Continents: Galeries nationales* (Grand Palais, Champs-Élysées), 10 Octobre (Paris: Editions de la Reunion des musées nationaux, 2009)

³³⁵ Koray Durak, Engin Akyürek, Jannic Durand, Ufuk Kocabaş, Rahmi Asal, Nevra Necipoğlu, Çiğdem Kafesçioğlu, Francis Richard, M. Baha Tanman, Tülay Artan, Semra Germaner, Zeynep Inankur, Kayahan Türkanöz, Ara Güler(photographs), Orhan Pamuk(Le Paşabahçe).

Archeological objects discovered in 2004 during the construction of an underwater metro station at Yenikapı, which was the location to the old harbor of Istanbul were presented in a slideshow for the first time.³³⁶

In the Ottoman section, the reign of Mehmed II, who had a great role in the foundation of the Ottoman capital, symbolized the new age in the city. His likeness was painted by the Italian Renaissance painter Gentile Bellini and was among the masterpieces of the exhibition reflecting a testament to the European fascination with the East. Together with a panoramic description of the city and such monumental structures as the Fatih complex, the Süleymaniye and Sultanahmed Mosque represented the power of the Empire and new face of Istanbul during the golden age when the Ottomans had their widest range of territory and ruled densely populated areas. In contrast to most of the Ottoman history exhibitions up to that time, “From Byzantium to Istanbul” introduced new topics in Ottoman literature the minorities who lived in the empire, and heterodox Islamic sufisms.³³⁷ At this point, it is an important contribution that Ottoman religious life was taken under light of multicultural religious elements: Armenian Catholic, Orthodox, and Judaism. That indicates ethnic and religious minorities were not absent, they were prominent figures of the city life. Works of art from Topkapı Palace were employed to display the splendor of Ottoman art; tiles, wooden works, jeweler, and Anatolian carpets constituted a part of the Ottoman section.

Miniatures depicted images of Ottoman people who came from various regions of the empire, among them Muslim women, Armenian Christian women and firemen, street sellers, and workers...so on. The exhibition covered all parts of the city life, while most of the earlier Ottoman exhibitions had given only a passage from the sultan’s life and the palace

³³⁶ *De Byzance A Istanbul: Un Port Pour Deux Continents: Galeries nationales*, p.143

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.209,253.

itself. The Bosphorus and sea life become the center of the city culture. Engravings of palaces and waterfronts, summer pavilions showed the various sides of Istanbul city life. Images from the Occident were particularly important since they revealed the mind of European travelers and the visitors would be picture in their minds with their paintings and of the gravures. This image has not changed even today. Hamam scenes, naked women, authentic images of Istanbul supported an Orientalist vision of the West. The final section was centered on the Turkish Republic, depicting a modern image of the city, youth, and culture through Ara Güler's photos.³³⁸

"Maybe this exhibition also can open a new window for visitors by looking at the old city with all of its secrets,"³³⁹ Ölçer said. The secrets or myths of Istanbul were not introduced as a touristic agenda that attracted foreigners to the modern city. The strategy adapted by Ölçer gave the modern and historical vision of the city, making it more sympathetic in the eyes of French visitors. The title of the exhibition "From Byzantium to Istanbul: One Port for Two Continents" was a new way to emphasize the duality in its geography and cultural identity, emphasizing a multicultural approach. Six months later, the Sakıp Sabancı Museum hosted the same exhibition, under the title of "Legendary Istanbul From Byzantium to Istanbul: 8000 Years of A Capital," and implemented a different identity strategy. To represent the glorious history to the Turkish art audience, Ölçer changed the title of the exhibition in order to display the cultural power of the city. In this regard, the exhibition

³³⁸ *De Byzance A Istanbul: Un Port Pour Deux Continents: Galeries nationales* p.327.

³³⁹ *From Byzantium to Istanbul Exhibition*. Accessed June 2, 2010. <http://www.rmnm.fr/De-Byzance-a-Istanbul>.

carried out both universal and particular values, and represented the reconstruction of the cultural identity of Istanbul in the early 2000s.

In conclusion, three different narrative structures in the post-1980s are analyzed in this chapter. The first narrative structure was related directly to the Turkish History Thesis using the idea of Central Asia/motherlands as an instrument rewriting the historical geography of Anatolia, to make a clear definition of Turks. The second narrative depended on the Turkish Islamic Synthesis model that flourished as a right wing Anatolianism of the 1980s. This synthesis was an outcome of the state-centered historiography emphasizing the Ottoman-Islamic past hoping to fill the spatial and temporal gaps in the Republican narrative. In the 1980s, a new group of conservative elites made an effort to create a glorious history of the Ottoman Empire stressing the sixteenth century. Visualization of imperial images in the internationally framed exhibitions were promotional efforts to redefine Turkey's identity into the Western world. The narrative structure of the Ottoman history exhibitions was organized in such a way so as to meet the expectation of Western audiences from an Oriental Empire. It is argued here that the shift in the logic of the international heritage exhibition is the result of transformation of cultural institutions, new trends in historiography and the reconstruction of the image of the country abroad.

The third narrative structure was seen in the early 2000s, as an outcome of post-modern history writing, and the conceptual representation of the Ottoman Empire as a multiethnic, synthesizing civilization. Due to new trends in Turkish historiography since the 1980s, cultural history became the dominant field in world historiography as well as Ottoman history writing. The visualization of Ottoman millets and bureaucratic, administrative, and military structure of the Empire indicated a shift in the logic of heritage exhibitions on

international platforms towards a multi-ethnic and cosmopolitan identity. The themes selected for the exhibits reflected concerns about the identity politics of Turkey.

In the next chapter, the internationally framed contemporary art exhibitions will be analyzed. During the last two decades, the contemporary art practices in Turkey have transformed. The relation of the contemporary Turkish art to the global art scene indicated the transformation of the image of Turkey and Turkish artists became visible in the world art scene. Within this framework, the internationally framed contemporary art exhibitions will be analyzed through their relation to cultural identity.

CHAPTER V

TURKISH CONTEMPORARY ART AT INTERNATIONAL SCALE EXHIBITIONS: DIALOGUE BETWEEN WESTERN ART AND ARTISTS:

This chapter provides a discussion of international contemporary Turkish art exhibitions in the last two decades. The focus is on group contemporary art exhibitions as they display better the overall tendencies and relations between global and local as well as changing themes and concepts in Turkish contemporary art. The following sections evaluate a series of questions in order to clarify the reasons for artists from Turkey to participate in group exhibition. For example, under what kind of circumstances did artists work in abroad and what did the international curators expect from their art? What were their strategies with regard to the Western perspective? In which way did artists formulate their questions, problems, representational strategies and did they have chance to reflect individual differences?

Contemporary art exhibitions are analyzed in two parts in terms of chronologic and thematic orders. The first period covered the first ten years (1990-2000), when Turkish artists faced the realities of the international art world, trying to find places for themselves in global exhibitions. The second period covered the last ten years (2000-2010) in contemporary art exhibitions. The second compared to the first one was artistically more productive. The exhibitions will be analyzed according to thematic concepts, formulating the representational strategies of contemporary art. Lastly, participation of Turkey in the Venice Biennial will be discussed as a symbol of the recognition of Turkish art in global art events.

A Brief History of Fine Arts Exhibitions in Turkey

The development of fine arts in the modern sense in the Ottoman Empire started with Western influences during the Tazimat period. After the foundation of *Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi* in 1882 (the University of Fine Arts), teachers from Western countries began to educate muslim and non-muslim students who belonged to the bureaucratic class and to give lectures on painting, sculpture, aesthetics and Western art history.

In April 1873, Şeker Ahmet Pasa organized the first modern painting exhibition, and thereby starting art exhibitionism in Turkey. Western influence from 1873 on climbed in the reform of fine arts. A series of art exhibitions, painting, were produced mostly by higher ranking state officials, and the non-Muslim population. In 1901, Şeker Ahmet Pasha once again organized the first Salon exhibition of Istanbul. The Salon exhibitions continued until 1904 and attracted the small art community in the capital city³⁴⁰.

Annual exhibitions organized by Galatasaray Lyceé every August starting in 1909 were an important part of the art scene in Istanbul. The first Turkish painting exhibition outside the Empire took place in Vienna in 1917 and was organized by the Şişli Studio's artists.³⁴¹ Painters who worked there had military school origin and most of them had graduated from Ecole de's Arts in Paris. Their background as well as the political situation of the Empire had a great impact on their artistic expression as well as their paintings. The long series of wars had raised nationalistic feelings and had influenced the themes of the art works.

³⁴⁰ Sezer Tansuğ, *Çağdaş Türk Sanatı* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitapevi, 2005), p.92,110.

³⁴¹ Ahmet Kamil Gören, "Türk Resim Sanatı Gelişim Sürecinde Şişli Atölyesi'nden Viyana Sergisine", *Antik Dekor*, n.41 (1997), p.54.

These painters were called the 1914 generation. The community of Turkish artists held nationalist and modernist attitudes and their paintings carried the influence of the ongoing wars.

In the 1917 and 1918 Vienna exhibitions, Namik Ismail's "The last bullet", Ibrahim Çallı's "Gunners", Hikmet Onat's "Reading Letters at the Barricade" were prominent examples of the collection which was sent to Vienna. Celal Esad Arseven, who had a role in organizing the Şişli studio exhibit wrote that "for centuries, as a result of propaganda against Turks, they have regarded us as an uncivilized tribe. To change their impression we must prove our civilization and competence."³⁴² The 1917 Vienna exhibition displayed a "nationalist" atmosphere in which a vast number of paintings reinforced the imperial ideal of the Ottoman state.

Starting from the 1914 generation, Turkish artists followed the nationalist path in the creation of modern art until the mid-twentieth century. However, they also worked landscape still lifes, and paintings of females. In the early decades of the Republican period, the state was actively involved in founding art institutions, the creation of political art, supporting artists and organizing exhibitions. State Painting-Sculpture Exhibitions, The Revolution Painting Exhibitions, Public Houses Art Exhibitions and Painting Tours of Anatolia were organized directly by the state.³⁴³ These exhibitions were not great importance in terms of the aesthetic quality of the art, but the patronage relationship between the state and artists led to several discussions in the Turkish arts. The Republican Party produced a program to control

³⁴² "Asırlardan beri Türkler aleyhinde yapılan neşriyatın tesiriyle müttefik olduğumuz milletler bile bizi hale iptidai bir kavim olarak telakki ediyorlar. Bu telakkinin yanlışlığını, medeniyetimiz kabiliyetimizi ispat etmek zorundayız." Mehmet Üstünipek. *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Çağdaş Türk Sanatında Sergile 1850-1950*. İstanbul: Artes Yayıncılık, 2007, p,34.

³⁴³ Şeyda Barlas, *Visions of Aesthetics and Culture in Yeni Adam (New Man): Republic of Fine Arts* (Germany: VDM Verlag, 2010), p.55.

the themes and techniques of paintings and the number of sculptures. The party put the artists in a strategic position to be propagandists. This initiated an important debate for art. The basic question was the extent to which artists should serve the needs of the state. Although the art works displayed at these exhibitions were the finest example of the time, they were criticized by Turkish intellectuals for being too ideologically engaged.³⁴⁴

During the 1930s, state exhibitions occupied a central position in constructing the sense of national in the fine arts and in raising the level of art in the public sphere. There was a growing interest in representational painting, sculpture, and architecture as the artistic carriers of Republican ideas. Exhibitions in Turkey during the 1930s were dominated mostly by the members of D Group, who also took part in international exhibitions in the Balkans, Russia and Eastern Europe. Due to the political instability in Europe, Turkey wouldn't organize a national pavilion at the 1937 Paris World Exhibition.

After the 1950s, the state-centered art exhibitions continued to serve the national interest of society while the state was starting to lose its dominant position in the artistic sphere. Independent groups, like Onlar, the Group of Ten and the D Group did not have a central position in Turkish art. Instead of being a member of a group, artists generally worked individually. The loss of state power in Turkish art caused a kind of exclusion of Turkish artists in Europe and later encouraged the creation of an autonomous art sphere in Turkey.

In the 1960s and 1970s Turkey was a fairly isolated country. Although there was a certain peripheral modern art production, a modern art system had not developed yet and modern art museums, art centers and fairs did not exist. The modern Turkish art in this period was not promoted officially or privately, supported through exhibitions abroad. Due to the

³⁴⁴Barlas, p.57.

lack of the state's financial support, sponsorship ties, in the 1960s and 1970s, international exhibitions were only possible through official governmental channels.

It is argued here that the situation in the 1960s and 1970s is one of the basic difficulties for organizing international exhibitions in Turkey. The Western countries' cultural centers, such as the British Council, the Goethe Institute, and the Italian and French Cultural Centers, were organizing exhibitions to present their cultures. Beral Madra writes that in the same period, art exhibitions organized by the Culture and Foreign Ministry, the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy did not succeed at representing Turkish culture outside Turkey.³⁴⁵ The narrow minded state cultural policies restricted the vision of Turkish artists to promote Turkish art in Europe as well as to improve standards of art production. On the local art scene, a handful of art galleries such as Artisan, İstanbul Maçka, Uart, Baraz, and Ankara Vakko³⁴⁶ promoted modern art.

Apparently, the generations of artists who were sent to Western metropol on educational grants did not play any significant role in the formation of an international art environment or modern art movements in Turkey. A small number of artists, like Sarkis, Fusun Onur, Altan Gürman, who went abroad in the 1960s and returned to Turkey and were trained in experimental techniques and were the representatives of the “innovative front” of the academy.

The first large scale national art exhibition started in the year 1977 as a part of the Art Festivals of the Istanbul State Fine Arts Academy. “*New Trends Exhibitions*” were held

³⁴⁵ Beral Madra. *İki yılda Bir Sanat* (İstanbul: Norgunk Yayınları, 2003), p.43.

³⁴⁶ Jale Nejdert Erzen, “Cumhuriyetin Son Çeyreğinde Sergiler,” in *Cumhuriyetin Renkleri, Biçimleri*, edited by Ayla Ödekan (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999).

every two years, six times in total from 1977 to 1987.³⁴⁷ The most significant contribution of these exhibitions to the art world at the time was that they revealed a hidden potential in the field of Fine Arts. The purpose of these exhibitions was to act as a platform for original artworks, running parallel to universal contemporary art.

The New Trends Exhibitions played a great role in bringing a new dynamism and breaking national borders. Actually, only a few works succeeded in the 80s contemporary art world. Jale Erzen evaluated the exhibitions as follows: “Unfortunately, today, specific and progressive art works in Turkey are based on elite social structure. For this reason, we shouldn’t produce cultural images, symbols and concepts in order to prepare the required environment for the forming a specific culture.”³⁴⁸

The fine Arts Academy Art Fair and “New Trends” Exhibitions carried enormous importance. At first glance, the New Trends resembled the late 1960s exhibitions in Europe and the USA. The exhibitions introduced an opportunity to show the new production dynamics of the country focusing on innovations in the preferred material, techniques and content and also contained a variety of subjects ranging from Anatolia, traditional painting styles, social, local and political issues. As Kemal İskender writes, the New Trends Exhibitions reached their goal. Indeed, the New Trends Exhibitions helped to free Turkey’s art from its own imprisonment, opened ways to new research about what was “new” among contemporary avant-garde attitudes and hosted and opened the object style conceptual art.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ Nilgün Özayten, “Türkiye’de Obje Sanatı, Post Kavramsal Sanat, Sanat Eğilimleri,” in *User’s Manual: Contemporary Art in Turkey 1986-2006*, edited by Halil Altındere and Süreyya Evren (İstanbul: Art-ist Produksiyon, 2007), p.10.

³⁴⁸ Jale Erzen, “Türk Sanatında Yeni eğilimler ve Sanat Bayramı,” *ODTU Mimarlık Fakültesi Dergisi*, no.2, 3 (1977), p.10.

³⁴⁹ Nilgün Özayten, “Türkiye’de Obje Sanatı, Kavramsal Sanat, Post-Kavramsal Sanat Eğilimleri, in *User’s Manual: Türkiye’de Güncel Sanat*,” (1986-2006), p.16.

Works belonging to the realm of Object Art and Conceptual Art were produced by Füsün Onur, Ayşe Erkmen, Gürel Yontan, Şükrü Aysan, and Sanat Tanımı Topluluğu showed the new trend in Turkish art. Their works contained a variety of subjects ranging from Anatolia, traditional painting styles, social issues, local issues and political issues. The weak point of the exhibition was focus. The material experiments of the artists were too simple and there was a lack of structural and spatial concerns and central concepts.

It should be noted that although the exhibitions displayed no real “new trends” in Turkey, they helped to free art from its own restricted areas and opened a new path for contemporary art trends. Together with “New Trends”, the number of events and artists, audiences, and galleries interested in contemporary art increased, and it promoted a series of exhibitions, such as “A Cross Section of Avant-Garde Turkish Art (1984-1988)” and “A, B, C exhibitions (1989-1993).”³⁵⁰

Contemporary Art after the 1980s

These developments discussed above prepared the background for the International Istanbul Biennial where Turkish art world met the wider world of art through a major international event. According to Beral Madra, the changes in Turkish art after the 1980s brought a new artistic language or style. These were a result of the social, cultural, political transformations and re-conceptualization of the liberal movement in contemporary art.³⁵¹ The eighties in Turkey were marked by the coup d’etat of 1980, the neo-liberal economic policies

³⁵⁰ Özeyten, p.18, 24.

³⁵¹ Beral Madra. *Bir Bilanço: 80’li Yıllarda Türkiye’de Sanat Üretimi* (İstanbul: Karşı Sanat Çalışmaları, 2005), p.12.

and culturally conservative agendas implanted by the Özal governments and their effects on the cultural and artistic fields. It can be argued that, with this period, promoting contemporary art in Turkey followed the logic of global capitalism.

After decades of isolation, Turkish art opened to outside influences and artists started to participate in mainstream art exhibitions. The new generation of artists was fully aware of global trends and determined to create autonomous works within the contemporary art of the 1980s and 1990s. While artist from the 1960s and 1970s had been engaged in politics and lived the revolutionary anxieties of the intelligentsia, the artists of the 1980s were more concerned with becoming leading individuals in society, producing works for the sake of art and their own personal artistic concepts.³⁵²

In the period following the coup d'état the exhibition series “A Glimpse from the Avant-garde Turkish”, “Ten Artists and Ten Works” were a collective voice free from the conservatism of academia. These autonomous art events utilized a formal language and expanded experimental attitudes in contemporary art. In 1980, the first “Contemporary Artists Istanbul Exhibition” organized by the Painting and Sculpture Museum Association became a new platform especially for young artists. These series of exhibitions opened a path for the New Trend Exhibitions in the 1990s, show us to transformation of art environment.

The first half of the 1980s was a period when the neoliberal economic model was on the rise at the expense of the closed economy models. Some banks like İş Bank, Ziraat Bank, and Ak Bank began to form large collections. Private galleries supported by the foundations of bank supported galleries and wide scale exhibitions sponsored by the private sector, represented a new model in contemporary art.

³⁵² Beral Madra. *Post Peripheral Flux: A Decade of Contemporary Art in İstanbul* (İstanbul: Literatür Yayınları, 1996), p.38.

The first exhibitions held in 1984, “A Cross Section of Avant Garde Turkish Art” (1984-1988), forced the boundaries of the academy-based contemporary art system, since it was realized without a curator or a small group of artists. The “A, B, C, D Exhibitions” in the 1989-1993 were shown in a different conceptual framework: for the first time site-specific works were shown. Along with the developments in the contemporary arts, Istanbul was going through a series of drastic cultural, social, economic and urban transformation. The number of galleries, exhibitions and artists gradually increased. For integration to the art world, a biennial with its global reach perspective was a must for contemporary Turkish artists.

The private foundations in 1990s art thus were laid in the second half of the 1980s. With the 1990s, innovative art movements and exhibitions were organized by Turkish artists and the concept of curatorship was introduced to the Turkish art world. The 1990s brought a transformation. Istanbul and some other metropolitan cities joined the art and culture scene and the artists also realized this vision on a global scale. Basic concepts in Turkish contemporary art in the 1990s such as dissimulation, immigration, national/gender identity, and everyday life reflected the new tendencies. Issues such as asymmetries in gender relations, militarism and violence in the public and private spaces were addressed. The neo-liberal economic politics increased the access of Turkey’s contemporary artist to other geographies and art publications. The climax of the war between the Turkish army and the Kurdish separatist movement, the explosion of nationalism, the Islamist movement, unaccounted for murders, private broadcast channels, and the influence of pop music and culture were major factors that led to the politization of Turkish contemporary art during this period.

In the 1990s, a series of contemporary art exhibitions were held in Turkey, proving the transformation of the contemporary art scene.³⁵³ “Memory-Recollection” exhibitions curated by Vasıf Kortun brought themes from everyday life between art and politics. The dispersion between memory and recollection’s social connotations created the main focus of these exhibitions.

The “Horse Exhibition” (1993) criticized the former Turkish president Kenan Evren’s “Horse Love” painting and the “Red Exhibition” which took place in a flat in Asmalımescit in 1994 by a group of young artists,³⁵⁴ questioned the dynamics of the system and grasped art in its political dimensions. Furthermore, “the Railway Station” exhibition led to a political scandal. The work of Selim Bırsel, Ayşe Selen, and Şehsuvar Aktaş, which represented soldiers dying in Eastern Turkey, caused the Station administration to collect all of the art works from the exhibition. The “Getting Dirty” exhibition brought ecological politics to artistic attention. During the 4th International Istanbul Biennial, a series of gallery exhibitions were taking place in Istanbul. The “State-Poverty-Violence” exhibition held in 1995. In this exhibition, for the first time, political and sociological issues were dominant. In addition, “Art: The Constructed Life” and “Orientlux” exhibitions showed that contemporary art was more effective when it come to political issues.³⁵⁵

After the “A Cross-section of Leading Turkish Art” in 1984, “Youth Action” exhibitions were held between 1995 and 1998 with impact on critics, academicians, art historians and journalists. The Youth Activity exhibitions were interdisciplinary organizations

³⁵³ Micheal Morris, Hüseyin Alptekin, Gülsün Karamustafa, İpek Aksüğü, Halil Akdeniz, Selda Asal, in the second Emre Zeytinoğlu, Bülent Şangar, Aydan Mürtezaoğlu, İsmet Doğan, Taner Ceylan, Lerzan Özer Aşar, Güven İncirlioğlu, and Eliza Proctor participated.

³⁵⁴ These artists were Insel İnal, Alper Ulaş, Fatma Binnaz Akman, Türkan Karaali, and Gaye Yazıcıtuğ.

³⁵⁵ Ali Akay, “The Art Community in the 1990s,” in *User’s Manual: Contemporary Art in Turkey 1986-2006*, edited by Süreyya Evren and Halil Altındere (Istanbul: Art-ist, 2007), pp.52-63.

where 250-300 young artists from various cities, disciplines, educational and social backgrounds took part for approximately three weeks with side events including seminars, panels, film screenings and workshops. The young artists not only broken with the given aesthetic approach of the art institutions at which they had been trained at, they also managed to reflect their art works in a political environment.³⁵⁶

Young of artists widened the discussion on a number of topic and questioned aesthetics as well as displaying their art works. There was no jury, no competitors or no elimination before the exhibition. The exhibition was tested by trial and error. The Youth Activity named “Boundaries and Beyond” explained that the boundaries of disciplines should be crossed. In the exhibitions undertook issues such as identity, crime, sexuality and media. These subjects were of everyday nature in Turkey. For this reason, contemporary artist Canan Beykal says that the Youth action was “an experimental testing area that is juriless and non-judgemental.”³⁵⁷

At the “Youth Actions” exhibitions and “Performance Days” exhibitions, artists Esra Ersen, Serkan Özkaya, Vahit Tuna, and Halil Altındere brought up the issue of identity and touched upon the concept of a government. In their works, they referred to the love-hate relationship between Turkey and the EU, more generally the problematic relationship between the center and the periphery. Since the 1990s, two generations of artists articulated in diverse techniques and different materials have been applying installations. Their works mainly reflect political repressions, in equalities disappointments and desperation.

³⁵⁶ Halil Altındere, “Giriş: Türkiye’de Güncel Sanat,” in ed. Süreyya Evren and Halil Altındere *User’s Manual: Contemporary Art in Turkey 1986-2006* (Istanbul: Art-ist, 2007), pp.3-9.

³⁵⁷ Altındere, p.57.

The BM Contemporary Art Center, founded by Beral Madra in the early 1990s, hosted a series of group exhibitions by artists from Turkey and abroad. The “Xample” (1995) and “Dialogues” (1996) and other exhibitions realized by Beral Madra in the mid-1990s had an important function in view of the contemporary art practices of the period. She played an active role as a mediator in the participation of artists from Turkey in international exhibitions and especially the Venice Biennial throughout the 1990s. Vasıf Kortun, art writer and exhibition producer of the period, curated the Memory/Recollection-1 exhibition in 1991 and “Number 50 Memory/Recollection-2” exhibition in 1993 and these exhibitions became important curatorial exhibition in the early 1990s for the art environment in Turkey.

Although the economic crises negatively affected the economy, with the economic expansion between 1994 and 1997, the art scene in Istanbul attracted investments from big companies and financial institutions. New venues such as Borusan, Platform, and Proje4L were alternative spaces for contemporary Turkish art in late 1990s which provided experimental and radical approaches. Another important opening of this period was the founding of the Istanbul Contemporary Art Project, an archive, library and discussion platform. The center was directed by curator Vasıf Kortun, who hosted a series of contemporary art seminars from 1998-2000. Experimental exhibitions the “Özel Bir Gün/One Special Day” organized in 1999, the “Karma Sergi/Mixed Exhibition” held in the Asmalımescit Galata Art Gallery in 2000 forced the limits of curatorship, participation and collectivism. For the first time, a private art gallery gathered Turkish artists such a huge project in Turkish contemporary art.

Starting from the early 1990s, a group of artists under the name of “current art” demonstrated the freedom of not expressing themselves under the label “contemporary art.”

The main difference is that “current art” broke free from the spotlight of the modernizing aspect of contemporary art. According to Vasıf Kortun, “unlike contemporary art and artists they do consider themselves in line with academiccontemporary art. This is a break in intermix/transition between modern and contemporary...Current art does not work on drafting a future; it is involved with ‘here’ and ‘now’.”³⁵⁸ The new trend can be considered as an independent art movement originating from a common approach among certain artists. During this period, current Turkish artists were creating their own concepts, forms and styles producing art, working with such topics as sex, assimilation, violence, memory, history, identity, everyday life and urbanization. They now had a chance to show themselves in their own country through establishments supported by the private sector. The owner of Galerist art gallery located in Teşvikiye made the following comment regarding changes in the definition of art in Turkey since 2001.

First, our understanding of contemporary or current art has changed. In the past, videos, installations or site specific projects were considered more alternative and experimental. We used to come across such works in biennials and we thought that they had no commercial value, no market. Such galleries were scarce. When we started this project, we carried out a serious search for artists. We were looking for artists who couldn’t find a venue to exhibit their work, and who had lost their motivation, but who were very talented artists. They were in need of a platform.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁸ Vasıf Kortun, “Güncel Sanat Kavramını Türkiye’ye On Yıl Önce Ben Getirdim”, *Vizon Dergisi*, 1 Aralık 2004.

³⁵⁹ “Öncelikle çağdaş yada güncel sanattan anladığımız değişti. Video, enstalasyon yada mekansal düzenlemeler eskiden daha alternatif deneysel olarak görülürdü. Bienallerde karşımıza çıkardı ve bunların ticari bir değeri piyasa değeri düşünülmezdi. Galeri sayısı da fazla değildi. Biz bu işe girerken çok ciddi sanatçı araması yaptık. Mekansızlık yüzünden kendini gösteremeyen, motivasyonunu kaybetmiş, ama çok yetenekli sanatçılardı bunlar. Onlara bir zemin gerekliydi.” Ayşegül Sönmez, “Current Art in Turkey: 2000-2007 Determinations and Incidents,” in *User’s Manual: Contemporary Art in Turkey 1986-2006*, edited by Süreyya Evren and Halil Altındere (Istanbul: Art-ist, 2007), pp.139.

In this sense, the private art galleries and newly founded contemporary art centers in Turkey were platforms for displaying current art works. Such prominent exhibitions as Look Again, Free Kick, Plajın Altında Kaldırım Taşları (Under the Beach: the Pavemet), Seni Öldüreceğim için Üzgünüm (I'm So Sad to Kill You), Nesne Ben (ObjectME), Offspace exhibitions realized in the 2000s were opportunities for current artists to share their work.

In my opinion, Istanbul is becoming more global each and every day as the center of the Balkans and the Middle East. Interaction with Istanbul and international circuits and the image of the Istanbul Biennial have been decisive in the phase of the emergence of artists who played effective roles in art at the center. Current artist Ferhat Özgür argues that in the last five years, there has been a shift in Istanbul's contemporary art scene. The increasing communication with "peripheral cities" and trans-border experiences were stimulating factors for contemporary art at the periphery. The axis of interaction between Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir and Diyarbakır produced a certain synergy and the atmosphere was enriched by activities of international level.³⁶⁰

After the first decade of the 2000, there were three developments on the Turkish art scene that determined the interactions between the center and the periphery and from the global to the local. First, with the integration to the global art scene, the collective spirit of artists left its place to more individual efforts. Proje 4L was Turkey's first contemporary art museum, founded in 2000 under the administration of Vasıf Kortun, who considered it as a first step in the institutionalization of contemporary art. Furthermore, the Osmanlı Bank Platform Contemporary Art Center, again realized with the efforts of Vasıf Kortun, became the first institutional project in which private capital invested in contemporary art. The

³⁶⁰ Özgür, "Herşeye Rağmen," in *User's Manual: Contemporary Art in Turkey*, pp.102-107

contemporary art spaces of Aksanatorusan and Siemens opened as the art centers of private companies’.

Second, in the last decade, the basic problem in contemporary art scene has been a problem of identity. With the influence of the EU membership process and the European pressure in everyday politics, there have been some attempts to link Istanbul-based contemporary art and culture to Anatolia. The first was the Diyarbakır Art Center which has presented an alternative public space for the larger public since 2000. A few artists who have gained rightful recognition in the international arena have profited from the services provided by this center. The second is the Sinopalia Biennial, an alternative and interdisciplinary event organized by the association Europist in Sinop, a coastal Black Sea city. The Sinopale Biennial introduced a new perspective for contemporary art in the periphery. The purpose of the Biennial is to build dialogue through culture and arts, within the framework of the “artistic production based on sharing” model. This project works on the urban, national and international levels in order to make citizens of all ages perceive a new their own living spaces with a vision for the future, reflects on urban problems, shares the historical collective memory and organizes it by means of artistic production and creates a better social living space. Sinopale is an alternative biennial in Turkey taking place in 2006, 2008 and 2010, using different sites such as the Historical Sinop Prison, the Pervane Madrasah Handcrafts Bazaar, the Dr. Rıza Nur Public City Library, Lonca Kapısı, and the Ülgen Boat House.

A cultural shift has occurred towards the Eastern and the south-Eastern regions of the country. Istanbul’s position within global culture has grown stronger and the city has taken a central position in the European art system. Madra argues that together with Istanbul, the

historical status and the sociopolitical context of the city determined the “gaze” of EU societies.³⁶¹

Contemporary art practices in Istanbul show both global and local characteristics. EU member states were undergoing a profound crisis of cultural identity due to the fact that globalization and Europeanization have weakened their cultural identities. In this regard, Istanbul is an alternative place for being a territory of transculturality in Europe. Rising intention in contemporary art exhibitions is a result: the artists are able to reach wider and more involved audiences, a few Turkish curators gained international recognition, and secondary sectors (PR companies, insurance and transportation, companies etc) have gained profit. Curators from EU countries and the USA tried to overcome their Orientalist tendencies, because the vision of contemporary art provide facilities gathering artists from different ethnic and religious backgrounds in the same exhibition space which have become the places for multiculturalism. Western curators no longer have had to cope with Otherness or Third Worldist attitudes in the last decades, widening their artistic boundaries.

Third, in the 1990s and first decade of the 2000s, artist-run spaces and artists' collectives have long made significant contributions to art centers in places such as Berlin, London, and New York. Artist-run culture has recently arrived in Istanbul. The emergence of artist-run spaces is fostering a wide range of artistic, cultural, and civic practices. The lack of basic funding and facilities, the newly founded trans-local networks, the effects of international art events, and the development of collaborative art practices were the basic factors to leading to the establishment of non-institutional, independent spaces in the different parts of the city. The basic reasons for the development of artist-run cultural organization in

³⁶¹ Beral Madra, “The Hot Spot of Global Art”: Istanbul’s Contemporary Art Scene and its Sociopolitical and Cultural Conditions and Practices”, *Third Text*, 22(1) (2008):105-112.

the first decade of the 2000s are the integration of Turkish artists in global art projects, Turkey's EU integration process, and the large-scale transformation of Istanbul, namely the gentrification process.³⁶² Turkish state officers and bureaucrats usually remain both nationalistic and conservative. For this reason, Turkish artists and curators hesitated to request funding for their projects. They mostly got financial support for their independent spaces and projects from private sources.

Several Turkish artist-run spaces and collectives aim to develop different practices and collaborations with urban, institutional, and socio-cultural impact. Harfiyat, Apartman Projesi, Altı Aylık, K2 (İzmir), Galata Perform, Nomad, Pist, and YAMA have emerged out of recent cultural inevitabilities: they have flexible agendas, assessing the potential of taking to the streets, and use every opportunity to be visible within the formal cultural agenda of the city. In 1990 a young radical group of artists involved in the underground popular culture and political activism founded Harfiyat referring to the growth of the peripheries and the reconstruction of the city. Since 1999, Apartman Projesi, owned by artist Selda Asal was artist-run space in Istanbul supporting young artists and curators. This street-level, twenty-four square meter space hosts exhibitions, projects and workshops.

Founded in 1997 by Özge Açıkkol, Seçil Yersel, and Güneş Savaş, the artists' collective Oda Projesi has been working with its Galata district neighbors many of whom moved to Istanbul from various parts of Anatolia in the late 1980s. Oda Projesi was a mediator and its platform depended on everyday experience. It responded to Galata's reconfiguration by working on projects that endeavored to increase public awareness and foster a local critique of the gentrification that was reshaping Istanbul's center. The project opened up an alternative

³⁶² Pelin Tan, "Sanatçı Kollektifleri, İnisiyatifleri ve Sanatçılar Yönetimindeki Mekanlar, in *User's Manual*, pp.130-131.

space where people who shared the same urban environment could discuss their different urban practices. It also sought to develop a local critical perspective and spread public awareness of Istanbul's new urban re-development initiatives.

PIST, an interdisciplinary project space run by artists Didem Özbek, Osman Bozkurt and curator/critic Fatoş Üstek, aimed to open their space as an exhibition, production and meeting place. In addition, artist Banu Cennetoğlu BAS collected and produced artist's books and printed matter. While BAS' growing international artist's books collection allows it to increase awareness of this art form and act as a resource for local artists, the center's aim is to generate a new platform for Turkish artists to explore printed matter as an alternative space.

NOMAD was founded in 2002 as an independent group of designers, engineers, architects, artists, curators and writers.³⁶³ It aimed to support the production of digital art and experimentation with electronic and digital media. It worked predominantly through collaborations with art institutions and universities had strong connections with collectives from Israel and Eastern Europe. It produced "ctrl-alt-del", a biannual independent digital and sound art event that took place in various urban spaces.³⁶⁴ All in all, the contemporary art atmosphere in the first decade of 2000s compared to the 1990s offered great possibilities to artists and give them both private and public spaces to in which to perform their arts.

³⁶³ *NOMAD*. Accessed March 18, 2010. www.nomad-tv-net

³⁶⁴ Tan, p.133.

Existence and Recognition of Turkish Art in the International Scene of 90s: “Other Foreigner”

In the 1990s the arts in Turkey partly preserved of the characteristics of the 1980s and focused on concepts such as work in terms of Westernization-Modernization-Internationalization, without the guidance of the state. Apart from the nationally framed the Istanbul Biennale tried to break down the monopoly of patronage and guidance of the Fine Arts Academy in the contemporary art scene, with the influence of global art. Resistance against the result of the influx of post-modern concepts in Turkish art, inner tension between younger and older generations reflected the theoretical background of works; where younger artists had a weak link to the 1950s generation. By this decade, contemporary artist had somehow broken theoretical and methodological boundaries in Turkish contemporary art. These artists were able to work independently and their art works were able to integrated into the art market circulation.

At the beginning of the 1990s, art production became one of the political strategies to integrate the global societies taking part in this flow. The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism were not willing to support contemporary art from Turkey abroad, and the state preferred to concentrate on a series of history exhibitions that gave messages about the history and cultural heritage of the country. Contemporary art was not a familiar representational strategy for Turkish ambassadors and bureaucrats in cultural relations. For this reason, the political and cultural authorities in Turkey did not separate systematic funds to introduce contemporary art in international forums. Organizing group exhibitions was difficult in these

limited circumstances. Although the state was responsible for supporting and guiding art until 1980, state support in sponsorship and art funds was not enough to take action abroad. To display their arts in Europe, Turkish artists started searching for funds and financial supports from local government and cultural centers ZKM (Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe), IFA (Institute for Foreign Exhibitions), MUMOK (Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung). These were European Cultural Centers located in Germany which contributed to the local art scene in German cities and EU cultural centers in other European cities.

Artists that made connections with these European cultural centers attracted the interest of European curators. Curator Beral Madra explains this situation as the nationally framed exhibitions enhanced cultural exchange and interaction of artists from Turkey and Germany. “We understand contemporary art and its theories in the visions of capitalism. If contemporary art is perceived as a manifestation, today’s politics and economy would be able to reach their goals much more easily. As for Turkey, a contemporary art exhibition is not only the demonstration of cultural success but also a manifestation of economic progress of the country.”³⁶⁵

From an academic perspective, art, called plastic art in Turkey, is not recognized as representative of the national identity of the artists at the intellectual level. Although installation, video and new media art were well known concepts in contemporary art trends, in Turkey, painting, sculpture and photography still dominated the area of the fine arts. In addition, the socio-economic realities in Turkey were strongly concentrated on art as a consumption product whereas understanding the message of art was to be “international,” but the process took long time for Turkey compared to Western Europe. Only contemporary art

³⁶⁵Madra, *Post Peripheral Flux*, pp.103,104.

exhibitions and art fairs put aesthetic value on art in order to raise its value in the conditions of the art market.

The 1990 marked a turning point in the international recognition of Turkish art. A series of major exhibitions of Turkish artists in the early 1990s, like the “Iskele” (Germany-1994), “Orient Express” (Germany-1995), “Intersecting Geographies” (Hungary- 1995), “Carte Colo Poste: Diverging Geographies” (Italy-1994), “A Foreign = A Traveler” (Netherlands-1993), Treffen: Kunst (Austria-1994) conceived art as a medium for cultural negotiation and dialogue. Artists from Turkey, who contributed to these exhibitions, produced art pieces that possessed the same level of competency in terms of use of material and conceptual structure as their Western counterparts. The exhibitions accelerated in the second half of the nineties: “Dialogues” (1996), “Iskorpit” (1998), “Journey in to Labyrinth” (1998), and “Still Cut Fragments” (1999) took place in Germany and Italy. These exhibitions were extensive enough to include a significant cross-section of contemporary art from Turkey that showed the transformation of the contemporary art scene. The number of exhibitions continuously rose through the first decade of the 2000s.

As Mahmut Koyuncu writes solo or group exhibitions were still related to the nationalist cultural identities of the contributing artists. Exhibitions were organized by European or Turkish curators have still revealed representational motives of geography, culture and nationhood.³⁶⁶ The basic reason behind this was that the representational strategies that were used in group exhibitions tended to create meta-identities in contemporary art. Thus, geography, culture and identities became the common determinants of the meta-identity in art in the post-modern world.

³⁶⁶ Mahmut Koyuncu, “Ulus Sergileri ve Temsil,” in *Kullanma Kılavuzu: Türkiye’de Çağdaş Sanat 1986-2006* (Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 2006), p.90.

Turkish contemporary art exhibitions had a common logic of promoting Turkish culture in Europe. However, most of the artists did not accept this logic. They wanted to resist being defined as the “Other” and the “Orient”. Although the state officers and private sponsors supported contemporary art exhibitions to create a positive image for Turkey, the artists from Turkey mainly tended to represent their art and aesthetic values rather than national themes.

First, Turkish art and artists were new to European audiences who expected to see the works of the “Other”. In the exhibition called “Turkey-Netherlands A Foreigner Traveler”, Turkish and Dutch artists’ art was displayed in the same exhibition space to establish a link or a dialogue in order to represent similarities and differences between the two cultures.³⁶⁷ “Being foreign” was the basis of the exhibitions in 1990s, also in the sense of being a traveler who has lived a short time in a certain place. Artists coming from outside European borders were regarded as “foreigners” and if the artists came from the East, they were seen as “Other.” In this sense, Turkish artists were regarded as both “Other” and ‘Foreign’. In the exhibition symbols from Eastern culture combined with Western terminology and gave the sense of exchange.

