Bosch Alumni Network

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Bosch Alumni Network =
Cultural Spaces <>
Impact !! Field

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E-Conference
Proceedings ‖ E-Book

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The Diversity !?
in the Perception ~
of Cultural § Spaces

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A cooperation between

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This e-conference proceedings is published as the output of Cultural Spaces Impact Field activities in the year of 2023 within the framework of Bosch Alumni Network. In the e-conference, nine members of the network did researches around the theme of the diversity in the perception of cultural spaces according to their interests and each of them made presentations regarding the process and the outcomes. Each of the researches brought a unique medium and each of the outcomes embodied in that unique medium of its own. E-conference is held by Şafak Ersözlü, as the host of the Cultural Spaces Impact Field.

In Bosch Alumni Network Cultural Spaces Impact Field, we are excited of welcoming new possibilities and different perspectives. Currently the cultural spaces are existing in various ways. Public spaces, art centers, galleries, black boxes can perform their roles as cultural spaces as well as a coffee cup, a poster, digital inter-faces, or bodies can be considered as cultural spaces today. In this e-book, you will find topics regarding the theme of “Diversity in the Perception of Cultural Spaces” which were developed in several media and tools like research paper, podcast, documentary video and presented online within the framework of Bosch Alumni Network Cultural Spaces Impact Field, in the year of 2023, by the network members, from the worldwide. Please do not be surprised of the diversity of the participant profiles. They gathered spontaneously through their responses to my call, in the program moderated by me and reflecting the theme of the work. The network currently consists of 8.428 members and the 9 researchers here are the ones whom we could be able to involve in this e-conference within the conceptual, timewise, productional framework of the study. I hope this study can be an inspirational touch to the cultural workers in our world.

Şafak Ersözlü

On behalf of the Cultural Spaces Impact Field

CONTENT ^

Perceptual Diversity Of What Is ✓ And What Is Not ≠ Art Through The Lens Of 10-15 Year Olds As A Space Of Culture In Underserved Communities ₪ In Masanafu, Bukukigi, Uganda

Brief history about the project:

In the realm of art discourse, our conversations often traverse the historical expanse of various art forms. However, within the contemporary perspective of art, new paradigms, and ideologies are constantly forged by the artists and creators themselves.

Irrespective of public consensus, an artist's creation, deemed art in their eyes, holds the intrinsic legitimacy to bear that title. Over time, such perceptions gain recognition, gradually evolving into acknowledged works of art.

Building upon this conceptual foundation, I conducted an artistic research project involving children 10 -15 years old in Uganda, they employed guided photography, capturing images of elements they perceived as both artistic and non-artistic within their surroundings. These creators articulated the rationale behind their categorizations, unveiling the unique lenses through which they perceive the world of art.

The research endeavor sought to delve into the intricate minds of children, unraveling their nuanced understanding of what constitutes art. The culmination of their endeavors was manifest in the form of pictures that were then showcased online in a virtual exhibition on https://aqua-romaine-f4mkcw.mystrikingly.com/ comprising 30 curated images, collectively generated by 15 young participants. Accompanying each image, the youngsters gave their thoughts and justifications behind their artistic choices.

To guide the young ones, the following were put forward as points of departure

1. What is art to you?
Asked the children to define what is to them and capture it in pictures.

2. What is not art to you?
Asked the children to define what art is not and also capture it in pictures.

3. What do you see?
Capture what you see for others to see what you saw

4. What's more in the cultural space?
What do you see that you think others won't see

5. Tell us about them
Children sharing stories about their captured images

Some of their images are be found on the website provided above for reference.

Key Lessons:
- The deficiation of art is based on individual perspective of it.
- Whatever you perceive as art, you can believe.
- Art is more than just the visuals but also the non-visuals.