Gülsün Karamustafa’s “Mystic Transports” and Hale Tenger’s slang idiom “The school of I don’t give a fuck” (... *Aşağısı Kasımpaşa Ekolü*) did not leave the world of daily objects that referred to oriental symbols such as a rug or Islamic sword. Mehmet İleri produced anonymous, desolate landscapes that evoked early Ottoman Mural painting. The image was framed as in miniature painting defining a world which was controlled and held at a distance. Gülsün Karamustafa commented on this exhibition as follows:

For the first time, in 1993, we were invited to a group exhibition in a small city of Holland, Schiedam. At the same time, Dutch artists participated in the exhibition with us and an equal situation existed among us. We were satisfied

³⁶⁷ *Turkey-Holland: A Foreigner-Atraveller* (Amsterdam: 1993).

this kind of equal exhibition. The city was small, but the exhibition excited us. Being on an international platform provided us a wide vision.³⁶⁸

Similar to “Turkey-Netherland A Foreigner Traveler”, in 1993, “Buluşma: Sanat, Treffen: Kunst” opened in the Museum of Painting and Arts in Istanbul welcomed artists from both Turkey and Austria was legendary strategy of Turkish art from the academic perspective. “When the art works interacted with each other, a speech or a dialogue started and this created tension between the art and mind. This provided a new outlook for understanding cultural differences,”³⁶⁹ said Günther Dankl.

The exhibition “Orient Express” was held at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin in September 1994 it aroused nostalgic memories of the West. The name was a deliberate choice of the curator Beral Madra. In the catalog, the director Künstlerhaus Bethanien of Dr. Micheal Haerdter said that “the Istanbul artists, selected together with Beral Madra-İnci Eviner, Serhat Kiraz, Ahmet Öktem, and Erkan Özdilek are working, each with his/her own artistic means, towards the evolution of a civic society. “Orient Express” offers them our solidarity and necessary links between their relative isolation and Central Europe.”³⁷⁰ He mentioned the role of artists in the modernization and democratization of Turkey.

The work of Raffael Rheinsberg was worked in Istanbul was entitled “Ornament-The Time Before the Future”. His work did give a direct message, but the Ornament tried to make a connection between Turks and Germans. German art critic and curator Haerdter argues

³⁶⁸ “1993’te biz Türkiye’li bir grup sanatçı olarak ilk defa Schiedam’da Hollanda’nın küçük bir şehrinde bir sergiye davet edildik. Bu sergiye bizimle aynı zamanda Hollandalı sanatçılarda katılıyordu ve bir eşitlik söz konusuydu. Bu eşit karşılıklı alışverişi oluşturan sergiden memnun kaldık. Çok küçük bir şehirdeydi ama bizi heyecanlandırmıştı. Böyle bir yerde olmak bizim dar alanımızın dışına çıkmamızı sağlayabiliyordu” Gülsün Karamustafa, 9 Ocak 2007’de Sanatçı ile yapılan Konferans Metni”, *Çağdaş Sanat Konuşmaları 3: 90’lı Yıllarda Türkiye’de Çağdaş Sanat*, Levent Çalıkoğlu (ed.) (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008),

³⁶⁹ *Buluşma: Sanat, Treffen: Kunst* (İstanbul: A4 Ofset, 1993), p.4.

³⁷⁰ Michael Haerdter, *Orient Express* (Berlin: Künstlerhaus Bethanien, 1994), p.3.

“good art should not and cannot have direct political message.”³⁷¹ However, Rheinsberg’s work questioned the development of civic society, human rights, relationship between the Turks and German, and the integration of Turkey into the EU. His installation, made from shovels and sickles on the floor of “Silahane” (Arsenal) rooms of the Yıldız Palace, displayed an iron carpet in a dialog with the coast on the ceiling of the gallery.

As a reflection of Turkish art, İnci Eviner’s “Body-Geo-Graphy”, Serhat Kiraz’s “The Twins”, “Erkan Özdilek” Silkroad reflected geo-identity attitudes in contemporary art in order to criticize Euro-centrist perspectives. Erkan Özdilek constructed a conic tent that belonged to the Central Asian Turkic tribes and the Silk Road of the route of the migration of Turks to the West and also played a decisive role in the construction of Western culture that shaped the fortune of European nations. Özdilek’s installation questioned the long road to Westernization, drawing attention to the modernist historical narrative. Especially İnci Eviner’s work strongly related to the popular discussions of the 1990s: geography, identity, or non-identity. She aimed at challenging clear-cut concepts: body, geography, identity referred to nomadic life, masculine identity, and a rural culture that shaped the logic of everyday life. Identity cannot be single dimensional or fixed. Thus, Eviner questioned the way non-Western people expressed their identity via contemporary art and the fact the “Other” was fixed in a single identity designed by the West.

The works of Turkish artists in Künstlerhaus tried to present more liberated work in the contemporary art scene. They were inspired by the discontinuities and the timeless struggle between East and West while the Western art world became aware of identity consciousness in other countries. The art scene of the 1990s encountered a different question around the concept of center and periphery: What do artists do as a common desire to escape

³⁷¹ Haerdter, *Orient Express*, p.6.

from their or of national/regional/local art scene to create sound relations with the “other” art scenes? The interests of Europeans in the Turkish art scene attracted artists to Istanbul, a source of spirit for the Eastern contemporary art scene. The city was so attractive because of a series dilemma such as the phases of alliance of different social groups, and the partiality and impartiality of the city people. Much of global city literature says that in the present era, capital and information can move across the world between global cities. The global city engenders new class or groups to control and manage society. Istanbul as a globalizing city showed the internal migration, conflicts between different groups, and gentrification as the most important issues in the context of contemporary art.

In the 1990s, Turkish artists struggled to overcome the stereotypical images between East and West that had been created by the first world art audiences. Particularly, Germany was a popular and attractive place to host contemporary art exhibition coming from Turkey. *İskele* (Turkische Kunst Heute) was the first travelling contemporary art exhibition visit to three cities, Berlin, Stuttgart and Bonn, on May-October 1994. As a nationally framed exhibition, its name was come from “sea-port,” where people come to board on ships and travel to meet new cultures. The act of a travelling is related to carry an energy that is transmitted to the art works. René Block, the curator of the 4th Istanbul Biennale, organized the *İskele* to promote Turkish contemporary art in Germany. He had visited Istanbul several times on the occasion of the 3rd Biennale and gave two conferences in 1991 and 1993. Block proposed Sabine Vogel as co-curator of the exhibition; she had focused on the development of Turkish art from the 1960s to the 1990s. Block was also the curator of the 8th Biennale of Sydney, the 47th Belgrader October Saloon, the 3th Kwangju Biennale, and the In den

Schluchten des Balkans, Kassel. Vogel worked on the project of thirty years of Turkish contemporary art at the Frankfurt Book Fair.

For the first time, due to strong ties with Germany, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accepted to cover the airplane ticket costs only and IFA (International Exhibitor Service in Berlin) would undertake transportation cost. Without the financial support of IFA, the İskele exhibition could not have been realized.³⁷² The process of integrating to the EU was a basic starting point for connecting periphery art to the global art scene. Promoting national art in an international area, economic process and long-term political relationships gave a chance to represent the local in the global.

“İskele” hosted art both from Turkey and from member of the Turkish diaspora in Germany such as Selim Birsell, Handan Börtücene, Osman Dinç, Ayşe Erkmen, Gülsün Karamustafa, Serhat Kiraz, Füsun Onur, Hale Tenger and Adem Yılmaz each with one work. As a DAAD artist of 1993, only Ayşe Erkmen was given the privilege of producing three different works.³⁷³ Turkish artists living in Berlin remained under the influence of the local art scene, whereas the artists from Turkey that participated in this exhibition have developed a more global discourse than the diaspora artists.³⁷⁴ The artists who were of Turkish origin were usually regarded as minority artists even if they had been born in Europe and had no ties with modern identity. Turkish artists who live in Europe have struggled with Turkish modernization, so that their experience in a foreign land sometimes hinders the national expression of contemporary art.

³⁷² Beral Madra, *Post Peripheral Flux: A Decade of Contemporary Art in Istanbul* (Istanbul: Literatür Yayıncılık, 1996), p.134.

³⁷³ Madra, *Post Peripheral Flux*, p.132.

³⁷⁴ Ahu Antmen, “Günümüz Türk Sanatı Berlin’de,” *Cumhuriyet*, 31.05.1994, Santral İstanbul Archive, 2:TRL-1.

In 1996, Istanbul hosted HABITAT II (United Nations Conference on Human Settlements) focused on the possibilities of man's attaining a happier existence in his social and physical environment. During the conference, two exhibitions were organized. The title of the contemporary art exhibition "Habitart" was "The Other." It brought 400 works of art and 179 Turkish artists came from different generations together for the first time. Antrepo, old shipyard on the European side, hosted a contemporary art exhibition after the Istanbul Biennale. Hüsamettin Koçan, President of the International Association of Art-Turkey, who was the curator of the exhibition, decided to display a retrospective of contemporary Turkish art in İstanbul. The name of the exhibition was a critical choice, bringing tendencies together and refreshing the memory of recent art in Turkey. Koçan defined the central theme of the exhibition in relation to the Habitat Conference for Human Settlements. He also took into consideration the criteria of "relevance to concept" and "exhibitableness" in selecting the works.³⁷⁵ For the curator, selecting works of art in a proper form was regarded by the state authorities as a duty. It is an important fact that a nationally framed exhibition compared to a group one has a tendency to represent history of Turkish contemporary art rather than post-modern concepts of exhibition structure. The necessity to exhibit art works in the exhibition structure would prevent the display of political issues and avoid discrimination of Turkish art in terms of the ethnic identity of the artists.

"Dialogues: The Lost Idea of the Order of Things" questioned the meanings of "order" into the labyrinth of dilemmas that was realized by the financial support of West LB Europe (one of the prominent financial institution in Germany). Curator Beral Madra expected that the exhibition would provide a new opportunity to audiences and artists on both sides to

³⁷⁵ Hüsamettin Koçan, *Öteki/The Other: Contemporary Art Exhibition* (İstanbul: Uluslararası Plastik Sanatlar Derneği, 1996), p.7.

get to know each other through the intermediary function of art works.³⁷⁶ The exhibition was first realized in Istanbul at the Atatürk Culture Center on from June 6-12, 1996 and then traveled to Germany and opened at Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, from August, 30- September 26, 1996.

“Dialogues” questioned the unequal power relations in international art scene. From the 1980s onwards, due to insufficient promotional support, artists from Turkey did not appear in the international arena. Taking periphery art to the center, European art institutions supported Turkish artists in exhibitions. Ernst Hesse, who prepared the philosophical framework, argued that they searched for a dialogue to unite contradictory components in a series of works. “Other” territories could represent their work in which things were codified, visioned, designed, and formulated by order. The artists participating in the exhibition were those who had created paintings, sculptures, installations, and three dimensional works which were mainly produced in Istanbul. The concept of exhibition derived in modern concepts of order and disorder. The peculiarities of orders or disorders determined the quality of art work. Art works directly carried the characteristics of geographical places in which they were produced.

The exhibition “Iskorpit,” which took place in the context of cultural exchange in Berlin and Istanbul, centered on the global/local perspective of Berlin as a multicultural city and the right place for showing local arts. The motto of the exhibition was “Now breach and bond at the same time” connected to the East and the West. René Block and Fulya Erdemci were curators of the exhibition that depended on the Haus der Kulturen der Welt and the Ministry of Culture of Turkish Republic.

³⁷⁶ *Dialogues: The lost idea of the order of things* (İstanbul:, 1996), p.2.

For the first time, a group of young Turkish artists³⁷⁷ who displayed their art at an international exhibition tried to avoid using the clichéd ideas of bright, decorative, ornamental and oriental art. They preferred to speak to the “underground” well known by Europeans. Their works of art included an international vocabulary, formulating revolutionary statements against all stereotypical concepts. These artists reconstructing and repositioning power, gender and identity with their works came from three different generations. Challenging issues in the Turkish art scene, Bruce Ferguson argues that “Turkey manages the impossible; it accomplishes an institutional disappearance act. And, as we all know, only strong fictions produce strong cultures.”³⁷⁸ Turkey being a member of a provincial art scene, Turkish art stood in a gap between modern and contemporary in the 1990s. From the influence of the Paris School of Arts, the Fine Art Academy strongly determined the concepts and style of art works gave no place for artists to do what they wanted to do. Levent Çalıkoğlu, curator of Istanbul modern and art critic, insists that “even in the 2000s, the Academy of Fine Arts still influence the local art scene as well as forms of Turkish painting.”³⁷⁹

According to Vasıf Kortun, due to the isolated political and social environment of Turkey until the 1990s, the local intellectuals did not legitimize their services in the state apparatus. There was now a complete and healthy divorce between the “provincial” and the “glocal.” Especially, minority artists have two functions in local art scene. Some artists’ works would be in global circulation and not remain “inside” and not limited to being importers.

³⁷⁷ Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin, Halil Altındere, Kutluğ Ataman, Ayşe Erkmen, Gülsün Karamustafa, Aydan Murtezaoglu, Füsun Onur, Serkan Özkaya, Ebru Özseçen, Neriman Polat, Sarkis, Bülent Şangar, Hale Tenger, İskender Yediler were participating İskorpit to open a new way nationally framed exhibitions.

³⁷⁸ *İskorpit* (Berlin: Berliner Kulturveranstaltungen, 1998), p.15.

³⁷⁹ Levent Çalıkoğlu, *Çağdaş Sanat Konuşmaları 3: 90'lı Yıllarda Türkiye'de Çağdaş Sanat*, edited by Levent Çalıkoğlu (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008), p.7.

Some other artists may again be in circulation, but they produce culturally and geographically specific works of art targeting the provincial art market. They are urban and revisionist.³⁸⁰

The Turkish art scene was dominated by the second group of artists, as mentioned by Kortun, from the 1990s onwards, in this sense even the works of Turkish artist, who participated in internationally framed exhibitions carries on regionalist attitudes. Regionalism can be analyzed in geography and history of the nation. The term “glocal” in other words intercultural legibility may be the best definition for younger generations of the 90s. “Iskorpit” provides a gate to enter the terminology of glocal Turkish contemporary art in the eve of new millennium.

Hale Tenger’s video installation “Cross Section” (1996) in which two simultaneous projections reflected the artists self-portrait sheds lights on the mobility/migration and identity/power struggle in modern Turkey. In her videos Tenger quotes Murat Belge’s speech given at the International Citizenship Congress at Helsinki as follows:

“According to what was taught to us in elementary school, the Turks were immigrants from Central Asia. They had to emigrate from Central Asia due to climate change. First, they immigrated to the West, than settled in Istanbul. Like Murat Belge said, from those days, our faces turned towards the West and probably became this place in which we settled has known as the Eastern Roman Empire, we are Eastern.”³⁸¹

³⁸⁰ Vasıf Kortun, “Weak Fictions-Accelerated Destinies,” in *Iskorpit* (Berlin: Berliner Kulturveranstaltungen, 1998), p.16.

³⁸¹ “Bizlere ilkokulda öğretildiğine göre bütün Türkler Orta Asya’dan gelen göçmenlerdi. Orada meydana gelen iklim değişiklikleri nedeniyle göç etmek zorunda kalmışlardı. Batıya doğru göç edip önce Anadolu’ya , ardından İstanbul’a yerleştiler. İşte o gün bu gündür Murat Belge’nin dediği gibi, yüzümüz hep Batı’ya dönük kaldı ve muhtemelen göç ettiğimiz bu topraklar zaten Doğu Roma olarak anıldığı içindir ki biz de hep Doğulu olarak kaldık.” Hale Tenger, “29 Mayıs 2007’de Sanatçıyla Yapılan Konfreans Metni”, *Çağdaş Sanat Konuşmaları 3: 90’lı Yıllarda Türkiye’de Çağdaş Sanat*, Levent Çalıkoğlu (ed.) (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008), p. 279.

This short description of the national past played a decisive role in identity construction; “Cross Section” contemplates the question of the national boundaries in the process of globalization.

“Iskorpit” questioned the issues of gender and the representation of violence taking place in all aspects of life, exile/displacement and the new urban life, as well as language, history and memory. The artists Halil Altındere made use of images of the Turkish state’s official monopoly items like identity cards and stamps, and created a mockery of state power, control and security. Bülent Şangar’s “İsimsiz/Untitled” was a visualization of state centered violence using body gestures as police men who did such a kind of thing controlling a crowd or a person.

Similar to Şangar’s representation in daily life, “Family Room Upstairs” ironically remade daily life objects and everyday life in Turkish society spoke of separation and isolation. Gülsün Karamustafa’ autobiographical work “Stage” (1998) juxtaposed her personal history with the recent political history of Turkey, displaying the hegemony of the state on national history. Kutluğ Ataman’s “semiha b. unplugged” (1997) a seven hour documentary video, showed the chaotic atmosphere of the 1990s, created a theatrical dialogue to depict myths of Turkish modern history.

A new structure which disfavored modernist academic cultural structure emerged in the mid-90s. A group of artists who started to work in the late 1980s and early 1990s used unprivileged everyday materials, metaphoric objects touching local authenticity rather than adopting frozen forms of global issues. Kortun regarded contemporary art in the 1990s as a movement that involved a contradiction between tradition and contemporaneity. As an authentic movement among a group of artists, the trend began to take in contemporary art at

the center.³⁸² The young artists of 1980s and 1990s preferred to put special emphasis on the hegemony of daily politics which became the main body of the work. This was also seen in nationally framed exhibition, this movement represented a fact on the Turkish art scene. Artists were setting their concepts on their own problems. They did not seen as Orientalists. They tend to represent a minority culture rather than a popular one on the international scene.

Contradictions and Dilemmas in the 2000s: “Stranger Among Us”

The period 2000-2010 is called “current art” in Turkey by artists, art critics and curators. This change in emphasis had an impact on internationally framed exhibitions in terms of concept, form and aesthetic. The “current art” platform assumed different identities, artists groups did not organize along political lives or state establishments. Rather than participating in group exhibitions held in Europe, they preferred to go solo in the galleries of Europe and America. With the new trend, Turkish artists participated in the increasing number of biennials and built up new approaches in Turkish contemporary art. Some of the current artists were able to talk about dilemmas in the Third World and considered the critical aspects of international exhibitions. Compared to the 1990s, they looked at international exhibitions from a critical point of view and did not participate in group exhibitions without questioning. The reason behind is that the Western current Orientalists would rush to use Turkish current artists producing art work under headings such as sex and assimilation, violence in all aspects

³⁸² Vasif Kortun, “Weak Fictions-Accelerated Destinies,” p.18.

of life, exil, new urbanization, language, history, memory, objects of everyday life and metaphorical objects.

During this period, the energy generated from Turkey fit this perspective, and succeed at creating an area of its own, or at least at creating an awarnesses through letting the Turkish current artists contemplate the experience of taking part in Western exhibitions. More work on urbanism was produced on the current art platform than ever before. The fact is that urbanist work does not meet all traditional and local expectations. On the other hand, in the first decade of 2000s, Turkish artists needed to be followed by different cultures and the local aspect in the urban work started to be observed not visually but in structural. This made it easy to realize urbanization in the art works for the Third World Country or the Eastern artists.³⁸³

With the process of globalization, Istanbul has been going through a series of drastic cultural, social, economic, and urban transformations. Shifting, relocating and restructuring the already existing business, finance, media centers and urban spaces related to transportation has changed the existing balances and given way to the emergence of new concentration for diverse purposes. Changes in the socio-economic structure and the widening gap between the social strata and the phenomenon of migration led to the transformation of different living spaces within the city. In the newly developing Istanbul suburbs, lower income classes migrating from rural Turkey have been creating new shanty towns as alternative habitats. Clean, urban, European-style secure housing for the new generation middle class families became the zone of social, cultural and economic isolation. Such phenomenon as gigantic shopping malls, fashion designer boutiques, clubs for world music, and specialist restaurants. followed to fulfill the emerging demands created by the new lifestyle of the citizens of the

³⁸³ Ayşegül Sönmez, “Türkiye’de Günce Sanat: 2000-2007 Tespitler ve Olaylar,” in *User’s Manual: Contemporary Art in Turkey 1986-2006*, edited by Halil Altındere and Süreyya Evren (Istanbul: Art-ist, 2007), pp.136-143.

desired “global city.”³⁸⁴ As a consequence, in the current art exhibition on both the local and global scale, Istanbul’s social and spatial fragmentation constitutes one of the major problematic issues related to urban space heavily emphasized by Turkish artists. Such issues as poverty, migration, exploitation, gentrification, and pollution were the basic themes in the concepts of urbanization, city and globalization.

In addition, the cultural atmosphere in the first decade of the 2000s gave woman artists the chance to organize group exhibitions featuring such prominent figures as İnci Eviner, Hale Tenger, Gülsün Karamustafa, Füsün Onur, Nur Koçak, Canan Beykal, Neriman Polat, Aydan Murtezaoğlu, and Tomur Atagök. The visibility of women artist in the field of art is one of the main issues of national representation in the EU. Women artists had been able to show their work to the public although their appearance in the local scene was limited to the 1990s. Society regarded women artists as marginal figures in the society that created a prototypical and extreme image and people expected the artist to adjust them. “Beautiful, rascal, and free” became a slogan for women Turkish artists. This showed on women artist profile.”³⁸⁵

In fact, the international arena did not recognize them as feminist. European art institutions provided financial support to Turkish women artists through art scholarships, the art market and exhibition facilities. As İnci Eviner says, “After travelling to Europe and America, we increased our self-confidence and got rid of the pressure of Western art. We really realized that we could independently act. Art media had not no longer related to the

³⁸⁴ Çağlar Keyder, *Istanbul: Between the Global and Local*; and Saskia Sassen, “The Global City: Strategic Site/New Frontier,” in *Democracy Citizenship and the Global City*, edited by Engin F. Işın (London & New York: Routledge, 2000)

³⁸⁵ İnci Eviner, “7 Şubat 2007’de Sanatçıyla Yapılan Konfreans Metni”, *Çağdaş Sanat Konuşmaları 3: 90’lı Yıllarda Türkiye’de Çağdaş Sanat*, edited by Levent Çalıkoğlu (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008), p.126.

local art market. Our problem and political issues started discussing in peculiar way.”³⁸⁶

Female identity in Turkey as well as the surrounding geography did not give so much flexibility because of male dominancy in art and patriarchal politics of the nation. Women artists preferred to take part group in exhibitions.

At the beginning of 2000, the following Turkish women artists’ group exhibitions had a considerable impact on the global art world: “Stills, Cuts, Fragments” (Germany-1999), “Contemporary Turkish Women Artists: As You See Me, But I am not” (Germany- 2001), “From Far Away So Close” (Germany-2001), “She Show” (Bulgaria-2002), France-2009). The curator of these exhibitions, Beral Madra, Vasıf Kortun and Tomur Atagök organized the most of the Turkish womens group exhibition. These women artists whom I mention below are one of the most prominent figures of Turkish contemporary art after the 1990s who participated participate in series of international exhibitions abroad.

As discussed above, Turkish artists through group exhibitions became visible in the public sphere and their works of art could be regarded as the mainstream Turkish art scene. A strong tendency in installation art was to make use of daily materials. The name of the exhibition “As You See Me, But I’m not” was very meaningful in the respect of landmarks carried out by women held on the Frauen Museum in Berlin. Susan Plat argues that these women artists among the Islamic women are an “other” in the traditional sense. “Outside of Turkey though, artists from Turkey are also perceived simply as the traditional ‘other’ to Europe.”³⁸⁷ This is the reason of this title. The state approach to women artists may be

³⁸⁶ “Avrupa’ya, Amerika’ya seyahatlar başladıktan sonar özgüvenimiz arttı. O Batı sanatının ağırlığından kurtulduk. Gerçekten bağımsız sanatçılar olarak var olabileceğimize inanmaya başladık. Sanat ortamı en azından fikir olarak local piyasaya bağlı olmak zorunda değildi. Kendi meselemizle bütün bu politik meseleler çok özgün bir yolda buluşmaya başladı”. İnci Eviner, “7 Şubat 2007’de Sanatçıyla Yapılan Konfreans Metni”, *Çağdaş Sanat Konuşmaları 3: 90’lı Yıllarda Türkiye’de Çağdaş Sanat*, Levent Çalıkoğlu (ed.) (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008), p.126.

analyzed in the preface of the catalogue. There, İstemihan Talay, the Minister of Culture of Turkish Republic, emphasizes women sensibility towards human beings and society.”³⁸⁸

Indeed, women artists did not want to work on sensible issues, and they struggled with representing the themes of “identity” or “other” in the art. Their ideological point of view was provoking, questioning, and encompassing imposed identity of Turkish women artists. In this regard, curator Tomur Atagök was looking at the multiplicity of identities, she focused on the issue of identity from different perspectives and different approaches. Her aim was to deal with the misunderstanding of Anatolian culture and orientalization of Turkey.

The competitive arena of the international art scene has been moving on point of differences. The basic concern of these artists who read post modern theories make art without labelling it as “feminist” or “Turkish”, although identity issues were more impressive for European audiences. It is a fact that artists in the exhibition were dealing with issues centered on identity; visitor did not see what they expected at this exhibition. Turkish women artist wanted to be represent their art without dealing with Eastern stereotypical images. These works, are discussed which below, and some one of the most peculiar examples of contemporary Turkish women artists in the last three decade dealing with shortcomings of post-modern culture. Gülsün Karamustafa physically deconstructed the Orientalist fantasies of Western European nineteenth century painters. In her work “Double Action Series for Oriental Fantasies”, Karamustafa combined the Orientalist image with the Western visualization that emphasizes male dominance over the female body. Nur Koçak is interested in the commodities of women’s beauty based on the images of women’s underwear that are

³⁸⁷ Susan N. Platt, *Contemporary Turkish Women Artists: As You See Me, But I am not* (Berlin: Frauen Museum, 2001), p.15.

³⁸⁸ *Contemporary Turkish Women Artists: As You See Me, But I am not* (Berlin: Frauen Museum, 2001), p.2.

manipulated her own photographs of shop windows in Istanbul. Her paintings underscore the contradictions and ironies between the public presentation of Islamic women as modest and covered and the impact of the commercial sector in their life. Although Turkish contemporary women artists carried the burden of a series of clichés of the West, their art does not meet the expectations of Western art critiques in terms of reflecting the prototypical characteristics of Eastern culture.

Alongside the process of globalization, the authority of the nation-states has been declining, leading to the emergence of cities as centers of the new world. “Global cities” like New York, Tokyo, Sao Paulo and London have expanded the borders of geographies and nation states. These cities have become centers for art and culture. In the last decade, there have been exhibitions concentrating on urbanism and cities articulating identities in the global world. Enormous interest has been shown in Istanbul, which was fostered by the negotiations over Turkey’s integration into the EU.

Jale Erzen argues that in Istanbul, identities are preserved and the pluralistic make-up of the society is always visible as a cultural fact. In contrast to many other cities, Istanbul can keep these differences due its geography. Creating a focus on Istanbul was the rise of post-modernist critiques. While Ankara is considered the seat of modernist Turkey, which never quite fulfilled its promises, Istanbul remains the city of diversity, the city that has not and will not become an example of modernity.³⁸⁹

The well-known exhibitions of the early 2000s were: “Springtime” (2000), “Between the Waterfronts” (Rotterdam the Netherlands-2002), “Where? Here?” (Saitama-Japan-2003), “Sisters and Brothers and Birds” (Germany-2004), “Along the Gates of the

³⁸⁹ Jale Erzen, “Art in Istanbul: Contemporary Spectacles and History Revisited,” in *Orienting Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe?*, p.218.

Urban” (Germany-2004), “Berlin-İstanbul, Vice Versa” (Germany-2004) and “Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul” (Germany-2005). The problematic of representation has kept under considerations such agendas as globalization, migration, militarism, Kurdish problem, unemployment, social exclusion. These have been the main issues of Turkish contemporary art emphasized in the internationally framed exhibitions. Different from the 1990s, the Turkish art scene has pursued the way integration into the global art scene. Keyder argues that Istanbul’s evolution and conflicts in the new era can be understood primarily from the global-city perspective. Because of its history and geography, Istanbul has the potential of emerging as a global city in the sense of constituting an important mode in the global economy.³⁹⁰ For this reason in most of the international exhibition, the concepts of globalization and city have been discussed.

In 2000, a contemporary art exhibition opened in Denmark for the first time titled “Erken Bahar (Early Spring),” it was an unusual (for early the 2000s) as a project that focused on the allegorical visual tendency in contemporary Turkish arts concerned with the criticism of modernism. It reflected contradictory aspects and defined itself as “art after appropriation”³⁹¹ drawing experience from the 1980s but being influenced by the sensibilities of the 1990s. The cultural diversity as an agenda of “Early Spring” points out subcultures, classes, and groups in the historic sense rather than discussing modernism/post-modernism.

In a very post-modern way, artists in the exhibition had their sets of signs, references, systems of signification, which were based on cultural production and reproduction. All references are drawn from cultural values that were based on nationality,

³⁹⁰ Çağlar Keyder, “Synopsis,” in *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*, edited by Çağlar Keyder and Ayşe Öncü (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), p.188.

³⁹¹ *Springtime* (Denmark: Chopenhagen Contemporary Art Center), p.6.

religion or even geography, climate. The European art audience considered contemporary works from a totally different perspective, while Turkish artists aware of the power of a wealth of signs, continued to search for hidden meanings in culture. Cultural differentiation was taken attention to the cultural intolerance of Western art audience and artists; at this point, “Early Spring” was a good beginning for developing a new understanding in cultural communications between Turkey and Western Europe. The curator of the exhibition paid attention to cultural intolerance in Denmark; essentialism became a representational strategy in the internationally framed exhibitions in the mind of the audience. Olsen said, “one could ask why, then, this exhibition is not with Turkish artists living in Denmark, because the Turkish artists living in Denmark should not be considered Turkish, but rather Danish.”³⁹²

Vasif Kortun argues that “keeping this in our mind, the experiences of Turkish artist with modernity has pushed them into the critical position producing post-modern art work. The individual memory of the Turkish citizen is penetrated by the Turkish Republic’s social engineering project. This situation creates a formational trauma for Turkish contemporary artists. It may be the reason why in the work of artists from Turkey reflects upon ‘a kind of collective schizophrenia.’³⁹³ On the other hand, they have to deal with the east-west question at the same time provoking the European Oriental attitudes. With particular focus, artists to be regarded as the “other” are preoccupied with questioning cultural and geographical differences such as East of what, middle of where, further west from whom. From the selection of art works, geography, internal migration, conflict, differences in perception, variety of cultural codes would be evaluated in the theoretical framework of this exhibition.

³⁹² *Springtime*, p.8.

³⁹³ *Springtime* (Copenhagen: Nikolaj Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center, 2000), p.10,11.

According to art critic and curator Erden Kosova, Halil Altındere's "My Mother Likes Flux" was referred his own life, trying to interrupt the linear conception of time, which again and again actualized political-cultural hierarchies between geographies through the notion of "belatedness" itself, which is a product of this linear conception.³⁹⁴ In the rural environment a photograph depicted a woman while reading a book on Flux, the image is out of space and time showing the "in-betweeness" of the artists.

Similar to Altındere, H. Bahari Alptekin sought to produce geographical map that was connected to the idea of controlling the totality of the world. However, Alptekin's remakes different concepts in his work "Black Sea" relate them to history, culture, and everyday life. Selim Birsell, "Open A Room" invited the viewer into different modes of viewing: of imagining a world without building space and images following actions; to cover, to reveal, to show, to represent.³⁹⁵

Exhibitions after 2005 inevitably acquired an apparent dialectic position in terms of the theme of identity in relation to geography and history. "EurHope1153. Contemporary Art from the Bosphorus" belongs to a series of exhibitions organized by the Villa Manin Center for Contemporary Art to promote an awareness and knowledge in East European and Middle East art to able to overcome stereotypes and preconceptions. Rather than reducing art exhibition representation of the national art scene, the exhibition contains and gives a framework of in terms of the plurality of culture, gender and nationality in different geographies. Curator Sarah Cosulich Canarutto said that "EurHope 1153" does not attempt to summarize the identity of the Turkish artists nor of the Turkish people in general. Indeed, focusing on Turkish art, the

³⁹⁴ *Springtime*, p.36.

³⁹⁵ *Springtime*, p.37.

diversity of vision, approaches and emotions truly reflected a universe that way as heterogeneous and multifaceted as the geographical territory.³⁹⁶

A work name as “Scary Asian Men” sitting in the grassy areas on the side of the motorway that links the Asian side of Istanbul to the European one testify the sense of fragility, alienation and fear for the future of one part of the population. Gülsün Karamustafa’s series “Compromise” revisits the Western stereotype linked to the idea of femininity in the East. The figures portrayed are in charge of their domestic environment and challenge the viewer with their gaze, thus claiming the right of an “Oriental” artist to represent, according to her rules, the idea of femininity. *EurHope 1153* was an open space for artists moulded directly from the energies and the conflicts present a specific context. In my opinion, ‘Shooting the West with its gun’ is a good statement on the reconstruction of identity, gender and nationality issues in new millennium, providing a confirmation of the East-West stereotype. Developing visionary sources in space and time, the artists explored the connection between the human being and the surrounding environment, giving rise to a multi-vocal dialogue between traditions, nature, space, time, and man.

In the middle of the first decade of the 2000s, Turkey gained popularity in the cultural domain of Europe through participating in art festivals and cultural activities. More and more artists from Turkey from among the Turkish Diaspora found place for themselves in the international environment without implementing “orientalist” tools. However, Turkey still lacked of the necessary encouraging elements in contemporary art scale for the following reasons: Sponsorship in Turkey for contemporary art is newly emerging and is not enough to support artists to participate in biennales and solo exhibitions. State support, as the case of the Venice Biennale is symbolic in value. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Promotion

³⁹⁶ *EurHope 1153* (Italy: Villa Manin Centro d’Arte Contemporanea, 2007), p.35.

Fund of Turkey in abroad financially supported the transportation costs of a number of artists but it was not enough to organize an exhibition with art taking support from cultural centers of the EU and local authorities in Western European cities.

Independent curator E. Osman Erden argues that it seems that the political struggle between the conservatives and liberals in Europe will be concentrated and focused much more intensively on Turkey in the future. As a result, artists from Turkey and the Turkish Diaspora will continue to be popular for sometime while in the contemporary art environments of Europe, thanks to support of the European cultural intelligentsia.³⁹⁷

However, there is no guarantee that funds will be allocate for Turkish artists in the future. If Turkey will continues with the integration into the European Union, the art funds will probably support the participation of Turkish artists. Otherwise, the interest of artists in internationally framed exhibitions might decline. For this reason, the curator Vasif Kortun emphasizes the need for liberalizing artists in terms of finances by supporting them with independent art funds. Compared to Balkan countries, without applying financial restrictions to artist, independent local centers are a must for the development of Turkish contemporary art on the global scale.³⁹⁸

In addition to financial weaknesses, the interest of the national press in contemporary art is limited. There is no effective criticism tradition of contemporary art and there is a limited number of art magazines. Fine arts education covers only painting, sculpture and ceramics in the state universities and does not open up a new path for art students to follow new trends in world contemporary art. A line with academic tendencies, departments

³⁹⁷ *EurHope 1153* (Italy: Villa Manin Centro d'Arte Contemporanea, 2007), p.28.

³⁹⁸ *Springtime*, p.10.

interested in contemporary art among art collectors, is a newly emerging trend that should be developed in the following years.

Except for Galerist, there is no art gallery in Turkey which supports artists from Turkey and the Diaspora. Including both foreign and native art collectors in their trade activities will transform the conservative structure of Turkish art fairs. This policy can be observed in the newly founded museums in Turkey. Painting and sculpture belonging to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, covers most of the modern art collections in private museums. Except for the İstanbul Modern, there is no interest in contemporary art works. Installation and video arts are unknown fields for Turkish art audiences. Limited exhibition space is available to show works of art. Only three institutions the Platform Garanti Art Gallery, Aksanat and Siemens Art are private sector sites for contemporary art in İstanbul. The Borusan Art Gallery was closed in 2006. This was a great loss for the art world. Under these circumstances, Istanbul Biennale is the biggest chance to keep Turkish contemporary art alive in the eyes of the local authorities, a public, and international circles.

The German media accepts Germany as an immigration country which is the main reason for the support of multiculturalism in television programs, newspapers, magazines and...so on. Kaya Yanar's Show "Ethno Comedy," which has to do with the duality of being German and being Turkish at the same time, has been running on German TV since 2001.³⁹⁹ The fact is that German audiences are faced with multicultural tendencies in media, literature and cinema. There is rising interest in the contemporary art of the Balkans and Middle East in Germany. "Balkan Trilogy" by Rene Block showed fundamental artistic connections and developed plural concepts for Eastern art in the West opened a new path for links with the Turkish contemporary art scene. The Berlin-based Haus der Kulturen der Welt (House of

³⁹⁹ *Berlin-İstanbul Vice-Versa* (Istanbul: Istanbul Culture and Art Foundation, 2004).

World Cultures) and the Stuttgart-based Institute for Foreign Relations have played decisive roles in terms of institutional communication. The Künstlerhaus Berlin has organized in International Studio Program for exhibitions and projects with Turkish artists. Also the financial support of the DAAD for artists who live in Berlin and Istanbul has had an impact on art exchange realized with European funds. Of course, the work of curators Fulya Erdemci, Vasıf Kortun, Erden Kosova, Beral Madra, Başak Şenova and the art magazine “art-ist” published by Halil Altındere connect the global art networks with local artists encouraging young contemporary artists, from Turkey to participate in internationally framed exhibitions.

The concept of the tension of Istanbul as seen as a cultural bridge between the two continents is truly taking attention as urban identity, and becoming an important channel for contemporary art on the road to internationalism. Through a series of exhibitions focusing on Istanbul, Fulya Erdemci, in the catalog of the exhibition “Between the Waterfronts: Istanbul-Rotterdam” started her preface from with a long quotation from the eighteenth century Dutch traveler Doctor Woensel:

Seeing everything the way we want to see it is an easy way, isn't it? Although we do not wear eyeglasses and we ignore everything, we look at things in the same way. The glasses that we are wearing have been painted with a thick layer of paint or badly removed. Reading news about to Turkey is the same as reading curses. People are afraid about to visit to the land of barbarians and pirates. However, when the people come to Turkey, they feel at home. In that case, why have this country put on pressure so far?⁴⁰⁰

⁴⁰⁰ “Herşeyi istediğimiz gibi görmek ne kadar kolaycı bir yol değil mi? Nicelerimiz gözlüğümüzü takmamış olmamıza ve bilgisizliğimize karşın her şeye bir gözlükle bakarız! Takılan gözlükte ne hikmetse kalın bir boya tabakasına bulanmış ya da taşlanıp kötü silinmiştir. Türkiye’yle ilgili çıkan haberleri okumak beddualarını okumakla eşdeğer. İnsan bu barbarlar ve korsanlar ülkesine ayak basmaya korkar....Ama,insane bir de o ülke topraklarına ayak basmaya görsün ki, kendini yeniden evinde bulurO halde bu ülkenin o denli itilip kakılması niye?”.Fulya Erdemci, *Between the Waterfronts:İstanbul Rotterdam* (İstanbul: Garanti Galeri Platform, 2001), p.10.

For the first time, the exhibition was realized through independent cooperation with local cultural centers on a wide scale in Holland. Erdemci says that while the exhibition was questioned the memory of the stereotypes in the past, on the eve of EU integration, it was giving a chance to solve misunderstandings in cultural interactions between Dutch and Turkish artists. Turkish contemporary artists in the Netherlands, cooperating in for displaying common concern in art and culture, determined ties between two modern cities, Rotterdam and Istanbul. As a starting point, for theoretical base for the exhibition, the sea, brought an instant for connection for different cultures which have totally different backgrounds. An advantage of being located on the sea, these cities remained beyond the national art scale and they were also gateways of “outside” and the other’ geographies. Indeed, at internationally framed exhibitions, Istanbul as the cultural capital of Turkey is seen as a culture bridge between Asia and Europe, representing the modern face of Turkey in the world.

In addition, the city itself displays both similarities to and differences from the West and thus offers a vivid picture for European artists to work there. Curator Erdemci insists that Turks do not like folklore or clichés, because there is no benefit to them and Dutch artists and we offer more contemporary and innovative works of art to reflect true vision of visual culture.⁴⁰¹ The works exhibited mainly centered on themes such as historic maps, the coastal region, the sea, people, and state buildings. A wide array of theoretical backgrounds were employed of painting, photography, video art, and installation. Artists who took part in the exhibition, Füsün Onur, Selim Birsal, and Aydan Murtezaoğlu, expressed how people felt in a city of water and their experience of interaction with the signs of the city. Erdemci aimed to display city panoramas, the sea, the beach, people, public, workers in the form of contemporary art that interpreted daily life in the city. The Bosphorus and the people brought

⁴⁰¹ Fulya Erdemci, *Between the Waterfronts:İstanbul Rotterdam* (İstanbul: Garanti Galerî Platform, 2001), p.23.

people from different cultures, geographies, and histories together. Istanbul, like Rotterdam, has an advantage in terms of its location, representing an existence beyond nations, acting as a gate for the outside world and “the other”.

As Istanbul being center of exhibitions, the Kunst Museum in Bonn hosted an international group exhibition titled “Signs of the City: Contemporary Art from Turkey” (Im Zeichen der Stadt: Zeitgenössische Kunst Aus Der Türkei) that was curated by Beral Madra between December 20, 2001 and February 17, 2002, and realized with the support of the Turkish and Germany cultural forum. In terms of financial support, this was a successful exhibition bringing more than ten sponsors from the private and state sectors. In contrast to the exhibition “Between the waterfronts: Istanbul-Rotterdam”, “Signs of the City” was a state sponsored international contemporary art exhibition financially supported by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. This support determined strategies and logic of representation. Comparing state-centered art exhibitions to independent ones, the choice of curator was strictly limited by the central authority, the state. This kind of exhibition strategy aimed to promote the “150 year old history of Turkish art” in the international arena rather than specifically displaying local art from a periphery country.⁴⁰² Under the title of contemporary, Turkish modern art dated to the 1930s and the 1950s was displayed in order to show a long tradition of modernity in the country. Although the aim of this exhibition did not cover the history of Turkish modern art from the mid-nineteenth century, the state officers emphasized the mission of representing Turkish modern art in every international group exhibition in order to realize an image of Turkey.

Beral Madra, who was the curator of the 1st and 2nd Istanbul Biennales, also organized a series of contemporary art exhibitions on an international scale since 1994. Her

⁴⁰² *Im Zeichen Der Stadt Aus Der Türkei* (Istanbul: Lebib Yalkın Yayınları ve Basım İşleri, 2001), p.25.

attitudes in state centered exhibits are largely in line with the state's vision on contemporary art that it should be give a brief history of Turkish contemporary art, rather than a discussion of critical problems such as migration, minority issues, and rapid unhealthy urbanization. Classic- time oriented divisions in exhibitions and catalogues show the transformation of modern art into contemporary art during the globalization era in art. In addition to art history writing, selection of art works by curators was strictly determined by the state ideology. Therefore, censorship seems to be one of the main problems in the representing political and social issues in Turkey in internationally framed exhibitions.

Even in the first decade of the 2000s, through post-modern concepts and structures organizing state-centered art exhibitions means including anti-militarist and anti-state attitudes. Censorship in the state-centered art exhibitions was the basic reason for curators to prefer working for independent exhibitions. The fact is that a work of "Extra Mücadele" (the nickname of male artist Memet Erdener) titled "Barış Ormanı" (*Peace Forest*) was not accepted in state organized contemporary art exhibition, "Index: Today's Turkey and Views From Everyday Life". This was realized with funds of the European Cultural Capital and the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vienna on February 2009. ExtraMücadele's video "Barış Ormanı" depicted a woman veiled in black (Türkan Şoray, famous movie star of Turkey) walking hand in hand with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who wore frank in the forest. The strongly critical approach of the artists in this work represents a dilemma about Republican and modernist attitudes. "Index: Today's Turkey and Views From Everyday Life" exhibition was organized by the Austria Ministry of Culture and Education, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Turkish Embassy of Vienna, and the Istanbul Culture and Art Foundation. Deniz Ova and Daniela Gregori, who were the curators of the exhibition,

determined their choices according to the state's policy. Gregori said that, "if you are organizing a contemporary art exhibition, your preferences of art works should be more sensitive and diplomatic. For me, the work of ExtraMücadele titled "Peace Forest" was not eligible to work in the partnership with the Turkish government".⁴⁰³

Similar to Gregori, Ova described procedure of selecting art works: "Of course, an exhibition is a selection of curatorial work. This exhibition is realized with cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture. For this reason, we chose art works without ignoring the diplomatic balance. We preferred works which were suitable for our concept. First, the works of ExtraMücadele is politic one. We did this work with the cooperation of the state".⁴⁰⁴

The situation indicates that an official or state supported exhibition has a certain tendency to show only art that is free from sensitive issues in politics. In other words, censorship in the exhibitions aims to present the "right" images for foreign audiences; representing a nation in proper form is a strategy in international affairs. İstem Cırcıoğlu, Cultural Attaché in Vienna, confirmed the censorship in the selection of representing works of art as follows:

This exhibition was realized with the financial support of the Turkish Foreign Ministry. For this reason, during the exhibition, we were sensitive about displaying works which carried political messages. The curators also paid attention to this. Artists are able to display their works in both Turkey and abroad. However, we must understand public opinion in Vienna. This work is exhibited somewhere, I visit this exhibition.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰³ "Resmi Sergiye Extra Hassasiyet," *Radikal*, 08.November.2008, p.24.

⁴⁰⁴ "Resmi Sergiye Extra Hassasiyet," *Radikal*, p.24.

⁴⁰⁵ "Bu sergi Türkiye'nin para ödeyip yaptığı bir sergi onun için biz politik şeylerin olmaması konusunda hassasiyet gösterdik, evet. Küratörler de buna dikkat ettiler. Sanatçı Türkiye'de ve yurt dışında her zaman işlerini güzel sergileyebiliyor. Viyana'daki bakış açısını da anlamamız lazım, herhangi bir galeri de sergilesinler ben gider izlerim." *Radikal*, Resmi Sergiye Extra Hassasiyet, 08.11. 2008, p.24.

In this situation, the state officer's perspective in representing the national identity in the international area must be sterilized from every kind of political message. Artists and their works should be natural. From the beginning the official view on contemporary art in Turkey has not been so optimistic about representing the Turkish identity in abroad. This is an interesting fact that Hale Tenger's well known work titled "...Aşşa Kasımpaşa Ekolü," which shows blood and violence in a contemporary work. The logic behind the work is to criticize the violence in society and militarist tendencies of the Turkish state and world politics. She said that three types of swords had been used in this work. One was Western; the others were an Ottoman grooved and a Turkish ceremonial sword indicating that violence does not belong to only one geography or culture, it is universal phenomenon.⁴⁰⁶ This work first was exhibited in a group exhibition titled "Seven Young Artists" (Yedi Genç Sanatçı) at Atatürk Kültür Merkezi in the 1990s. After the catastrophic experience of the 1980s coup 'détat, exhibiting such an art work in a public space was difficult in the early 1990s political atmosphere.

Tenger tells her memories in the following sentences:

For the first time, the work of Hale Tenger "Aşşa Kasımpaşa Ekolü" was exhibited in Holland. During the opening reception of the exhibition, the Turkish Ambassador didn't understand the meaning of the art work and he said that 'I wish the name of the work had been 'the Battle of the Kosova.' In contrast to this example, In the opening of the Gorges of the Balkan, a young deputy of the Ambassador said, "I like very much both your two works." The gentlemen surprised us and at the same time we were very happy with the critic of the unusual Turkish diplomat. We know our past experience with the Turkish state authority which had been very critical of contemporary art and had created tension in the exhibitions.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ Hale Tenger, 29 Mayıs 2007'de Sanatçıyla Yapılan Konfreans Metni," in *Çağdaş Sanat Konuşmaları 3: 90'lı Yıllarda Türkiye'de Çağdaş Sanat*, edited by Levent Çalıkoglu (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008), p.255.

⁴⁰⁷ "...Aşşa Kasımpaşa Ekolü" işi yurt dışında Hollanda da sergilenişinde açılışa gelen Türk Konsolos işi hiç mi hiç anlamayıp "Keşke Bunun adı 'Kosova Meydan Savaşı' olsaydı" deyivermişti. In the Gorges of the Balkan sergisinin açılışında sanırım bir Türk konsolos yardımcısı gelmişti açılışa, çok genç bir beyefendi. Hepimiz tecrübe ile biliyoruz ki genellikle bizim bu türlü eseler resmi makamlarda çok gerginlik yaratıyor sergilerde. Burada ise tam tersine ediyorum, iki işinizi de hakikaten çok beğendim", dedi. Bu beyefendi insanı şaşırtan ama aynı zamanda sevindiren, hiç alışık olmadığımız bir Türk diplomatydı". Hale Tenger, "29 Mayıs 2007'de

So, this example shows a changing attitude among the younger generation of Turkish diplomats. Because of the prejudices which the state officers had, the state's approach to contemporary art and the artists has been always problematic. The role of art exhibition in foreign affairs is to establish a close cultural interaction between Turkey and Europe, representing the modern image of Turkey and Turks.

In the integration of the EU, a state-sponsored exhibition titled "Istanbul Diptychs: Contemporary Visual and Verbal Positions" opened at the Istanbul Center in Brussels at the heart of the EU with the financial support of the Municipality of Istanbul. The Curator, Beral Madra chose 12 artist's work due to the position of their work taking on Istanbul intended to present alternative approach and show Istanbul to European citizens beyond generalizations and stereotype images. She said that,

This exhibition showcases architectural and urban cityscapes of Istanbul, topics of human interests, traditions and modernity along with pursuit of globalism as evinced by the imagery and metaphors in the recent works of a wide group of contemporary artists. It aims to present Turkey to citizens of EU countries in a fresh and accustomed manner, by employing the perceptions of contemporary artists regarding Istanbul, the site of all micro and macro-cultures present in Turkey.⁴⁰⁸

However, the sterile image of Istanbul that was very important in making a good impression on the Europeans in the exhibition is a mask for protecting the city from the Orientalist vision. Behind the logic of selecting Istanbul as the central theme of exhibition is that Istanbul's current position in global economy and culture corresponds to post-modern dynamics and dimensions in the international art scene. Istanbul embodies a variety of cultural lines where the Balkans and the Eastern and Southern influences form a cultural amalgam of

Sanatçıyla Yapılan Konfreans Metni" in *Çağdaş Sanat Konuşmaları 3: 90'lı Yıllarda Türkiye'de Çağdaş Sanat*, edited by Levent Çalıkoğlu (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008), p.251,252.

⁴⁰⁸ Beral Madra, *Istanbul Diptychs* (Brussels: Istanbul Center in Brussels, 2008), p.2.

tradition and modernity. The diptych series includes painting, videos, installation art present an alternative view point for the orientation and actions of the artists and curators. State-supported exhibitions have a certain tendency to follow the political conjuncture of Turkey in line with modernization and EU integration, giving contemporary art a political role.

Thinking on concepts and perceptions, contemporary art exhibitions in abroad in the early 2000s were different compared to those in the early 1990s in terms of the post modernist attitudes. A series of exhibitions was held in German cities, new cultural representations flourished. “Szene Türkei Abseits aber Tor!” (Turkey Scene: Away From the Gate) organized by Vasıf Kortun and Erden Kosova opened in Köln based on politics, migration, gender, differences in society elaborated a determining factor to draw the borders of contemporary art in Turkey.⁴⁰⁹ On the cover page of the catalogue, a transgender woman wearing a t-shirt written on “Türkiye” and the symbol of Turkish the flag on it; the moon and star gave the direct political message of the exhibition. However, the Turkish curators in order to make the exhibition attractive, preferred to utilize self-orientalization methods. The cover page of *Szene Türkei Abseits aber Tor* made this exhibition attractive using the Turkish national symbols with a problematic gender issue. In this sense, if exhibition do not focus on Turkey, the cover page probably reflect a different theme. Being Turk and Turkish artists is a kind of negative label in Europe, the weaknesses of the state are generally explicated by the foreign curators as well as the Turkish ones.

In 2005, the exhibition “*Stadtansichten Istanbul*” (City Views from Istanbul) realized in Germany, was based on the history of the city from Byzantine times scanning a long history to combine with contemporary art practices. Every work in the exhibition more or less was influenced by the historic cityscape, giving this notion in its theoretical framework. It

⁴⁰⁹ *Szene Türkei: Abseits, aber Tor!* (Köln: Buchhandlung Walther König, 2004).

is an interesting fact that at the end of the exhibition catalogue, there is a historic map of Istanbul and the Galata district of the city, visualizing the sixteenth century Ottoman era for the art audience.⁴¹⁰ However, the art works in the exhibition did not carry Oriental- revisionist themes, on the cover of exhibition catalog a photograph depicting a woman smoking a cigarette and looking outside the window in front of the image of a mosque among apartments, symbolized Istanbul and its urban signs. The partly melancholic displayed showing in the cover page and symbol of the mosque referring to the Islamic background of the city is a typical concept of cover pages in internationally framed exhibitions.

As opposed to the international exhibitions mentioned above with a similar thematic focus, “Berlin. Istanbul. Vice Versa” was a group exhibition concerned with cultural overlapping from the perspective of “unconditional urgency of now”. For artists, culture had become an indicator of current trends responding with flexibility visual forms. For example; in Berlin, Paris as the metropolis of the world, contemporary artists implemented such general anthropological framework in their works of art. Vasıf Kortun argues that Istanbul as a heavy weight global city has raised its status as a cultural capital getting into close contact with Europe. This is a tactical marriage between Berlin and Istanbul, since displaying culture abroad requires strong international ties.⁴¹¹

Negotiation with the global economic actors has brought the globalization of Istanbul as well as the dissolution of national economy and culture. Behind the socio-political scene, there is a strong relationship between Berlin and Istanbul rather than Berlin and Ankara. Behind the current policies, these cities have sought a new and more or less equal dialogue for understanding common tendencies between East and West. The Turkish population in

⁴¹⁰ *Stadtansichten Istanbul* (Stuttgart: ifa Galerie-Stuttgart, 2004), p.13.

⁴¹¹ *Berlin-Istanbul. Vice-Versa* (İstanbul: İstanbul Culture and Art Foundation, 2004), p.18.

Germany provides anthropological ground for contemporary art works, and is now part of the local visual culture. For many years during the 1980s, contemporary art in Istanbul had a very limited profile compared to other European cities, because, there was lack of sufficient funding and lack of supporting international art events. Except for the Istanbul Biennale, there was no long-term art event organized in Istanbul that contributed to the development of visual culture. The works of art exhibited in Berlin. Istanbul. Vice Versa had the potential to elaborate such contemporary issues as private and public sphere, spatial interventions after the post 1980s, and issues about everyday life, national identity, social memory, and melancholy. Art works centered on such post-modern issues as ethnic differences, gentrification, and dilemmas in daily lives. This exhibition compared to the other exhibitions emphasizing Istanbul's socio-cultural ties with Berlin through Turkish migrant's lives in Germany and influence of Turkish culture abroad.

As one of the circles of the series of exhibitions based on the city, "Istanbul Now" was a project of the Galerie Lukas Feichtner in Vienna in 2007. Presenting the position of contemporary Turkish art in Austria, the exhibit hoped to create an important impulse and a leading interest in the current Turkish art scene among Austrian audiences. The organizer of the exhibition, Tayfun Belgin offered new possibilities to Turkish culture in the concept of Europe. In fact, there was an increasing tension in the field of the urbanization and gentrification of Istanbul. This perspective offered a new vision for contemporary Turkish art as determined one of the basic concepts of the art exhibitions in the middle of the first decade of the 2000. European art circles recognized Istanbul, with its 14 million inhabitants, as the biggest city in Europe, offering enormous creative opportunities. The fact is that keen interest

in contemporary art in Istanbul is one of the main reasons for European artists to enjoy cultural difference and practice new opportunities on a multinational level.

The curator of the 9th Istanbul Biennale, Charles Esche, Director of the Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven, said the following in the *Kunstforum International*: “Istanbul is perhaps one of the most important places in the world. There are a few cities that have such significance both historically and currently.”⁴¹² At the moment, the Austrians are trying to keep Turkey out of the EU for good, before it has even joined in. This situation shows that contemporary art exhibitions in Europe have a tendency to represent the post-modern face of the country, helping European art audience to get rid of their fears and prejudices about Turkey.

In the “Istanbul Now” exhibition, Zeki Arslan’s work on color direction, color movement and color symbolism moved on a continuum between two worlds: “Eastern and Western.” An abstract image in Arslan’s pictures had a wide scale of color which symbolized the artistic East-West dialogue.⁴¹³ Another work dealt with duality. Selda Asal questioned who are immigrants? What do they think about? Being marginal? Asal’s “Nice Kids” was a music video about understanding a city through children who mostly migrated to Istanbul from different regions in the country. The main agenda of this work was showing off political reaction, migrant’s cultural attitudes about folk, rap, dance and other varieties. Predictably, surprising thing, the problems of migrant life, the rapid transformation of cities, unequal social stratification, and gentrification were central issues of contemporary art in such forms as installation, video art, photography in the Turkish art scene.

⁴¹² Charles Esche, *The Kunst Forum International*, vol.178, p.12

⁴¹³ Tayfun Belgin, *İstanbul Now/C* (İstanbul: Promat Basım Evi, 2007), p.37.

The internationally framed exhibition called “Along the Gates of Urban” was held in Berlin in 2004, focusing on urban life with a comparative perspective. Both cities kept on relishing their geo-political centrality through ups and downs. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, these cities raised their importance due to geographical partitions. In Berlin’s case, Central Europe, the Slavic terrain, and the Baltic belt; in Istanbul’s case the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Middle East, repositioned the cities ascribing their new codes and social mobility. The curator, Erden Kosova, after the visiting the Berlin Biennale, was thinking about Berlin and asking what had gone wrong with the Berlin Biennial. During the re-unification project, Berlin had attracted a large amount of public expenditure and began to become a center of the Western global economy that led to gentrification in sub-urban areas and produced dis-advantages groups. Kosova argued that for a curator, an exhibition was not the object of academic research. The exhibition at Galerie K&S Berlin brought works together with a wide range of references and avoided boring and repetitive illustrations of a single theoretical position.

“Along the Gates of the Urban” was realized with a series of art projects examining the effect of various issues such as overconsumption, urban waste, gentrification, property speculation, unemployment, the alienation of everyday life, recently produced hierarchies and emerging alternative subjectivities. On May 2003, the first collaborations “Unoccupied Territories,” curated by Atilla Tordai, thematized the possibilities for the emergence of new subjectivities in a certain social and geographical situatedness held on the Galerie K&S. The second project “Things You Don’t Know” brought the work of a number of foreign artists held in the Home Gallery of Prague in Winter 2004 exhibiting video the works of the group of inventory artists and a performance art. “Along the Gates of the Urban” held in the gallery

space of Galerie K&S in May 2004, was a continuation of “Unoccupied Territories” with some variations in the selected works. As mentioned before, both of these exhibitions shared the thematic frame of the contemporary urban experience dealing with minority issues, subcultures, and architecture. Turkish artists who had been producing their works in Berlin for some time aimed at bringing together their Istanbul perspectives and the current situation of Berlin Contemporary art. These two exhibitions combined in one catalogue put together both foreign and Turkish artists in the same space.

A sort of field research depended on observation was conducted by a group of Turkish artists during the production process. Nevin Aladağ worked on the sub-cultural expression of young people from the hip-hop scenes of Berlin and Munich while she was defining, interrupting and interrogating the urban space searching for harmony from the perspective of Istanbul. Seçil Yersel’s work depended on defining the psychological dimension, defining life in the big cities where melancholia radiated in her photographs following urban rhythm. Erineç Seymen did well-prepared images in such thematic paintings as sex, family, life, war and politics onto Istanbul’s public space. Esra Esen’s video work “Brothers and Sisters” focused on the daily lives of illegal migrant families who were currently living in Istanbul waiting to pass to Central European countries. The video works dealt with the socio-political issues of migration through interaction with the local population.⁴¹⁴

Up to now, common tendencies in exhibition themes and the collaboration of different group of artists in internationally framed exhibitions as a trend at the beginning of 2000s were discussed. The Harfiyat Group⁴¹⁵ which consisted of artists focused on the

⁴¹⁴ *Along the Gates of the Urban*, p.11.

specific location features of Istanbul and Turkey in an era of globalization was known as “metropolitan observer” in Turkey. The group sought the definition of the practical life created by the popular culture that created a series of contexts and symbols. Artists from Hafriyat were interested in the concept of flaneur,⁴¹⁶ walking down the streets; their works of from the metropolis which has been subject to immigration. Hafriyat is a good example for independent artists groups resisting global capitalism and acting independently from any kind of restriction, because they do not take financial support from any private foundation or the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The members of Harfiyat are interested in various kind of such different themes as tension between global and local, immigration, ethnicity, social differentiation, urban transformation. Their model is also followed by other independent art initiatives such as the Apartment Project, the Oda Project, Altı Aylık, K2, Galata Perform, Nomad, Pist and YAMA founded by artists and curators from different educational and professional backgrounds who participated in internationally framed exhibitions. In contrast to private exhibitions, group exhibitions bring a momentum and flexibility reflecting variety in unity, enabling them to show their collective visions.

“Falsche Welt” (The False World) was the first exhibition realized by Hafriyat at Rathaus Galerie Munich between May 13, 2004 and June 27, 2004. As an alt-culture movement, Hafriyat communicated with the viewer’s and society’s memory. Realities in

⁴¹⁵ Hafriyat is a common platform and field of the thought formed by a group of artists who have been organizing exhibitions for 10 years. It is also an effort to slip from the tight membrane of the rigid, sterile, conservative commercial and academic art environment of the art dealer, artist, collector and viewer. Hafriyat turns its gaze to and empathizes with discarded, the rejected, the abandoned of everyday life which has become irrelevant because it is seen everyday or because it has genuinely been othered. Hafriyat described this gaze as a look at the street and subculture. Hafriyat has ‘becoming an urban dweller’. Since 1996, Hafriyat organized a series of exhibition: Hafriyat (1996), Hafriyat 2 (1996), Hafriyat 3 (1997), Super Hafriyat (1999), Öz Hafriyat (2000), Hain Geceler Hafriyat (2001), Yalan Dünya (2004), Hafriyat Karaköy (2007) *Hafriyat Grubu Hakkında*. Accessed on May 10, 2010.<http://www.hafriyatkarakoy.com/hafriyat/hafriyat-grubu-hakkinda/>

⁴¹⁶ Baudelaire characterized the flaneur as a ‘gentleman stroller of the city streets’, he saw the flaneur as having a key role in understanding, participating in and portraying the city. A flaneur thus played a double role in the city life and in theory, that is remaining a detached observer.

everyday life that are unseen, degraded or falsified by the mainstream contemporary Turkish art are revealed with the works of Hafriyat. Istanbul is the setting of modern life, and Hafriyat traces the process of modernization in Turkey. Harfiyat's exhibition abroad was different from other Turkish group exhibitions because as an independent art group, they did not work with a curator. For this reason, they were able to display their works in the gallery space without dealing with curatorial problems.

In the global world, it is possible to trace the failed or incomplete project of modernity and artists from Hafriyat talked about an affinity. Contemporary art had strong ties with sociology, so Harfiyat artists were developing arguments in art by interpreting urban sociology. For Hafriyat artists, the works in the exhibition should not be considered as representing the universal collective memory. The pleasure of discovering the rapid and continuous changes of what is our locality and tradition presents.

As the first independent group exhibition, *Falsche Welt* was deeply grounded in the culture of the geography reminding us that "we are temporary in this world and something goes wrong, we remind ourselves of this and keep ourselves apart from it." The young group of Turkish artists took on the duty of visualizing the common cultural climate. Here, "Arabesque" culture emerged as submission and this diminished contemporary artist's resistance in society.⁴¹⁷ In a sense, Harfiyat/excavation is to make sense of the real city image that was far away from orientalist depictions of Istanbul. For this reason, Harfiyat artists as flaneurs preferred to be observers in Istanbul. They argued that if there is such a thing as the False World, it is based on the imagination that offered alternative identity instead of the ethnic, religious, and cultural ones in the exhibitions.

⁴¹⁷ *Falsche Welt*, p.17

As depicting Turkey in stereotypical representations and the clichés, “The Call Me Istanbul, is Mein Name” exhibition staged during the 17th European Cultural Festival, Karlsruhe on April 18, May 8, 2004 was accompanied by a wide-ranging program of events (films, music, literature) and a symposium entitled “Ex Oriente Lux?”-Insights into German-Turkish Cultural Mosaic. As the name implies, the symposium referred to a mechanism of the classification of art and culture, and the organizers labeled Turkey as the Orient. The concept was carried out by curators Roger Conover, Eda Cufer and Peter Weibel in the selection of the works. According to the curators, the exhibition gave a visual dimension to the dialogue, reflects the diversity of the city and subjected it to close scrutiny. For Conover, Istanbul could be seen as a permeable membrane between space and time, a kind of transparent foil between the Istanbul of the present and the Europe of the future, and as a model for the future multi-cities of Europe, the outstanding feature of which is the flexible and vibrating systems within which it operates.⁴¹⁸

For this reason, the curators sought signs of the city in metropolis and paved the way for an encounter with some of the symbols. A group of artists and curators strongly criticized the strategies used by the curators in the selection of works. Nur Yersel’s video “Belly Dancer” displayed a woman’s dance, Revan Barlas’s “Artificial Kiss” dealt with the issue of transgender, Vahap Avşar’s whirling dervishes referred to Mevlana’s teaching “Whoever you are, you come” display full of controversial symbols representing Istanbul and Turkey. The theoretical curator of the exhibition, Peter Weibe answered the question of whether the exhibition enforced Turkish art audience? He replied: “I hope that the Western visitor who carried touristic image of Istanbul in their mind, they are disappointed.

⁴¹⁸ *Call Me Istanbul ist Mein Name*, Exhibition Hand Catalogue (Berlin:2005).

However, other disappointment should be experienced by Turkish visitors. They will face with unusual images when they will visit the exhibition and they will question realities.⁴¹⁹ However, the purpose of Weibe created a main paradox that was seen in his statement in the exhibition catalogue as well as event website. He said that

In the age of nation capitals, Istanbul was a world city. And now, in the age of global cities, Istanbul is becoming something else (...) It is a question not only for the future of Istanbul, but for the future of Europe, as non-native citizens, class collisions, information technology, illegal aliens, black markets, real estate irregularities, housing shortages, labor challenges, suicide bombings, business ventures and market pressures increasingly define the way people organize and imagine urban landscapes. If Istanbul is a model for the future multi-cities of Europe, we need to understand the elastic and vibrant system that defines Istanbul now. This exhibition offers an encounter with some signals coming from that metapolis.⁴²⁰

His aim was to situate Istanbul as a world city, but at the same time he was dealing with the negative images of the city mentioned above. The exhibition was sort of a transparent screen between Istanbul and Karlsruhe, between the present and future, between Turkey and Europe. Curator Weibe used the phrase “Don’t stand at the gates. Come, whoever you are. Call me Istanbul” reminding us of Mevlana’s famous saying “Come whoever you are.” This citation indicated that the curator wanted to politically and geographically situated the city in between the East and the West, creating a well-designed meta-identity for the EU.

Similar to the “Call Me Istanbul” exhibition, again in Germany “The Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul” organized by Christoph Tannert in 2005 was the first part of an exhibition trilogy. His curatorial examination of “shrinking cities” defined as where were in the economic and social process and having interaction with European cities, German curator

⁴¹⁹ “Beni Istanbul Diye Çağır,” *Milliyet*, 19 Mayıs 2004, p.25.

⁴²⁰ *Call Me Istanbul: Istanbul ist Mein Name?* Accessed May 8, 2010.
<http://www.zkm.de/istanbul/e/>

Tannert planned to use comparative analyses for his past exhibitions which focused on two of the most important Third World cities, Cairo and Mexico. He argued that “we are less interested in the aesthetic perspective of the artists as tourists. We know that Europe is more than what it was in the past. Europe can be what Europeans are attempting to create in the active process of communication.”⁴²¹ However, “Urban Realities Focus Istanbul” was a kind of analysis of the current socio-economic situation in Istanbul rather than an attempt to realize contemporary art and culture in the global age. As a periphery city, Istanbul has struggled with circumstances of underdevelopment has experienced the gentrification process in terms of environment and liberalization of state policy as the central arguments of the focus.

As for the concept of “global cities” used in this exhibition, the artistic examinations of urban realities, focusing on Istanbul with a view of Europe, highlighted the following subjects: history, memory, feeling for the homeland, family, religion; cityscape, urban construction, urban development, infrastructure, re-urbanization, gentrification, city life, nightlife; cultural awareness, migration, protection of minorities, process of democratization, right to self-determination; violence-public safety; the art scene in Istanbul, inner-artistic dialogues, reference to Turkish literature and literature on Turkey; examination of clichés, political correctness, value systems, new view of society, media reality. As seen from a different perspective: Turks in Germany.⁴²² The topics handled in the exhibition strategically chosen by the curator figured out the boundaries of contemporary art in Europe and how contemporary European artists were perceived the non-Western metropolis Istanbul. Apparently, the artists are more interested in the present day transformations of the city and its inhabitants, rather than in a fixed and unchanging place in the Orient. Still, the Orient was

⁴²¹ *Urbane Realitäten: Fokus Istanbul* (Berlin: Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH, 2005), p.12.

⁴²² Ibid, p.13.

there in a modern form for international group exhibitions in the mid-2000. Dealing with the issues of the Orient and Occident in Turkish contemporary art became a traditional approach for foreign curators.

“The Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul” was a remarkable exhibition due to its conceptual framework, examining Istanbul as a case study for global processes from the periphery. This situation showed us an ongoing stereotypical image continued in this exhibition as well. As a circle of a series of the city exhibition, Cairo and Mexico were selected by Tannert as examples of the globalization of cities in the Third World countries. Can Altay, Hüseyin Alptekin, Halil Altındere, Memed Erdener, Gülsün Karamustafa, Ahmet Ögüt, Neriman Polat, Canan Şenol, Hale Tenger, and Vahit Tuna and interviews with Erden Kosova and Vasıf Kortun, and an article by Fulya Erdemci were removed from the exhibition catalog by the authors. The artists who withdrew from the exhibition cited the following reasons:

First, the breach of ethical principles of exhibition making; the emergence of a conflict of interests. The unfair, unequal and partial distribution of the exhibition budget. Even the modestly proposed production budget of the artists from Turkey were denied. The exhibition team explained this asymmetry by the low funding coming from institutions from Turkey. This meant absolutely that artists from Istanbul could not produce their works physically in an exhibition themed after Istanbul.

Second, besides the restriction on the production budgets, there was no coverage of travel and accommodation expenses of artists from Turkey and no honorariums. Third, the discomfort with the nationally framed exhibitions. Artists did not find any reason to belong it to the same artists list other than originating from the same place.

Fourth, the instrumentalisation of artists in accordance with Turkey's membership negotiations with the EU. Artists did not want to play the role of ambassadors of their country. The sudden increase of interest in their work takes the shape of demand for representational positioning on their behalf. Fifth, the limitation of artists by geographic, national or regional definitions. The art works could be reduced to representation-based meta-identity. Lastly, the absurdity of limiting the exhibition's website to the languages of German and English. The introduction text is filled with clichés about the East and West, Islam and Christianity.⁴²³

Christoph Tannert as the curator of this exhibition defended the concept and organization of the exhibition as follows "Focus Istanbul" can certainly be understood as a response to "Şimdi Now."⁴²⁴ However, "Focus Istanbul" was not an instrument of political or artistic self-presentation for the Turkish public. Instead, it was an art event based on in-depth research that aimed to involve interested international art producers and viewers, and focused on current developments (urban, social, political, and aesthetic) in Istanbul in the context of globalized processes. The exhibition offered the guiding question of how heterogeneity and culturally transitions occurred in the city.⁴²⁵ It reduced the contemporary art scale in Turkey to a city life rather than taking care of plurality of cultural codes and plural identity.

Like a touristic guide, the exhibition catalog included texts that centered on Republican history, the Byzantine past, migration after the 1980s, and political struggle with cultural differences, and the notion of the progress in Turkey as an indicator of EU integration and so on. The sense of "other" or "otherness" can be analyzed in the background while

⁴²³ *Urbane Realitäten: Fokus İstanbul* (Berlin: Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH, 2005), p.22.

⁴²⁴ *Şimdi Now* was a festival of Turkish culture organized by the Istanbul Culture and Art Foundation took place in Berlin under this title in a high media profile.

⁴²⁵ *Urbane Realitäten: Fokus İstanbul*, p.25.

depicting diversity, religions, languages, and ethnic groups regions. The catalog actually reproduced political clichés, comparisons, illustration of panoramic city life in Istanbul. Some of the titles of the texts were published in the exhibition catalog for example; “Istanbul in October,” “The Miracle on the Bosphorus,” and “Cultural Identity in the Process of European integration.” These descriptions were closely attach to the concept of “mental mapping” that described facts in the identity of the formation conflict in 1990’s Turkey.

State-centered art exhibitions took a step in the second half of the first decade of the 2000s in new directions in terms of the EU process and tourism campaigns. The official view on contemporary art was gradually transformed and now it is perceived as strategically important. In 2008, “Made in Turkey: Positionen Türkische Künstler 1978-2008” was an official contemporary art exhibition opened in Frankfurt during Frankfurt Book Fair to which Turkey had been the invited as so the guest of honor. Fifty Turkish artists participated in this exhibition with one hundred fifty works of art and this was the first retrospective for thirty years of Turkish contemporary art on the international scale. Turkish government officers, Ali Babacan, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ertuğrul Günay, the Minister of Culture and Tourism, expected that the historical perspective in this exhibition would represent cultural memory and a different collective vision of society.⁴²⁶ However, the state still recognized contemporary art as a tool for taking the universal values of humanity. The Project Coordinator of Turkey at the Frankfurt Book Fair, Ahmet Arı insisted that the exhibition unified the past with the present, the common values of Anatolian life, history and culture that should be shared by humanity and transferred.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁶ *Made in Turkey: Positionen Türkischer Künstler 1978-2008* (Frankfurt: 2008), p.15,17.

⁴²⁷ “Made in Turkey,” *Milliyet*, 30 Eylül 2008, p.22.

In fact, for him, contemporary art exhibitions provided an insight into the common good of humanity that was neither a necessity nor a duty. Anatolia or Anatolian culture in all works of art presented “Made in Turkey” cannot be the source of inspiration of Turkish artists. The official vision of the state is strongly determined by geography and history even in the contemporary art. The selection of art works were based on single dimensional, monolithic, and state centered approach. The works of art were neutral not depicting problematic issues of current political and cultural sphere in Turkey.

The expectation of the German authorities from the exhibition and the positions of young artists who participated in “Made in Turkey” exhibition questioned the relationship of art and society, post-modernity and its dialogue with art, and the interaction of private and public sphere. The Berlin art authorities expected to see classic discussions about the Turkish minority in Germany, artistic interpretation of migration, and a questioning of Western art in the Eastern Art.⁴²⁸

Jürgen Doppelstein, catalogue writer of Made in Turkey, discussed “being foreign” as a political debate as well as the issue of cultural studies, migration, integration, otherness in the field of contemporary art asked why people were afraid of the foreign and how they were to define it.⁴²⁹ For Europeans, the political atmosphere of the early 2000s brought a new way of thinking on identity that gave them a space to create and understand cultural differences. Europeans had to learn not to be afraid of foreign who lived among them; they had to face differences and similarities and live with them. As Edward Said says, the East was pushed into structures that were created by the West. The imaginary concept of the Orient does not exist in

⁴²⁸ *Milliyet*, “Made in Turkey,” pp.19,21.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid*, p.35.

reality, constructed the “other” as a sign of cultural conquest of the Western world.⁴³⁰

Thinking on the 1990s in the European art scene, contemporary art from Turkey, for the first time, got to showcase and attribute them as the “other” foreign. The systematization of policy, sociology, military, scientific issues was strictly classified by the Occident taking control of the Orient.

In light of this perspective, Turkish artists were foreigners, because they were strangers. They were also the “other” who lived in the periphery. These privileges attributed to the artist coming from Turkey led to a tension between the two worlds. In this situation, it is difficult to break down clichés and taboos in the representations of Turk and Turkish art in internationally framed exhibitions. “Stranger among us” as title of Doppelstein’ catalogue text gives us a notion of the acceptance of foreigners in contemporary art scale that is an obligation for European art audience to accept foreigners among themselves. From now on, “the other” transformed into the image of “stranger,” who had never been a part of the European soul, but are lived among them.

In 2009, a state-sponsored contemporary art exhibition titled “Istanbul Next Wave” was opened in three venues in Berlin. Organized to celebrate to the 20th anniversary of the sister city agreement between Istanbul and Berlin, the exhibition presented works of Turkish contemporary art. The exhibition was organized in collaboration with the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Berlin Senate and Akademie der Künste. It dealt with modern Turkish art through the eyes of Turkish curators presenting contemporary art from Istanbul 250 works by 88 artists. Curators Beral Madra and Levent Çalikoğlu chose the development

of Istanbul as a modern art hub and focused on the current art scene, which included media works and installations.⁴³¹

The first exhibition in the “Istanbul Next Wave” titled “Istanbul Modern in Berlin” in the Gropius-Bau was composed entirely of work from the Istanbul Modern Art Museum and traced the evolution of contemporary Turkish art from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present day. As a second exhibition, the theme of “The Ground Beneath My Feet, Not the Sky” exhibited at Pariser Platz focused on the role of women artists in the development of Istanbul art covering three decades and generations of 17 artists in the development of Istanbul art. The third exhibition, titled “Six Positions in Critical Art from Istanbul” in the Academy building in Haseatenweg, focused on six Turkish artists who had taken up critical positions, especially with respect to social, political power structures and violence. This exhibition compared to the first and second developed a more political and critical tendency in contemporary art. Both “Made in Turkey” and the “Istanbul Next Wave” exhibitions displayed the changing face of state-centered modern art exhibitions. Although these exhibitions mainly based on the history of Turkish modern art as well as contemporary art works, some of them politically engaged issues such as violence, ethnicity, terror, and war. This situation showed that the Turkish state had changed its thought on contemporary art a little, regarding contemporary art exhibitions as a new dynamic for international cultural policy.

In 2004, European artists and curators questioned the idea of Europe, and Europe XXL⁴³² was a forum for expression and dialogue regarding European issues: its history and

⁴³¹ “Istanbul Next Wave,” *Hürriyet Daily News*, 13 November 2009, p.8.

future. The basic questions asked in this regard were what does Europe mean today? How can Europe continue to build and grow? What are the frontiers of Europe? Should they be geographical, philosophical, or cultural?

In 2008, the exhibition “Istanbul, Traversée” organized by Europe XXL presented in the Palais des Beaux-Arts of Lille, was an opportunity for artists to reveal the main challenges of contemporary Turkish society. Either coming from Istanbul, Turkey, or from the diaspora, more than 30 artists reflected and accompanied the flux of History. The standpoint of the exhibition asked the question, where better than in Istanbul to ask oneself what being European means?⁴³³

In 2004 and 2005, two exhibitions “Call Me Istanbul: Ist Mein Name” at ZKM in Karlsruhe and “Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul” at Berlin Martin-Gropius-Bau both were devoted to the art scene in Istanbul which was not considered to be the real image of the city. However, its geographical location, its urban development and its socio-political situation made Istanbul case study for the artists. Through the selected works and the varied backgrounds of the artists, the exhibition “Istanbul, Traversée” attempted to show how city-dwellers face their reality and their history, and how, depending on their cultural, social, and political background, they show their resistance to it and participation in it.

In recent years, the number of artistic projects has increased, inviting dialogue and historical perspective. Compared to the classical view of looking at Istanbul from the Western perspective, “Traversée” brought the discussion of the European project and aimed to display the strength and richness that Istanbul shared with Europe. Artists from Turkey such as Aydan

⁴³² Europe XXL is an independent cultural organization developed by lille3000 (Lille European Capital of Culture) created a new dynamism in terms of a Journey of discovery through a new continent, a voyage through a Europe transfigured 20 years after the fall of Berlin Wall.

⁴³³ *Istanbul, Traversée* (France:Lille Press, 2008), p.3

Murtezaoğlu, Sarkis, Hüseyi Alptekin, Hale Tenger, Osman Bozkurt, İnci Eviner, Ceren Oykut, Burak Delier, Şener Özmen, Erkan Özgen, and Erçin Seymen participated in the “Traversée.” Photography, media art, installation, video works were selected in terms of the concept of the exhibition giving certain references to the social, political, cultural, economic history of Turkey. The exhibition was far away from the “neo-Orientalist, exotic, even imperialist” attitudes, European art world, for the first time, questioned European artists and curators on the lookout for artistic scenes embodying a “typically Oriental” identity or location in Turkish contemporary art exhibitions. The exhibition consisted of an interactive database on contemporary Istanbul and a 16-minute complementary film titled “Mapping Istanbul.”

“Mapping Istanbul” is a film composed of two fragments including around 70 maps that were prepared for the “Becoming Istanbul” exhibition organized by the Garanti Gallery and the German Museum of Architecture, Frankfurt am Main in 2008.⁴³⁴ Peter Cachola Schmal, the director of DAM in Germany; Pelin Derviş, the director of Garanti Galeri Platform, Bülent Tanju; and Uğur Tanyeli were the curators of the exhibition who decided to use new media technologies to overcome classical exhibition format.

The attempt took place as a result of looking at Istanbul from multiple perspectives and defining Istanbul as a heterogeneous entity. In doing this, the database, instead of producing and placing new stereotypes opposite clichés, formed its own structure by instrumentalizing the clichés themselves. The maps were presented in two fragments: “Istanbul in and Istanbul is.” Istanbul as analyzed and positioned “Istanbul” in as part of the world, as part of Turkey related its own dynamics, whereas “Istanbul” is allowed the discussion of population, purchasing power, income, education, transportation, and

⁴³⁴ *Becoming Istanbul Exhibition*. Accessed April 17, 2011. <http://database.becomingistanbul.com/>

topography. The information was given in “Mapping Istanbul” emerged as a unique tool to the dynamics of the metropolis. All maps in the video accumulated the data to the visitors. The maps, the product of exclusive data and visual research, met the viewer for the first time. The cosmopolite attitude of the exhibition took a section out of today’s Europe, and “Mapping Istanbul” formed a contemporary memory for the city.