What children perceive as art

What children perceive not to be art

A virtual exhibition by Emmanuel Ssekitto Kalule

Work in progress presentation at 10th July 2023 at 14.00-15.00 CET

Presentation of the outcomes at 15th July 2023 at 14.00-15.00 CET

Speaker: Emmanuel Ssekitto Kalule
Moderator: Şafak Ersözlü

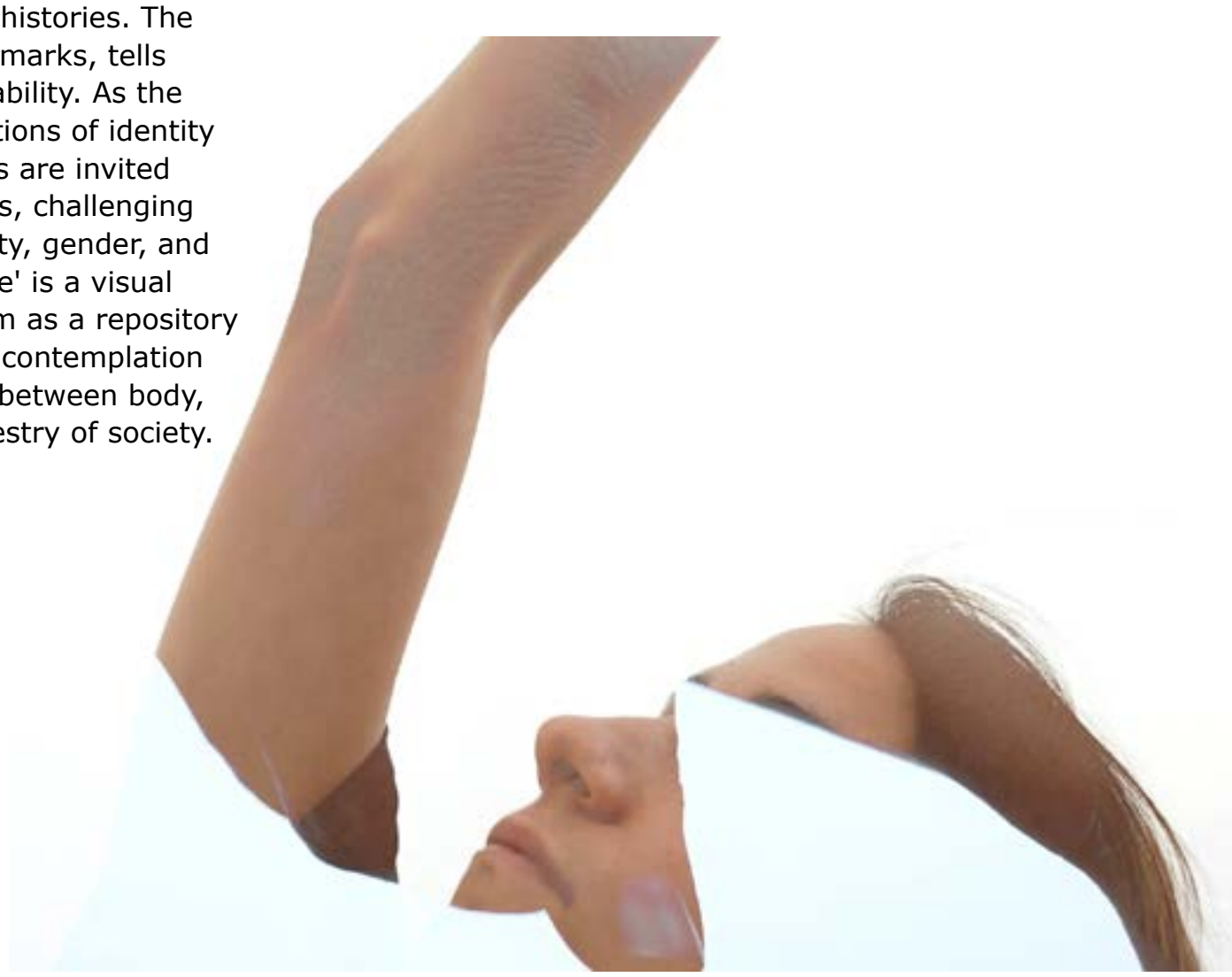
"Most times when we talk about art, we talk and refer to the different forms that have existed since the early years. But in the contemporary view of art, there are emerging views and thoughts that are created and defined by the artists/creator. Whether the public believes or not, what an artist creates and believes to be art, they have all the reasons to call it, and in the end, people start to call it art."

Based on the line of thought above, Emmanuel Ssekitto Kalule proposes to engage 10-15 years to use guided photography to take images of the things they believe to be artistic and non-artistic in their environment. During the presentations Emmanuel discussed the logical framework of this study and invited us to a virtual exhibition of the creative process.

Body µ As a Cultural Space <>

In "Body As a Cultural Space", the human body emerges as a cultural space, a canvas of collective stories and societal imprints. The video navigates the contours of diverse bodies, transcending the physical to delve into the symbolic. Through a dance of choreographed movements and intimate close-ups, the body becomes a living archive of cultural narratives, societal norms, and personal histories. The skin, adorned with scars and marks, tells tales of resilience and vulnerability. As the camera explores the intersections of identity etched onto the body, viewers are invited to question societal constructs, challenging preconceived notions of beauty, gender, and self. 'Body As a Cultural Space' is a visual exploration of the human form as a repository of cultural dialogues, inviting contemplation on the intricate relationships between body, identity, and the broader tapestry of society.

https://vimeo.com/890195292



A videography by Metehan Kayan

Work in progress presentation at
22nd July 2023, 11.00 am CET

Presentation of the outcomes at
29th July 2023, 11.30 am CET

Speaker: Metehan Kayan
Moderator: Şafak Ersözlü

“As a dancer and performance artist, my view of the cultural space is body oriented. Based on the meaning of the word culture, I reached the words accumulation and residue. When I approached these concepts from a human existentialist point of view, the idea that I could consider my body, where my existence takes place, as a space, made sense to me. I conducted research on the effects of the world surrounding us and the living spaces we live in on our body-space, and their remains and accumulations in this space. I recorded the bodily equivalent of the data I have reached during the mental thinking and research process by using the movement writing technique from the dance discipline and videography as a tool. I think it was fruitful for me to consider the body as a field of culture and to progress with body-oriented studies and to research how it corresponds to the discipline of video art.”

During these presentations, Metehan Kayan shared the logical framework and the approach regarding his topic as well as he invited us to an online video screening regarding a creative process.

Convention of Religious † Places into Modern Cultural § and Public Spaces: Case Of Christian Molokans' Temple ɻ In Baku

Abstract

As attitudes towards certain religions or religious movements change throughout history, temples belonging to them turn into historical monuments or public spaces. Unless the historical structure and spiritual sensitivity are changed, the transformation of this type of religious spaces into public and cultural spaces is a positive attitude. There are many examples when ancient religious sites took on different roles as the attitude of society and the state towards religion changed. In the Soviet period, along with the restriction of religions, this type of places was assigned to public spaces (schools, libraries, offices, etc.). There are a huge number of examples of their transformations. Of course, these cases are considered unacceptable, as they are the result of the authoritarian approach of the state. Respect for the religious beliefs of people and religious temples are important. And it is positive that some spaces, as they lose their religious functions, are turning into public spaces rather than remaining just a historical building. One of these positive examples is the Molokan temple, built in Baku (Azerbaijan) in 1913. This article has studied the example of turning religious temples and places that do not carry a religious function into public and cultural spaces and has reached the conclusion that these buildings have a positive experience in maintaining their historical value. This type of religious places can create an emotional and public atmosphere of religiousness by interacting with secular society, which has the potential to motivate even non-believers, as it influences the way people perceive the environment around them in public spaces.

Keywords: Molokans' temple, Space transformation, Baku, Christianity.

Author:

Ilkin Aliyev is a young researcher based in Azerbaijan and Turkey. He is a Phd candidate at Istanbul University, Social Sciences Institute. Ilkin's research areas are social and human rights, social behaviors of communities, political studies as well as sustainable development. He is a lecturer at Azerbaijan State Academy for Sport and Physical Education in the Social Sciences department and conducts social sciences related courses for bachelors. Along with his academic career, he works on different social projects and with various civil society organizations, international institutes as a consultant, expert and trainer/facilitator, project manager.

1. Introduction

Religious spaces hold a unique place in the cultural and historical tapestry of societies around the world. They are the physical manifestations of spiritual beliefs, and they often serve as sanctuaries of worship, reflection, and community engagement. Over centuries, the role and fate of these religious spaces have been subject to profound transformations, reflecting the evolving attitudes of societies toward religion and spirituality. In this article, we delve into a fascinating aspect of this evolution — the conversion of religious places into modern cultural and public spaces. Our focus centers on the captivating case of the Molokans' Temple in Baku, Azerbaijan, built in 1913.

Religious spaces have long been integral to the spiritual and cultural identities of communities, embodying centuries of tradition and belief (Nolan, G. & West, W. 2014). These spaces, often characterized by their architectural splendor and spiritual sanctity, hold immense historical and cultural significance. However, as the world undergoes rapid societal and ideological changes, the fate of religious places becomes an area of critical inquiry. The transformation of religious spaces into cultural and public domains brings to the fore questions of preservation, adaptation, and the impact of such conversions on the society at large. It is evident that changes in the attitudes of societies and governments have a direct bearing on the destiny of religious spaces. The past century has witnessed fluctuations in the approach to religion in various regions, often driven by political ideologies, societal dynamics, and cultural shifts. These changes have prompted religious spaces to take on different roles, thereby reshaping their identities.