In the second half of the first decade of the 2000s, cosmopolitanism was the main theme of internationally framed exhibitions showing a new concept of the city. Integrating Turkey into Europe was a challenge that greatly exceeded the limits and constraints of the current debate on contemporary art. The integration of the other in the last decade of international exhibitions attributed certain tendencies: the Turk, a mixture of Islam, the East and the Barbarian. Istanbul in this sense was the place where these characteristics coexisted. However, a new trend, cosmopolitanism, was based on a critical approach taking into consideration neo-liberalism, urbanizations, and globalization in organizing theoretical frameworks of the contemporary art exhibitions.

Participation of Turkey in Venice Biennial:
Politics of Art: Strategy of Representing The ‘Other’

I say that words such as “orient” and “occident” correspond to no stable reality that exists as a natural fact. Moreover, all such geographical designations are an odd combination of the empirical and imaginative.

Edward D. Said⁴³⁵

⁴³⁵ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism, Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), p.331.

The Venice Biennial has for over a century been one of the most prestigious cultural institutions in the world. In 1990, Turkey participated in the 44th Venice Biennial by invitation of the biennial curator, Giovanni Carandente. Organizing two Biennales in Istanbul, Turkish contemporary art was more and more recognized by European critics. Beral Madra chose the works of two painters (Mithat Şen and Kemal Önsoy) and two sculptors (Erdağ Aksel and Kemal Önsoy). The selection of artists showed classical approaches in contemporary art. The era of the early 1990s politicized the art world showing a kind of re-evaluation or re-confirmation of the state of art. Strategies of exhibition that were conducted in Eastern countries proved their capability of art in Europe and the USA.

Participation of Turkish art in Venice Biennial depended on a language based on historical and environmental background interwoven with modernist dichotomies. Contemporary Turkish art flourished in the rather limited cultural environment following the 1980 coup d'état, which ironically prepared the background for the development of culture and a dialogue in global art scene.

In 1993, the Venice Biennial invited artists from the countries which had no pavilion of their own. This provided an apparatus to contribute to the interaction between the artists and the art of people of various cultures. The curators of national pavilions utilized their goals for national purposes. For the first time, the Venice Biennial's main pavilion held four extensive exhibitions entitled "Passage to Orient" "From Moskau", "Letterists" and "The New Chinese Paintings". Ironically, the "Passage to Orient" exhibition was installed in the Israeli Pavilion as a image from the Middle East and also the Japanese and Chinese presence in the biennale indicated the importance of Asian art with a relatively strong art market competing with Western art. Although Turkey did not acquired a pavilion until 2003 in the Giardini di

Castello ,a section reserved for countries without national pavilions, Beral Madra selected two artists, Erdağ Aksel and Serhat Kiraz. The USA and Western countries in the national pavilions of Venice Biennial reserved their space to show the effectiveness of their art and a trend of undergoing a change and opening up a change. The winds of change in the world art events directed the global art scene to create a bi-polar world system. With the emergence of privatization in the Eastern art markets, local and international curators played a greater role taking peripheral art to the center.

Turkey's participation in the 45th Venice Biennial was regarded seriously by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This was a symbolic event after the financial support of the state of the Istanbul Biennial showed the state's will to contribute with Turkish contemporary art in the international arena. Fifty-three countries and more than 400 artists participated at the 45th Biennale of Venice. Beral Madra was again the curator of the Biennale, demanding a budget of \$25000, but the government provided only \$18000.⁴³⁶ Besides the official support of private enterprises like Arçelik Company, Selahattin Beyazıt, Mas Matbaası, Lojik, Turkish Airlines, IFA Stuttgart, and Flachglass Stahlbau, Sommer-Atlas Reisen contributed to the budget.⁴³⁷ Producing original and large dimensional works meant a big budget for artists. However, Turkish artists had to deal with budget problems in the 1990s due to the lack of the state's financial support and sponsorship in the contemporary arts. The global art scene in the 90s was seeking a language between the East and West. Problems in identity issues became the central topics of contemporary art, the past as source of identity reevaluated in a postmodern theoretical framework.

⁴³⁶ Beral Madra, *Post Peripheral Flux: A Decade of Contemporary Art in Istanbul* (İstanbul: Literatür Yayınları, 1996), p.101.

⁴³⁷ Ibid, p.103.

As Madra argued, the artist from Turkey in the 45th Biennial of Venice proposed concepts and methods for a change of mentality and for a new attitude towards the new order of the world. She said that, “we are not bringing an art exhibition to Venice, but we represent a political point of view.” The exhibition expressed the place in the world that Turkey wanted to take.⁴³⁸ Serhat Kiraz was against conceptual framework, the formulation of design and elements in art combined series of drawings, serigraphies, documents, photographs and three dimensional constructions. His works in the 2nd International Istanbul Biennale entitled “God of Religions,” “Religions of God” was an installation for St. Eirene. The work of Kiraz in the biennale entitled “Time of Emptiness” is a spiral construction created by transparent materials challenges global perspective of the art.

Erdal Aksel’s work “Here, Now, Then” focused on the world of signs and symbols and on the complex relationships between the past, present, and the future. The images of Ottoman sultans carried a significant ironic aim to represent everyday life, and the traditional structure of Turkish society. The reason behind this was that at the beginning of the 1990s artists applied new kind of internationalism in contemporary art exhibitions organized within the concept of “global.” Turkish artists at the Venice Biennial were dissatisfied with the place that was allocated to it in the Italian Pavilion, there was no independence in the exhibiting area. The Turkish place in Italian Pavilion showed the characteristics of Turkey, being a bridge or transition place. In this sense, Madra insisted on allocating a national pavilion in Venice Biennial as a must for gaining reputation and promoting Turkish art in the international scope that was the need for further developments in Turkish art.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁸ *Cumhuriyet-2, Sanat, Kültür, Magazin, Televizyon* , “45.Venedik Bienali”, 13 Haziran 1993, p.2

⁴³⁹ Madra, *İki Yılda Bir Sanat: Bienal Yazılar 1987-2003*, p.145.

Turkey's contribution to the 45th Biennale of Venice is an open air exhibition entitled *Inbetween* and was realized by two artists, Adem Yılmaz a Turkish artist living in Cologne since 1977. The Swedish artists Jarg Geismar has lived and worked in Düsseldorf and New York since the beginning of the 1980s.⁴⁴⁰ This exhibition was based on the rapid developments of the art world due to the results of nomadism and co-existence of different languages. The works of artists raise questions about nationalism and internationalism. The artists were challenging the classical museum system and attempting interest in communication technologies in contemporary art. Their basic motivations came from a new approach to internationalism and trans-nationalism, presenting discrimination between the First World and the Third World. Both groups of artists questioned the boundaries of globalization in contemporary art taking into consideration peripheral art and its struggle with the center.⁴⁴¹ In this regard, the works of Kiraz and Aksel in the exhibition situated as “*In Between*” in order to overcome the impossibilities of peripheral art in the “global saloon.”

1995 was the 100th anniversary of the Venice Biennial, which had been the center of European art for a century. Unfortunately, Turkey did not participate at the 46th Venice Biennale, and thus missed a great opportunity to find a place for itself at this center of the world of art. Two years later, the 47th Venice Biennial focused on the function of the art market in the integration of peripheral art in a multicultural world. For the first time, artists emphasized national identity while they did not prefer to put forward nationalist attitudes. Turkey participated in Venice classified as an Islamic country. The exhibition titled “*Modernity and Memory: Contemporary Art from Islamic Countries*” constituted the main

⁴⁴⁰ Madra, *Post Peripheral Flux: A Decade of Contemporary Art in Istanbul*, p.113.

⁴⁴¹ *Cumhuriyet-2*, “45. Venedik Bienali’nden notlar: Küreselliğin Sınırı Nerede?,” *Sanat, Kültür, Magazin, Televizyon*, 7 Temmuz 1993, p.2.

framework of common interest of the Middle East art scene, financially supported by the Rockefeller Foundation.

In 1994, the Rockefeller Foundation took a decision to establish strong cultural and political relations among Islamic countries and to support the organization of this exhibition in order to promote contemporary art. Serhat Kiraz and İnci Eviner exhibited their works a the group of artists from Indonesia, Morocco, Algeria, Pakistan, Egypt, Sudan, Mali and Malaysia in the exhibition “Modernity and Memory.”⁴⁴² The Venice Biennial which was normally a national structure in terms of a space of representation opened a path for multicultural identity that would realize cultural resources in multinational co-operation rather than contradictions. In 1999, Turkey again missed the opportunity to participate in the Venice Biennale. Chief curator Herald Szeeman invited Kutluğ Ataman for the Italian Pavilion. The new millennium brought structural change in the Venice Biennial. The first change was increasing number of participation of periphery countries in Venice and the second was exhibiting the works of independent artists who were given the chance to represent their art in international arena.

The title of “The Human Plateau” of the first biennale of the 21st century chosen by Herald Szeemann indicated collective resources, and plurality as well as the conflict of differences. The vision of the 49th Venice Biennial implied the collective memory and heritage of human kind instead of concentrating on geographical place. The exhibition in the Turkish Pavilion titled “The Perfumed Garden” (İtrli Bahçe in Turkish), was borrowed from the title of the book, presumably written between 1394-1433, in Arabic, by Seyh Ömer Ibn-i Muhammed El Nefzavi and translated into French and English in the last quarter of the nineteenth century,⁴⁴³ a constructed environment that would facilitate a reconsideration of the

⁴⁴² Beral Madra, *İki Yılda Bir Sanat*, p.68.

difficult questions of the Orient and the Occident. The curator Beral Madra selected artists and their works in terms of exploring the problems of authenticity and subjectivity, in order to represent contradictions in the practices of globalization and multiculturalism.

“The Perfumed Garden” in Thetis Park was a collaborative work by Murat Morova, Butch Morris, Ahmet Öktem, Sermin Sherif, and xurban.net. Beral Madra said that “this work embraces the names of all the writers, philosophers, artists, dilettantes who explored, exploited and exposed the secrets of the Orient to the curious audiences in the West with a very simple form and sound which fits into the natural environment of the park and into the source of the concept”.⁴⁴⁴ With the reconstruction of the Western mentality in the exhibition, the theme was elaborated from an Eastern concept into a Western one.

Art from the periphery gained momentum in cultural exchange after the 1990s. As a peripheral art, the Turkish contemporary art scene opened a place to itself in Venice Biennial in 2001 by “the Perfumed Garden” introduced the utilization of art production and questioning layers of metaphors. For the first time, Turkey participated in the Venice Biennale with an identity issue questioning the ways the Orient and Occident were transformed or modified during the last decade of twentieth century. Madra focused on the perceptions of art from the center and the periphery on “the Plateau of Humanity” where the “Perfumed Garden” allowed audiences to rethink the interminable questions of the Orient/Occident. In doing so, the art audience was able to establish a link between the past and the present. For example, Murat Morova’s “Turkish Delights” is a box of lokum commonly called “Turkish delight”. The red velvet box is an authentic production of the nineteenth century. A metal emblem on it is titled “the Rose of Istanbul”. The box is filled with 30 pieces of hand-made, painted lead women

⁴⁴³ Beral Madra, *The Perfumed Garden Exhibition Catalog* (Istanbul: Borusan Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2001), p.1

⁴⁴⁴ Beral Madra, *The Perfumed Garden Exhibition Catalog*, p.6.

figures. He employed the traditional and post-modern underground culture clichés. Again, Sermin Şerif's work was an ensemble of 60 photographs selected from a series of photographs which depicted a performance realized in Istanbul. Sherif used a scarlet veil to cover/uncover her own head and face in simultaneous images, thus creating different judgments of the viewer. Her proposal to identify, recognize and distinguished the true "other" and the true "self."⁴⁴⁵

In the 50th Venice Biennial in 2003, Turkey presented five works of artists from Istanbul organized again by Beral Madra pointing at globalization and art. The topic of the Biennale "Dreams and Contradictions" was determined by Francesco Bonami, thinking that this concept would to send signs of globalization to art audiences. Besides the works of Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Ergin Çavuşoğlu, Nafiz Topçuoğlu, Gül Ilgaz, Neriman Polat in the Turkish Pavilion, the Oda Project, an independent artist group from Istanbul invited by Francesco Bonami, and Gülsün Karamustafa worked on the project titled "Utopia Station" on the invitation of Hans Ulrich Obrist.⁴⁴⁶

Madra put emphasis on a visual and conceptual crisis of the 2000s in the global art world, asking how artists responded to the supremacy of global power relations how questioning "identity" and "others" constitute crucial parts of contemporary culture. The not so surprising thing is that Istanbul is the center of discussion in *In Limbo* gave a message to the non-Western world that the dreams of globalization will never be realized. The title of the Turkish pavilion "In Limbo" is a reference to the producers of our dreams. It means a region on the border of neither hell, nor heaven, rather a place of souls which remain outside both a state of neglects, oblivion and complication and clearly defines the currently experienced

⁴⁴⁵ *The Perfumed Garden*, p.16.

⁴⁴⁶ Radikal Gazetesi, "Hiçbir Yerden Gelen Sanat," 7 July 2003, p.20.

“warscape.”⁴⁴⁷ The choice of this topic was essential in those years due to the ongoing Iraq War; the works of Turkish artists reflected details of their experiences in warscape. Nuri Bilge Ceylan’s films guided the viewer throughout every day life and social conflicts, the psychology of the individual gave a perspective on how global city challenges the lives of individuals. Gül Ilgaz’ significant work, which was conceived as a fragmented digital image of the Bosphorus, is based on a dilemma. Between two continents the Turkey found themselves in a geography that penetrated into their genres. People in the city experienced the dilemma of being on Eastern/Asian or Western/European territory. The fragmentation of identity also dealt with the contradictions between history, modernity, and post-modernity. Similar to Ceylan and Ilgaz, the works of Ergin Çavuşoğlu, Neriman Polat and Nazif Topçuoğlu’s focused on the different aspects of culture and life in Turkey, portraying permanent conflict and tension in the city life rather than portraying and promoting Western culture and life style in Turkey. Turkish artists in *In Limbo* were critical of perceiving art as a medium of Westernization and the process of globalization; they enjoyed the sense of challenge and perceptions of conflictual everyday realities. The Turkish Pavilion showed how art exhibitions became a platform for expressing the social and political challenges that came with globalization. The chaos of the city gave the notion of in-betweens and dilemmas which were then translated into the language of contemporary art.

In 2005, the 51th Venice Biennale was a manifesto of Spanish women curators Rosa Martinez and Maria de Coral, the first women directors in the history of Venice Biennale. Hüseyin Çağlayan,⁴⁴⁸ a well-known Turkish Cypriot fashion designer living in

⁴⁴⁷ Beral Madra, *In Limbo* (Istanbul: 2003), p.1.

Britain, presented his work titled “The Absent Presence” in the Turkish pavilion. Garanti Bank and Shop and Miles Card were the private sponsors of the exhibition. The Ministry of Foreign affairs and Turquality Fund also allocated funds for promoting Turkish fashion and textiles at international fairs. Rosa Martinez had worked in the Istanbul Modern museum as co-curator. She invited Semiha Berksoy and Bülent Şenger to exhibit their works in the Italian pavilion.

Although Çağlayan is a fashion designer, his work is different from fashion art. In the exhibition is post-surrealist video art questioning “non-existent existence” (Olmayan Varolma). Tilda Swinton performed in the video and said that “I’m Turk on this night,”⁴⁴⁹ at the opening of the Turkish Pavilion. On the other hand, Çağlayan states that he feels like a Cypriot Turk. He speaks Turkish. He likes Turkish food and was born in a Turkish house. However, being a Turk is a created idea. How is being a Turk or how can we feel it? I’m living in London as a Cyprian Turk, representing Turkey at the Venice Biennale. It doesn’t matter being a Turk.”⁴⁵⁰ Çağlayan was careful to convey the idea that demanded the identity issues and adaptation of an individual to new spaces or geographies. But, his intention was not to represent an identity, but the flexibility of identity. The message in the video was a combination of geography, anthropology and identity, how can these concepts he mixed with each other. In fact, he was telling a story in modern life carrying socio-politic vision saw orientalist view in contemporary as a trap that is created by artist. Obviously, the Orientalist perspective is a kind of situation of being the advocate against something or

⁴⁴⁸ Hüseyin Çağlayan was born Cyprus, Lefkoşa as a Turkish Capriot in 1970, migrated London with his family in 1982. He graduated from Central St. Martins College of Art and Design in the department of Fashion Design. Currently, he lives in London and works on fashion collections and video installations.

⁴⁴⁹ *Tempo*, “Biz Venedik’te Her Gece Bienale Çıkardık”, 15 June 2005, p.50.

⁴⁵⁰ *Hürriyet Cumartesi*, “Venedik’te Türkiye’yi Temsil Edecek Olan Hüseyin Çağlayan,” 19 February 2005, p.1.

advocate/representative of a certain ideology. He was interested in developing new perspectives rather than commenting on clichés. Çağlayan is a proof in the global art platforms, compared to the 1990s, Turkish artists preferred to be more neutral in their works of art, applying a neutral thematic approach rather than traditional symbols and clichés.

İsmail Acar's exhibition, titled "Sultans in Venice" (*Sultanlar Venedik'te*) at the 51st Venice Biennale was one of the most provocative artistic interventions until that time. As a first for a Turkish artist, Acar independently participated in this exhibition with three different projects. The theme of the exhibition was based on cultural interactions between Ottoman Turkish and Italian culture and their similarities. He strategically chose the sixteenth century Turkish House in Venice to present his works. Portraits of Ottoman sultans printed on huge painted fabric banners hung on the wall of the house, seen even at a distance. In addition to the poster exhibition, Acar shot a short film titled "dream of sultan" that told a story of the prince at Topkapı Palace. The name of the prince was Cem. This was the story of Cem sultan, whose story ended in Venice. The references in the works of Acar were directly taken from Ottoman history. His installation in the Palazzo Franchetti, one of the venues of Venice Biennial where was the place exhibition held in consisted of two rooms one white the other red. This symbolized virtue and simpleness as well as a modern reference, the colors of the Turkish flag.

He defined his works as reinterpretations of traditions and history. He said that "we always stay under the pressure of Westernization. This situation led to pushing back sources of our culture and history. (...) My aim is to reevaluate the past and reinterpret modernization in contemporary Turkish art".⁴⁵¹ However, the strategic uses of historical facts in Turkish contemporary art sometimes risks "Orientalizing the Orient." Acar was not afraid of falling

⁴⁵¹ Şamdan Plus Bazar "Venedik Sultanları Ağırladı," 22.06.2005, p.108.

into this trap and preferred to use strong references in his works. He expressed the reason behind his attitude as follows:

At one time, we began to ignore our past in order to create the new symbols of our Republic. We should legitimize the Republican ideals and traditions that are not non-existent. The Turkish Republic was founded by a race who had created several states in the past. If we understand our national power without discussing the Ottoman tradition, we can carry this tradition and find a new form. In this way, art can shape its original form.⁴⁵²

The influence of the break discourse in Turkish history during the time of modernization can be also found in attitudes of Turkish artists who had experienced the shortcomings of modernization. The sense of belatedness especially in the field contemporary art causes an attitude of catching up in the mainstream tendencies among Turkish artist who lived in Turkey, even in Europe. The sense of belatedness was one of the pitfalls in the representations of Turkish art. Trying to catch up with the modernist tradition in art in the 1950s and 1960s, Turkish artists compared to European artists relied on working on the Western aesthetic, forms and concepts, and struggling with the sense of belatedness. This situation led to a tension between the national and international, between Eastern and Western, and between traditional and modern in the discourse of modern Turkish art that continues to exist, but also has declined considerably.

Directed by Davide Croff, the 52nd biennial was entitled “Think with the Senses--- Feel with the Mind. Art in the Present Tense” and was curated by Robert Storr, who was the first US director in the history of the biennial. After a series of Turkish art exhibitions curated by Beral Madra, Vasıf Kortun, the director of the Garanti Gallery Platform, became the new

⁴⁵² “Bunu yaparken de kendi geleneğimizden beslenmemiz lazım. Biz olmayan bir kavmin yarattığı bir devlet değiliz. Geçmişinde onlarca devlet kurmuş topluluğun yarattığı yeni bir devlet Türkiye Cumhuriyeti. Biz bunu Osmanlı’dan korkmadan, Osmanlı’yı bir kompleks yapmadan kavrayabilsek, geleneği de Cumhuriyetin içine taşır ve yeni bir form buluruz Sanat da bu sayede kendi estetik formatını oluşturacak.” Şamdan Plus Bazar “Venedik Sultanları Ağırladı,” p.112.

curator of the Turkish Pavilion. The main sponsor of the official Turkish Pavilion was Garanti Bank, which was also the founder of the Garanti Gallery Platform. İKSV coordinated the promotion and advertising campaign to take further steps among other countries. This is an important fact that Turkey had finally found an official pavilion in the Arsenal, the main exhibition hall. Until this time, with the efforts of Beral Madra, Turkey had found a place in the Italian Pavilion in the 1990s and early 2000s, but there had been no independent pavilion in the Arsenal.

According to Kortun, “concerning culture, Turkey is a banana republic. Now they are trying to do some things forced by the EU process requirements. Turkey had nothing to present to the international community 20-30 years ago. The main reason behind that is that the Turkish government with its parochial culture did not pay attention to contemporary art exhibitions.”⁴⁵³ Regular participation of Turkey in the Venice Biennale brought a new vision for the Turkish art scene in the international arena.

This time, Turkey officially participated in the Biennale with an installation titled “Don’t Complain” by Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin.⁴⁵⁴ Alptekin lives in his story. He travelled around the world even at the expense of being foreign and collected a wide range of visual materials which were used in this work. His thirteen short films which focused on small things in daily life were taken in Rio de Janeiro, Kosova, Bombay, and Istanbul so on. For each film exhibited in the installation, there was a chain of events, and a situation dedicated to

⁴⁵³ *Today’s Zaman*, “Finally Finding Place,” 14 February 2007, p. 13

⁴⁵⁴ A graduate of the Hacettepe University with a degree in philosophy, Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin completed his Postgraduate studies in Philosophy of Art at the Paris Sorbonne University. Teaching in posts at Ankara Bilkent and Istanbul Bilgi Universities, Alptekin was appointed as the Coordinator of Exhibitions and Cultural Activities at the Habitat II-City Summit organized in Istanbul. Alptekin has covered a wide range of topics like design, architecture and gastronomy in his writings. He has worked in countries like Finland, Sweden, Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Germany. Organizing many exhibitions in Turkey and abroad, Alptekin directed one of the first artist collectives and resident programs in Turkey.

someone's complaint of complaining in this sense. He criticized the "other" and "otherness" in contemporary art. His motto was that in understanding his or her self, he or she understands the "other." Alpekin said in his interview with curator Vasıf Kortun that "in this globalized world, all the syndromes and illness are alike. Instead of constantly complaining, we must develop modest optimism within individual, social, cultural positions and operations."⁴⁵⁵

Globalization in contemporary art has gone hand with the aim to connect peripheral art to the center. Photographic images taken all around the world added to each other giving a panoramic picture of a multicultural world. Alptekin said that "my work does not represent to Turkey or national art. For promoting the country, İKSV organized such a festival in Venice... The Turkish media do not know me so much. Academicians consider me to be an anarchist. For this reason, I'm the last artist to represent Turkey at the Venice Biennale. The only pressure on me, there was no sense of alaturka, arabesque, Orientalism in my work."⁴⁵⁶ Similar to Hüseyin Çağlayan, Alptekin avoided giving references of Turkish and Ottoman history or negotiating directly with the traditional background that hindered him from independently doing his work.

For the Pavilion of Turkey in 53th Venice Biennale, the project "*Lapses*" was developed by the curator Başak Şenova,⁴⁵⁷ which contributed with the works of Banu

⁴⁵⁵ 2007 *Venedik Bienali Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin ile Söyleşi*. Accessed May 8, 2010 http://www.biennale07-turkey.org/soylesi_en.asp?m1=soy

⁴⁵⁶ "Aynılıkları Anlatıyor", *Cumhuriyet Dergi Pazar Eki*, 27 May 2007, p.205.

⁴⁵⁷ Başak Şenova was born in 1970, Istanbul. She lives and works in Istanbul. Şenova is a curator and designer. She studied Literature and Graphic Design (MFA in Graphic Design and Ph.D. in Art, Design and Architecture at Bilkent University and attended the 7th Curatorial Training Programme of Stichting De Appel, Amsterdam. She has been writing on art, technology and media, initiating and developing national and international projects and curating exhibitions since 1995. She is the editor of *art-ist 6*, Kontrol Online Magazine and one of the founding Members of NOMAD, as well as the organizer of ctrl_alt_del and Upgrade Istanbul. Currently, she is a member of the Faculty of Communication, at Kadir Has University. *Venedik Bienali Kùratörleri*. Accessed May 15, 2010. <http://venicebiennial-turkey.org/curator.html>

Cennetoğlu's⁴⁵⁸ "Catalog 2009" and Ahmet Öğüt⁴⁵⁹'s Exploded City." A lapse in a linear time and continuous flow of time implies either a sense of disorientation or a disconnection with our personal surroundings. It realizes our ability to restructure memory in the space and time continuum. Lapses consist of projects that demonstrate how the perception of occurring events can vary and lead to differing narrations of history because of lapses in collective memory. Both projects reveal the possibility for diverse memory formations or narratives conceivable through lapses. The exhibition deals with such crucial questions as: how do we remember? Could remembering be considered a generative process in the construction of meaning? How do we forget? Could forgetting be considered a generative process in the construction of meaning?⁴⁶⁰

Ahmet Öğüt traces buildings that recently have been the sites of a crucial event that have turned them into ruins. "Exploded City" presents a model of city by referring to the original architecture of buildings. The work questions the significations and values attributed to these buildings before and after the explosions, while detecting lapses that occur in our memory via media images. It also manifests concealed lapses by ripping the buildings out of their memory.

⁴⁵⁸ Banu Cennetoğlu was born 1970 in Ankara. She lives and works in İstanbul. Cennetoğlu works with photography, installation and printed media. Her research explores areas of socio-political uncertainty and documentation of such uncertainty as well as the questioning of the ability of photographic medium to document. After a BA in psychology, she pursued her studies in Photography in Paris. She founded BAS, a space focusing on artist book and other printed media works. *Venedik Bienali Kûratörler*. Accessed May 15, 2010. <http://www.venicebiennial-turkey.org/artists.html>

⁴⁵⁹ Ahmet Öğüt was born in 1981 in Diyarbakır; lives and works in Amsterdam. Öğüt works with a variety of media such as video, photography, installation, drawing and printed media. His practices incorporates interventions created departing from the social and political realities of everyday life and recent history. He received his BA from the Fine Arts Faculty of Hacettepe University and his MFA from the Art and Design Faculty of Yıldız Teknik University. He was a guest artist at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam in 2007-2008. *Venedik Bienali Kûratörler*. Accessed May 15, 2010. <http://www.venicebiennial-turkey.org/artists.html>

⁴⁶⁰ Başak Şenova, *Lapses: 53th Venice Beinnial Turkish Pavillion Exhibition Catalogue* (İstanbul: İKSV, 2009), p.27.

“CATALOG 2009” pointed to the fact that photography, extracted from the reality in which it was shot, is not only expected to exist in a new subjective and critical context. Banu Cennetoğlu’s photographs showed different geographies that opened to fictional narratives. The work was presented in the form of a performative mail order catalog. The artists will allow free download of all the photographs from the catalog during the Biennial.⁴⁶¹

The project was accompanied by a book series of three volumes. Edited by Başak Şenova, the first volume can be considered as the catalog of the exhibition, as it explores the conceptual framework, the artworks and the insight on the overall production process. The second volume, edited by Jalal Toufic, consists of a set of philosophical essays by William C. Chittick, Jalal Toufic and Paul Toufic, which looks into the concept of lapses at depth and from different points. And the third volume, again edited by Başak Şenova, presents four case studies discussed within the conceptual framework of this project: Park Hotel, Postcapital, Kriegspiel, the Master Plan.

Ayşe Erkmen⁴⁶² will represent Turkey at the Venice Biennale 2011, at the 54th International Art Exhibition, which takes place between 4 June and 27 November 2011. Erkmen was invited to participate in the Pavillion of Turkey by international curator Fulya Erdemci,⁴⁶³ who is the director of SKOR, Foundation Art and Public Space. The Pavillion of

⁴⁶¹ Şenova, *Lapses*, p.16.

⁴⁶² Ayşe Erkmen graduated from Mimar Sinan University Department of Sculpture in 1977. She participated in the DAAD International Artists Residency Programme (Berliner Künstlerprogramm) in Berlin in 1993. From 1998 to 1999 Erkmen worked as the Arnold Bode Professor at Kassel Art Academy, and as lecturer at Frankfurt Staedelschule (2000-2007). Among numerous exhibitions Erkmen has participated in are the 2nd and 4th Istanbul Biennials; the Münster Sculpture Project; the Shanghai, Berlin, Gwangju, Sharjah, and SCAPE biennials as well as the Folkestone and Echigo Tsumari Triennials. *Plan B Venedik Bienali Giriş*. Accessed May 5, 2011. http://www.planb-venicebiennale.com/giris_en.asp#

⁴⁶³ Fulya Erdemci was the director of the International Istanbul Biennial from 1994 to 2000. Between 2003 and 2004 she was the director of Proje4L-Museum of Contemporary Art, Istanbul and from 2004 to 2005 she worked as the curator of temporary exhibitions in Istanbul Modern. She curated the Istanbul Section of the 25th Biennale

Turkey was again located in the Arsenale Artiglere, the main venue of the Venice Biennial and was coordinated by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts. In 2011, the Venice Biennale Pavillion of Turkey was realized with the support of the Turkish Foreign Ministry Promotion Fund, and is sponsored by the Italian automotive company Fiat. Fiat will also be sponsoring the Pavillion of Turkey in the upcoming biennial in 2013. İKSV Chairman Bülent Eczacıbaşı said during his speech: “İKSV has been realizing, since 2004, international projects aiming at promoting Turkey’s cultural heritage and contemporary artistic production. Within this respect, the Foundation has been undertaking the organization and coordination of the Venice Biennale as a significant opportunity for artists from Turkey.”⁴⁶⁴

Ayşe Erkmen’s sculptural installation “Plan B” drew on the ineluctable and complex relationship with water. Her project transformed a room inside the Arsenale into a complex water purification unit where machines performed as sculptures. After this process, the sculptures provided clean, drinkable water back to the canal. Erkmen choreographed the elegant industrial forms to draw attention to the process of transformation. Her practice often comments on minimalism’s relationship between the industrial form and the body. The installation generated a visceral experience for viewers who were embodied within the mechanism of transformation.

“Plan B” abstractly conveyed systems and processes of which we are a part daily: blood circulating through the body, capital flowing through borders, the mechanisms of authority, the supply of natural resources. Plan B referred to a back up plan when the

of Sao Paulo in 2002, and worked as a part of the curatorial team for the 2nd Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art. *Fulya Erdemci New Director of the Skor*. Accessed April 15, 2011. <http://www.skor.nl/artefact-3801-nl.html?lang=en>

⁴⁶⁴ *Venedik Bienali*. Accessed May 15, 2010. <http://www.iksv.org/english/detay.asp?id=331>

hypothetical Plan A failed. This was the expression of common conservation, planning and production issues. The participation of Turkish artists in the Venice Biennial more or less displayed the same characteristic as the international group exhibitions. In 1990s, Turkish artists independently participated in the biennial and generally dealt with finding a place for Turkey in international art events. On the other hand, the early 2000s brought a decisive change at terms of concept, identity and vision in the Turkish Pavilion at Venice. Turkish curators preferred such global topics as materiality, memory, and geography rather than dealing with the dilemma between the East and the West or identity problems.

All in all, this chapter has analyzed internationally framed contemporary art exhibitions in Turkey under two orders: chronologic and thematic. The chronologic order divided contemporary art exhibitions into two decades. The 1990s for Turkish artists was a time for introducing their art works in Europe and for a growing recognition of art from Turkey. Artists coming from outside the borders of Europe of regarded, were as non-Europeans and as “foreigner.” Thus Turkish artists were regarded as both “other” and “foreign.” This is the reason why most solo or group exhibitions organized by European or Turkish curators were still related with the national cultural identities of the contributing artists revealing characteristics of geography, culture, and nationalism.

The 2000s opened up a new path for Turkish artists abroad. Compared to 1990s, the visibility of contemporary art from Turkey in the internationally framed exhibitions gradually increased as a result of the positive image of the Istanbul Biennial and the great effort of artists from Turkey. Especially, group exhibitions in Europe made them partly well known figures in Germany, Holland, Austria and France. In the last decade, the image of art from Turkey seems to have transformed from “outside foreigner” to “stranger among us” in Europe.

Thematic concern is directly related to the issues analyzed in the exhibitions. First, examining Istanbul as a case study for global processes from the periphery was the strategy contemporary artists used in presenting the transformation of the city life, because the city was no longer a fixed and unchanging place in the Orient. Apparently, for this reason, the image of the city determined the narrative of the most international group exhibitions. Artists from Turkey questioned the boundaries of globalization in contemporary art, taking into consideration the periphery's struggle with the center.

Second, state-sponsored contemporary art exhibitions continued to focus on the history of modern Turkish art rather than contemporary currents. Due to being politically incorrect, some works of artists were not displayed at state-sponsored exhibitions. The concept, theoretical framework, and aesthetic of art exhibited abroad, frequently reflected the state's point of view. In the light of this perspective, the participation of Turkish artists in the Venice Biennial was regarded as a duty to represent the new image of the country. In the last two decades, the concept of the arts which were exhibited in Venice has shifted from national to international. This situation has shown a changing point in the meta-identity of Turkish contemporary art from a national to a more cosmopolitan and multicultural one. In the following part of the chapter, the thesis sheds light on contemporary art world in the Middle East and the Balkans.

Comparative Perspective of Contemporary Art in the Middle East and the Balkans

Contemporary art in the Middle East is a recent phenomenon for Western audiences. It has its roots in the ongoing political conflicts in the region after the fall of the

Berlin wall. The bi-polar world system was transformed radically the socio-political conditions in the Balkans, the Caucasia, and the Middle East region and open the peripheral art to the West. War, conflict, chaos, disquiet are often associated with countries in these non-Western geographies of the world.

The dilemma created by the conflict in the Middle East determines the way of the contemporary art scene. The first parameter is the condition of the art market and the taste of audience/consumer/viewers. The limited number of professional artists and lack of financial support of states in these countries has made it very difficult to develop contemporary art in the public sphere. The second parameter is tension between the local and global.⁴⁶⁵ This situation shows the unequal situation of referring to an “Eastern quota” on the international contemporary art scene, keeping Middle Eastern art a distance from the center. Developing formal relations with the Western art world is only possible through projects that are realized through the networking and collaboration of various cultural and artistic actors. State funding is a crucial aspect for a general contemporary art policy which has still been absent in most of the Middle Eastern countries. In this sense, due to the geographical locations, the Balkan states close to the Central European art scene benefit more from the cultural policies and funds of the EU.

Since the 1980s, newly emergent artistic scene gradually increased its global outlook and sense of modern aesthetic in the Middle East. Although independent art organizations were founded beginning with the 1990s in the Middle East, they maintained most of their activities after the 2000. There are two factors in the development of contemporary art scene in the Middle East.

⁴⁶⁵ Serhan Ada, “Formulating Common Question,” in *Emerging Cultural Continent: Actors and Networks: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey*, edited by Serhan Ada (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2008), p.8.

First is the number of international foundations which financially support independent projects have started to change the profile of contemporary art. The number of art galleries has increased within the last decade, parallel to the neo-liberal tendencies that have contributed to the marketization of contemporary art. Contemporary art museums are an evolution in the Middle East and have been strongly establish on the funds of private companies. Second is the dilemma of art from the periphery. Ada argues that there is an “Eastern quota” at all international events or cultural organizations today that lead to the perception of non-Western art as a commodity in itself on the global art market.⁴⁶⁶ Global art actually promotes the tension between “global” and “local” artists in international biennials and fairs. However, the tension sometimes turns into an advantage for artists from the periphery, permitting them access to the western metropolis. However, art works from the periphery, are normally expected to carry the sign of their non-Western origins and past. This is sometimes a limitation on artists from these countries.

Being restricted to locality brings problems in space and time, as was the case in modern Armenian art and culture. For example, nationalist agendas refer to subjects of memory, history and identity to create a common history. This situation indicates that there is a tension between the local and international art scenes. Armenian local art scene under the pressure of the Soviet regime functioned as a state apparatus, art hindering artists to integrate with global art initiatives. On the other hand, the contemporary artists are trying to provoke a discourse on international level that is similar for most Third World countries. This would be threat of the centralization or monopolization of the network and the formalization of a

⁴⁶⁶ Ada, “Formulating Common Question,” in *Emerging Cultural Continent: Actors and Networks: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey*, p.8.

network activity.⁴⁶⁷ To break down the monopolization in contemporary art, new art schools should be founded. This is also an important factor in order to develop a mentality between past and present after the Soviet regime. Ruben Arevshatyan, the founder of Hay-art and art critics, argues that the 1980s formed a new generation of artists who were opposed to state-centered art production and tried to shift mechanism through independent art institutions reflected a more liberal way to express new rhetoric in contemporary art.⁴⁶⁸ Until to 2010s, Armenian local art scene had not independently developed from Third World's cultural formation. Similar to the situation in Armenia, the Azerbaijan contemporary art scene lacked of state support and institutionalized educational structure partly transformed into a more independent structure.

The development of artistic cooperation in the Caucasus can be identified in three steps: educational programs, collaborative art projects, and artists, curators exchange programs. These organizations were bringing local artists closer to international actors in the contemporary art field. Obviously, the information gap in contemporary art was still a crucial problem for Middle Eastern countries. Independent art organizations attempted to deal with this problem to organizing workshops, seminars, conferences, exchange programs, and small exhibitions for developing strong ties among local and global artists. The danger in this situation is that ignoring cultural difference and a homogenized art scale lead to the loss of tension on locality and pushes the boundaries of global and mass culture in contemporary art. Although cooperative projects are very important today, localized cultural sources can be

⁴⁶⁷ Ruben Arevshatyan, "The Role of the Local Artists in the development of the Contemporary Art Situation in Armenia From the 1980s. Until Today," in *Emerging Cultural Continent: Actors and Networks: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey*, edited by Serhan Ada (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2008), p.14.

⁴⁶⁸ Ruben Arevshatyan, "Süreğiden Geçişler," in *Komşularla Konuşmalar*, edited by Beral Madra (İstanbul: Norgunk Yayınlar, 2003), p.69.

shown in exhibitions and art production in Middle Eastern countries to protect locality from the negative effects of global trends.

In this sense, the cultural policies in these countries direct the channels of globalization in contemporary art and culture. A new strategy for a cultural policy is a must for supporting mutual understanding, multi-culturalism and cooperation in periphery countries. Georgia is a good examples of a global-oriented cultural policy in the Caucasus region setting priorities in promoting Georgia and Georgian culture abroad through festivals, exhibitions, co-projects, participation in biennials in Venice and Istanbul and conferences, and promoting Georgian culture. However, many Georgian intellectuals think that Georgian cultural policy is weak in terms of practicing contemporary art, diversity in art forms and nongovernmental support in cultural field.⁴⁶⁹ For this reason, due to being geographically and conceptually distant from the Western art scale, Georgian contemporary art has struggled with socialist attitudes in art education. Today, similar to other countries in the same region, the necessity of contemporary art in Georgia is to found independent art centers to carry out Euro-Asian cultural projects.

Georgian artists argue that in order to prevent isolation between our regions the Balkans and the Middle East building a strong art platform among neighborhood countries is necessary.⁴⁷⁰ The centralization and monopolization of contemporary art in the Middle East have hindered the formation of interregional art platforms. Undoubtedly, it is very important to represent cultural diversity and expand the range of contemporary art activities offering new choices to Middle Eastern artists.

⁴⁶⁹ Levan Khetaguri, "The Cultural Infrastructure in the Caucasus Region: The Case of Georgia," in *Emerging Cultural Continent: Actors and Networks: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey*, edited by Serhan Ada (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2008), pp.37, 39.

⁴⁷⁰ Khetaguri, "The Cultural Infrastructure in the Caucasus Region: The Case of Georgia,"p.15.

In contemporary Iran, art is the gate of cultural interaction with nations in the outside world and is important for providing democracy, the needs of civil society, and the freedom of expression to the Iranian society. According to Jinoos Taghizadeh, artists living in Tehran, in the modern history of Iran, had something with to do society, and had the potential to become a progressive and critical movement and was a threat to the status quo.⁴⁷¹ Iranian artists in the past three decades have had to perform their art under the patronage of the state. Furthermore, there is no chance use public space as it in closely controlled by the state. Since mid-the 1990s, Iranian artists have had a chance to start public space projects with the support of independent artists groups, but because of a lack of an independent art space for creation and exchange for artists, Iranian contemporary art has stayed within its narrow boundaries. Artists are not able to use international funds for any projects inside the country.

Similar situation can be seen in Jordan and Syria where censorship and lack of financial support for artists and independent art network determine their fate. In order to increase tourist attractions in the country and the support the national tourism industry, the private sector generally only supports large events such as pop star concerts. The bureaucratic authorities slowly have permitted to foreign foundations to help local initiatives to develop project and establish networks with the Western global art scene.⁴⁷²

Compared to other Middle Eastern countries, Lebanon's cultural scene constitutes a very specific contrast. Although the state is absent in culture and art, this situation provides the most meaningful aspect for Lebanon. Due to the global connections of Lebanese economy,

⁴⁷¹ Jinoos Taghizadeh, "Artistic Presence or Strife," *Cultural Continent: Actors and Networks: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey*, edited by Serhan Ada (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2008), p.53.

⁴⁷² Diala Khasawhih, "Independent Contemporary Art Initiatives of the 21st Century: The Case of Jordan," in *Emerging Cultural Continent: Actors and Networks*, p.71, and Issa Touma, "From Stillborn to Reborn Art Curator In Syria," pp.86,89.

this financial situation in the cultural field affects the very nature of production and artistic dissemination. Both the private sector and foreign institutions heavily support cultural production and, unlike Syria and Jordan, the art and culture features a certain level of professionalism and quality, at least in its conceptualization. Lebanese contemporary art, compared Egypt and Iran, is mostly independent from political sponsorship. But Lebanese public has little awareness of art and culture, except in its most popular expressions. The independent cultural scene is often beyond the understanding of the larger public. For instance, art galleries address a restricted group of Lebanese and Arab contemporary art lovers and the independent cultural centers which take the support of private and foreign companies, which reproduces a culture of elitism, which is very much Westernized and focused in itself.⁴⁷³ The Lebanese independent art environment can connect and interact with the Arab world, for developing international networks in the contemporary art and culture.

In Turkey, the substructure based on state capitalism and official cultural policy, which directed and manipulated the art within state-funded institutions, did not change much until the beginning of the 1980s. For lack of proper contemporary art museums in Turkey, the challenging works of these artists were not available for public viewing. Thus the contemporary works of Turkish artists remained in the storage spaces of the artists and due to political reasons, they were found immoral, provocative and indecent. The reason behind this is that contemporary art has a political side that provoke controversial such issues as the Kurdish problem, forced immigration, non-Muslim identity in the Muslim state, state power, and unemployment in Turkey. Since the 1990s, Istanbul has gained special recognition due to the Istanbul Biennale in the field of contemporary art. However, art education in

⁴⁷³ Alexandre Medawar, "Lebanon A Cultural Scene That Looks Elsewhere," in *Emerging Cultural Continent: Actors and Networks*, pp.77,78.

Turkey, the art academies are official and conservative carrying tension of modernist attitudes. Only recently opening private universities have introduced new programs and courses to wide the vision of art students.

Given their history of struggling with the colonizing gaze of the Western countries, post-colonial discourse and emancipation, Balkan artists are witnessing the more recent and more sophisticated tendency of the “glocalization of Balkan art” as a global project. The geography called “the Balkans” embracing ethnic groups, states, and forms that differ widely in language, religion, and culture is one of the centers of political influence and power, contradictions. Due to the effects of the Yugoslavian war wars, many artists and curators of Balkan origin have increasingly resisted the West with their own political, cultural definitions, reformulating the many-sided politico-cultural links between western and southeastern Europe. The Slovenian Group IRWIN, and their “East Art Map” project holds that the art history of East Europe consists of map, document analysis and interpretation facts from this region. Balkan art critic, Zoran Eric argues that we can trace a similar exploration “world art,” that we might choose to call “ethno-cultural global art.” For him, the globalization of Balkan art should not be understood as homogenization, but as the interrelation between artistic homogenization and cultural heterogenization which has emerged as one of the key issue of our time.⁴⁷⁴

In the early 2000s, Western Europe attached the new label of “Balkans” to Eastern or Central Europe, but this label was rejected by Balkan artists. The wars in Yugoslavia unjustly generalized as the “Balkan Wars” generated a Balkan crisis in terms of ethnic and religious identity. The region became a threat for Western Europe. For this reason, the former Eastern Pact in the Balkans has never been fully accepted as part of Europe. It is seen in the

⁴⁷⁴ Zoran Eric, “Glocalisation, Art Exhibitions and the Balkans,” *Third Text*, 21:2(2007):207-210.

region as being close to the Orient. Due to political instability, the Balkan has never been represented as a unified cultural identity. Therefore, the exhibitions taking place under the title of the Balkans represented two possible models of expressing this decision. Harald Szeeman's exhibition "Blood and Honey: the Future's in the Balkans" (Klosterneuburg, Austria, 2003) based his selection on the recommendations of the curators and artists in each country. Focusing on art works had an explicit connection to violence, war or to the extreme opposite such as loud music and weddings, and bringing a series of sculptures and installations. Szeemann's aim assembled the past with the future in which to place the contemporary art works of artists in the region. However, due to the lack of theoretical and conceptual analysis, Szeeman used spirituality as a metaphor that made for an unsuccessful exhibition.

In the same year, Rene Block, the other very well known curator organized a big project entitled "The Balkan Trilogy" which took place over a year (2003-2004). The debut of the trilogy, the exhibition "In the Gorges of the Balkans": A Report' was founded on his knowledge of the region since 1995. The second part of the trilogy consists a series of independent projects organized by the partners represented in the exhibition. Block took decisions of local curators on the concept of exhibition, while he was creating this large project. In this sense, "In the Cities of the Balkans" supported and accompanied more than ten projects with diverse activities devised and carried out by partners in the cities of the Balkans: Belgrade, Vrsac, Bucharest, Cetinje, Istanbul, Ljubljana, Pristina, Sarajevo, Sofia, Skopje, Tirana, and Zagreb. Taking different forms-conferences, publications, exhibitions, biennials-in Istanbul, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Sofia, Belgrade, exhibitions and contemporary art activities, these events were connected to Balkan cities, local curators and artists in 2000s.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁵ Marius Babias, "Reinventing The Balkans," in *Die Balkan- The Balkans Trilogy*, edited by Rene Block and Marius Babias (Kassel: Kunsthalle Fridericianum, 2007), p.352.

The interest of the EU in Balkans could be seen in newly founded public cultural organizations; artists support programs, raising funds and sponsorship in art in Bosnia, Serbia, Macedonia, Croatia, and Albania. These projects provided approaches to issues of the cultural geopolitics of the Balkans and the local and regional issues of cultural policy and artistic production as well as a platform for discussing questions.

In the case of exhibitions, a sudden interest emerged at the beginning of the 2000s. This situation can be connected to political events and the funding made available for such projects. Balkan artists from the Eastern part of Europe were able to speak the “universal” language of contemporary art aspiring to show the differences, the strategies and vocabularies developed during the previous decade. The new trend, called the glocalization of Balkan art, was an outcome of polarization of contemporary art in the global world.

Comparing Turkey to Middle East and Balkan countries, Turkish contemporary art is different from these countries in terms of its art academy tradition, strong private sponsorship, and newly emerging independent art organizations. Besides, the relatively democratic political situation in Turkey provides a greater advantage, which opens new concepts in post-modernist attitudes on the local contemporary art scene

As Homi Bhabha indicates, within the global context of “uneven development and differential often disadvantaged histories of nations, races, communities and people,” we can only identify artists in the “non-canonical cultural forms.”⁴⁷⁶ Art works coming from Eastern nations are labeled “primitive” or “ethnic art” and usually are categorized under the title of Third World. Eastern artists who lived in the Western countries have had to integrate into the Western art system, producing art in modern form and carrying the tension of reflecting Western aesthetic values and their different origins. In the light of Bhabha’s statement, the

⁴⁷⁶ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004), p.265.

burden of immigrant artists in Europe and the USA shows the unequal fragmentation of contemporary art in the world as a result of cultural globalization.

Today, the transnational dimensions of cultural transformations-migration, displacement, diaspora, relocations shows that there is no unique national or pure art, so the discourse of national art is no longer reliable conceptual framework for artists. The artworks are formed in multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic societies flourishing from dilemmas, change and discontinuity. Therefore, globalization has had deep impacts on the distribution and accessibility of contemporary art works that has led to the construction and reconstruction of identities in different ways between East and West.

The next chapter will analyze the Istanbul Biennial and Istanbul 2010. In the last two decades, the image of Istanbul in the international arena was transformed completely as the cultural effects of globalization in cities became as great as the transformation of economic structures. Istanbul, as a cultural capital of Turkey became visible in the world's cultural arena. In terms of the transformation of the image of Istanbul, the Istanbul Biennials and Istanbul 2010: European Capital of Culture as part of global culture projects will be investigated.

CHAPTER VI

THE ISTANBUL BIENNIAL AND ISTANBUL 2010 EUROPEAN CULTURE PROJECT

In this last chapter, the aim will be on the relation of international exhibitions to politics during the last three decades in question. The transformation in art and culture actualized through post-modern representational strategies and reconstructing the meta-identity of modern Turkey as well as the promotional aims of the Turkish state will be analyzed. By defining these representational strategies, the differing position of Turkish art in terms of art sponsorship and integration to the world art market will be examined. The transformation of Turkish cultural policy and national identity in the exhibitions will construe the central discussion of this chapter.

In addition, the emphasis will be on the relation of the International Istanbul Biennial and the European Capital of Culture Event which promote Turkish culture and art in the international arena. By defining cultural identity between international politics and national image, the position of Istanbul came to demonstrate the boundaries between the global and the local cultures. Considering the new meanings and the images of the city, in this chapter, it will be discussed how the city's culture has been integrated into the global system.

During the last two decades, Istanbul has become more visible as a postmodern image of Turkey. Due to its geographical position, Istanbul, once the capital of the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires undoubtedly has been one of the most iconic cities. For this reason, it usually is identified as a battleground between East and West and between Islam and

secularism. This complex structure of the city leads to the creation of clichés in the art and culture events that will be questioned in this study.

The process of globalization in the realm of contemporary art has been manifested in the proliferation of biennial exhibitions, disturbing the old geographical hegemonies of the big art centers and revealing the multifaceted order of the new global art scene. Curators frequently turn into globetrotters, competing in global cities, producing discourses for contextualization and developing new formats for artistic display. In the following part, in order to analyze the Istanbul Biennial, a brief history of fine art exhibitions will be given as a background to Turkish art history. Then the International Istanbul Biennial will be analyzed in three different categories: concepts, curatorship and exhibition spaces. Transcending developmentalist perspective and highlighting cultural creativity, Istanbul 2010: European Capital of Culture will be investigated as a re-presentation of visual art as multicultural perspective. This project is a phenomenon of the global culture industry, nourishing the new imperialistic instincts of Europe. The project will be discussed in the last part of the study.

The Borders of Cultural Diplomacy in Turkey: International Exhibitions and Turkish Festivals

In the global world, cultural diplomacy relies on art as a tool to deliver a given message, since art provides a long-term strategy to increase the common ground among people who are divided by cultural differences. Art, in all its mediums, links its creators and their audiences' cultures, creating dialogue. It also unites those who create it and leaves them with a higher understanding of different thought processes and influences.

The scope and extent of cultural diplomacy in Turkey was rather limited compared to that of European countries until the 1980s. The state as regulator, protector and organizer had to wide its horizon in cultural relations in politically powerful countries at the beginning of the 2000s. In collaboration with public and private institutions as well as with non governmental organizations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been making contributions to numerous activities entitled Week/Days/Years/Seasons of Turkey in Order to promote the country on a wider scale.

In the twentieth century, art seems to have been a diplomatic cornerstone articulating visions of the countries demonstrating the cultural capabilities of the nations. During cold war the world's great artworks have been increasingly used for international propaganda. Great art works are above daily politics, but still they have political meanings. One major type of these art exchanges were "blockbuster" exhibitions which toured museums and carried out political missions. According to Judith Huggins Balfe, four variables determined the structure of international exhibitions after the 1980s: the political agenda of the sponsoring state, the aesthetic qualities and power of the art works, the characteristics of the elite and mass art audience, and the "received" interpretation of the exhibited works.⁴⁷⁷ After the Cold War, American state politics in visual and performance art were closely related to the foreign policy of the state, stressing achievements in business and statecraft. The country steadily raised the standards of artistic accomplishments and enlarged the cultural opportunities of the citizens. The idea was to show that the USA commanded respect throughout the world not only for its strength but for its civilization.⁴⁷⁸ The international

⁴⁷⁷ Judith Huggins Balfe, "Artworks as Symbols in International Politics," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 1, no.2 (1987), p.197.

policy on visual and performance art took new directions. The purpose was to create a media event. The technique of presenting artwork to support political agendas has become increasingly refined. These techniques have become more widely understood as well as practiced.

The blockbuster exhibition of 1976-1979 titled the “Tut Show” displayed the political nature of the sponsor’s agenda to attract masses rather than school children. Because the exhibition was a cultural propaganda of Egypt organized to promote ancient Egypt to the Western World. Certainly, the 8 million in the audience and \$16 million in world-wide profits would.⁴⁷⁹ The Tut Show not only provided commercial gains but also provided national prestige for Egypt. The USA government regarded the success of national exhibitions in 1980s. They decided to expand the National Endowment Fund for the Humanities, which was one of the funds that provided exhibition costs for a number of international art exhibitions hosted in the USA.

After the 1970s, state-sponsored loan exhibitions were one of the main agendas of the cultural policies of the USA, Britain and France. Organizing state-sponsored exhibitions is an intricate, multilayered process of global diplomacy, with the purpose of transforming negative stereotypes into positive ones and to improve the political and economic standing of their country. Particularly, art exhibitions are modes of cultural representation to be used to propagate a certain view of a nation’s history. Although art history is not political as such, it conveys political messages among different cultures.

⁴⁷⁸ Richard T. Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century* (Washington DC:Potomac Books, 2005), p.398.

⁴⁷⁹ Balfe, p.204.

On a large scale, national festivals have eclipsed the spectacular blockbusters of the mid-1970s and 1980s as national promotion vehicles. Such shows as *The Treasures of King Tutankhamen* (1976-1979), *Irish Gold: Treasures of Early Irish Art* (1978), *Five Thousand Years of Korean Art* (1979), *The Treasures of the Kremlin* (1979), *The Treasures of Ancient Nigeria* (1980) were realized with the financial support of multinational corporate sponsors and focused on the national artifacts of these respective cultures in the USA.⁴⁸⁰ These exhibitions served the function of followings: the promotion of tourism, the development international business and political connections, museum advertising.

In 1986, as the Turkish minister of culture and tourism, İlhan Evliyaoğlu stated that the purpose of the Sultan Suleyman exhibition was “to enable those people who cannot visit Turkey to see our culture and our resources.”⁴⁸¹ However, Turkey’s image in the Western world was not positive in the 1980s and this was perceived as being one of the main problems in cultural policy. Due to the lack of sponsorship, state advertising, exhibition promotion, and educated state officers, Turkish state authorities did not have well-prepared strategies in public relation activities at that time.

The Turkish state had the following roles in a process of the image building of the Turkish nation: a wealth protector and upholder, a regulator, an arbitrator, and finally an organizer.⁴⁸² In this sense, we can see the state-centered mission of art and culture in international public relation activities. The Turkish state took the role of protector, pioneer,

⁴⁸⁰ Brian Wallis, “Selling Nations: International Exhibitions and Cultural Diplomacy,” in *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, edited by Daniel Sherman and Irit Rogoff (Minneapolis:University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p.267.

⁴⁸¹ Turkish Tourism and Information Offices in U.S.A, *Turkey: Bridge to Continents & Cultures* (Ankara: Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 1986), p. 15.

⁴⁸² Nedret Kuran Burçoğlu and Meral Kozay, “Image Building of a Nation: The Case of Turkey” in *Heritage/Multicultural Attractions and Tourism*, edited by Meral Kozay, Nedret Kuran Burçoğlu, Şükrü Yarcan, Dilek Ünalın vol.1 (İstanbul: Boğaziçi University Publishing,1999), p.881

regulator and upholder, arbitrator, and organizer in international exhibitionism. Prime Minister Turgut Özal played a leading role in organizing cultural activities at the international level aimed at promoting Turkish tourism. The efforts of Özal's government in developing cultural tourism came into reality in 1988, when the number of foreign tourists who visited Turkish museums exceeded the number of national tourist for the first time. Approximately 500,000⁴⁸³ foreign tourists visited Turkish museum as a result of public relations in the international arena. Heritage tourism⁴⁸⁴ is one type of cultural tourism widely used by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism displaying heritage sites, artifacts, and events to draw the attention of foreign tourists.

As sign of the promotion of tourism in the 1980s, Turkish state officers hoping that history exhibitions would attract tourists to Turkey, published hand catalogues on Turkish history and its cultural heritage. In the catalogue, the cultural richness and modern face of the country provided a positive image for tourism as well as economic progress:

Turkey today is a young and modern state with a dynamic and creative nation always aware that they were and are the people with the longest tradition of independent states. This is indeed a heritage as valuable as economic strength and a source of confidence as Turks who have made their country quite self sufficient in the last few decades, look to the future with pride and hope.⁴⁸⁵

Turkey attempted to focus and enhance the national image for foreign consumption in well-publicized exhibition "The Age of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent", shown in

⁴⁸³ *Kültür İstatistikleri 1991* (Ankara: T.C Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 1993), p.43.

⁴⁸⁴ Heritage tourism is a phenomenon based on tourists motivations and perceptions rather than on specific site attributes. Heritage tourism is a form of special tourism that offers opportunities to portray the past in the present. Evangelos Christou, "Heritage and Cultural Tourism: A Marketing-Focused Approach", *International Cultural Tourism: Management, Implications and Cases*, edited by Marianna Sigala and David Leslie (Great Britain: Elsevier Publishing, 2005), p.6.

⁴⁸⁵ Republic of Turkey, *Turkey: A Bridge Between Two Continents* (Ankara: Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 1987), p.7

Washington, D.C in 1987, Chicago, and New York as a part of “the Festival of Turkey: The Continuing Magnificence” in 1987-1988.⁴⁸⁶ This exhibit was a practice for the sending touring exhibitions around the world to promote Turkish cultural heritage and address misperceptions. “The Age of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent” was also the first blockbuster and travelling Turkish history exhibitions in the international arena. Actually, planning for the show began in 1978. The exhibition aimed to challenge the commonly held warlike perceptions of the Ottoman Sultan, Kanuni Sultan Suleyman by emphasizing his role as a reformer in the arts and architecture. At that time, Turkish- USA diplomatic relations were sensitive. For this reason, the curatorial negotiations required the involvement of institutions, such as the State Department, the Information Agency, the White House, and the President of the Metropolitan Museum.

Turkey’s basic motivation for organizing this exhibition was to represent Turkey’s democratic face and eradicate negative stereotypes that had formed over the years, the image of the 1980 coup d’état, the continuing conflict with Greece over the issue of Cyprus, claim of the Armenian Genocide, and the oppression of the Kurdish nationalist movement were basic problems in foreign policy.

In 1985, the government of Turkey enlisted the aid of Gray and Company, a prominent Washington public relations firm with close ties to the Reagan administration. For \$600.000 a year, Gray and Company’s mission was to “improve and increase knowledge of the Republic and increase knowledge of the Republic of Turkey in the United States. Turkish Gray came up with the plan for a yearlong festival of exhibitions, performances, lecturers, and

⁴⁸⁶ *Cultural Diplomacy in Turkey*. Accessed December 15, 2010. <http://publicdiplomacy.wikia.com/wiki/Turkey>

with the common theme Turkey: The Continuing Magnificence.⁴⁸⁷ The company sought a way to represent the modern face of the country, drawn from an epoch of the Turkish past venerated in the West: the Turkish renaissance of the arts during the reign of the Ottoman emperor Suleyman I (1520-1566).

The exhibition carried extraordinary examples of sixteenth century Ottoman art which showed the wealth of Turkish art as well as the power of the Ottoman Empire. Wallis writes that “Turkey’s construction of nationalism was bound up with ideologies of imperialism. Prominently displayed maps, illuminated scenes of battles and conquests, ceremonial armor, and the bellicose language of the wall texts reiterated the importance of the Ottoman expansionism to the development of culture.”⁴⁸⁸ However, the period of the sixteenth century titled golden age discourse in terms of art and architecture reached the highest level in at that time. The logic of the Sultan Suleyman exhibition pointed to a central paradox that was common in national exhibitions in order to establish a strong image within the international community. The selection of objects based on a deformed representation consisted of conventionalized versions of the national image, asserting the glorious past, reconstructing stereotypical differences, and provoking the sense of fear. In the case of Turkish festival, Bloomingdale served Turkish coffee and cakes; the National Gallery provided Turkish cigarettes that were a symbolic construction of the sense of Turkishness. Thus, due to improper public relations activity, Turkey adopted an imposing stereotypical identity that might be called “self- Orientalization” with a stereotypical image of Turks

⁴⁸⁷ Brian Wallis, “Selling Nations: International Exhibitions and Cultural Diplomacy,” in *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, edited by Daniel Sherman and Irit Rogoff (Minneapolis:University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p.270.

⁴⁸⁸ Wallis, p.271.

providing their American audience was no more than presenting the classical version of the Turkish image.

As Benedict Anderson states: “If nation-states are widely conceded to be ‘new’ and ‘historical,’ the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and still more important, glide into limitless future.”⁴⁸⁹ The exhibition indicated such deployments of art in a more assertive way to sell the image of the country. In this regard, the national image was a part of the political system that showed culture, history and the identity of the nation in the international arena.

In 1991, the Memphis Culture Organization in the USA, in a unique partnership with the National Geographic Society, launched “Wonders: The Memphis International Cultural Series”, with exhibits from past civilizations such as Ramesses the Great, Catherine the Great, Splendors of the Ottoman Sultans, the Etruscans, Napoleon, the Titanic, Ancestors of the Incas, and the WWII through Russian Eyes.⁴⁹⁰ The series of exhibitions helped to build a strong and impressive team of professionals to develop, organize, produce and market cultural dialogue programs for audiences throughout the world. The exhibits attracted over 12 million people at several American venues.⁴⁹¹ “The Splendour of Ottoman Sultan” was one of the exhibits organized in this cultural series; it had considerable impact on its American audience. Its video cassette was also produced to draw American citizens’ attention to Turkey.

⁴⁸⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Publishing, 1983), p.19.

⁴⁹⁰ *International Culture Series: Wonders*. Accessed April 15, 2010.
<http://www.cityofmemphis.org/framework.aspx?page=45>

⁴⁹¹ *Broughton International Inc.* Accessed April 2, 2010.
<http://www.faberge-exhibition.com/jbroughton.html>.

The 700th anniversary of the foundation of the Ottoman Empire was the turning point for culture exhibitionism in Turkey.⁴⁹² This event triggered a cultural promotion campaign in the USA as well as in Europe. “Ottoman Exhibition” shows in the Versailles Palace in Paris realized with the support of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Other Ottoman exhibitions financially supported by the Sabancı Company showed the private Islamic art collection of Sakıp Sabancı, “*Master pieces from the Calligraphy and Painting Collection- Letters in Gold*” were on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Los Angeles Country Museum of Art, Harvard University, the Arthur M. Sackler Museum and at the Louvre Museum in Paris between 1998 and 2000. Spectacularizing the national myth, national festivals present an opportunity for nations to circulate their treasures for building prestige and reputation. Undeniably, these sorts of exhibitions present rare and exciting works of art that otherwise only the ambitious traveler would get to see; this kind of cultural activities increases the capacity of the cultural tourism and national understanding. Especially, the non-Western countries such as Brazil, Egypt, Nigeria, Iran, Thailand, Morocco, and Vietnam had opportunities to promote their images in the First World countries through heritage exhibitions. The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism opened an office in New York and Washington spent a lot of effort on advertising and public relations campaigns.

The main focus of the collective efforts and activities taking place in the USA was the promotion of Turkey as an unique cultural tourism destination. “Turkey-The Center of World History” and “Turkey-Where Europe Becomes” were the slogans of the Turkish Ministry of Tourism, which they believed would ensure a unique positioning in the market. Some of the headlines that were used in the advertising campaigns in the 1990s as follows:

⁴⁹² Burçak Madran and Şebnem Önal, p.183.

“Turkey-The World’s Largest Open Air Museum,” “İstanbul-A Fascinating Blend of East and West, Past and Present, Modern and Exotic,” “Turkey- Key to the East, Key to the West,” “This Journey Spans 3.650.000 Days But You Can Do It Ten,” “Turkey-Ageless, Unique, Exciting, Affordable, Friendly, Exotic,” “If You think You’ve Seen the World You’ve Left One Stone Unturned,” “Our Library Hours are Dawn Until Dusk (the Celsius Library in Ephesus),” “The Architecture is Magnificent, the Hospitality is Divine (the Selimiye Mosque).”⁴⁹³

The messages delivered in the promotion campaigns emphasized the unique geographical location, long history, diversity, and richness of Anatolia presenting as a Turkey favorite cultural tourism destinations. However, the slogans that were used in promotional campaigns in newspapers and magazines offered a highly exotic and oriental image of Turkey. Apparently, the reason behind this promotional strategy was creating travel demands for Turkey. Drawing an exotic image was an easy way to succeed in emphasizing the country’s originality in terms of culture and history. In global the world, the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic image of Turkey is properly marketed as a sustainable tourism product of the 1990s. As can be seen in the titles of the tourism slogans, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism mainly emphasized the cultural wealth of Turkey and the role of the country’s land in the making of the civilizations.

The governments of Turkey and Japan agreed to designate the Year 2003 “The Year of Turkey in Japan” during the visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister to Japan in April 2000. During the year, various events were held in Japan with a view to further promoting

⁴⁹³ Leyla Özhan, “The Role of NTO In Marketing Cultural Tourism Product, Part 1: Turkey’s Experience In USA”, in *Heritage, Multicultural Attractions and Tourism: Conference Proceedings*, edited by Meral Korzay, Nedret Kuran Burçoğlu, Şükrü Yarcın, Dilek Ünalın, vol.1 (İstanbul: Boğaziçi University Publishing House, 1999), pp.838-841.

Turkish culture and history and offering the Japanese people the opportunity to experience Turkish culture and history. A series of exhibitions, fairs, concerts, theatre, cinema activities, conference/seminars on Turkish culture, sport and photography competition was organized.⁴⁹⁴

Apdullah Gül, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, said that the most efficient way of developing cooperation is through deepening our knowledge of one another.⁴⁹⁵ Within this framework, the designation of 2003 as the “Year of Turkey in Japan” constituted a great opportunity. Gül said that “During this year, we will have the chance to better introduce the history of Turkish Japanese relations, aspects of the multidimensional and colorful culture of Turkey, the enormous economic potential and the ever diversifying commercial capacity of our country to Japanese people.”⁴⁹⁶

In the international relations arena, cultural activities in the 20th century usually were regarded as free time activities to strenghten diplomatic as well as economic relations among neighboring countries. However, Turkish-Japanese relations had along history. In late 19th century the Ertuğrul accident developed a deep sense of affinity with Japan. During the Year of Turkey in Japan, a series of fine arts, archeology, photography and cartoon exhibitions were taken places in different cities. Exhibitions on Turkish culture had been held in Japan since the end of World War II. These have included the 1960s “Ancient Turkish Art” exhibition, the 1985 Turkish culture exhibition, the 1988 “The Treasures of Topkapı Palace” exhibition, finally 2002 “The Great Turkey Exhibition.” The most impressive one opened

⁴⁹⁴ *Türk-Japon Kültür Yılı*. Accessed December 25, 2010.
<http://www.turk-japan2003.org/engmain.asp>

⁴⁹⁵ *Türk-Japon Kültür Yılı*. Accessed December 25, 2010.
<http://www.turk-japan2003.org/engmain.asp>

⁴⁹⁶ *Türk-Japon Kültür Yılı*. Accessed December 25, 2010.
<http://www.turk-japan2003.org/engmain.asp>

during “the Year of Turkey” titled “Three Great Empires in Turkey,” which featured the treasures of the Hitite, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. NHK, one of the biggest international broadcasting companies in Japan, was the sponsor of this exhibition. Despite the geographical distance between Turkey and Japan, political actors expected that the year of Turkey could promote the continuing growth and development of the deep and long enduring friendship between the citizens of Japan and Turkey.

The “Year of Turkey” showed the importance of bilateral relations in politics, economy, technology as well as culture. The “2003 Year of Turkey” at Japan succeeded in improving cultural relations with Japan in every field, and activities under this title went on until the end of March 2004. The positive impact of this activity triggered other organizations in Europe as well as Turkey. The official slogan for the “Japan Year in Turkey” was “Turkey and Japan are closer now.” This reflects the two countries’ determination to reinforce the friendship between them. Turkish officials chose three general objectives: to introduce the beauties of the country covering prominent aspects and traditional and modern facets of the country in all fields. The activities that took place in “Japan Year in Turkey” was similar to the program of “2003 Year of Turkey” with concerts, sport festivals, fashion shows, dance performances, traditional and modern art exhibitions in Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Antalya, Kayseri, Kocaeli and Çanakkale.

The history exhibitions aimed to represent the splendour of Ottoman Turkish cultures. “Treasures of Topkapı Palace and Magnificent Ottoman Dynasty” opened August 1, 2007 in the capital Tokyo. A total of 140 items were showcased in the exhibition, with 111 pieces from the collection of Topkapı Palace and the rest from the Istanbul museum of

Turkish and Islamic Art. The works were estimated to be worth \$65.6 million.⁴⁹⁷ The exhibition received the greatest interest from art enthusiasts, having been visited by 200,000 people in Tokyo, 100,000 in Kyoto and 70,000 in Nagoya.⁴⁹⁸

“Turks: A Journey of A Thousand Years, 600-1600” explored the art and culture of the Turks from Central Asia to the Bosphorus over a thousand year period between 600 and 1600 AD. Their journey incorporated many different centers of power and artistic traditions. The story begins with the Uighurs, a nomadic people of Central Asia and China, and ends with the Ottoman Empire from the reign of Mehmet II to Suleyman the Magnificent, including the fall of Byzantium and the spread of Ottoman rule to include Mecca and Medina.

More than an exhibition, *Turks* was a promotion campaign for Turkey in the process to the integration EU to show the diversity of Turkish culture from Central Asia to the Balkans region. In the catalogue, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan wrote “Cultural diversity is a source of richness for all nations. This exhibition comes at a most propitious time, as Turkey’s aspirations towards the membership of the European family of nations in the European Union are center stage.”⁴⁹⁹ It demonstrates that the civilization of Turks has always looked to the West and has been shaped by Western values and ideas. The Foreign Ministry’s Abroad and Presentation Affairs General Director Ambassador Şule Soysal, in the press meeting introducing the exhibition stated that the theme of the exhibition was very important considering Turkey’s present day position. Soysal said that “the Royal

⁴⁹⁷ Topkapı Treasures Draw Japanese Tourists *Turkish Daily News*, March 17, 2008,

⁴⁹⁸ Japan Asks Turkey for New Exhibitions, *Turkish Daily News*, March 17, 2008.

⁴⁹⁹ *Turks: A journey of a Thousand Year* (London: Royal Academy of Arts Press, 2004), p.9.

Academy of Arts accepted the offer because they wanted to prove how creative the Turkish nation was”.⁵⁰⁰

In the foreign press, the Turks exhibition attracted the attention of journalists interested in Eastern culture and art. In Britain, *Guardian* journalist Jonathan Jones asked whether the Ottoman Empire was one of the mightiest the world had ever known, and if the royal Academy’s new exhibition could do it justice? He declared that this exhibition would dissolve myth. It did not prove that Turkey created art to rival medieval Andalusia. But, demonstrating is that the Turkish cultural achievement lay elsewhere, in synthesis and pluralism in art and culture. The Turks were prolifically impure. They may not have created the porcelain- they got from China, but they introduced China’s cultural riches to the world.⁵⁰¹ As can be seen in this statement, the main aim of the exhibition was to display the Turks as “a civilization maker” to geographically situated the Turkish civilization as one of the important civilizations in the Eastern World.”⁵⁰²

As is well known, European opinion is changed by questions such as, whether Turkey really is a European country, whether Turks have civilizations, and whether a secular country with a Muslim population could be a full partner in EU? Shape the European public opinion. Of Course, the exhibition doesn’t answer these questions, but it gave a sense of the past civilizations and role of the “Turks” in the Eastern civilizations. David Roxburg, one of the curators of *Turks* exhibition noted that “to describe the array as eclectic and diverse would

⁵⁰⁰ Turkish Art Exhibition at London, *Turkish Daily News*, 16.01.2005

⁵⁰¹ *Turks: A Journey of A Thousand Year*. Accessed April 8, 2010.
<http://arts.guardian.co.uk/features/story/0,11710,1392855,00.html>

⁵⁰² *Turks: A Journey of A Thousand Year*. Accessed April 8, 2010.
<http://arts.guardian.co.uk/features/story/0,11710,1392855,00.html>

be the merest understatement. Nothing can prepare you for the sheer oddness of fusion.”⁵⁰³

Shortly, the “Turks” exhibition was the proof of the power of international exhibitions in representing a dynamic and modern image of the country on the eve of integration of to the EU. Creating a sense of “Turkishness” in the heart of Europe provided a sense of the glorious history of the Turks, who still waited at the door of the European Union.

Both promoting Turkish tourism and Turkey’s image in international organizations continued to be main targets for the Turkish governments in 1990s and early 2000s. The focus of all these collective efforts was the promotion of Turkey as a unique cultural tourism destination in order to increase the number of the tourists. In 2008, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism put together a program of activities to stage in conjunction with this year being declared “The Year of Turkish Culture” in Russia. A series of events were organized over the year in the Russian cities of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan and Sochi. The events started on 8 April with concerts by the Turkish pop stars Tarkan, Sertab Erener, and Şebnem Ferah. In addition to “Literature Days,” lectures, panel discussions, and an exhibition of Ara Güler’s photographs of Russia and Istanbul were mounted. At the same time, in St. Petersburg an exhibition on the art of paper marbling and an exhibition of objects from Topkapı Palace promoted Turkey’s cultural heritage.⁵⁰⁴

A year later, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized “2009-The Year of Turkey” in France, due to agreement with former president Jacques Chirac. However, Nicolas Sarkozy, the new president of France rejected the title of the program and shortened the

⁵⁰³ Art; The Turks’ travels; An alluring show samples a sprawling culture and the rise of its arts. John Daniszewski, *Los Angeles Times*, February 20, 2005, p.40.

⁵⁰⁴ Moskova’da Türkiye Yılı”. Accessed May 8, 2010. <http://www.moskova.ru/2008-turkiye-yili/2008-rusyada-turkiye-yili-aysegul-eminol-2.html> and <http://www.turkishairlines.com/en-INT/skylife/2008/march/cityscope/2008-is-turkish-year-in-russia.aspx>

duration of the organization due his biases against the membership of Turkey in the EU. The title was turned out “Turkish Season in France” with a Letter of Intent signed by Turkey and France, and was carried out between July 1st, 2009 and March 31st, 2010 throughout the country as well as in Paris, Marseilles, Lyon, Strasbourg, and Bordeaux. Nearly 600 cultural, social, economic, scientific activities were organized within the context of “Turkish Season.”⁵⁰⁵ The season constituted the largest, the most comprehensive, and the longest serial events as well as the best promotion campaign compared to Japanese and Russian ones. A wide range of activities such as contemporary and classical music, performing arts, contemporary arts, cinema, theatre, dance, sports, education, and fashion introduced cultural characteristics, dynamism, and creativity of Turkey to French society. 2013 was proclaimed as “Year of Turkey in China” with a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Republic of Turkey and People’s Republic of China on June 16, 2010.

The “Turkish Season in France”, organized with the close collaboration of İKSV and the Culture Ministry of France, is an indication of alternative formation of cultural diplomacy and promotion in EU countries. After the first years of the 2000s, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism have preferred to collaborate with non-profit private public organizations to realize more successful festivals and organizations. One most important Turkish Culture and Art Festivals was “Stuttgart Now” held in Stuttgart between 22 and 29 November 2005. During eight day long Festival, over 30 cultural activities were organized in 14 different places.⁵⁰⁶ One of the most influential events in this program the Ensemble Resonanz Orchestra, led by Fazıl Say and İbrahim Yazıcı, who performed an opening concert in the Congress Center altered by 1300 people.

⁵⁰⁵ “Fransa’da Türk Mevsimi Kahve Bahane”, *Cumhuriyet Hafta Sonu*, 8 August 2009, p.10.

⁵⁰⁶ *Şimdi Stuttgart*. Accessed December 25, 2010. <http://www.iksv.org/simdi-stuttgart/de/>

Another festival organized through the collaboration of the Kulsan Foundation in Netherlands and İKSV was, “Turkey Now”, held between 29 and January-21 April in the Netherlands. Over 20 activities were organized within the framework of this festival, ranging from classical to world music and from traditional to pop music, with dance and theatre performances as well as film sessions and exhibitions.⁵⁰⁷ In addition to these activities, the “BOZAR Turkey Festival” was organized through the contributions of Belgian and Turkish Ministries of Foreign Affairs as well as İKSV and held at the Center of Fine Arts in Brussels between October 6, 2004 and January 16, 2005.

“Turkey at One Glance: Excerpts from Life and Culture” took place from November 4, 2008-February 1, 2008 in Vienna. Apart from, “Turkey Now,” “Stuttgart Now,” and “BOZAR,” “Vienna 2008,” was based on a special topic of culture that derives from the daily life of a young and considerably critical generation and, thus, the festival dealt with issue of social change and transformations.⁵⁰⁸ The festival was curated by Daniela and Deniz Ova and organized by the Ministry of Education, Art and Culture of Austria in cooperation with the İKSV and the Embassy of Turkey in Austria. The festival was supported directly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The festival program also included a series of exhibition and performances on diversity, challenge, and change in Turkey. Art festivals’ programs mostly included popular public art event, concerts of pop stars, music and dance shows, and cinema days, which were organized to attract the masses and foreign audiences. The aim of “art for the public” rather than the motto of “art for art’s sake” was the basic framework of the Turkish Festivals abroad.

⁵⁰⁷ *Turkey Now Festival*. Accessed December 25, 2010. <http://www.turkeynowfestival.nl/en>

⁵⁰⁸ Avrupa’da İKSV. Accessed April 17, 2011. <http://www.iksv.org/english/detay.asp?id=257>

The Role of Art Sponsorship and EU Funds in the Development of International Exhibitionism

After 1980s, due to influences of the global economy, multinational companies interested in the field of cultural and art became active in sponsorship in the USA and Britain. Most of the blockbuster exhibitions and cultural festivals were realized through the heavy patronage of the initiating country. However, the lists of donors are surprisingly multinational, reflecting new partnerships and alliances. Not only culture was represented during the exhibitions, but also a multi-national economic alliance was achieved. Cultural critic Shifra Goldman called this act of alliances an alignment of power elites from the nations of the First and Third Worlds whose objective is the control of resources and cultural configurations across national boundaries.”⁵⁰⁹ Aesthetics carry symbolic power for global capital and multinational companies to promote their public image. The sponsor is presented as a participant in a free market economy of the world economic order as well as a prominent figure in the free market of culture.

In addition to the business world, philanthropic organizations are the leaders in financially supporting activities in culture and art in order to direct cultural policy and influence. The definition used by the American sociologist Paul DiMaggio for “culture capitalists,” referred to a majority of young men who are an elite group managers interested in the prestige and refinement provided by cultural activities and contemporary art. This class also called cultural elite capitalists, and their status and aspirations are based on a social class

⁵⁰⁹ Wallis, p.278.

distinction source.⁵¹⁰ In this context, art sociologist Pierre Bourdieu said that when we think of “cultural capital,” the social elites protected their companies’ interests to strengthen their economic capital to promote the image of the companies.⁵¹¹

To move from the theoretical position to the real structure in Turkish art sponsorship, *Capital* magazine reports:

Within the context of social responsibility, there is a considerable increase in investment (that is) made in culture and art in recent years. Companies started transferring the amount of almost 10% of their communication budget to the culture and art. Thus, they subsidize leading art activities as sponsors or administrators. Through these art activities, they get chance to reach the public (millions of people). The other gain of the companies who make an investment in culture and art is “institutional image” that they have created. Art sponsoring sometimes leads to an effective result rather than advertising campaigns on a particular mass. Through these activities, reaching the high income groups of companies becomes possible.⁵¹²

Obviously, the power of art and culture consolidated the corporation’s image in the global economic system when they support culture and art in international areas. In Turkey, the structure of sponsorship in culture and art mainly has focused on music, contemporary and performance art. As I discussed in the previous chapter, for strategic reasons, Turkey’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs preferred to support traditional arts and cultural heritage exhibitions which represent the national values and authentic culture of the country. However, contemporary art in the state cultural policy was

⁵¹⁰ Chin-Tao Wu, *Privitization of Culture: Corporate Art Intervention Since 1980s*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 212.

⁵¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of Judgment of Taste*, p.129.

⁵¹² “Sosyal sorumluluk kapsamında son yıllarda kültür ve sanata yapılan yatırımlarda önemli bir artış var. Şirketler iletişim bütçelerinden %10lara miktarları kültür sanata aktarmaya başladı. Bu sayede önde gelen sanat etkinliklerine sponsor yada düzenleyici olarak destek sağlıyorlar. Bu etkinliklerle milyonlara ulaşma şansı elde ediyorlar. Kültür ve sanata yatırım yapan şirketlerin diğer kazancı ise yarattıkları “kamusal imaj”. Sanat sponsorlukları kimi zaman belirli kitleler üzerinde reklam kampanyasından çok daha etkili sonuçlar verebiliyorlar. Bu etkinliklere şirketlerin üst gelir grubuna ulaşmaları mümkün hale geliyor,” *Capital*, 01 May 2006.

excluded until the middle of the first decade of the 2000s, either because they find contemporary art works too radical or because their tastes had not trained to enjoy contemporary art. The bureaucratic elites and the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism were skeptical about the mission of contemporary artists and art works in internationally framed exhibitions.