The Soviet period, particularly, was marked by significant shifts in the role and ownership of religious spaces. As the Soviet authorities pursued a stringent approach to religion, they transformed many religious places into public institutions such as schools, libraries, and offices (Wanner, C. & Stainberg, M. D., 2008, p 124). These conversions were, in some cases, deemed unacceptable as they were often perceived because of authoritarian policies that failed to respect the religious beliefs of individuals. This period serves as a compelling illustration of the complex interplay between government, religion, and the fate of religious spaces. Yet, amidst the controversies and challenges, there are instances where the conversion of religious spaces into modern cultural and public domains is celebrated as a positive endeavor.

The case of the Molokans' Temple in Baku, Azerbaijan, is a remarkable exemplar of this positive transformation. The Molokans, a unique Christian sect with distinctive religious practices and beliefs, established a spiritual haven in the form of a temple in 1913 (Coleman, H. J. & Stainberg, M. D. 2007). Over the years, the temple underwent a transformation, shedding its religious function and embracing a new role as a modern cultural and public space. This conversion is emblematic of the potential to harmonize tradition and modernity, enriching both the historical and cultural dimensions of the space. As we explore the Molokans' Temple in Baku, we aim to understand the underlying dynamics of religious space transformation. We will examine the historical and religious context, the processes that facilitated its conversion, and the positive outcomes that this metamorphosis brings. The preservation of historical value and the creation of an emotional and public atmosphere within this converted space are central themes in this investigation.

This article unfolds as an exploration of the dynamic relationship between religious spaces and the societies that shape them. The Molokans' Temple in Baku stands as an enlightening case study, demonstrating the multifaceted nature of these transformations and their far-reaching implications. The study of the conversion of religious spaces into modern cultural and public domains presents a captivating journey through history, spirituality, culture, and the adaptive nature of human society. It offers a lens through which to understand the fluidity of religious and cultural identities and the capacity of these spaces to retain their relevance and significance. In the pages that follow, we delve deeper into the history, transformation, and impact of the Molokans' Temple in Baku, exploring how such conversions can influence the way we interact with our environment and history within public spaces.

2. Academic Review on Conversion of Religious Places to Cultural and Public Spaces

The conversion of religious places into modern cultural and public spaces has been a topic of considerable academic interest, drawing attention from various disciplines. Scholars have examined this phenomenon through the lenses of history, sociology, architecture, and religious studies, offering insights into its historical context, socio-cultural implications, and motivations. Scholars have sought to uncover the historical context and motivations that underlie the conversion of religious spaces into cultural and public domains. In discussing the Soviet period and the conversion of religious sites, Ph.D. Michael Roemer, a renowned sociologist, observes, “The Soviet government's approach to religious spaces was deeply influenced by its ideological stance, which aimed to reduce the influence of organized religion on society. Converting churches, temples, and synagogues into secular institutions was seen as a means to achieve this goal” (Roemer, M., 2010, p. 29).

The impact of these conversions on the preservation of religious spaces and cultural heritage has been a central focus of academic research. Ph.D. Marie Rodriguez, an architectural

historian, highlights this aspect, stating, "Converting religious spaces can be an effective strategy for preserving their historical and architectural value. It ensures that these spaces remain integral to our cultural heritage, serving as bridges between the past and the present" (Rodriguez, 2016, p. 62). Religious and Cultural Identity Conversions of religious spaces have prompted discussions on the shifting religious and cultural identity of communities. Besides, other research (Fiorani, D. and others, 2017) emphasizes the importance of striking a balance between preserving the original character of religious or historical places and facilitating their integration into the modern urban fabric. By carefully planning and designing the conversion process, these sites can be transformed into vibrant public spaces that foster cultural exchange, community engagement, and dialogue. By repurposing religious spaces as cultural venues, they become accessible to diverse populations, transcending religious boundaries and creating opportunities for interfaith dialogue and mutual understanding.