“The Age of the Sultan Suleyman Exhibition” was the first Turkish art history show in the twentieth century. The cost of the promotion campaign was about \$10 million,⁵¹³ covered by the Philip Morris multinational company as the main sponsor of the exhibition to enhance Turkey’s global reputation. On the catalogue, the imperialist image of Ottoman Turks left its place to Ottomans as an art bridge between East and West. The Philip Morris supported the exhibition due to the following reason: “In our business as in yours, we needed to be reminded that the art of innovation knows no boundaries, including the seemingly impossible and that one of the noblest works of art between cultures.”⁵¹⁴ Not surprisingly, at the same time, Philip Morris established a business connection with Sabancı Company in order to enter Turkish market. In 1987, the campaign sheds light into experience of Turkish culture and sponsorship in the international area.

On the 700th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Ottoman Empire, the Sabancı Company decided to take the calligraphy collection of Sabancı Holding to prominent cities in Europe and then the U.S. For the first time, a Turkish company financially supported an international travelling exhibition called “Letters in Gold” It was presented in New York, Washington, Paris, and London. This indicates that apart from state support in cultural

⁵¹³ Sultan Suleyman courts America(traveling exhibit of treasures from the Topkapı Palace), U.S. News&World Report, February 9,1987. <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-4629339.html>

⁵¹⁴ Wallis, p.278.

heritage and history exhibitions, in the late 1990s, private sector companies showed greater interest in traditional art and history.

An interesting promotion campaign was realized in the “*Turks*” exhibitions in London. A leader in the liquid petroleum gas sector in Turkey, Aygaz, and Garanti Bank, Corus Group, and Lassa Tires were the main sponsors of this event. On the website of the “*Turks*” exhibition, there is a map that is similar to the “*Turks*” diffusion from Central Asia to the West that shows the diffusion of the Aygaz from Istanbul to London and Europe. This is a fact that a local company represented itself on a map shows the influence of an advertising campaign.⁵¹⁵ In addition to these sponsors, the exhibition received the support of the Friends of the Royal Academy, the Royal Academy Trust, the Akkök Group of Companies, and Access Industries (UK). The total expenditure of the exhibition was over £795,000,⁵¹⁶ making it the most successful sponsorship campaigns in Turkey.

The interest of private companies in contemporary art started in the late 1980s. The Istanbul Biennale was a turning point for international modern art in Turkey showing the outside world the modern face of the country. In the first three exhibitions, business entrepreneurs such as Asil Nadir and Halil Bezmen, not private companies financially supported the Biennale. After that, several companies in different fields participated in modern art sponsorship activities. Koç Holding signed an agreement with İKSV to be the main sponsor of the Istanbul Biennale from 2007 to 2016. The main reason behind this is that contemporary art in Turkey is a new phenomenon for the social elites, whose interest in contemporary art derived from social class distinction. Marketing activities in this field have relied on promoting company names as trademarks. According to Koç Company Oya Ünlü

⁵¹⁵ *Turks: A Journey of A Thousand Year*. Accessed April 8, 2010. <http://www.turks.org.uk/index.php?nid=16>

⁵¹⁶ *Turks: A Journey of A Thousand Year*. Accessed April 8, 2010. <http://www.turks.org.uk/index.php?pid=51>

Kızıl, the reason for taking main sponsorship in Istanbul Biennale is Istanbul's positive image in the global world.⁵¹⁷ Similar to Kızıl, journalist Duygu Asena says that:

If I were a businessman, the owner of a big business, I would certainly provide sponsorship for art events. For example, sponsoring one of the İKSV's festivals or biennale is the biggest favor for the sake of art.... It is both a favor and certainly useful for business....For example, during the whole Jazz Festival, whenever I see Garanti Bank's poster, I feel love and happiness. In such enthusiasm I even thought of investing all my money there...(Of Course, Yapı Kredi Festival also should be taken into account) Similarly, I embrace the music festival's sponsor Turkcell with love at every show and exhibition, and feel sympathy for them.⁵¹⁸

The policy of private companies mainly depends on promoting the image of the company name and marketing their products as well as promoting art and culture. Usually, private museums in Turkey have received support from one of the well-known companies in order to organize modern art exhibitions. Contemporary artist Genco Gülan argues that "Picasso exhibition was not one of the most important art events; it was the most successful art promotion campaign."⁵¹⁹ Koç Company, Garanti, Akbank, Yapı Kredi Bank, İş Sanat, Borusan Sanat are the leading companies which support contemporary art in Turkey.

⁵¹⁷ "Sponsorluk Logo ve Para İş Değil", *Marketing Türkiye*, 15 November 2007, p.56.

⁵¹⁸ "Ben bir iş insanı, büyük bir firma sahibi olsaydım mutlaka ama mutlaka sanat olaylarına sponsor olurum. Örneğin, İKSV'nin festivallerinden birisine ya da bienaline sponsor olmak sanat adına işecek sevapların en büyüğü...Hem sevap hem de mutlaka ticari açıdan faydalı bir şey....Örneğin ben caz festivali boyunca karşımda duran Garanti Bankası afişini sevgiyle izledim. O coşkuyla gidip tüm paramı ona yatırmayı bile düşündüm.... (Tabii bu arada Yapı Kredi Festivali de unutulmamalı) Aynı şekilde müzik festivalinin sponsoru Eczacıbaşı'nı, tiyatro sponsoru Henkel'i, film festivali sponsoru Turkcell'i her gösteride sevgiyle kucakladım, bu şirketlere sempati duydum." Duygu Asena "Yaşasın Sponsorlar", *Milliyet* 18 Temmuz 1999 quoted in Rıfat N. Bali, *Tarz-ı Hayattan Life Style'a Yeni Seçkinler, Yeni Mekanlar, Yeni Yaşamlar*, 6th edition (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), p.93.

⁵¹⁹ "Picasso sergisi Türkiye'de gelmiş geçmiş en büyük sanat sergisi değil, ama sanat alanındaki en büyük en kapsamlı reklam kampanyasıdır. Pazarlama konusuna girdiğimizde de iletişim yapıtlardan öne çıkmaktadır. "Picasso İstanbul'da" yada "Louvre İstanbul'a"da gibi...İkinci sergi başlığı bence özellikle ilginç, zira islam eserlerini, aynı Camel'in tütününü gibi önce ihraç ediyorsunuz sonra ithal. Yapıtlar önce Fransa'ya gidiyor, ondan sonra değerlendirilip, itibar kazanıp Türkiye'ye geri geliyor. Yani yapıtlar muhtemelen yasadışı yollarla yurt dışına çıkarılıp bir takım koleksiyonlara girmezse, Türkiye'ye tekrar girmesi makbul hale gelmiyor. Binlerce yıllık değerler kaçak inşaatlarda kepece kenarında harfiyata karışıyor." Open Panel with Bedri Baykam-Genco Gülan, 28 March 2008", in *Çağdaş Sanat Konuşmaları: Koleksiyon, Koleksiyonerlik ve Müzecilik*, edited by Levent Çalikoğlu, (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2009), p.115.

However, their support basically renames limited to founding cultural centers and financially supporting the Istanbul Biennale and Turkish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. On the international scale, Turkish artists who contribute to group exhibitions in Europe and the U.S. face several difficulties in terms of funding and sponsorship. They have to apply to international organizations to meet the costs of international exhibitions and art programs.

European Union commissions and several other independent art foundations located in the UK, Germany, Netherland, France, and Italy financially support artists and academics in Europe. As one of the leading foundations in art and culture, the European Cultural Foundation acts as a catalyst arts and culture in Europe. It is an independent foundation based in Netherlands that has been operating across Europe for nearly 60 years. They are committed to the whole of Europe and its neighboring regions, but they spare their support to where it is most needed. They share and connect knowledge across the European cultural sector, and campaign for the arts on all levels of political decision making. The ECF directly supports Europe's cultural sector through their grants program. In 2009, ECF grants supported 223 individuals and organizations across EU and non-EU Europe at a total of 1,465,075 euro.⁵²⁰ Independent, non-profit art organizations in Europe supported Turkish artists and collaborated with Turkish culture institutions in order to increase the interaction among countries and create mutual understanding of art.

One of the most well known cultural institutions in Germany, DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) is the largest art funding organization in the world supporting the international exchange of students and scholars.⁵²¹ The DAAD's Berlin Artists-in-

⁵²⁰ *European Capital Culture Programs*. Accessed December 15, 2010. <http://www.eurocult.org/about-us>

⁵²¹ It runs over 250 programmers, through which it funds more than 67,000 German and foreign scholars worldwide per annum. Its budget is derived mainly from federal funding for various ministries, primarily the

Residence Program (Berliner Künstler Program) is one of the most renowned international scholarship programs for artists and artistes in the field of visual arts, literature, music, film, dance and the performing arts. Each year, about 20 grants are awarded to international artists to come to Berlin, usually for one year. The Daadgalerie, a center for art, literature and music located in Berlin regularly hosts exhibitions, readings and presentations of the DAAD's artists and artistes in residence. DAAD has funded various art organizations and cooperated with cultural institutions, museums, and literature and film festivals to bring beneficial effects both for Germany and European countries.

As other cultural institution, ZKM is a center for art and media in Karlsruhe that holds a unique position in the world. It responds to the rapid developments in information technology and today's changing social structures. Its work combines production and research, exhibitions and events, coordination and documentation. For the development of interdisciplinary projects and promotion of international collaborations, the ZKM Museum of Contemporary Art opened in 1999 and cooperated with internationally renowned collections. The high quality and diversity of the participating collections make ZKM known internationally for confrontation with contemporary art: European and American works provided insight into the artistic developments from 1960 to the present. Major exhibitions and smaller presentations in the project spaces of the museum offer insight into current artistic and cultural tendencies.

Due to lack of state support, contemporary Turkish art exhibitions such as HABITAT II "Housing and Bettlement in Anatolia: A Historical Perspective", "Haritasız:

German Federal Foreign Office European Union and a number of enterprises, organizations and foreign governments. The Berlin Artists-in-Residence Program defined itself as a forum for artistic dialogue across cultural, geographical and political borders founded by the Ford Foundation in 1963 and taken over by the DAAD in 1964.⁵²¹

Medya Sanatlarındaki Kullanıcı Çerçeveleri,” “Call Me Istanbul: Istanbul Ist Mein Name,” taking places in Germany and Turkey in the 1990s mainly were supported by ZKM and Municipality of Berlin. In addition to these institutions, Lab for Culture work with and for artists, arts and culture organizations and networks, cultural professionals and audiences in the 50 countries of Europe, as well as providing co-operations between Europe and the rest of the world. The mission of the institution is to ensure that all institutions working in cultural collaboration⁵²² have access to information and to encourage the cultural sector to become more experimental with online technologies. Lab for Culture provides information research, and analysis related to in cultural cooperation and collaboration including funding opportunities and critical perspectives, space for connections and exchanges and knowledge sharing between organizations for non-Western countries.

By//pass is another non-profit structure for the development of economic and cultural exchange between Italy and the countries of Middle East: Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, and Egypt. It consists of a network of curators, artists, people dealing with the theatre and fashion, and business people in Turkey and Italy. This project was born out of the need that many felt to escape from the ‘Western fortress,’ that rigid structure of production and distribution of culture. The Perfumed Garden was the name of the exhibition held in the Turkish Pavilion in 43th Venice Biennial, which was supported by By-Pass. This exhibition was about the identity issues questioning the ways the Orient and Occident have been transformed or modified during the last decade of the twentieth century.

The situation shows that the Turkish state’s sponsorship mainly relies on heritage and traditional art, yet the state also was gradually becoming aware of the socio-political function of contemporary art. In the last ten years, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and

⁵²²*About Us*. Accessed May 15, 2010. <http://www.labforculture.org/en/about-us>

Tourism and the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs started to financially support contemporary art exhibitions to display the modern face of the country. In addition the private sector as mentioned before, took advantage of being sponsors in the contemporary art field in terms of marketing and developing business strategies. Marketing Turkish art, the promotion image of Turkey in international relations and refining the taste of the Turkish masses are the important reasons that have triggered recent developments in the Turkish professional sponsor system. Cultural foundations and municipalities located in Europe supported Turkish artists in order to have them participated in exhibitions, workshops, and international conferences in Europe. The newly founded international networks provided much more opportunity to Turkish contemporary artists representing their art in abroad.

The International Art Market and Its Structure

Business art is the step that comes after Art.... good business is the best art.⁵²³

Andy Warhol

Today, along with the question of art for art's sake, the question of art for investment, after 1980s, is being discussed. Neoliberal policies have relaxed the boundaries of commercial art production, circulation, and articulation. This has created high demand for contemporary art collectors. The total amount of money circulating in the global art market reached \$24 billion in 2007. Art fairs are organized for art collectors not only in U.S. and Europe, but also in the Middle East, China, and India. Especially, due to the social prestige

⁵²³ Andy Warhol. *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol from A to B and Back Again* (London: Michael Dempsey in association with Cassell), p.92

associated with art international companies overwhelmingly tend to keep art collections. According to Wu, the corporations' support for contemporary art creates the image that they are liberal and progressive in society. They have re-articulated the concept of innovation in art sponsorship and thus, legitimate their intervention in the arts.⁵²⁴ This innovation is a product of the neo-liberal economic model, articulating the power of international companies in the field of contemporary art, music and the cinema industry. Art sponsorship has triggered the development of art in the USA and Western Europe and has had an impact on cultural globalization.

Art in the twentieth century closely linked to money and business is presented as a luxury commodity, an "experience of good"⁵²⁵ that has to be tasted or consumed before its true quality is revealed. As an effect of globalization, art is thus defined by global actors and their taste. Robertson states that "art is only art when it passed certain mechanisms. Since money is the accepted medium of exchange for the transference of power, of which taste is one manifestation, art is only art when it has been exchanged for money."⁵²⁶ For this reason, the value of art is determined by the amount of money when it is sold it.

The international art market is defined as the sole distribution mechanism for conferring value to art and antiques. Since the 1980s, Sotheby's and Christies have dominated the art market around the world as a duopoly. Art market players have shaped the basic structure of the market mechanism. The items became "commodities" when they are traded in the art market. They can be traded "locally," "regionally" and "internationally." Among all art

⁵²⁴ Chin-tao Wu, "Embracing the Enterprise Culture: Art Institutions Since the 1980s," *New Left Review*, vol. A (1998), p.31.

⁵²⁵ Iain Robertson, "*The International Art Market*" in *Understanding International Art Markets and Management*, ed. Iain Robertson (Routledge: London and New York, 2005), p.3

⁵²⁶ Robertson, "*The International Art Market*," p.4.

objects, only cultured goods can be traded internationally. This means that an art work can be only marketable if it carries modern Western aesthetic taste. A contemporary work of art is classified through the Western point of view. This indicates that the stage of development of a country from which a cultural artifact originates has a strong bearing on that object's value. If the country or region is perceived to be non-Western and if its culture is deemed more primitive, then its art works lesser value than those of a developing or developed country or region.⁵²⁷ Opening Chinese and Indian contemporary art to the world is a result of organizing art fairs in Dubai and Shanghai. For this reason, the non-Western governments and businesses have realized that organizing art fairs is the most important part of gaining experience and providing communication to a global art scene.

Art fairs today are based on the importance of educating and building relationships with the public. These events are usually held for three or four days, and may include seminars, workshops, and special events. Gallery representatives and dealers are brought under a common roof to display works of new artists. Thus, galleries sometimes use this opportunity to launch their artists on a global market. Compared to Europe and the U.S., art fairs in Turkey have a short history and they are completely focused on the local level. For this reason, Turkish galleries and artists have limited chances to participate in international art fairs.

Considering the strong actors of international art market, Haşim Nur Gürel argues that “the Western countries are subsidizing their own artists and dumping their output on the international market (by fairs and biennials), so in countries like Turkey we have a hard time promoting our own artists.”⁵²⁸ This situation indicates that price as well as the value of the art

⁵²⁷ Ibid., p.15.

work is related directly to the environment in which it is marketed. We think of large scale exhibitions and art fairs like Basel, Documenta, and the Venice Biennale, when the highest ratio of participating artists come from Western countries, the artists of which have advantages compared to the Third World countries. Non-Western foreign artists who live in the Western metropolis are called ‘cultural nomads’ or ‘universal strangers.’ They are between the First and Third Worlds to connect to the modern art world. They also participate in art fairs and biennials on behalf of contemporary Western art to eliminate their disadvantaged situation.

Participating in international art fairs offers a chance to nations to represent their art and artists on a global scale. For Turkey, Gallery Artist located on Beyoğlu, Istanbul, was the first gallery in Turkey involved in the “Art Basel” international art fair in 2007. Gallery Artist’s owner Murat Plevneli chose the works of Hüseyin Çağlayan, Haluk Akakçe, Leyla Gediz, Taner Ceylan, Evren Tekinoktay, Elif Uras, and Yeşim Akdeniz Graf, who are well-known contemporary artists. This situation indicates that Turkish contemporary art and artist have less chance than artists who live in Europe and U.S. On the other hand, thinking in opposite way academic and art critic Ahu Antment supports Gürel’s view, saying “I think we are all aware that it is the ‘international’ or ‘global’ aspects of these shows that is questioned most of all when we are looking from a non-Western perspective. The East of the EU wants to be part of this ‘art world’ but at the same time, we are paranoid about being tokens in it.”⁵²⁹ Since the early 2000s, Turkish artists increasingly have maintained their

⁵²⁸ Haşim Nur Gürel, Workshop I- Season I in “Art Critism and Curatorial Practices, East of the EU,” in *International Workshop and Roun Table in Conjunction with the 8th Istanbul Biennial* (İstanbul: AICA TR, 2003), p.61.

⁵²⁹ Ahu Antmen, I- Season I in “Art Critism and Curatorial Practices, East of the EU,” in *International Workshop and Roun Table in conjunction with the 8th Istanbul Biennial*, (İstanbul: AICA TR, 2003), p.41.

access and links to the global art world via European nonprofit cultural institutions. They feel quite independent compared to the 1990s because they can participate easily in art workshops abroad, make cultural collaboration with European museums and institutions, and developed their personal networks with Western artists.

Changing Concepts: Discussions on Contemporary Art and the Istanbul Biennial

The International Istanbul Biennial organized eleven times by the non-profit and non-governmental Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Art (İKSV). The first biennial entitled “International Istanbul Contemporary Art Exhibitions” was organized by İKSV in the year 1987. The founder of the İKSV, Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı stressed the biennial’s aim as international and intercultural exchange in the first exhibition catalogue:

We are fully aware of the great importance of artistic exchange between the various nations of the world and the extremely beneficial results that such an exchange produces. We believe that these exhibitions will provide a concrete opportunity for the realization of such exchanges, and we are thrilled to think that the artistic strength and virtues of our country will be tried and tested in accordance with international standards.⁵³⁰

The task of the first international Istanbul biennial was to illustrate a cross- section of the contemporary art world, to present the nations’ art with their characteristics, to select and bring together prominent artists from different art metropolises, and to expand the art market in Turkey. The curator of the first and second biennial, Beral Madra,⁵³¹ states three generations

⁵³⁰ Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı. “Why Contemporary Istanbul Exhibitions?” *First International Contemporary Art Exhibitions* (İstanbul: İKSV, 1987), p.10.

have faced an unequal relationship between Eastern and Western art worlds. Up until that date, artists had forced themselves to perform the historical fate of Turkey, acting as acting as between the East and the West, making a synthesis of the two in order to formulate a national understanding of art. The tendency of a creating, dynamic, contemporary art in Turkey was realized to attract to attention of Western artists and art critics with organizing international art events in the 1980s. The Istanbul Biennial contributed contemporary art at the international level created a good image for Turkey and Istanbul.

Taking the financial situation of the organization in to consideration, starting from 1987, the Istanbul Biennial was more an independent than state-sponsored art event as most of its funding came from private sources. In a political atmosphere, shadowed by Turkey's checkered human rights record and the rising Islamic fundamentalist movement that was against contemporary art activities, İKSV did not use state funds in order to finance its advertising campaign. Starting from the 4th Istanbul Biennial it relied on support from multinational corporations such as IBM, Renault, and DHL. Like most other biennials, it also received governmental money from many of the participating countries, for example, the U.S artists at International Festivals and Exhibitions, a consortium which received contributions from the United States Information Agency, the NEA and the Rockefeller and Pew Foundations. In 1997, the USA and its partners put up \$67,500 to cover the costs of about half of the 12 US- based artists, with the Biennial picking up the the rest of the tab. The Turkish government provided only \$300,000 of the total \$1.4 million budget.⁵³² This is a unique

⁵³¹ Beral Madra was born in Istanbul, in 1942. She graduated from Istanbul University at department of Archeology and Art History. She has worked in Yıldız Teknik University, department of Museum Studies. Madra was the curator Turkish pavillion of the 50 Venice Biennial and the director of visual arts department in Istanbul 2010: The Capital of Culture.

⁵³² Eleanor Heartney, "Report From Istanbul: In The Realm of the Senses," *Art in America* 6, no.4 (April 1998), pp.44-46.

question that faces many mega exhibitions such as biennials today: how possible is it to sustain their critical positions and not capitulate to the power of capital and national governments and agencies.

In 2007, the Koç Company announced that it would finance Istanbul Biennial for the coming ten years. This situation indicates that the big entrepreneur families wanted to use as a PR opportunity and as a branding tool to make their names more closely associated with cultural affairs. The total government support remained limited scale even in 2007. Only five percent of total income was taken from the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The promotion fund of the Turkish Prime Ministry paid fifteenth percent of the total budget to promote tourism in the international arena.⁵³³

Unlike other biennials, the Istanbul Biennial broke with the tradition of international biennials. Biennials usually include representation art works of a few artists which are presented in their national pavilions. The Istanbul event presented contemporary art works from a number of artists from different countries, with an emphasis on Turkish artists. Madra organized the portion of 2nd Biennial called “Contemporary Art in Traditional Spaces” that was displayed at the St. Irene Church and the Süleymaniye Cultural Center. The St. Irene Church hosted mainly Turkish artists that year, while at the first biennial, the church halls had been a forum for foreign artists. No theme was chosen for the exhibits at St. Irene’s Church or Süleymaniye Cultural Center. Madra said that “there is a natural theme arising from the artists’ reactions to the historical space, the way in which they are inspired by that space, and the story behind the monument in which they are exhibiting-the theme of uniting past with

⁵³³ İKSV, *The 11th International Istanbul Biennial, Rehber: The Guide* (Istanbul:İKSV,2009), p.33.

present.”⁵³⁴ This provided an independent space for allocating and exhibiting the works of art in their pure forms and artists had a laboratory to try post modernist attitudes in the late 1980s.

In the early years of the biennial, financial resources was always a big problem for İKSV. Although foreign shows were organized with the help of the foreign cultural institutions or private sponsors, the budget of the Istanbul Biennial was largely financed by Turkish-Cypriot businessman Asil Nadir.⁵³⁵ Some of the Turkish artists the committee invited could not participate because they could not finance the works they wanted to prepare for the show. This concern with financial shortcomings had to do with the lack of a healthy art market as well as the neglect of the state. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, most of the Turkish artists hadn’t ever participated in the Venice or Paris Biennials, because of the lack of funds. Due to receiving limited feedback after the first biennial, a catalog of the works shown at the 1987 biennial was sent to leading art centers around the world to be used as a reference. The art market in Turkey at that time was extremely limited, Turkish collectors were willing pay only for early modern Turkish paintings, and not for contemporary art work. Giving the necessary support to artists would only be possible by increasing the interest in the contemporary arts and the better representation of Turkish contemporary art in international exhibitions.

Vasıf Kortun⁵³⁶ functioned as the director of the third biennial as well as the curator of the Turkish pavilion. The biennial developed the basic concept, titled “Production

⁵³⁴ Zeynep Çağlayan, “Dealing with Space at the Istanbul Biennial,” *Dateline*, September 9, 1989, p.7.

⁵³⁵ Beral Madra, *İki Yılda Bir Sanat* (İstanbul: Norgunk Yayınları, 2003), p.37.

⁵³⁶ Vasıf Kortun was born in Istanbul in 1958. He is the director of Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center, İstanbul. He was the founding Director of Project Istanbul Museum of Contemporary Art (2001-2003), the chief Curator and Director of the 3rd International Istanbul Biennale (1992) and Co-Director with Charles Esche of the 9th International Istanbul Biennale (2005) and between 1994- 1997 he worked as the founding Director of the Museum of the Center for Curatorial Studies. Kortun received the 9th annual award for Curatorial Excellence

of Cultural Differences” analyzing relationship between artistic centers and peripheries of the time, the construction of local vs. global identities. Of the 50 countries invited by Kortun to take part in the Third Biennial, countries with official entries were Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Holland, Israel, Italy, Poland, Romania, Russia, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The United States submitted work without official sanction. The United States Information agency withdrew official support following a decision in late August that the entry “would not strengthen relations between the United States and Turkey,” in the words of an agency spokesperson.⁵³⁷

For Kortun, the biennial was more than just a biennale. Rather, it seems, the organizers aimed at a kind of chaos-proof thought, and action, which could manifest itself in spite of unclearness and confusion. Each country curated its own display in response to the overall theme. For the theme of the Turkish pavilion, Kortun chose the term Megalopolis, Greek for “the big city” referring to a city which possesses the peculiar quality of being un-overseeable. Kortun wrote that “megalopolis represents a break regarding previous city models and bears certain medievalizing aspects: the forming of clans and besides the tendency to produce odd, autonomous figures.”⁵³⁸

The topic chosen by Kortun symbolized Western culture as it entered 1980s, seeking a new definition of history that did not involve ideas of hierarchy, or of mainstream-and-periphery, and offered a new global sense of civilization to replace the linear Eurocentric model that lay at the heart of Modernism. Discussions of modernity and identity were so

from the Center of Curatorial Studies, Bard College in 2006. Kortun was the co-curator of Taipei Biennale in 2008, and he was also one of the curators of the 24th Sao Paulo Biennale in 1998, Tirana Biennale. He curated the Turkish pavillions for 1994 and 1997 and the 2007 Venice Biennale for which he worked Hüsetin Bahri Alptekin. He has been selected as the curator of the UAE Pavillion for the 2011 Venice Biennale.

⁵³⁷ Judith E. Stein, *Art World Europe* 3, no.1 (November/December 1992), p.10.

⁵³⁸ Vasif Korun, *3rd Istanbul Biennial Catalogue*, (Istanbul:İKSV,1992) ,p.7.

vibrant in the early 1990s. Kortun offered a new path for Turkish contemporary art and Turkish intellectuals. This time, the Turkish pavilion included the works of women artists such as Hale Tenger, Gülsün Karamustafa, and Canan Tolon who deal with representation, migration, and modernity. Kortun insisted that the city (Istanbul) was not a vitrine, cultures did not surrender to tourism or the tourist consumption of banal simulation. They operated rather, through layers of masks, on different premises of barter and exchange.” At this point, Kortun was against showing Istanbul as a tourism destination in the Biennial. The Biennial itself was considered an art show rather than a promotion or marketing mechanism.

The 4th Istanbul Biennale was devoted to “Orientation: The Vision of Art in a Paradoxical World” and was a showcase for celebrated international figures and the younger generation of artists. Compared to first three biennials, it was a diverse exhibition in terms of the choice of the curator and his theoretical framework. René Block a well-known German dealer, collector, and curator who has long been identified closely with the “Fluxus movement”,⁵³⁹ proved an interesting choice as curator. Block brought to bear his knowledge of art from the 1960s and 1970s. An exhibition of European Fluxus artists was mounted in conjunction with the Biennial and he included in the Biennial itself a number of older works by Polke, Broodthaers and Beuys, who produced in the Fluxus line. This exhibition provided a rare opportunity for a Turkish audience to see influential pieces of 20th Western Art. Also, the geographical places where artists ranged from countries such as Australia, Cuba, Moroccan, and Sub-Saharan Africa represented their national art. Besides, a conference with a series of

⁵³⁹ Fluxus is a name taken from a Latin word meaning “to flow,” an international network of artists, composers and designers noted for blending different artistic media and disciplines in the 1960s. They were active in Neo-Dada noise music as well as literature, urban planning, architecture, and design. Fluxus is sometimes described as intermedia. The art form “Fluxus Art” most closely associated with Fluxus are event scores and Fluxus boxes that originated with George Maciunas, who collected prints of cards, games, and ideas, organizing them in small plastic or wooden boxes. Among its early associates were Joseph Beuys, Dick Higgins, Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell, La Monte Young, Joseph Byrd, and Yoko Ono who explored media ranging from performance art to poetry to experimental music to film.

panel discussions on topics such as Disorientation/displacement, do Turkish artists Have to Go to West? and the Oriental Challenge in Art took place at the Istanbul Art Academy in November 1995. The Biennial's director, N. Fulya Erdemci, said that, "when the René Block first came up with the idea of Orient/ation, I realized that in Turkish there was neither "Orient" nor "Occident" but only "direction"(yön) in the origin of the word "orientation" (yönelim/yönelme). In the Turkish language, by contrast to Western languages, there is no definite direction (indicating the East)."⁵⁴⁰ East, West, North and South were directions that largely depended on people who orient himself/herself. Thus the Biennial, Orient/ation, suggests that orienting oneself was to the only way to be related to a place.

According to Sulan Koletan, the term "orient-ation" did not require explanation in Turkish, in which it meant getting direction rather than dealing with the Orient. A place like Istanbul, situated on the fault line between two contending world cultures, part in both of them, and it also showed as the virtual territories or deterritorialize spaces of global communication in the global art scale."⁵⁴¹ Although the Istanbul Biennial did not carry oreintalist tensions, its ieuw reflected that the biennial was directly related to the orentalist approach in order to locate Istanbul in Eastern art world. The basic false assumption was situated Istanbul's geographical position among the Third World countries. Positioning its geography and defining the city by Western curators and art critics was an escape from the realities of Eastern art.

The title of the Biennial "Orientation" illustrates the new openness and tolerance of Turkish cultural policy. This new tendency started after the signing of the customs agreement between Turkey and the European Union, which is considered to be the reason for the

⁵⁴⁰ Fulya Erdemci, "Alice Now/Here," *Fourth International Istanbul Biennial* (Istanbul:İKSV, 1995), p.12.

⁵⁴¹ Jerry Cullum, "Touring Istanbul," pp.46-49.

liberalism shown in the EU integration process. The reason behind this is that for the first time, the geographical location and cultural identity of Turkey would be discussed in an international art event.

The 5th International Istanbul Biennial was organized under the Spanish curator Rosa Martinez. The title of Biennial was “On Life, Beauty, Translations and Other Difficulties”. Its concept covered a range of topics, thoughts, and approaches and the aim of the biennial was to search a new visual language or dialect. The exhibition was dominated by a large number of time and action-related video installations. The 5th International Istanbul Biennial was considered as young artist exhibition. In so far as most of the artists were seen in the international art arena for the first time. They were still used experimental approaches in their work. The distinctive feature of this exhibition was that among 86 artists invited about 56 were women. Martinez thought that “a biennial was not just a group show with a fashionable concept. A biennial was a kind of event and an exhibition that gathered together a lot of international artists and tries to establish a dialogue among them.”⁵⁴²

Istanbul’s fifth biennial placed special emphasis on theme of women and femininity, on younger less-seen artists and on the pleasures of the senses. The biennial could be seen as an “off-center exhibition” redefining itself in unexpected and provocative ways. The political conjuncture after 1994 showed a growing fundamentalist religious movement, the Biennial’s strong female presence made an important statement about female contributions to culture. Martinez’s Biennial provided a softer version of feminism than was in common in with that the U.S avoiding overt statements about rights, wrongs, and social inequities.

⁵⁴² Antonia Lopez, “Dialogue with Site Curator Rosa Martinez,” *Pasatiempo: The New American*, (July 1999), p.14.

Similar to René Block, Martinez said, “Istanbul is a city with a very complex history. Many religions and cultures are crossing there. A dense demography arises with the contradictions between globalization and tradition I tried to include its complexities as a megapolis inside the discourse of the exhibition. I considered the character of Istanbul as a gate between the West and East, between Asia and Europe, and I proposed that the artists could work in the actual gates of the city.”⁵⁴³

For this reason, Martinez used the city itself as part of the exhibition. The different sites themselves were the art works exhibited to bring art to people, but generally the works exhibited could have contributed to bringing art to the people. Because of the fact that there was no contemporary art museum, the biennial served another mission, that of informing the Turkish people of the present-day art world. This was the real reason for the existence of the Istanbul Biennial, but the interest of Turkish people in the Istanbul Biennial was still limited in terms of participation and the discussion of contemporary art, compared to the Western art audience.

The 6th Istanbul Biennial had the title “The Passion and the Wave”, and was curated by the Italian-Canadian Paolo Colombo. The large Kocaeli Earthquake of the 17 August 1999 overshadowed the exhibition, in which 59 artists from 31 countries participated. It was smaller compared to previous biennials. Şakir Eczacıbaşı, the chairman of the Istanbul Culture and Art Foundation, organizers of the Biennial, recalled the horror and its effect on the show in a statement called “The Earthquake Biennial”: in such a condition, could one think of presenting an art festival, an international biennial? What if something should happen to Istanbul? The show’s curator insisted “the Biennial must take place. Now more than ever,

⁵⁴³ Lopez, p.5.

we are convinced, there is a need for the solidarity and solace given by the arts.”⁵⁴⁴ Wisely, Colombo and the Biennial authorities organized an art benefit auction staged to raise relief aid, the guests and city bureaucrats gathered more or less according to plan, and the Biennial was made to survive and did not fall off the international culture map.

The title of the sixth Istanbul Biennial, “The Passion and the Wave,” had a less close relationship with such generic titles as “Past-present-Future” or “The Bridge between Continents.” Colombo was interested in the modulation of artists’ emotions through the works of art. He wanted to see energy, beauty, and a flexible culture. About 85 percent of the works were exhibited for the first time. Despite the presence of ten Turkish artists among the 57 contributors, there were the usual complaints about the lack of attention to the local scene.

According to Colombo, “the important thing in an international show is what the city can teach you. The incredible social, ethnic, religious variety of a city can only bring wonderful things to our art. Istanbul works as a magnet east to west, north, and south, across linguistic and religious barriers. I think Istanbul is one of the great places to be right now and the younger generation of artists.”⁵⁴⁵ The typical explanation given by Colombo was very similar to that of Block and Martinez as they tried to situate Istanbul on the international art map.

Yuko Hasegawa, curator of the 7th Istanbul Biennial, posited the theme “Egofugal: Fugue from the Ego towards the Next Emergence”. Hasegawa was the chief curator of Contemporary Art Museum at Kanazawa, Japan, and the former curator at the Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo. This term “Egofugal” was a combination of the term “ego” and “fugal” in

⁵⁴⁴ *Art Treasures of Turkey*. Accessed April 15, 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/yr/mo/artleisure/turkey/html>.

⁵⁴⁵ Ahu Antmen, “Public Passions”, *Flash Art* 32, no.208.

meaning transforming oneself or creating a new life and new source of significance.⁵⁴⁶

Hasegawa's thesis aimed to promote a new "collective consciousness," "collective intelligence" and "co-existence" premised on a critique of what was wrong in the late twentieth-century civilization: "man", "money and 'materialism'" and taking art away from male-dominated ego-centric view of the world. However, the exhibition unfortunately did not include a higher percentage of women of sixty-four artists (as individuals or groups/teams) that took part in this event, only 23 percent of the total number were women.

As the curator pointed out, contemporary art had long been concerned with affecting a political role in society and with suggesting alternate modes of life. For Hasegawa, in the concept of the Biennial, art could exist as divorced from a particular context, or rather, that art can convey a message across context. Yet the Istanbul Biennial was invested with the project of bringing contemporary art to a metropolis on the periphery of globalism. In the early, the global trend in contemporary art was a new phenomenon for the Istanbul art scene. Hasegawa's egofugality was a model for global relations between self and others-the individual and the collective, and the individual and space. Technology that was used in Istanbul Biennial was seen as the main mechanical form of capitalism. The globalist tension in contemporary art reached at its peak in the biennial due to the enormous art interest of the foreign curators in Istanbul that continued into the first decade the 2000.

In 2003 the 8th Istanbul Biennial was curated by the American Dan Cameron who determined the concept of "Poetic Justice" and defined the artist as an activist who connected the poetic to the global crisis in order to propose a fairer world. In proposing this phrase as the basis for a sustained investigation into the latest developments in contemporary art, the exhibition sought to articulate an area of creative activity in which seemingly opposing

⁵⁴⁶ IKSIV, *The 7th Istanbul Biennial Catalogue* (Istanbul: İKSIV, 2001)

concepts of poetry and justice were brought into together. In doing so, the exhibition revealed an attempt to reconsider the wide stylistic breach between two different forms of art-making one which took as its subjects the world and its affairs, and one that addressed concerns which were more identified with the viewer's inner life. The Biennial questioned whether justice was possible in today's globalized world? In fact, there was no particular system of justice in the world. Awareness of and sensitivity toward a particular system of justice had increased as result of the phenomenon of globalization in marketing and the media. By definition, globalization was a mono cultural phenomenon, one that distributed the same set of products world-wide by way of culturally tailored programs of promotion and distribution.⁵⁴⁷

In recent years many artists have begun to seek modes of expression that engage multiple viewpoints. In this way, the Istanbul Biennial was bringing together ideas that bridge a broad array of disciplines. These artists were all very different from each other in terms of media and stylistic attitudes. In this regard, one of the most important objectives of the 8th Istanbul Biennial was to create an engaging public forum for responding to the ideas of artists whose work embodied a form of commitment to the goal of making art a vehicle for life.

In the global art scene, one of the most significant factors in this struggle over art's most significant cultural meanings has consisted of the failure of artists, curators and critics to characterize contemporary life. For this reason, when Cameron visited Istanbul to organize a biennial, he was deeply influenced by Istanbul in terms of its historical role as an imperial city. Doing some light reading on the court life of the Ottoman Empire. He became aware of the number of references to poetry as a mode of spiritual communication. The inspiration for the title was directly connected to his experience of the city.

⁵⁴⁷ İKSV, *The 8th International Istanbul Biennial Catalogue* (Istanbul: İKSV Publishing, 2003), pp.7-8.

In 2005, the 9th Istanbul Biennial was curated by Charles Esche, from England, and Vasıf Kortun. This exhibition, which showed 54 artists and was directed by Çelenk Bafra, marks a radical shift in the history of the Biennial, since they did not choose any historic sites or building in order to present Istanbul as a metropolis shaped by western modernization and globalization. Due to the fact that art has become tourism at the exotic sites which tourists come to see, in contrast to the previous biennials they selected venues in Beyoğlu, Deniz Palace Apartments, Garibaldi Building, Platform Contemporary Art Centers, and Istanbul's commercial and entertainment center Garanti Building, Antrepo No.5, Tabacco Warehouse, and Bilsar Building. Vasıf Kortun insisted that "we want the Biennial to disappear into the city, to blend in and not race with the changes of Istanbul. Biennials are ephemeral. They come and go. But Istanbul is a complex city with a strong future, may be even as the capital of Europe."⁵⁴⁸

Most of the previous Istanbul Biennials had looked for a connection between contemporary art and the exotic locations of locations in the city. However, the 9th Biennial curators chose to look at the history of modernity in a city. Esche and Kortun did not really talk about modernity as much as everyday life. They wanted to get rid of the exotic reading of the city, and bring people to the everyday life of a city. As a result the 9th biennial marked a turning point in the logic of the biennial in terms of the two curator-system and a radical shift in exhibition space. These were the successes of the Istanbul Biennial, which showed an experimental and extraordinary approach for the periphery biennial.

The 10th Istanbul Biennial in 2007, "Not Only Possible, But Also Necessary: Optimism in the Time of Global War", followed the 9th Biennial's effort to call attention to cultural and commercial sites like İMÇ (İstanbul Textile Traders' Market), Santral Istanbul

⁵⁴⁸Susanne Fowler, "Istanbul's Biennial: A Study in Living," *Wall Street Journal*, September 16-18, 2005, p.1.

(the former Silahtarağa Electric Santral), and Antrepo No.3 that could be seen as “historic” in their own right. But curator Hou Hanru engaged with the history of his chosen sites, and with the city itself, much more aggressively and on a much larger scale than the previous biennial. Hou Hanru’s theme of “Global War” used the literal position of conflict to discuss contemporary conflicts: cultural homogeneity, economic pragmatism, urban gentrification and a growing religious conservatism as well as the universal condition of globalization.

The Istanbul Biennial all the time navigated this problematic, challenging the cultural and political reading of place. Dan Cameron’s “Poetic Justice” and Esche / Kortun’s the simple title “Istanbul” showed that the biennial had gained maturity was maturity and face the task of reinterpreting globalism for Turkey. On the other hand, Hanru took into consideration of contemporary art as product of modernization and modernity. Along with globalization and the integration of many developing countries in the global system of production and communication, contemporary art was represented far beyond the West.

Hanru stated that the phenomenon of biennials in the non-Western world was an obvious and powerful expression of the rise of fresh and different voices. In this sense, for him, the Istanbul Biennial was an “avant-garde” project among the international biennials.⁵⁴⁹ It should be seen and understood as a part of the renaissance of the Third World. Hanru referred to modernity and to the nation-state paradigm in Turkey, formulating his approach with globalization in the exhibition. He tried to connect concepts modernity, nation state, globalism, optimism, war, and neo-liberalism which were related to this issue of contemporary art. This was the failure of the ideological mechanism of the biennial, because each concept was used by the curator independent from the theme of the biennial.