The academic literature supports the notion that the convention of religious or historical places into modern public and cultural spaces contributes to the preservation of heritage, revitalization of urban areas, and the promotion of inclusivity and cultural exchange within communities. Numerous case studies and examples from around the world have enriched the academic discussion. In conclusion, academic research on the conversion of religious places into modern cultural and public spaces has provided a multifaceted view of this phenomenon. Scholars have examined the historical context, motivations, preservation, socio-cultural implications, and practical examples of these conversions. It is within this academic framework that we explore the case of the Molokans' Temple in Baku and its role in the broader context of religious space transformation. This academic review offers a comprehensive overview of the scholarly discourse surrounding the conversion of religious spaces, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of the Molokans' Temple and its significance in the landscape of religious space transformations.

3. History of The Molokans and The Molokan Temple in Baku

The Molokans are a Russian Spiritual Christian sect that evolved from Eastern Orthodoxy in the East Slavic lands in the 18th century. The term Molokan is an exonym used by their Orthodox neighbors. Members tend to identify themselves as Spiritual Christians (духовные христиане: Duchovny khristiane). In general, they rejected the institutionalized formalism of Orthodoxy and denominations with similar doctrines in favor of more emphasis on "Original Christianity" as they understood it. They emphasized spirituality and spiritual practice; such sacramental practices as water baptism have been permitted only as tangible signs and symbols of more important spiritual truths. They are a Christian sect that emerged as a result of religious reform movements within the Russian Orthodox Church. The name "Molokan" is derived from the Russian word "moloko," which means "milk." This name reflects one of their distinctive practices, which involves the consumption of dairy products during religious rituals, particularly in the celebration of the Eucharist. Molokans are known for their pacifist beliefs, simple living, and communal lifestyle. They have historically faced persecution and discrimination in Russia due to their religious practices and beliefs, including their refusal to serve in the Russian military.

As for their presence in Azerbaijan, the Molokans, along with various other religious and ethnic groups, migrated to the South Caucasus region, including Azerbaijan, during the 19th century and early 20th century. In Azerbaijan today, the Molokan community is quite small, and its numbers have likely decreased over the years. They are primarily located in the cities of Baku (separately) and Ismayilli (as a community). The exact number of Molokans in Azerbaijan is not readily available, but they are a minority within the broader Azerbaijani population. The activities of the Molokan community in Azerbaijan are not well-documented, and it's likely that they have integrated into Azerbaijani society while preserving some of their religious and cultural traditions. Given their historical emphasis on simple living and communal practices, they may continue to maintain tight-knit communities and adhere to their religious beliefs. Nowadays, there are only about 180,000 Molokans in the whole world (there are different sources and numbers – it is hard to say exact number). Most of them live in Russia, Ukraine, South Caucasus, and the United States as small communities.

Russian Spiritual Christians, called “Molokans,” are a sectarian group that originated in eighteenth-century Russia as part of breakaway movements from the Russian Orthodox Church. The term “Russian Spiritual Christians” may derive from the early Christian heretic movement of the fourth century led by Valentinus. Spiritual Christians denied the divine right of the czar to rule and rejected the use of icons, orthodox fasts, military service, and baptism (Bronner, 2006). Various settlements were founded in 1834 by Russian peasants, predominantly Molokans from central Russia, that had been resettled in the Caucasus by Tsar Nicholas I in the years following the Treaty of “Turkmenchay” at the end of the Russo-Persian War (1826–1828). Further Russian peasants migrated to the area over time. These were mostly Molokans and some Doukhobors, coming from the cities of Tambov, Voronezh, Rostov, and Stavropol.

A religious temple was being built in the capital of the country - Baku, which would unite all Molokans by the decision of the Molokan leaders

after the Molokans spread to different regions of Azerbaijan, and years later already established their own local communities. The building, known as the Molokan Temple, was built in 1913 as a place of worship for Baku's Molokans, who follow an offshoot of Russian Christianity. Under the Soviet Union the building was taken over by the state and Azerbaijan's first radio station was founded there in 1926. Until recently, the building had been under the control of the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport. It was then privatized through a process that has remained opaque. The building has been emptying since the early 1990s. At the end of 2018, the building was privatized, and the new owner leased it to the "Salaam Cinema Club" where it was designed as a culture and public space.

4. "Save Our Heritage" Campaign and Current activities of "Salaam Cinema Collective" in the Molokan Temple

In the early days of May 2019, the owner of the premises of the Salaam Cinema Baku, set up by a group of young people, demanded they leave the old building. The young people, fearing the demolition of this historic building, rejected the request. As a result, on May 6, police and executive officers entered the building. On the same day, the issue gained public attention and the activists started the "Save Our Heritage" campaign. The activists demanded that the government issue a statement that the building was in an emergency condition. Young activists guarded the building day and night. In the evenings, the young people organized various musical programs and performed theatrical performances. As a result of the 3-month campaign, the building will be added to the list of historical monuments and the threat of demolition was eliminated.

The young people who worked to protect the building were mostly young people working in the arts and architecture. After the campaign began, political activists started to join the process. On June 28, 2019, the Institute of Architecture and Art of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS) sent a report to the Ministry of Culture on the inclusion of the Salaam Cinema Baku in the list of state-protected historical monuments. According to the head of the institute's department for protection and restoration of architectural monuments, the Cabinet of Ministers immediately began to review the appeal of ANAS to consider including Molokans' Temple in Baku in the list of historical monuments.

During the inspection, it was found that the building was different from other Christian temples. Unlike other Christian temples, it was revealed that the building had no altar. The expert group prepared a positive recommendation for the building's registration as a monument and sent it to the Ministry of Culture. The Salaam Cinema is still operating in the building as a public and culture space.

Salaam Cinema Baku, located in the historic Molokan Temple building, conducts a diverse array of community-building activities. They organize art festivals, fairs, and film screenings, providing a platform for local artists, vendors, and filmmakers to engage with the community. The venue also hosts celebrations of national and religious holidays, including Novruz Thursdays, Ramadan, and Easter, bringing the community together for these special occasions. In addition, Salaam Cinema Baku promotes community engagement through public gardening and other public space activities. They offer a space for meetings with Molokans, fostering discussions and connections. The venue is a hub for theatrical performances and various workshops, covering subjects from art and crafts to skills development. Furthermore, Salaam Cinema Baku hosts exhibitions, showcasing the work of local and visiting artists, allowing the community to engage with visual art and creativity. These activities collectively contribute to the vibrant cultural fabric of the local community and strengthen the bonds of togetherness in the area.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

As we focus on the specific case of the Molokan Temple in Baku and examines the positive effects resulting from its conversion into a modern public space. By analyzing the historical, social, and cultural implications, we can better understand the value of repurposing religious structures for the benefit of the community.

- **Preservation of Historical Value:**

The conversion of the Molokan Temple into a modern public space has allowed for the preservation of its historical value. The architectural integrity and unique features of the temple have been maintained, ensuring that its rich heritage remains. By repurposing the temple, its history and significance are made accessible to a broader audience, fostering a deeper appreciation for the religious and cultural heritage it represents.

- **Enhanced Cultural and Public Engagement:**

The Molokan Temple's transformation has facilitated increased cultural and public engagement within the community. As a public space, it provides a platform for various cultural events, exhibitions, and performances that promote dialogue and interaction among diverse individuals. The temple's open and inclusive nature encourages people of different backgrounds to gather, fostering social cohesion and understanding.

- **Revitalization of Urban Space:**

The conversion of the Molokan Temple has contributed to the revitalization of the surrounding urban space. Previously an unused or underutilized building, it has been

transformed into a vibrant cultural hub that attracts locals and tourists alike. The presence of a lively public space creates a positive impact on the neighborhood, attracting businesses, stimulating economic growth, and enhancing the overall quality of life for residents.

- **Promotion of Religious Tolerance and Understanding:**

By repurposing the Molokan Temple into a modern public space, it has become a symbol of religious tolerance and understanding. The temple's open-door policy and diverse range of activities create opportunities for interfaith dialogue and mutual respect. Visitors, regardless of their religious beliefs, can appreciate the architectural beauty and historical significance of the temple, fostering a sense of shared heritage and promoting religious harmony.

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A paper by Ilkin Aliyev

Work in progress presentation at 4th September 2023, 17.30 CET

Presentation of the Outcomes at 26th October 2023, 17.30 CET

Speaker: İlkin Alilyev
Moderator: Şafak Ersözlü

"As attitudes towards certain religions or religious movements change throughout history, temples belonging to them turn into historical monuments or public spaces. Unless the historical structure and spiritual sensitivity are changed, the transformation of this type of religious spaces into public and cultural spaces is a positive attitude. There are many examples when ancient religious sites took on different roles as the attitude of society and the state towards religion changed."

Within this presentations, Ilkin Aliyev invited us to share the approach and logical framework regarding the topic as well as the outcomes came out of the research.