⁵⁴⁹ Hou Hanru, “Not Only Possible, But Also Necessary: Optimism in the Age of Global War,” *The 10th International Istanbul Biennial Catalogue* (İstanbul: İKSV, 2007), p.24.

Hanru tried to connect the Turkish modernization project with the third world modernity. The project of “colonial modernization” and creating the term “Third World” were the leading results of globalism in the twentieth century. Thinking of globalization as a post-colonial economic project, nations faced collapses, decadence and new challenges. In this sense, Turkey was an important example of this process from the Republic to its current political change. For the first time, a biennial curator touched upon the catastrophic sides of the Turkish modernization as a Third World modernization. He refused to be constrained by models of established thinking and challenged the authority/power-base of knowledge. However, in the 10th Biennial catalogue, Hanru wrote an essay on “belated third world Turkish modernity,” which met with the reaction of the Kemalist republican intellectuals. The biennial itself is an international event. This time, the scope of the curator was found very problematic and limited in its vision of Kemalist modernity, as he generalized all modernities and Turkey’s modernity project as an outcome of the globalization and Third World experience with it.

In contrast to the 10th Istanbul Biennial, the 11th International Istanbul Biennial was heavily focused on the social and economic needs of people. The biennial was held under the title of “What Keeps Mankind Alive?” and was curated by the WHW/What, How & Whom collective. It was hosted at Antrepo No.3, Tabacco Warehouse, and the Feriköy Greek School with the contribution of 141 projects by 70 artists and artists collectives from 40 countries. It took its title from the song “Denn wovon lebt der Mensch?” translated into English as “What Keeps Mankind Alive.” The song closes the second act of the play *The Threepenny Opera*,

written exactly 80 years earlier by Bertolt Brecht in collaboration with Elisabeth Hauptmann and Kurt Weill.⁵⁵⁰

The biennial was a highly representative art manifestation, burdened as such by the usual complexity of dynamics between the local, the national, and the international in all titles. Its concept evoked two main subjects, politics and economics. The first questioned the legitimacy of the “new world order” underlining the shortcomings of neoliberal economic policies. Second, the exhibition did not reveal the fascinating aspect of the ‘metaphor city,’ Istanbul as a bridge between Asia and Europe or nostalgic symbol of an Ottoman Empire, but, it carried a new role as one of the world’s finance and cultural centers.

Critical Curating: Native or Foreign

Curatorial activities determine the way art work is situated in the exhibition space and draw the boundaries of contemporary art. Generally there are three curatorial concerns when organizing a biennial. First is to formulate the aims and the concepts underlying the show, then the artists must be chosen in accordance with these aims. Third, those works of the artists that fit the context of the show must be selected.⁵⁵¹ Because of the general title of the 2nd Istanbul Biennial, “Contemporary Art in Traditional Spaces”, some artists preferred a neutral theme arising when they saw the exhibition space. For example, the French artists fell

⁵⁵⁰ The 11th Istanbul Biennial Catalogue, *The Guide: What Keeps Mankind Alive?* (Istanbul: İKSV, 2009), p.39.

⁵⁵¹ Zeynep Çağlayan, “Dealing with Space at the Istanbul Biennial”, *Dateline*, September 9, 1989, p.7.

in love with St. Irene church when they saw it, so Madra could not reject their request to exhibit there.

The 3rd Istanbul Biennial was not dictated by the expertise of an elitist group and not the ego of a single curator. Vasıf Kortun tried to experiment with an umbrella concept by encouraging individual curators from the host countries to present their own interpretation of the given theme. In this way, the host countries reproduced a variety of themes to express the meaning of their art works.

Rene Block was the first foreign artistic director. For the 1995 Biennial, he gathered a vast range of works from three decades of Western art and invited numerous artists to produce art under the theme of “Orientation.” It was Block’s decision that the Biennial would dispense with national presentations of artists chosen to present their respective countries; he considered this a 19th century approach that had become outdated. Block desired to have a real engagement with Istanbul, and his wish to avoid having the exhibition turn into a kind of international road show temporarily plunked down in an exotic locale.⁵⁵² However, the fourth biennial was essentially a hybrid version of European mega exhibitions. Due to insufficient art critics in Turkey, local artists and critics did not discuss the basic frameworks of the biennials. Block took the Western concept of Fluxus and received the Western interpretation of the Orient in consequence this interpretation did not focus on the particular circumstances of Istanbul. Thus he focused on the Istanbul Biennial from the Western point of view.

Spanish curator Roza Martinez’s biennial differed markedly from Block’s concept oriented theoretical framework(the Fluxus). She noticed the emphasis on approaches to art-making that tended to be associated with women artists. Fifty-seven of the eighty-seven participating artists were female. This was a first for the Istanbul Biennial. Furthermore, both

⁵⁵² Gregory Volk, “Report From Istanbul: Between East and West,” *Art in America*, (May 1996), pp.39-43.

male and female artists embraced “femine” materials such as fabric, flowers and focused on the themes of sexuality and the female body. However, she declared her theme to be “On Life, Beauty, Translations, and Other Difficulties,” which had little comment on life in Istanbul. In fact, Martinez had visited the city only for short periods before she announced her concept and exhibition structure. However, due to her concept moving beyond Turkish modern art, the biennial did not give a sense of locality, and that was the main reason for the negative critic’s comments on the biennial. She referred to the local art criticism as “some grumbling within the Turkish art community”.⁵⁵³

However, Paolo Colombo defined his role in the Istanbul Biennial in more strategic way. He states that the role of the curator could be compared to that of an editor in a publishing company. Editing requires active participation. Every time the curator invites artists, it is an invitation, not an obligation.⁵⁵⁴ Colombos vision, compared to Martinez, developed more of an international dialogue in terms of selected categories of contemporary art work. The curator’s vision became clear and the presence of the curator seemed invisible. He allowed the intertextuality of the various sized places and their history. Its approach was both post-modern and intercultural. He called it “transglobal express”⁵⁵⁵, the sharing of cultures and languages through art, as an open forum. Because of a limited number of artists dominating the biennial circuit, Colombo invited a high proportion of emerging artists from countries on the art-world periphery. In this way, the 6th International Istanbul Biennial represented a new model for off-centered biennials, raising the consciousness of its audience in terms of sensitivity to time or place. Although other biennials gave the chance to see the

⁵⁵³ Beral Madra, “Is Globalism Good? An Istanbul Protest,” *Art in America* 32, no.8 (September 1998), p.29.

⁵⁵⁴ Ahu Antmen, “Public Passions,” *Flash Art* 32, no.8 (October 1999), p.63.

⁵⁵⁵ İKSV, *The 6th Istanbul Biennial Exhibition Catalogue* (İstanbul: İKSV, 1999).

works of art from the periphery, the 6th International Istanbul Biennial overwhelmingly emphasized peripheral art in order to display multi-cultural identities.

Yuko Hasegawa followed a more radical way to choose artworks for the Istanbul Biennial. Hasegawa's view on curatorship depended on the will of the curator, who chose the artists. When Hasegawa decided on the theme of the Biennial, she already had several artists in mind whose works would fit her ideas. Although the curator conducted an extensive study, she excluded artists from Turkey's neighbors, including most of Africa and Asia. In her own defense, she said that "it was unfortunate that I was not able to meet any artists who could contribute to our theme."⁵⁵⁶ Hasegawa's choice in the 7th Biennial was unfair and inconsistent in terms of reflecting the intercultural perspective for biennials.

As a senior curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art in New York and in his earlier career as independent curator and critic, James Cameron showed himself to be deeply interested in engaging art from all parts of the world. He sought a kind of synthesis providing meditations on themes such as the contradictions of modernity, migration displacement, and mutability of identity. The theme "Political Justice" compared to the theme of 7th biennial, "Egofugal", had a softer version of globalist attitudes shown in the contemporary art. The works of 85 artists from 42 countries formed a mixed bag for the international art audience.

As an independent curator, James Cameron's choices in the 8th biennial were more realistic and focused on sociopolitical concerns. He organized a series of panel discussions related to the topic of the biennial and his relations to the art work depended on its relation with the theme. Compared to Hasegawa, Cameron paid more attention the background of the artists and art works were chosen by him conveying cultural, social, and geographical realities. At the stage of curatorial process, he asked "what meaning could be found in the

⁵⁵⁶ Emre Baykal, "Going 'egofugal'-The 7th Istanbul Biennial", *Easternreport*, no.78, October 2001, p.24.

effort to reconcile the truth-values of art and poetry with those of the geopolitical sphere?" He argued that the recent emergence of international organizations dedicated to forging bonds between groups of activists or victims represented a growing recognition that nation-based identities presented severe limits to the kinds of cooperation.⁵⁵⁷ Biennials and other globally oriented exhibitions created an environment in which the viewers experienced a temporary imagination. In this respect, Cameron played the role of intermediary between art and the art audience, trying to explore and establish new limits of thought and experience for society. For him, the act of imagination in the exhibition was the result of poetry, which in return increased the human consciousness.

The curatorial collaboration of Esche and Kortun in the 9th Istanbul Biennial opened a new path for contemporary art organization in Turkey. For the first time, in order to produce site specific art, Esche and Kortun offered residencies to foreign biennial artist to produce original space-oriented works. From a few weeks to several months, artists came to produce works about, and for Istanbul. Fifty-three artists and art groups participated, some from Western Europe or the Americans, but most from the Middle East and the Balkans: Croatia, Albania, Kazakhstan, Iran, Israel, Palestine, Romania. Esche said that "we wanted to avoid generic internationalism-which amounts to globalism as decorations. "Their choice of artists depended on the cities from which they came. Kortun supported Esche and argued that the value of the creations is difficult to articulate because so much of the work was new. About 60 percent of the art work was produced in Istanbul. This situation could offer critical thinking about society as well as making different proposals to the city. There was kind of give-and-take between the artists and the city.

⁵⁵⁷ İKSV, *The 8th International Istanbul Biennial* (Istanbul: İKSV, 2003), p.7

In contrast to the 9th Biennial, Hou Hanru was one of the most widely known international curators working with major exhibitions. Chinese-born, Paris based, Hanru was the second Asian curator invited to Istanbul in the event's twenty four year history. He was the director of exhibitions and public programs at the San Francisco Art Institute and a contributing editor of *Art-Asia-Pacific*. He worked as the curator of the Chinese Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennial.

For the 10th Istanbul Biennial, he did not accept programs the travelling artists which had been used in 2005 and decided to organize a program for people who lived in Istanbul. His goal was to see how the people in Turkey used this event to get a next step of creation. He decided to organize the program into day and night programs in order to have common people participate in this mega art event. This biennial, compared to the previous ones, offered more interactive places to discuss the contemporary art in the city. Istanbul Bilgi University's cultural center, Santral Istanbul, was used as a kind of laboratory and workshop environment where artists, students and the public could come together around discussions and lectures. According to Hanru, curators had to question the continuous effort in challenging the borderline of art and life. Art could propose a different form of living which forced people to penetrate real life.⁵⁵⁸

In the 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s, Istanbul biennials were mostly conceived and organized using ideological criteria of the Western art system, and did not touch directly on the current sociopolitical situation in Turkey, because the foreign curators were not well informed about Turkey and its region. The first three biennials were directed by Turkish curators occurred at a time when the international communication network and current multicultural tendencies had hardly influenced the isolated art scene of Istanbul.

⁵⁵⁸ Gina Fairley, "The Curator's Role," *Asian Art News* 17, no.6 (November/December 2007), p.90.

Later, Western curators were chosen by İKSV with the expectation that they would help put the Istanbul Biennial on the international map. Unfortunately, Western curators did not exchange views with the local intellectuals and did not diminish the differences between the curators' central and peripheral positions. Curators and artists from the Middle East, North Africa and Middle Asia participated in the Istanbul Biennials in a very limited number. In practice Western curators were very reluctant to explore the younger generation of artists in the host countries. They preferred instead to live and produce in Western centers. As a result, the Istanbul Biennials suffered from a lack intercultural dialogue among the artists who were chosen to exhibit their works in the biennial.

For the first time, in 2009, a curator group worked on the Istanbul Biennial called What, How & for Whom (WHW). It is a non-profit organization for visual culture and curators' collective formed in 1999 and based in Zagreb, Croatia. Its members are curators Ivet Curlin, Ana Devic, Natasa Ilic and Sabina Sabolovic, and designer and publicist Dejan Krsic. The choice of the organizing committee clearly shows that instead of the one-curator system, a group of curators can display diversity in the selection and exhibition of the art works. Emphasizing the distinguished characteristics of contemporary art, the curator group marginalized the concept as well as the theoretical framework of the biennial. The WHW touched upon artwork containing a high dose of politics, giving priority to geographical-cultural themes. However, in the one-curatorial system, the curator does not take the risk of exhibiting a high dose of politics or criticizing the global art system. The new trend in curatorship offered a new path for international exhibitions and biennials.

Curator Levent Çalıkoğlu writes that each curator insisted on emphasizing the fact that Turkey stood at the junction point of East and West /South and North. The interviews

held with all of them reveal that they were all preoccupied with the same concept. René Block said, “Istanbul is the center of arts in Turkey, because it is a city with a long history of cultures meeting together and forming a mosaic.” Rosa Martinez said, “Istanbul excites me because it is a bridge, a gateway of inconsumable energy between the East and the West.” Paolo Colombo said, “The richness of the textures of Istanbul, with its history traversing centuries and continents, and the energy, passion and generosity of it excites me.” Finally, Yuko Hasegawa made a similar comment and said: “In my opinion the main axis of the biennial is the city it is held, its location. The structure of Istanbul, being a city between the East and the West, is important criterion for me not only in the geographical sense but in the sense of the mentality.”⁵⁵⁹ The curators from the First World tended to rely on the definition of the geographical position of Istanbul on the world map. Therefore, they heavily dealt with the questions of identity, alterity, the other, center vs periphery, and multiple identities. These concepts became a must in organizing contemporary art exhibitions after the 1990s, and the main were also problematic in the Istanbul Biennial.

In this aspect, the first Istanbul Biennial curator, Beral Madra, raised the question of the validity of outside curators for “global” exhibitions in non-Western countries. As she pointed out, these curators tended to lack an insider’s knowledge of the local art trends, politics and personalities, and produced exhibitions that were off the mark.⁵⁶⁰ Increasingly young Western curators played a role in organizing non-Western biennials. This situation brought advantages that were freedom from tangled interrelationship which govern local art politics, a fresh outlook for local artists, an ability to work with foreign curators, critics,

⁵⁵⁹ Levent Çalıkoğlu, “Round Table: Season 4,” in *Art Criticism and Curatorial Practices in the East of the EU*, ed. Beral Madra (Istanbul: AICA Turkey, 2003), p.309.

⁵⁶⁰ Beral Madra, “Is Globalism Good? An Istanbul Protest,” *Art in America* 36, no.8 (1998), p.29.

artists, thereby enhancing the local artists' international visibility. But there was an inherent tension between the local and international points of view which was never been resolved. While Western curators usually attempted to use certain strategies for peripheral artworks and attributed a kind of otherness, contemporary artists from peripheral countries tried to overcome stereotypes and clichés in the Biennials and exhibitions. As a result, the role of curator in the current art environment played a decisive role in the construction of national identities as well as geographically positioned art works at international art events.

Exhibition Spaces: Shifting from Tradition to Post-modern

Nowadays, in contemporary art exhibitions and biennials, a shift has occurred due to a change in the concept, form and aesthetic value of art. There are mainly two reasons behind this transformation. First, the image of the old city provided one of the extraordinary images in the Turkish tourism advertisements. Displaying contemporary art at historical sites was an extraordinary opportunity to show the cultural heritage of Turkey to the world. Every year an increasing number of tourists has visited Istanbul and discovered to historic heritage sites. This opportunity has made the Istanbul Biennial a cultural product for the Western art world.

Second, there is a limited number of exhibition spaces being converted into contemporary art exhibition spaces. In the early 1990s, few art galleries, the Ataturk Culture Center, and the Istanbul Painting and Sculpture Museum were the only places in which contemporary art works were exhibited for a long time. Both tourism promotion and lack of

modern exhibition spaces in Istanbul led to the display contemporary art works in historical buildings and sites.

The executive creator of the 1st and 2nd Istanbul Biennial, Beral Madra, played a leading role in choosing exhibition spaces and initiating “site specific art” in Turkey. The exhibition strategy of exhibiting contemporary art works in traditional spaces was a new strategy. For the first time, Turkish artists experienced the site-specific art,⁵⁶¹ creating their works for the St. Sophia Bath, and in order to attract foreign tourists, the Byzantine church of St. Irene was one of the most influential historic sites. The main reason behind this was that adequate places for exhibiting contemporary art were not available, and these historical sites were sites of tourist attraction.

Similar to the first one, the 2nd Istanbul Biennial continued with the exhibition concept of “Contemporary Art in Traditional Spaces.” The main exhibition spaces were St. Irene, the Istanbul Museum for Painting and Sculpture, the Süleymaniye Culture Center (*Süleymaniye Kültür Merkezi*), the Museum of Press (*Basın Müzesi*), the Ataturk Cultural Centre (*Atatürk Kültür Merkezi*), Yıldız Technical University and the Military Museum. Madra argues that the foundation of the contemporary art museum and culture center was a must for Turkey and the belated modernity in fine arts made it difficult to progress in art and culture. Compared to developed countries, Turkey is a latecomer in global art. For this reason, both state and private enterprises had to invest in establishing a strong exhibition infrastructure and facilities in contemporary art.⁵⁶² As Madra expressed due to lack of

⁵⁶¹ Site-specific is artwork created to exist in a certain place. The artist takes the location into account while planning and creating the artwork. The term first was used in the mid-1970s in the USA.

⁵⁶² Beral Madra, Çağdaş Sanata Altyapı, *Cumhuriyet*, July 31, 1988, p.4.

exhibition space and state support in art, Turkish contemporary artists were not able to demonstrate their aesthetic power and represent themselves.

Large buildings with historical importance such as the Istanbul Painting and Sculpture Museum make people think of the past and thus create a different mood. Curators like the effect created by contrasting this atmosphere of decay with an exhibition of modern art. Christos Joachimides, who was responsible for putting together an exhibition of the work of a group of artists from Berlin for Istanbul's second Biennial, called himself "a freelance curator." According to Joachimides, the nineteenth century saw the creation of an ideal environment for art which was poetical and coherent. Old walls, tall windows and staircases began to be used to create special effect in the exhibition halls. Old places created a special atmosphere in which one feels interested and intrigued that was started to use in the mid twentieth century in Europe.⁵⁶³

The 3rd Istanbul Biennial in 1992 showed radical changes in terms of exhibition space and structure. The exhibition was held at the Feshane (the Ottoman Textile Factory) on the Golden Horn, which had been restored by the Italian architect Gae Aulenti. The directoral of the Biennial as well as the curator of the Turkish pavilion, Vasıf Kortun, preferred to choose one place for the exhibition due to its concept, called a large-scale international exhibition. Kortun allocated the area of the Feshane for fifteen countries to exhibit their works of art.

The newly restored Feshane provided exactly the sort of flexible, neutral space required by contemporary installation artists. With fifteen different countries exhibiting in the same building, there was a sense of intimacy most big international group shows lack. After the Biennale, the founder of İKSV, Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı, desired to convert the Feshane into

⁵⁶³ "Istanbul's Ottoman Past Provides the Setting For Biennial Exhibits," *Dateline*, September 9, 1989, p.7.

the first contemporary art museum in Turkey. However, this project was never realized because of disagreement between İKSV and the Istanbul Municipality.

René Block was the first foreign curator to take responsibility of the Istanbul Biennial in 2005. He chose places for the Biennial at three separate sites: Antrepo Nr.1, a renovated two-story customs warehouse by the Bosphorus; the St. Irene, the Yerebatan Cistern and the Atatürk Cultural Centre, in which the Fluxus project was shown. The two places represented the old city and the Antrepo warehouse, with spare white walls and individual exhibition spaces was by far the most “museum like” of the sites. The division in exhibition space demonstrated both the traditionalist and modernist approaches that were determined by the exhibition concept. The works of art in the large scale exhibition were chosen in terms of their form, aesthetic and value. Artists who worked in the St. Irene and the Yerebatan Cistern found quite different conditions from those in the Antrepo Nr.1 warehouse. Historical places for modern art exhibitions offer a rather limited use of exhibiting space.

In the 5th Istanbul Biennial, using feminine materials and focusing on themes of the female body, exhibition spaces were chosen in terms of their feminine qualities. First place, St. Irene was a fourth century basilica built by the Emperor Constantine. Its interior space was vast and dark, perfect for works focused on birth and the female body. Its feminine character came from its architectural form of dome and design structure. The second space the Yerebatan Cistern, was more mysterious and visceral still to host artists who mainly focused on installation art projects. For the first time, the roster of exhibitions was a series of galleries in the nearby Imperial mint. Built as a city within a city, the mint ceased operations in 1967 and now functions as a museum and exhibition space. After the powerful architectural presences of St. Irene and the Yerebatan Cistern, the more conventional exhibition space in

the Imperial Mint was the typical conventional international exhibition space. The newly renovated central section was a rather too typical reiteration of the clean white space. The Mint complex also offered artists a number of outdoor sites and small cell-like rooms set along outdoor passageways. These three main exhibition spaces are located within the grounds of Topkapı Palace, Istanbul's most popular touristic site. Istanbul could be said to represent the same kind of exoticism and mystery. It is an oriental city with its own archeological memories, Byzantine intrigues and vibrant bazaars. The Women's Library and Information Centre and the Maid Tower were also used as secondary venues for the biennial.

The 6th Istanbul Biennial, titled "Tutku ve Dalga/ The Passion and the Wave," took place in three different venues. Curator Colombo remodeled the Dolmabahçe Cultural Centre in Beşiktaş as a city metaphor that was developed through the construction of familiar metropolitan places: a miniature 28-seat cinema with a bookstore, a café, a infotheque. The second place the 6th Biennale St. Irene was altered as little as possible so as to reorganize the powerful interior space and to designate its vertical/horizontal axes. Colombo's aim was to articulate the magnificent space of the church with contemporary artworks in such different types as video art, installation art. As a third site, the Yerebatan Cistern as the "womb" of the city, was used. According to the curator Fulya Erdemci, these three spaces were utilized in different ways that displayed the various aspects of the Biennial's conceptual framework. The location, usage of each site, and architectural specificity were the most important factors determining the preference of the curator in selecting the different venues. Compared to the previous Istanbul Biennials, the exhibition spaces were properly used in contrast to the more crowded and stuffed "fair-like biennials." Thus the biennial audience had a chance to examine small scale art works in the architecturally extraordinary space. The decrease in the number of

artists in the 6th Istanbul Biennial, made it easier for visitors easy to experience all works of art. Earlier, large scale works in historic buildings had led to confusion in the minds of the visitors and created contrasts in terms of light, form and meaning.

In the 7th Biennial, the traditional perspective still existed in exhibiting contemporary art in historical places. The exhibition venues, except for the Platform Contemporary Art Center, were again historical places: St. Irene, the Imperial Mint, and Yerebatan Cistern. For the first time, a biennial curator had a chance to use a contemporary exhibition space. The Platform Contemporary Art Center, which was newly founded at that time. This attempt showed the possibility of using modern spaces for contemporary works of art in the international exhibitions after 2000.

In 2003, American curator Dan Cameron chose both traditional and modern places for the 7th International Istanbul Biennial. Antrepo Nr.4, the MSU Tophane-i Amire Culture and Art Center, the Yerebatan Cistern, the exhibition space Platform Contemporary Art Center, and for the first time, the world's famous Byzantine Church Hagia Sophia. The 7th Istanbul Biennial was the last exhibition to take places in the historical sites of the city. From 2005 on, biennial curators preferred to allocate modern buildings or ruins like the Park Otel for contemporary art exhibitions.

The 9th Istanbul Biennial was for and about Istanbul. Curators Vasif Kortun and Charles Esche sought to address artistic places in dialogue with different aspects and observations of the city itself. Their aim was to shed light on the particularities of Istanbul in comparison to cities. To observe the change in the conditions of the city Esche and Kortun rejected choosing dramatic or historical locations, preferring to focus on the everyday living

and working environments in the city.⁵⁶⁴ The curators preferred a transformation in the exhibition space to show the abstract notion of art. By doing so, they intended to underscore that the framing of art, no less than the selection of art works, is fundamental to the ideological dramaturgy that we call an exhibition. Esche stated that,

We are making a statement by not using Istanbul's famous historical sites. Since 1995, I think, was that a curator from outside has come to Istanbul and been very understandably wowed by these amazing Byzantine and Ottoman sites. For Vasıf, of course, that's something he has been brought up with for him it's already completely gone. And you realize that the old city is not really used by Turks-it's used by them to make money off the tourists but fundamentally it is not a space that is used.⁵⁶⁵

Previous Istanbul Biennials mostly held in historic sites of the city gave a sense of the past to contemporary art works. The combination of the past with the present in the exhibition space created a transition zone between the traditional and the modern. In time, the Biennial moved to Galata and Beyoğlu. Exhibition locations included such places as the apartment building Deniz Palace; the exhibition space Platform Contemporary Art Center; the apartment building Bilsar; the former tobacco depot; the Garibaldi building and the former customs depot, Antrepo Nr. 5. Esche indicates that the selection of exhibition sites in historic buildings aimed at promoting the touristic venues of the old city.

In the 10th Istanbul Biennial, curator Hou Hanru chose some of most significant modern edifices and venues including *AKM*, *İMÇ*, Antrepo No.3, Santral Istanbul⁵⁶⁶ (Silahtarağa Power Plant) and KAHEM (Kadıköy Public Education Centre). These spaces

⁵⁶⁴ *The 9th Istanbul Biennial Catalogue* (Istanbul: İKSV Publishing, 2005), p.9.

⁵⁶⁵“Istanbul Biennial”, *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, September 16-18, 2005, p.2.

⁵⁶⁶ Santral Istanbul is a project led by Istanbul Bilgi University involving the conversion of the first power station built in Istanbul during the Ottoman period-Silahtarağa Power Plant- into a Museum of Contemporary Arts, a Museum of Energy and a cultural and education center.

symbolically and physically mirror the various facets and models of urban modernization in the city, embodying the political, social, economic, industrial and cultural realms.

According to Hanru, the Biennial project was clearly defined and structured beyond a conventional exhibition model; and it embraced the rationale of merging it with the vibrancy of real urban life.⁵⁶⁷ A series of projects led to the production of spaces for a new urban society and also produced new public spheres such as the Garanti Galeri Platform Contemporary Art, and Proje 4L to counter the current trends of privatization and gentrification in Istanbul, especially Tarlabası, Sulukule and Dolapdere. The state and private sector wanted to reconstruct some parts of the city for an economic purpose that was a new reality for the city. For this reason, the curator's choice in exhibition space is related directly to communication strategies in the development of the project, the selection of the exhibition theme, the forms of action and presentations in these sites. In other words, Istanbul Biennial as a complex structure produces a new reality for the city and the selection of venues is determined by the curator in terms of his/her perceptions of the relation between the people and the city. In contrast to previous Biennials, the 10th Biennale contributed to Turkish contemporary art scene in terms of the development of exhibition space and its structure.

The Istanbul Biennial has always been an urban event. There were two main reason of choice of Hanru in the selection of modern buildings. First, the urgent question of the biennial was about contemporary life and how modernization and modernity have been incarnated in architectural forms. Although many people did not recognize the importance of the Istanbul Commerce Building and the Atatürk Culture Centre, they represented different aspects of Istanbul's particular modernity, which also has universal connections.⁵⁶⁸ These

⁵⁶⁷ *The 10th Istanbul Biennial Catalogue* (İstanbul: İKSV, 2011), p.26.

exhibition venues in turn reflected the contradictions of modernization in Turkey. Hanru's selection of the IMÇ and the AKM as venues for the 10th Biennial showed a critical approach in international contemporary art exhibitions. Due to the fundamental change in the language and function of contemporary art, the exhibitions sites were selected in regard to their history, concept, and ideological perspective.

One of the most important sites for the Biennials was the AKM, around which a major political dispute has been raging. Taksim Square in Istanbul carries a symbolic meaning of Turkish experience with modernity, also sheds light into the recent debates in political arena.⁵⁶⁹ The Atatürk Culture Center as a Republican complex carries the spirit of the early Republican modernist trends, showing us the revolutionary face of Turkish architecture. However, due to the effects of recent developments in city planning, the Justice and Development Part government has declared its desire to demolish the Atatürk Culture Center in order to construct a new building consisting of a modern art complex and a commercial center. Most of the secular Turkish intellectuals argue that the AKM should not be demolished because of its value of identity, architecture, continuity, memory, symbolic quality, and authenticity. The inner meaning of destroying a cultural complex which was constructed by the Republican ideology is considered an attack to modernist attitudes for most secular intellectuals.

The AKM's situation demonstrates the real nature of the new urbanity and social order imposed by the currently dominant forces. Globalization, the neo-liberal economy and

⁵⁶⁸ Gina Fairley, "The Curator's Role," *Asian Art News* 17, no. 6(November/December 2007), p.90.

⁵⁶⁹ Situated in Taksim Square, the AKM is Istanbul's major public site of cultural and political ceremonial events and performances of the 'high arts'. Its archetypal socio-modernist style makes it a symbol of the utopian vision of the Turkish Republic, that of a secular, progressive and modern nation-state guided by Ataturk's political power.

political system were the main reasons behind urban development. On the occasion of the 10th Istanbul Biennial which sought to engage contemporary art in urban reality, the destiny of the AKM was inevitably a central issue to be dealt with. Bringing artistic interventions and critical visions to the AKM could effectively reintroduce the building to the public, create dialogues and debates on the future of urbanization. For this reason, the AKM as a venue was a natural choice for the Biennial. More than 15 artists from different parts of the world were invited to present their works there. Some works were conceived specifically for the site, based on the buildings, history and reality. Hanru linked these works to the more global experience expressed in the works by other artists. In the exhibition sites, diverse stories and strategies of negotiating with the global trend of urban gentrification and post-utopian reality conducted at the 10th International Istanbul Biennial.

A venue had never been used before, the IMÇ Buildings,⁵⁷⁰ a block structure that houses workshops, boutiques, and other artisan shops. The IMÇ hosted projects under the theme of “World Factory,” which talked about questions of production have been used by economists and sociologists who talked about the third world’s role in economy. More than three decades, IMÇ served as a trade market, diversified into different blocks with their commercial sectors. At the beginning, the building was a rationally planned modern utopia then it turned into a kind of dystopian urban chaos, because it was exactly in this hybrid and chaotic “structure” that the diversity and vitality of popular life could be observed.

The IMÇ was a microcosmic structure in Istanbul that showed the true image of Turkey’s modernization process and the multiplicity of its modernity. The main driving force

⁵⁷⁰ IMÇ is an outstanding masterpiece of Turkish modernist architecture. Designed by Doğan Tekeli and Sami Sisa in the late 1950s during the first wave of Istanbul’s urban modernization, this architectural project has intelligently combined a highly experimental ‘metabolism’ with its design and references to the traditional Istanbul Bazaar. It was designed with an understanding of the relationship between the building and the surrounding urban conditions, creating a bridge between the old city and new urban centre.

of Turkey's modernization, liked for many other developing countries, was its integration into the global economic system. In the global economic model, the developing world was turned into a huge "World Factory." Obviously, the transformation of the Third World into a "World Factory" had an impact on the all aspects of social reality such as industrialization, urbanization, material and cultural progress accompanied by urban gentrification, forced migration, unemployment, environmental destruction, and social conflicts.

This process also had huge impact on cultural production. More and more artists, architects, film makers, intellectuals and other cultural workers were exploring the challenges and opportunities provided by the global system. With its deeply inspiring history, the IMÇ was chosen as the venue of the 10th International Biennial aimed to reengage contemporary art activities with the urban life. The issue of "World Factory" was an indispensable element in the whole projects. Some 20 Turkish and international artists produced new projects specifically for the sites. The works were performative and developing during the exhibition period. In this way, the exhibition site created dialogues, exchanges and collaborations with the people.⁵⁷¹

The 11th Biennial place in only three venues due to a limited budget, Antrepo No.3, Feriköy Greek High School and the Tobacco Warehouse located on the European side of the city Bosphorus the venues. Although curators made a list for top five exhibition venues for the exhibition, due to bureaucratic, financial and security reasons, this project could not be realized. These places were the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture, the former U.S Consulate General Building, the Ottoman Bank Archive and Research Center, and Haydarpaşa Train Station. This situation indicates that even in the 2010s, due to several reasons, curators

have not chosen specific places that can be one of the best venues for contemporary art exhibitions in Istanbul. In addition to the lack of infrastructure, most of the exhibition spaces were partly reconstructed in order to be efficient to display the works increased the cost of the biennial.

Western Perceptions of the Istanbul Biennial: Is the Biennial the Trade Mark?

When Constantine the Great relocated the capital of the Roman Empire during the fourth century A.D. to the city today called Istanbul, he acknowledged the growing strategic importance of the Eastern provinces. In the centuries since, this vital metropolis often has alternated between a position at the worlds “center” and “periphery”, depending on the circumstances. Istanbul’s status as an East-West crossroads began to be revived after the Cold War, when border tensions eased between Turkey and its former communist neighbors. A powerful metaphor of this connection across boundaries is the city’s dramatic suspension bridges that span the Bosphorus strait and link Europe and Asia. Both bridges were built before the Cold War. This example is ideologic.

Starting with the Istanbul Biennial, the city signaled its intention to serve as a global cultural forum. Istanbul intended to take up this role because of it was a tourist attraction and represented its modern and civilized image to the world. As Judith Stein argues, the Istanbul Biennial provided Istanbul a greater visibility as a center for the display of

contemporary art. But the aesthetic success of the show demonstrated that the vortex of East and West offers provocative, varied and thoughtful work.⁵⁷²

Especially in the first three biennial, the works of Eastern European artists made an unexpectedly strong showing from Bulgaria, Romania, former Yugoslavia, and Poland. The presence of these countries, and the vitality of the works they showed, introduced European and American artists and critics to works that became more and more visible as time passed. This indicated that the Istanbul Biennial gave artists from peripheral countries a chance to show their differences in the variety of others.

In these connections, biennials can be seen as multiplying sites of intercultural dialogue that provide fully the understanding of differences and commonalities of purpose. There is growing geographical tension in such late comer biennials as Kwangju, Istanbul, and Johannesburg. The newer biennials have challenged the structures within which art and ideas traditionally have circulated.

In the mid-1990s, the Istanbul Biennial, unlike the much older Venice Biennial and Documenta, had a feeling of youthful experimentation. The participating countries exhibiting did not send their heaviest artistic guns, but those who were still on the cutting edge of what passed for the avant-garde. Richard Dornant, British art editor, argues that that it is a peculiarity of international art exhibitions that artists tend to rely on their national identities. Being English, being French and being American has argued important.⁵⁷³ This is a fact that at the beginning Istanbul, both the structure and mechanism, came from strictly local sources. For this reason, the artists represented their countries as a national structure. However,

⁵⁷² Judith Stein, "Putting Istanbul On the Map of the Art World", *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October, 9, 1992, pp.106-108.

⁵⁷³ Richard Dornant, "Noah's Ark on the Golden Horn," *Visual Art News*, no.35 (Winter 1992-1993),p.117-118.

beginning with the fourth one, the Istanbul Biennial opened more to the global art scene and played an influential role in the international arena. Documenta'95's curator Bart De Baere said that, "the Third Istanbul Biennial was a really professional and world class biennial."⁵⁷⁴

Similar to Baere's view, art critic Sarah McFadden said that "on the easternmost fringe of Europe, Istanbul has played a negligible role in that continent's contemporary art scene. But with the breakdown of the center/periphery model of cultural production, which effectively excluded from serious considerations the art made outside Western cultural capitals, the peripheries are now finding themselves subject to increased attention on the international circuit."⁵⁷⁵ Closely related to international politics, Turkish diplomatic interests have influenced a new trend called cultural integration into European Union.

Vasif Kortun argues that "being a megalopolis is the arrested destiny of Istanbul. It is situated between the North and the South, and from Asia to Europe, as a "non-space". The city does not have a direction of its own. It is not the center, for it is not center, it is just there, in the middle."⁵⁷⁶ Compared to Western artists and curators, Kortun never linked Istanbul to any cultural direction. Istanbul has its own direction different from those of other countries and is not located in the middle or anywhere else. Geographically positioning the city by the curators in the Biennial leads to the reconstruction of the upper or meta-identity of Istanbul every time.

Starting from the 4th International Istanbul Biennial, its organization shows how the international exhibition has readapted itself to political realities that are very different from those which shaped the format of the "classic" European Biennials. The general Director of

⁵⁷⁴ Kim Levin, "Significant Others in Istanbul", *Village Voice*, (December 1992), p.96.

⁵⁷⁵ Sarah Mc Fadden, "Report From Istanbul: Bosphorus Dialogues," *Art in America*, (October 1992), p.55.

⁵⁷⁶ Vasif Kortun, "İstanbul As Raumgeist", in *3rd International Istanbul Biennial* (İstanbul:İKSV,1992), p.212.

the Istanbul Biennial, Melih Fereli said that the Biennial aimed to introduce Turkey to contemporary age in art values, “but was careful to avoid the term “Western”.”⁵⁷⁷

Curator Gerardo Mosquero sees the centering of the third world in its own culture as a part of a new global era. He argues that “if the most of the world aspires to new international orders in the economic and information realms, seemingly it would also be necessary to defend a new international order of art and culture. We, the Africans, the Asians, the Latin Americans.”⁵⁷⁸

Roza Martinez, the director of the 5th Istanbul Biennial, argues that ““peripheral’ cities organize biennials as a way to have a place in the international circles of dialogue and artistic prestige, or to attract tourism. I think this is not such a bad thing, because it is better to have cultivated visitors than violent fanatics of football teams for example.”⁵⁷⁹ But at the same time the idea of globalization and the imposition of its models on other cultures have to submit to the aesthetics of the Western civilization. The West has still hegemonic power on the third world countries, creating dogmas for the global art world most of the time. Istanbul Biennial as a periphery biennial constructed new possibilities for interpreting and questioning how “centrality” and “exoticism” are constructed ideologically.

Getting back to older descriptions in the field of Oriental and Islamic studies, Paolo Colombo thinks that “the Western world does not have a sense of the cultural importance of Turkey. The vision of Western Europe is remains slanted from the time of the Crusades. The demonization of the enemy is still a current practice in the West.”⁵⁸⁰ Colombo’ statement

⁵⁷⁷ Anna Somers Cook, “The Biennial Boom”, *The Art Newspaper*, pp.1,13.

⁵⁷⁸ Thomas McEvilley, “The Third World Biennials,” *Artforum*, Spring 1992, p.115.

⁵⁷⁹ Okwui Enwezor, “*Translating Cultures*,” *Siksi* 12, no.1, p.76.

reveals how the historical biases against Turkey have dominated the contemporary art scene even at the end of the twentieth century.

Dan Cameron looked at the Istanbul Biennial from a comparative point of view, confessing that the Venice Biennial and Documenta had lost some of their importance in terms of good taste and sensitivity. Ideas and methods presented in old-style biennials remained trapped within the boundaries of Western art, whereas biennials like those of Istanbul, Havana, Shanghai and recently Sao Paulo broke a lot of rules were broken and Western paradigms were challenged. Cameron gave Turkey an important role in world culture and politics, and Istanbul was positioned as the site of a new found sense of enlightenment and exchange between the East and West.⁵⁸¹

Art and politics took center stage with the 9th Istanbul Biennial, as the Istanbul Culture and Art Foundation founded the new museum, the Istanbul Modern, the first modern art museum in Turkey. Additionally, a Contemporary Art Fair opened in mid-September, coinciding with the initial round of EU membership talks with Turkey. Esche and Kortun paid close attention to the image of the country during the promotion campaign of the biennial. In this sense, Istanbul's traditional role as melting pot and bridge between the West and the Muslim world maintained the classic view on Turkey and the Istanbul Biennial. Although the aim of Kortun and Esche did not promote cultural richness of Istanbul, the state's cultural policy used the title of the Biennial 'Istanbul' as city advertising. In the same year 2005, as featured in *The New York Times*, Istanbul was enjoyed a renaissance. Regarded as one of the most dynamic cities in the world, Istanbul was open to change and indeed was changing fast.

⁵⁸⁰ Carolee Thea, "Globalization's: An Interview with Paolo Colombo in Istanbul," *Sculpture* 19, no.1 (January/February 1999), p.37.

⁵⁸¹ Ahu Antmen, "The 8th International Istanbul Biennial," *Flash Art*, (April 2003), p.53.

Newsweek magazine featured “Cool Istanbul: Europe’s Hippest City”. The picture on the front cover displayed a scene of a well dressed young men and women dancing to dimmed red lights in a night club a westernized lifestyle. This was not like the old Orientalist depictions of Istanbul. However, this discourse of the foreign media was an outcome of the advertising and culture industry made biennial as an art product in the current cultural panorama.

Istanbul 2010: European Capital of Culture

The European Capital of Culture project, which is based on the idea of selection of Capital City from the countries that are members of European Union each year, was first implemented in 1985 with the selection of Athens.⁵⁸²In 1983, the Greek Minister of Culture, Melina Mercouri, and her French counterpart, Jack Lang, declared that culture was not given the same attention as politics and economics, and a project for promoting European Cultures within the member states should be pursued. The main aims of the program were highlighting the richness and diversity of European cultures, celebrating the cultural ties that linked Europeans together, promoting mutual understanding, and fostering European citizenship. In addition, the organization provided regenerating cities, and raising their international profile, giving new vitality to their cultural life.