Youth ¡ Activism and Engagement * in Cultural § Spaces

1. Introduction

In a city where many aspects of our life are shaped by economic interests and forces , the culture nevertheless can play a vital role in fostering collective participation. Moreover, youth people through forms of culture and inclusion can reclaim a sense of belonging in shaping cities, neighborhoods and surroundings. The latter is essential in shaping culture and art policies and to overcome elitization of it towards young people. In contrast to the easy access to the mass culture by young people especially from marginalized communities, the practices towards social change require active participation and give perspectives for the involved groups of recreation, networking and engagement in societies. Considering that in a city the key role of culture is in shaping societies and social change practices in its broad term is a starting hypothesis of this research. Throughout its forms citizens are being involved not just as participants but as re-creators of processes and events and re-established strong ties within networks and communities and enriching the commons.

2. Implementation

The research brings the theme of youth culture practices and places in choosing three site specific alternative places and initiatives. "ReBonkers" is placed in a former historical settlement from Ottoman times turned into an alternative cultural center. "HALE 3" is a re-created center for alternative cultural practices, non-formal education and skateboard activities, which is located in the former Poligrafiya building. The "Emergence" art fest was organized by an informal group of youth whose passion is the re-development of art practices within the city of Varna, Bulgaria. All of these initiatives and places either created within the past years or recently are redistributing private resources and using fundraising, re-shaping civic society energy and using the potential of the new technologies for reaching people for the co-creation process. Following a framework (Wisniewska, 2015) in a prescriptive sequence the study is diversifying culture with people as action and commons, as inclusion and a social glue. Three case studies provide practices that give glimpses of proactive behavior in setting a scene for co-creation and re-development of public places, in providing space for alternative forms of culture for/by youth people, which suggest resilient ways of cultural practices with people.

- **Culture as action and commons**

Daily we use the word culture so often not just for referring to Art, but it is becoming a language for describing reality, for exploring historical heritage and neighborhood surroundings. For most of the countries in transition in Southeast Europe after the 90s culture and art entered public space not just as a decoration , but as a commentary and reflection and through this opened a dialogue about that space in a historical perspective. "ReBonkers" is a newly established place for alternative culture in Varna, which was open to the public 2 years

Figure 1. Outside facade and main entrance of '"ReBonkers" (2023)
Source: Own photo

ago. The space is distinguished by unusual architecture and acoustics – a tunnel-like round stone building with a natural green roof.

In the 90s, the Bonkers club, which was among the first scenes for alternative music in Bulgaria, was housed there. Key to the development of bands such as Rag Dolls, Babyface Clan, Pyromania, Big Mama Scandal, Slang, etc. At the beginning of the millennium, the "bunker" fell into disrepair and turned into an overgrown abode of homeless people. The transformation of "ReBonkers" from a historical place to a space for culture started in 2016 and was adhered by collective and organized efforts of the NGOs - "Varna Youth Capital 2017'' and "Talyana'' association, which is engaged for its refinement since 2017.

Through innovation and art, the association "Talyana" helps preserve the architectural heritage of the city and meets the public with new and different forms of cultural practices. Enormous amounts of work and commitment have been done by the organizations throughout the journey of carefully protecting the tangible heritage and the collective transformation into place, which was based on new embodied knowledge. Throughout the numerous reviewed interviews of the members of the organizations in local newspapers and media (Barbov, 2022) it is evident that the challenge process of restoring the place which is highlighted requires participatory tools and models of governance. Abide this participation entails a number of paradoxes when applying academic knowledge that need to be carefully considered through the prism of the commons.

Participation is not just an act but, in the process, also matters the reciprocity of the action in the local context. In that case among the learning lessons for the organizations involved are that the collective intelligence enables the community to create some kind of togetherness, to be flexible and a sense of belonging when dealing with institutions.

The stage for contemporary art in Varna – the "ReBonkers" space, opened its doors less than 2 years ago, but in its short experience it has already held more than 100 events with the participation of 342 artists from Varna, Bulgaria and the world. During my exploratory site tour, I saw the latest exhibition "Postcards and contraband" by Nikola Stoyanov and Aaron Roth, curated by Hristo Kaloyanov. The exhibition is the result of a study of the official archive of the "Combating Drugs Trafficking" Directorate of the "Customs" Agency in the period 1975 – 1985.

It shows official notes, photographs, negatives, references and report notes. which mark part of the routine of the customs case, but also the diplomatic image that the services must maintain before the international community, explains the curator Hristo

Figure 2. "ReBonkers" Indoor eastern side (2023)
Source: Own photo

Figure 3. "ReBonkers" main entrance indoor - on the left side - poster of the exhibition "Postcards and contraband" (2023)
Source: Own photo

Kaloyanov. "ReBonkers" program of activities is multidisciplinary and includes contemporary theatre and dance, film, experimental music, literature and discussion of social issues, but a major focus is on contemporary visual art.