Until 2010, more than 40 cities had been designated as European Capitals of Culture. During the German Presidency of 1999, the European City of Culture program was renamed the “European Capital of Culture”. During the first two decades, cities were chosen

⁵⁸² *Avrupa Kültür Başkentleri Hakkında*. Accessed February 15, 2010.
<http://www.en.istanbul2010.org/AVRUPAKULTURBASKENTI/avrupakulturbaskentleri/index.htm>

primarily based on the criteria of cultural history, scheduled events and the ability to provide infrastructural and financial support. According to the European Commission, the European Capital of Culture is a golden opportunity to show off Europe's cultural richness and diversity, and all the ties that link Europeans together. The event is so attractive that Europe's cities vie with each other fiercely for the honour of bearing the title.⁵⁸³ In response to the difficulty of generating a European identity and overcoming national interests, the EU developed various programs including the European Capital of Culture event.

In 1999, the ECOC Project was enlarged to include non-member countries. A group of civil society volunteers in Turkey arranged a meeting on 7 July 2000 in order to establish an "Enterprise Group" that would take the required steps for Istanbul to become candidate for European Capital of Culture. The collaboration of thirteen non-governmental organizations under the name of The Initiative Group to working for Istanbul's candidacy, made possible. With the participation of academics, new NGOs, members of the city's cultural and artistic communities and the support of the state institution, Istanbul was designated as one of the European Capital of Culture for 2010 along with Pecs (Hungary) and Essen (Germany). These three Capitals of Culture selected for 2010 presented new aspects of urbanity and metropolitan form and its citizenries and identities.

Urban sociologist Carola Hein argues that "Istanbul's selection as a European Capital of Culture is an example of how EU policies attempt to overcome nationalist sentiments by supporting cities, which are traditionally cosmopolitan and thus able to transcend national identity. Istanbul does not just belong to Turkey; it belongs to Europe and

⁵⁸³ *Avrupa Kültür Başkentleri Hakkında*. Accessed February 15, 2010.
<http://www.en.istanbul2010.org/AVRUPAKULTURBASKENTI/avrupakulturbaskentleri/index.ht>

the world.”⁵⁸⁴ Hein regarded the selection of Istanbul as the Cultural Capital of Europe in terms of the EU’s decentralization strategy to market the city. In this sense, the EU uses cities and European-branded spectacles and festivals to promote “Europeanness,” the cities use the events as a means to urban transformation. As following statement of ECOC shows that

Cities wishing to become European Capital of Culture must prepare a cultural programme that meets rather specific criteria: it must reflect the European character of the event and involve the participation of the people who live there. The European flavor can be seen in the themes chosen and the artists and cultural organizers from different countries cooperating to put on the event. The programme must also have a lasting and sustainable impact on the city’s long-term cultural, economic and social development.⁵⁸⁵

This perspective illuminates the motto of EU “United in Diversity”, while it provides important opportunities for rethinking a reorganizer of the European space and its networks and for integrating a diverse group of cities and regions from the center and the periphery. Since 2000, there have been multiple simultaneous European Capital of Culture, highlighting the diversity of European cities in terms of space, size, and urban form.⁵⁸⁶

Andreas Huyssen argues that through European cities of culture and other initiatives, the EU seeks to create new urban ‘imaginaries’ and European rather than ‘national’, ways of citizens to perceive the cities in which they live and work.⁵⁸⁷ Through arts and culture, European Cities of Culture highlighted the imagined European culture and European citizens.

⁵⁸⁴ Carola Hein, “The European Capital Programme and Istanbul 2010,” in *Orienting Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe?* edited by Deniz Göktürk, Levent Sosyal, and İpek Türelİ (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 253-266.

⁵⁸⁵ *European Capital Culture Programs*. Accessed December 15, 2010. http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc413_en.htm.

⁵⁸⁶ Hein, “The European Capital Programme and Istanbul 2010”, p. 258.

⁵⁸⁷ Andreas Huyssen (ed). *Other Cities, Other Worlds: Urban Imaginaries in a Globalizing World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008)

Decentralization and weak governance is one of the most important problems of the EcoC program. While the EU selects the ECoC events, it provides only partial funding, leaving the actual planning and of the organization of the year's events to the respective cities. In this regard, Istanbul's ECoC programme included European-themed activities, symposia and workshops, new art, historical renovation, urban development projects and competition. At the beginning, the main goals of the event were written in the application document for Istanbul 2010 they were overcome the challenges of the city and solve the local governmental problems. The Istanbul 2010 program mainly focused on "facilitating harmony between urban renewal and the transformation of daily," ensuring the independence of the cultural capital and facilitating the interaction of the every class within the city.⁵⁸⁸ Developed projects provided access to art and culture to people and areas which usually lacked such opportunities.

The project was called "Istanbul: City of Four Elements." The content of the project was described as follows:

Throughout history, then, Istanbul has been home to countless societies and cultures. Yet this "beautiful harmony," which is embedded in the city's foundations and entwined in the branches of its family tree, is not just a pleasant memento from a bygone era. Istanbul retains still its rich cosmopolitan character, sometimes concealing and sometimes revealing the evidence of its unrivalled physical and cultural legacy. The city is a living example of the much sought-after meeting of civilizations-something so desperately missing in the modern world that the search for it seems almost utopian. For more than two thousand years, as if inspired by Aristotle's theory of the four elements, the city has captivated humankind's attention.⁵⁸⁹

The Istanbul 2010 ECOC Agency was founded for the purpose of planning and managing the activities for preparing Istanbul as the European Capital of Culture by 2010 and

⁵⁸⁸ *Forging the Future*. Accessed January 17, 2010.
<http://www.en.istanbul2010.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ist2010-images/gp540583.pdf>.

⁵⁸⁹ *Avrupa Kültür Başkentleri Hakkında*. Accessed February 15, 2010.<http://www.istanbul2010.org>

for coordinating the joint efforts of public bodies and institutions in order to realize its goal. The Agency operates in three strategic areas: culture and arts, urban applications and protection of cultural heritage, tourism and publicity. In these three categories, there were ten aims targeted by the executive committee of Istanbul 2010. These were demonstrating Istanbul as the symbol of the country, discovering the beauty of the city, developing cultural tourism, creating jobs for a large number of people, engaging people in various artistic discipline establishing new museums, renovating historical buildings, sharing knowledge and experience with European countries, and making process in the promotion and branding of Istanbul. Visual arts, music and opera, film and documentary and animation, literature, theatre & performing arts, urban culture, education, cultural heritage and museums, urban projects, tourism and promotion, maritime and sports, international relations, fund raising projects, projects acquiring logo support were the departments under the Istanbul Capital of Culture Project.

The Istanbul 2010 ECoC Agency was assigned the task of carrying out ‘a comprehensive urban development project through arts and culture, and reveal the wealth as an inspirational source for the whole world. The Agency evolved into a fully-fledged organization, with various departments responsible for managed projects mentioned above. As Cengiz Aktar, one of the advisors to Istanbul 2010, wrote that, “one of the most valuable benefits of the ECoC project’ would be ‘transforming the classical local government into good governance.”⁵⁹⁰

However, due to legal arrangements, the Agency was connected directly to the Office of the Prime Minister and depended on a strictly bureaucratic and hierarchical structure. This weakened the role and the influence of civil initiative. The advisors,

⁵⁹⁰ Cengiz Aktar, “Istanbul, the European Cultural Capital,” *Turkish Daily News*, April 14, 2006.

consultants, and directors were turned into state bureaucrats and the Agency was turned into a government bureau. For this reason, the former director of Istanbul 2010 ECoc Agency, Nuri Çolakoğlu and the executive committee members, Gürhan Ertürk, İskender Pala, and Metin Sözen, resigned from their positions in the Agency. Their positions were filled by state bureaucrats and Istanbul Municipality governance members Şekib Avdagiç, Cumhur Güven Taşbaşı, and Muammer Erol.

Urban sociologist Asu Aksoy stated her expectations on the Istanbul 2010 event as below:

(In Turkey)...although they are chosen democratically, municipalities and local governmental bodies do not have organizing and facilitating roles in the cultural sector, and they do not create platforms for institutions and cultural actors to interact with each other. Rather, they choose to act as monolithic parties with a singular cultural vision and play central decision-making roles...Istanbul 2010 can help to solve this structural problem and create new practices for negotiation between different actors, by creating discussion platforms where citizens seek common languages to speak.⁵⁹¹

Instead of working with civic activists and private and cultural sectors actors, the Agency was constituted of bureaucrats and local administrators who viewed the Istanbul 2010 project as a state-centered cultural project. Furthermore, the Istanbul 2010 initial programme was not creative or innovative; it was a bureaucratic tool to promote Istanbul to the world and achieving short-term goals in culture. The 2010 programme book, presented in 2009 on the web site and a published book, demonstrates the shifts in focus. Şekip Avdagiç, Chairman of the Executive Board of the Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency, states that the agency selected the motto “Istanbul: The most inspiring city of the world” and characterized

⁵⁹¹ Oğuz Öner, “Istanbul 2010: European Capital of Culture: Towards a Participatory Culture?” in *Orienting Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe?* edited by Deniz Göktürk, Levent Sosyal, and İpek Türeli (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 267-278.

“Istanbul, Europe’s Natural Culture Capital” as one of the cities, which most influenced European culture and civilization.⁵⁹² This statement illuminates attempts to overcome the lost status of the City and recover its powerful position among the world cities. As can be seen in the 2010 program catalog, the renovation projects were the Kariye Museum, Hagia Sophia Museum, restoration work undertaken at Topkapı Place, and Süleymaniye Mosque.

In the closing ceremony of the Istanbul 2010, the Turkish State Minister and Chief European Union Negotiator, Egemen Bağış, said that “Istanbul will be one of the cultural capitals of the world with its assets, historical heritage and spirituality, which inspired our civilization based on tolerance and affection. It is unfair to define Istanbul as only the cultural capital of 2010. “This is not just a city. It is the identity of Turkey and a unique source of inspiration for peace, brotherhood, tranquility and tolerance.”⁵⁹³ In the final form, the European Cultural Capital Program comprised 549 projects, selected from a pool of more than 2.500 applications. The total budget of the projects approached 300 million Turkish liras, of which about 60 per cent were spent on urban transformation projects. It is not my intention here to describe the content and scope of these projects. Only projects developed by visual art departments are analyzed in order to widen to the perspective of the study.

The main target of the projects was to contribute to the international dignity of Istanbul and Turkey and to provide an opportunity for interaction among European cultures in the EU integration process. Şekib Avdagiç, the Chairman of the Executive Board of Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Cultural Agency, stated that “the event that world-wide acknowledged prominent contemporary artists in order to make production. This project is also important with regard to its fulfillment of principles which the Istanbul 2010 ECoC

⁵⁹² Ayşe Orhun Gültekin, *Istanbul 2010* (Istanbul: Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture, 2009), p.5.

⁵⁹³ “Istanbul 2010 Capital of Culture Prepares to Sign Off”, *Turkish Daily News*, December 20, 2010, p.15.

Agency maintained for supporting creative people, renewing their infrastructure for art and culture production and enhancing the international networks of contemporary art.”⁵⁹⁴

Starting from 2008, the visual department was under the directorate of Beral Madra, who determined the needs and activities in contemporary art. There were two basics that come to the fore in this respect: supporting young creative individuals and professional artists, and promoting large masses of people to embrace contemporary art. Projects were undertaken in five main frameworks: Kadirga Art Center, Sanat Limanı, Lives & Works in Istanbul, Portable Art Project supported by VAD.

The Municipality of Fatih allocated a duplex center in the square of Kadirga for the Istanbul 2010 Art Production Center as the main center of the projects. The center included a library, archive, technical room, exhibition halls, performance hall for 600 people, music and a conference hall. The predicted outputs of the projects advanced and supported by the Visual Arts Directorate by the end of the 2010 were an international art collection dedicated to Istanbul, an Art Production Center Model which had international visibility and democratic synergy to connect art project in Europe, interacting and connecting different art styles. Madra writes that “Art in Nişantaşı is definitely different than the art in Eyüp. The main theme in Istanbul 2010 should be to bring these two extremes into a platform of settlement and to find a common denominator for them.”⁵⁹⁵ For this reason, the visual culture activities took places in the different venues of the city.

In addition to Kadirga Art Center, the second project realized by Istanbul 2010 ECOC was called Sanat Limanı, a new venue for exhibitions at Warehouse #5 in Tophane in

⁵⁹⁴ *Avrupa Kültür Başkentleri Hakkında*. Accessed February 15, 2010.
http://www.en.istanbul2010.org/HABER/GP_786292.

⁵⁹⁵ Beral Madra, *Home Affairs: On Contemporary Art and Culture in Turkey* (İstanbul: BM-Suma Contemporary Art Center, 2009), p.69.

attempt to fulfill the alternative location requirements of exhibitions to be realized in İstanbul. The place is designated as an art center model which has a permanent location in the public domain. Two stairs of 3,600 m² were renewed with technical and aesthetical aspects at Warehouse 5 in Tophane to comply with contemporary exhibition standards. In 2010, Sanat Limanı hosted the following exhibitions: “European Eyes on Japan/Japan Today Vol.12, Photography, Video, Poetry Exhibitions,” “Architectural Counterpoints in Greece: From the nineteenth Century Tradition to twentieth first Century Mutations,” “A Space between Contemporary Art from North and South Cyprus: The Little Black,” and “Contemporary Arts: Mutual Trusts”.

Another project was realized under the direction of the visual arts department “Lives and Work in Istanbul,” carried out since 2008, hosted artists from EU countries who had accomplished great projects in visual arts and contributed to universal arts. These artists were provided with opportunities for living, working and producing in Istanbul; and they were allowed to conduct workshops, thoughtout meetings and production together with creative individuals, academicians and local artists of the young generation. Within the scope of the project, Istanbul hosted prominent names of contemporary art, such as Remo Salvadori (Italy), Danae Stratou (Greece), Victor Burgin (United Kingdom), Peter Kogler (Austria) and Sophie Calle (France). The main aim of the project was to turn Istanbul into an international modern art connection. Another feature of this project was that six produced art works along with the production of 48 artists who joined the workshops within this project constituted the first public contemporary art collection in Turkey. The mentioned above-in six artists exhibited their works in other museums, art centers and galleries contributed to the promotion of global art environment of Turkey.

One of the most successful projects of the visual arts department, called the Portable Art (October 2008-December 2010) project, aimed to ensure the distribution of contemporary art productions and events to remote districts of Istanbul, which were normally only presented to limited audiences in galleries and art centers concentrated in five neighborhoods. Portable exhibitions, curated by established and up-and coming curators were realized in the art and cultural centers used daily by common people. The project also aimed to enable independent curators, exhibition organizers, and artist's initiatives to exhibit their works in multi-disciplinary exhibitions, adopting an interactive, pluralistic approach open to participation and dialogue with different audiences. From October 2008, seven exhibition project and three performances displayed the productions of 155 artists and curator, reaching more than 350,000 people in Umraniye, Kartal, Tuzla, Küçükçekmece, Zeytinburnu. The projects were Portable Borders, Amber Seçkisi, Very Good, Now You Are Here! Contemporary Art for Children, Temporary Inconvenience, Amber '08:, Memorycity. The projects were supported by VAD-nonprofit art organization in Europe: Anatolian Enlightenment of the Art, Istanbul Otherwise, Flash Rue, The Saturday Events, Such is Youth, Traditional Turkish Book Arts, The Photography Parade, Cihangir Mitte, Istanbul in Children's Eyes, Art and Desire Seminars, Istanbul Time Travel Experiment, 1st International Artists Initiatives Istanbul Meeting, 1st Art Design Knowledge Symposium, The Cuma Ertesi (Saturday) Events, Contemporary Art Memory, Metrobüs to Ükudar: Connecting Perspectives in Contemporary Art, Visibility, Atlas Pasajı 3rd Floor Exhibitions: Possibilities, Intuitions, Fantasies on Istanbul, Breaking the Stereotype, Artists Meeting, The Table Project, and Divercity: Learning From Istanbul.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹⁶ Handan Durgut (ed.), *365 Gün, 549 Proje* (Istanbul: Istanbul 2010 Avrupa Kültür Başkenti Ajansı, 2010), p.30.

In conclusion, in most of the European capitals of culture, the state and local municipalities worked together on projects, working groups, and the selection of the categories under the title of the European capital. In Turkey, the organization committee and its director were changed two times because of differences in political opinions. Due to the lack of public and were intellectual support, the Istanbul Cultural Capital of Europe project stayed limited in scale and in terms of public attention. Mahir Namur, the director of European Cultural Association, emphasized the dynamics of being a cultural capital as follows: “2010 is not a target, but it is a tool for the emerging of new possibilities in art and culture. The event is a public event; this project should be integrated into Turkish society. It can be as a tool to develop a strong network at all levels of Turkish society.”⁵⁹⁷ Similar to Mahir Namur, Beral Madra, the director of the Istanbul 2010 Visual Arts Department, states the importance of developing independent organizations in the cultural sector.

Being a capital of culture is not an ordinary vent for Istanbul. It is an attempt for the structural change, waiting at the doorsteps. It is the urgent need for globally recording Turkey’s potential of critical thinking, visual/audial production and aesthetic creativity. It is to take effective part in the ideological, aesthetic and thinking production-areas of resistance and inspiration for the global culture industry. It is to enter the brisk culture/art market, enabling the introduction of the outcome of these productions to the outer world.⁵⁹⁸

Unfortunately, the organization of the European Capital of Culture was far away from making a strong connection between artists and the public to integrate art and culture in Turkish society as well as in Europe. At the state level, this event was seen only as an economic and political opportunity in regard to the integration of the EU. Istanbul 2010 was

⁵⁹⁷ Mahir Namur, “Geçmiş Avrupa Kültür Başkentleri Deneyimleri,” in *Geçmişten Geleceğe Avrupa Kültür Başkentleri*, ed. Mahir Namur (İstanbul: MSGSU Publishing, 2007), p.57.

⁵⁹⁸ Beral Madra, *Home Affairs: On Contemporary Art and Culture in Turkey* (İstanbul: BM-Suma Contemporary Art Center, 2009), p.54.

attractive for the opportunities opened up in terms of marketing the city's image as a modern, charismatic and cosmopolitan place. Hence the opportunity was being turned into a branding exercise to attract tourists and global capital investments into cultural industries. Museologist Neslihan Albayrak states that "carrying out numerous exhibitions and concerts doesn't necessarily mean that the year has been successful. The point is how these programs were chosen and they were shared with the people of the city. Unfortunately, those aspects have been quite weak."⁵⁹⁹

A committee of state officers, academics and representatives of non-governmental associations had been working on the idea of bringing the Capital of Culture to Istanbul for 10 years. However, instead of following the advisory committee's directives the agency decided to focus on mainly projects that involved protecting cultural heritage and the restoration of historical places. According to Korhan Gümüş, a member of the agency's executive board, "the restoration projects were preferred because the state's understanding of culture is rebuilding its pasts. There are also technical issues. The bureaucracy is used to handling the restoration process instead of developing new and creative projects. But they are so closed off to creativity while completing these projects; they treat them like engineering jobs."⁶⁰⁰ However, restoration need to be done carefully and this takes a long time, so these projects could not be finished in a year.

As a result of the Istanbul 2010, there were lessons learned and mistakes made. Civil and private cultural agencies could not participate in this process because of the state-dominated system. Due to the lack of an autonomous, decentralized organizational structure in

⁵⁹⁹ "Istanbul Cedes 2010 Culture Capital Title As Post-Mortem Begins," *Turkish Daily News*, 31 December 2010.

⁶⁰⁰ *Puts A Quick Make up on Istanbul*. Accessed May 25, 2010.
<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=2010-puts-a-quick-make-up-on-istanbul-2010-12-30>

Istanbul as well as in Turkey, Istanbul 2010 was not able to realize a model which was more influential or structured. Inspirational visual art projects lost its high potential to be effective in the global art scene.

In conclusion, it is observed in the late 1980s that the Turkish state increasingly relied on public relations strategies in public relation activities. International exhibitions played a leading role in promoting tourism and advertising Turkish culture in the global scene. The modern face of Turkey had to be re-fashioned in international politics to eliminate negative stereotypes. In heritage exhibitions and Turkish Festivals, an emphasis on the ancient national heritage and asserting the glorious Islamic/Ottoman past continued to build on stereotypes and the symbolic construction of sense of Turkishness served self-orientalization in many ways.

However, this stereotypical mode of representation was no longer the dominant trend in Turkish cultural policy. The global political atmosphere caused changes in the direction of the exhibition strategies which gradually began to display the diverse cultural characteristics, regional plurality, and ethnic diversity in Turkish society in the past decade. During the last two decades, the state and private sectors in Turkey have acted as the two main actors in the rising sponsorship in the field of art and culture. Organizing festivals, promoting Turkish culture abroad and refining the cultural taste of the public have been the major developments taking place in to Turkish cultural scene in the early 2000s. With the increase in the number of cultural centers and foundations in Europe, Turkish artists have had the chance to act independently in international art pushing the boundaries of European and Middle Eastern art networks beyond past limits.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This study focusing on Turkish contemporary art and heritage exhibitions in the international arena in the post 1980s period is an attempt to fill a gap in the cultural history of modern Turkey. Given this framework, this dissertation dealt with the common problems and controversial issues surrounding the terms globalization and multiculturalism. It was argued that visual representations in internationally framed exhibitions correspond to either the state' or elites' notion of history, culture, and art as well as the individual artists' self-perceptions. One major issue taken into consideration during the writing process was how the image of the nation became a tool to redefine the nation's role in world civilization. Heritage exhibitions, either official or private, openly displayed this concern. Contemporary art exhibits on the other hand, were usually pre-occupied with the in-betweenness of a global identity in today's Turkish metropole.

Most of the studies in art history have reproduced the official art historiography constructed mainly during the early Republican era. This historiographical approach is single dimensional, monolithic, state centered, and nationalist. Thus it cannot explain many of the new developments in Turkey's arts. The impact of globalization on the local culture level defined a new terminology in art history in the post modern era. Concepts which are the outcome of globalization, and also about the local culture, such as identity, glocalism, and multiculturalism, make possible to discuss a new era for Turkish cultural history. Globalism as

the crucial factor has reshaped the structures of cultural institutions, museums, exhibitions, art fairs, artists' networks, and international sponsorship as well as cultural diplomacy. Therefore, a rising literature in cultural studies on exhibitionism and museums in the West was widely used in this dissertation.

The history of international art exhibitions, apart from short critics' focusing on the International Istanbul Biennial, has yet to be written. This is mostly due to lack of relevant sources on this subject and the limited literature. In fact, during this study it was difficult to reach first hand sources and exhibition catalogues to prepare a chronological time table of the international exhibitions. In the last thirty years, studies written on the international exhibitions of late Ottoman and the early Republican era slowly have been produced. In this regard, the main intention of this study was to re-evaluate exhibitions in the post 1980s by dealing with such issues as glocalism, identity and multiculturalism. The impact of globalism and identity and multicultural studies defined the dominant theoretical perspectives of the 1980s era in cultural studies. It is hoped that this study opened a new path for visual cultural studies to evaluate the discussions and the developments of the Turkish art scene.

Turkish art history in general does not deal with the interaction of cultural developments in Turkey with social concerns in society. In the 1960s, art historians did not fully begin to write art history in comparative academic perspective and did not leave us concrete second hand-sources about exhibitions and museums in the period. Because of the introverted nature of art history, Turkish Republican art history avoided studying the interaction between sociology and art and hardly carried an interdisciplinary perspective. This dissertation sought to make up for the absence of the cultural studies approach and raised theoretical questions about the social implications of art in international exhibitions.

Due to the cultural effects of the globalization, museums are places where meanings are constructed and they have become sites which provide the visual environment for both representation and self- representation. International exhibitions are the primary sites of exchange in the global political arena where the images of the nations are constructed, maintained and partly deconstructed.

This dissertation underlined three transformations. In Turkey's cultural politics, after 1980, the first was the formation of privatization in art and culture and the rise of the Turkish bourgeoisie after 1980, directly related the neo-liberal capitalist economic formation. While the local Turkish art penetrated to the international vision of Turkey in the world, neo-liberal economic and political change triggered the form cultural policy took after the 1980s. The second is the change in Republican art history writing from a statist, monolithic, discourse into a post-modern discourse, based on diversity and multiple pasts. The third is the gradual shift of the image of Turkey from a nationalist/Turkist identity into a more cosmopolitan and multicultural identity, as designated in international heritage exhibitions and international contemporary art events.

The first is that international art exhibitions had enormous impact on the institutionalization building of museums, galleries and art centers in Turkey. Raising the cultural awareness of the masses slowly became an issue for the rising Turkish bourgeoisie art and culture also have become more profitable and marketable in the mind of entrepreneurs in terms of status, prestige, and advertising functions. The emergence of a "culture of exhibitions" was an outcome of commercialization and the privatization of art in the public sphere. Therefore in the early 2000s, to promote Turkish art and heritage, private foundations and non-profit cultural institutions have organized large-scale national as well as international

exhibitions, set up prizes, financially supported artist groups and designed advertising campaigns for attracting local populations as well as foreign tourists. The rise in the number of the private art museums in Istanbul (İstanbul Modern, Pera, Sabancı and Rezzan Has Museums) attracted foreign tourists to modern and contemporary art exhibitions when these museums hosted European blockbuster exhibitions to positively influence Turkey's art audience. In addition, private companies redefined their sponsorship strategy in culture and art, founding cultural centers and supporting non-profit art organizations after the 1980s.

Internationally framed exhibitions are central to the economic and social system of the neoliberal cultural development of the Western countries. In a similar manner, Turkey's cultural scene has followed the global trends in terms of entrepreneurial roles for both the state and the private sector. From the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the state centered cultural policy around museums and the fine arts paid particular attention to the ideological meanings of archeology, ethnography and national history. The early Republican period paid special attention to modern fine arts, as well mostly to painting, and sculpture, to educate and influence society in line with the Republican ideals of the formation of a modern bourgeoisie society. There was an going attitude that by protecting the objects of the Anatolian civilizations, Roman-Hellenistic past, and Islamic and Ottoman works of art that the Turkish state demonstrated its role as a protector of the great civilizations in the geographical space it ruled. Until the mid-1980s, Turkish cultural policy basically depended on protecting the cultural heritage of Anatolia in closed environments/museums. Republican museums as means of expressing collective Turkish identity were established according to the state's ideology that included classical civilization as a part of its territorial heritage, thereby constructing a meta-identity with links between ancient Anatolian civilizations and Turkish civilizations.

Dissolution of nationalist attitudes in the museum space was analyzed in narrative and visual structure of international exhibitions. The basic reason behind this particular shift was the increasing privatization of museums and collections in the post-1980s. Turkey's newly emerged bourgeoisie brought a new perspective for the Turkish cultural heritage and art collecting represented a transformation in aesthetic taste of collectors. There was a gradual shift from ethnographic objects to contemporary art works which showed changing preferences in collectionism in Turkey.

The second transformation was the rise of neo-liberal attitudes in domestic politics affected the state cultural policy realized a change in art history writing and exhibition's narrative structure. From the 1970 onwards, state-centered heritage exhibitions in the international platforms were constructed on a meta-narrative based on territorial identity. These state-centered exhibitions focused on the "total history" of Anatolia starting from the emergence of the first civilization in Anatolia and to modern Turkey, still basing themselves on Turkish historiography of the 1930s to a great extent. Because of the influence of the Turkish cultural policy and Republican ideology based on the Turkish History Thesis and break discourse, the national identity, which was adjusted on the national territory, resulted in the transformation of art history writing and the memory practices enacted in the museums. The construction of a chronological, linear, deterministic history formed the conceptual background in developing museum practices and creating the national past. The narrative structure of the Ottoman history exhibitions was re-organized in order to meet the expectation of Western audience. Visualization of imperial images in the exhibitions were promotional efforts to redefine Turkey's identity. This situation shows that the logic behind the

internationally framed heritage exhibitions actually reflected reproduced the ideological construction of the Republican nation state.

However, in the post-1980s era, some families from Turkey's upper bourgeoisie were willing to transfer their wealth to cultural capital. They thus aimed at the cultural development and transformation of Turkish society into a "civilized" society, while creating a legitimate social image for themselves. The need for the increased presence of private foundations in art and culture was also a result of limited financial state support in art and culture as well as the need to strengthen international networks in a global world. The newly formed private cultural heritage collections of the Koç, Sabancı, and Kıraç families opened a new path for a new wave of Turkish museums and exhibitions in Turkey.

After 2010, while the state institutions were stepping back in their financial support in this field, they still continued to cooperate with private foundations. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs paid special attention to support private heritage collections in international exhibitions to display the cultural richness of Turkey's history. A new mission of private museums brought blockbuster modern art exhibitions from European museums. The promotional campaigns and widespread advertising of museums in the blockbuster shows reflect the commercialization of exhibitions and demonstrate how the images of art and culture began to change at the local level. Dual narratives in the international exhibitions are discussed in chapter 4 and 5, demonstrating differences in politics, ideology and historiography in representation of heritage and art.

Heritage exhibitions are founded on assumptions about the cultural history in a certain society, and display how a notion of history can visualize the past in terms of narrative structure. Not surprisingly, as a result of the integration of private sector in cultural policy, the

ideological formation of heritage exhibitions in the international arena was shaped by a post-modernist historical perspective. This is the second transformation focusing on multiculturalism and interdisciplinary perspectives in heritage exhibitionism in Turkey. Due to the new trends in Turkish historiography since the 1980s, cultural history became a dominant field in world historiography as well as Ottoman historiography. The visualization of Ottoman millets as an essential heritage of the Empire, indicated a shift in the logic of heritage exhibitions on international platforms towards a multi-ethnic and cosmopolitan identity. Themes were selected according to the new tendency and elaborated the national past as the hidden site of multiple-identity.

In heritage exhibitions, three different kinds of narrative structures in the post 1980 are observed in this study. *The first* is (a) narrative structure directly related to the Turkish History Thesis using the idea of Central Asia/the motherlands, as an instrument rewriting in the historical geography of Anatolia, to make a clear definition of the origin of the Turks. This theory argued that Anatolian civilizations had Turkish roots; Turks, as a civilization building people, were not simply a military people with despotic qualities. This kind of narrative structure promoted the cultural assumptions the early Republican national ideology aimed at discovering the origin of the Turks.

On the other hand, *the second* (b) narrative depends on the Turkish Islamic synthesis model that flourished as a right-wing Anatolianism in the 1980s. This synthesis was an outcome of the state-centered history writing emphasizing the Ottoman-Islamic past hoping to fill the spatial and temporal gaps in the Republican narrative. Purifying national history from non-national elements and reducing the influence of Islamic civilizations was the basic framework international exhibitionism in the early decades of the Republic. However, the

Turkish-Islamic synthesis of the 1980s was an effort to create a glorious history of the Ottoman Empire stressing that the sixteenth century was an outcome of the rising power of a new group of conservative elites in the post 1980 coup environment, associated with the cultural legacy of Turgut Özal, a modern but conservative leader.

However, exhibits on Ottomans held between the mid 1980s to early 2000s continued more or less the same defensive attitude. Visualizations of imperial images in internationally framed exhibitions were promotional efforts to gain status and a privileged position in the eyes of the Western world. In these exhibitions, the narrative mostly ignored the multicultural characteristic of the Ottoman society, reproducing the nationalist perspective. The description of palace and the harem consisted of the oriental symbols of the Ottoman court life. The narrative structure of Ottoman history exhibitions were organized in such away so as to meet the expectations of Western audiences of an Oriental Empire. Turkish curators engaged in utilizing self-Orientalizing perspectives which took the Ottoman golden age discourse as a base for a narrative structure in the exhibitions.

The third (c) narrative structure is a recent outcome of post-modern history writing, representation of the Ottoman Empire as a multi ethnic, synthesizing civilization while also developing a newly emerged “Turkish civilization” discourse. Recent developments in Turkish historiography also go hand in hand with the changing representations of Ottoman history in international scale exhibitions. Due to new trends in historiography after the 1980s, cultural history became a dominant field in world historiography as well as Ottoman history writing. Especially the narrative structures and themes after the millenium were completely different from the previous periods. The presentation of modern Turkish history together with Istanbul and the image of the Ottoman sultans as national symbols are the main features of

this new/ post-modern representation. For the first time, the bureaucratic, administrative, military structures of the empire were studied along with the social structure in the Ottoman Empire. The visualization of the lives of ordinary people and the concrete everydayness of the various Ottoman millets brought newer perspectives to cultural history. Although according to the curators, self-orientalization generally became a disapproved strategy; it was argued here that for the purpose for advertising and making cultural promotion of Turkey, the oriental visualization still continued at some levels and through some given symbols. The main reason behind the transformation is that a gradually raising interest in Byzantine history in the international exhibitions was providing cultural and historical connections with the pre-Ottoman past. It is argued here that the logic of the exhibits followed these broad trends in historiography. For example, “From Byzantium to Istanbul: One Port for Two Continents” and “Istanbul: The City and the Sultan” exhibitions showed a new understanding for the international heritage exhibitions.

As depicted in the title of this dissertation, the international exhibitions in terms of theme and organization consisted of two different types: heritage exhibitions and contemporary art events while heritage exhibitions were mainly sponsored by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the early 2000s, private art collectors who were big capital holders paid much more attention to exhibiting archeological works and Ottoman heritage in the reputable world museums. The themes selected for the exhibits, it was argued in this dissertation reflect political concerns for the image of Turkey in front of the civilized nations as a site of multi-cultural local identities and one of the great civilizations in the world.

Contemporary artists from Turkey became much more visible in the global art scene in the 1990s and the early 2000s. For the first time, independent groups and artists integrated into European art circles. As a second narrative style, contemporary art exhibitions, in contrast to heritage exhibitions, mainly depended on private sponsorship and EU funds, because the Turkish state did not spare systematic funds to promote the contemporary at the cultural festivals. The reason might be that the contemporary art exhibitions carried radical political messages. Apparently, until recently contemporary art was not a familiar representational strategy used by Turkish ambassadors and bureaucrats in cultural diplomacy. In the Chapter 5, participation of Turkey in international contemporary art exhibitions was analyzed in terms of two dimensions: chronologic and thematic.

The 1990s for Turkish artists was a time for introducing their art works in Europe and gaining a growing recognition of art from Turkey. Artists coming from outside the borders Europe of regarded, were as non- Europeans and as “foreigner.” Thus Turkish artists were regarded as both “other” and “foreign.” This is the reason why most solo or group exhibitions organized by European or Turkish curators were still related with the national cultural identities of the contributing artists, revealing characteristics of geography, culture, and nationalism. The thematic concern was directly related to the issues analyzed in the exhibitions. Such issues as gender, violence, new urban life, identity conflict, immigration, and the daily life in Istanbul were the new issues which could again serve the construction of Turkey’s image in new ways. On the other hand, state-sponsored contemporary art exhibitions continued to focus on the history of modern Turkish art rather than contemporary currents. The participation of Turkish artists in the Venice Biennial was regarded as a duty to represent

the new image of the country. The concept of the art works which were exhibited in Venice has shifted from national to international.

Starting from 2000, as for Turkey, contemporary art exhibition was not only a representation of the cultural “co-evalness of the country with the rest of the world, but also a manifestation of economic welfare of the country. Private entrepreneurs interested in contemporary art funded independent art organizations and artists to exhibit their works all over the world. Considering art as a commodity, unlike heritage exhibitions, international contemporary art exhibitions aimed to place Turkish art in the international global art market since contemporary art exhibitions and art fairs put aesthetic value to art in order to raise its value under the conditions of art market, they fit into the capitalist networks of the private sector.

Compared to the 1990s, the visibility of contemporary art from Turkey in the internationally framed exhibitions gradually increased as a result of the positive image of the Istanbul Biennial and the great effort of artists from Turkey. Especially, group exhibitions in Europe made them partly well known figures in Germany, Holland, Austria and France. In the last decade, the image of art from Turkey seems to have been transformed from “outside foreigner” to “stranger among us” in Europe. This indicates that there has been a transformation of Turkish identity in the field of contemporary art, in terms of an image and acceptance. Although Turkish art is still an “outsider” and a “stranger,” private companies and the symbolic support of the state of artists from Turkey and the Turkish Diaspora introduce them to the international environment without necessarily engaging Orientalist tools.

In contrast to Turkish curators and artists, foreign art critics and curators still seem interested in seeking Oriental images and the codes of eastern culture in group exhibitions.

Examining Istanbul as a case study for global processes from the periphery was the strategy contemporary art is used presenting the transformation of city life, because the city was no longer a fixed and unchanging place in the Orient. Istanbul as the cultural capital of Turkey is now seen as a culture bridge between Asia and Europe, representing the modern and cosmopolitan face of Turkey in the world. Apparently, for this reason, the image of the city determines the narrative of most international group exhibitions. Depicting diversity in religions, languages in the city were in turn associated with the contemporary questions on how heterogeneity and cultural difference were incorporated into globalization. Artists from Turkey questioned the boundaries of globalization in contemporary art taking into consideration periphery's struggle with the center. Obviously, most Turkish artists were aware of falling into the trap of self-Orientalization and they avoided reproducing political clichés, comparisons, and the illustration of stereotypes in Istanbul. One of the negative results of nationally framed group exhibitions were that the instrumentalisation of artists in accordance with Turkey's membership with the EU in cultural diplomacy. These artists though did not want to take a role on the role of culture missionaries of the country. Also, the limitation of artists by geographic, national and regional classifications in these exhibitions led to restriction in styles, forms, techniques and identity of representation.

The third transformation realized in this study is the gradually shifting image of Turkey. Internationally framed exhibitions might serve a multilayered engine of global diplomacy and help transform negative stereotypes into positive ones and to improve the political and economic standing of the country. They demonstrate the ways in which cultural representation can be used to promote a certain view of national self-representation in global politics. In this regard, this dissertation argued that even the third transformation actualized

through post-modern representational strategies serves to reconstruct the meta-identity of modern Turkey and the promotional aims of the Turkish state.

The Turkish state increasingly relied on the strategies in public relation activities in the 1980s. International exhibitions played a leading role in promoting tourism and advertising Turkish culture in the global arena. Heritage tourism provided a positive image for tourism attraction as well as inviting foreign investments. The messages delivered in the promotion campaigns emphasized a unique location, a long history, and the diversity and richness of Anatolia, which that made Turkey the unique travel destination.

The rising importance of cultural diplomacy directly was related to the conditions of the 1980s coup d'état period. The image of the country severely was damaged due to the politic atmosphere. For this reason, the modern face of Turkey had to be re-fashioned in international politics to eliminate negative stereotypes. In heritage exhibitions and Turkish Festivals, an emphasis on the ancient national heritage, asserting the glorious Islamic/Ottoman past helped reconstruct stereotypes and the symbolic construction of the sense of Turkishness served self-Orientalization in many ways. The Western audiences expected Turkey to reflect Oriental symbols. However, the global political atmosphere caused changes in the direction of the exhibition strategies, which gradually began to target display cultural characteristics, regional plurality, and ethnic diversity in Turkish society in the past decade. During the process of membership to the EU, the Turkish states promoted the idea of Turkey as a bridge for cultures and nations between the East and the West was a strategy promoting this role for reconstructing the image of the country in terms of its multi-ethnic character and as the maker and protector of civilization.

The post-1980 period is needed to be reevaluated through its inner dynamics. To conduct new research with a new perspective, not only visual culture but also on cross cultural studies will be an important activity that will advance the historiography of Turkish art history. The distinctive characteristic of this period needs to be evaluated through using various social science disciplines as sociology, art theory and cultural studies, while asking new questions. One major problem was the constructing weight of stereotypical- Orientalist images of Turkey at international exhibitions and attempts to eliminate. In this way a new area for study seems to have opened up in the analysis of the heritage and contemporary art exhibitions defining cultural identity of the nations. The changing status of Turkey in world politics during the past ten years seems to have created distinct pressure on cultural diplomacy. The change both in the political and cultural preferences in Turkey reveals that the “representation of cultural identity” is still very important. In this sense, “Istanbul 2010: The European Capital of Culture Project” was highlighting the richness and diversity of Turkish culture, celebrating the cultural ties that linked Turkish citizens together, promoting mutual understanding. The Istanbul 2010 project will promote Turkish culture and art in the boundaries of European countries.

As a result, in this study, the transformation of the basic notions of post- modernity in the exhibition space is basically discussed in terms of 1) cultural policy, 2) Turkish art historiography, 3) changing representation strategies in the body of the international exhibitions. The dual narratives were articulated in three different transformations namely: cultural policy, Turkish art history writing, and representation of national identity. Under the effect of globalization, the theme and structure of the Turkish international exhibitions shifted from national to international.

This study aimed to show the transformation in the presentation of the cultural identity of Turkey, reconstructed in accordance with the tension between the global and local cultural concerns. The role and status of Turkey within the EU membership process also should be viewed in terms of this overall process. Turkey's new visual representations in international exhibitions are related to the new social, economic, and political formations in which the country finds itself. Being contemporary (i.e, European) and being culturally different (Turkish, Muslim) still seem to be the guiding principles of cultural representation in Turkey.

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