This year the building of ''ReBonkers'' turns 200 years -old and is actually the oldest fully preserved building in the summer capital of Bulgaria- Varna. Back in 1823, the stone building was built by the Ottoman authorities as a storehouse for gunpowder. Many call it the bunker. During the Crimean war (1853 - 1856) when Varna was the most important city of the western coast of the Black sea, and turned into an important strategic center of the military operations the bunker was used as "gunpowder burial''. Close to "ReBonkers" still now can be found remains of the fortification from the Ottoman times of Varna called "Kadar Baba tabia''.

Referring to past and present for some reasons in school is usually being taught in glorious events about world history, while little space is left for our community, our neighborhood. Moreover, our community belonging knowledge is predominantly narrated through heroic struggles. "ReBonkers'' turned a historical place into a space for alternative cultural events through systematic work with institutions in the municipality of Varna and Bulgaria. Being situated in a very mixed and central neighborhood with a long history is a great advantage for its coexistence. However, in order for its full potential and position in the neighborhood and the involvement of the community to be more intensive it needs more collaborative actions. This could as well make the culture we need more in touch with people, with them together. Envisaging more visitors could be planned activities with the nearby community for revolving its past through oral history in various visual or site-specific activities.

Figure 4. "ReBonkers" Exhibition "Postcards and contraband", installation (2023)
Source: Own photo

- **Culture as inclusion**

In recent years we are living in massive digitalization, and the changing of communication channels, which create new forms of expression between culture and audience. To a certain point a new phenomenon is arising when culture is perceived as doing something with the audience. This process of creation by doing is very common within the non - formal educational models of learning by doing. As it is confirmed ''This is where the practice of cultural activists meets that of social activists'' (Wisniewska, 2015, p. 15). Working together, collaboration is more important within the common process of recreation rather than on an individual basis. That is the case of the alternative space "HALE 3'' (Home, 2017) for youth culture, board games, a kitchen and a library which is housed in the former Poligrafiya building in Varna. However, the functioning of the alternative place was threatened by the owners of the building who in 2020 decided to increase its rent. Thus created a large support by the youth people across Varna and Bulgaria, through a presented petition " Support the Alternative Space Association and the HALE 3 project!", 2020). Like that they were seeking support in the negotiations held. "HALE 3" is formed by three spaces uniting people in the common idea of freedom, independence and creativity. Since its creation in 2015 the main mission of the organization called "Alternative space'' is to keep as they say "Varna awake and active''. In an area of 700 m2, it is in the

Figure 5. Remnants of the former Varna fortress of Kadar Baba Tabia. Regional Library "Pencho Slaveikov", Varna, Bulgaria - CC0. (no date). Source: https://www.europeana.eu/item/2058609/object_PSRL_5412476?lang=en

center of the city and stretches in three halls and a city terrace. The first hall is a constantly changing street-ramp track for extreme sports and lessons. The second hall is for audio-visual performances, concerts, cinema and shows, and the third hall is set aside for creativity, exhibitions, relaxation or a shared workplace.

Throughout the years the organization behind "HALE 3" - "Alternative Space" is working for the recognition and development of the space on local, regional and national level and as well for the contribution to the development of youth and

Figure 6. Front door of Poligrafiya public building – "HALE 3", (2023) Source: Own photo

youth cultural spaces. These forms of reactive protests opposed the economic agent of the privatizer, whose intention was as well to contain the functioning of the alternative place for youth cultural activities and to rearrange it. The process of privatization in Bulgaria in compliance with the Transformation and Privatization of State-Owned and Municipal-Owned Act (Transformation and Privatization of State-Owned and Municipal-Owned Act, 1992) started in 1993. During its ongoing procedures a strong decentralized approach to privatization was adopted and this helped it to maintain a relatively high degree of independence. Like this many public buildings functioning was totally changed as is the case of the Poligrafiya Varna. As being privatised its premises were transformed into small offices or partly reconstructed into a commercial building of a hotel. Existing

Figure 7. "HALE 3" main hall , (2023) Source: Own photo

public spaces like this started to degrade due to looser administration by local authorities. However the absence of places for youth culture, ramps for skateboarding urged the rise of activism by people being involved in non-formal education or alternative youth sport activities.

Becoming part of "HALE 3" either as a viewer or a participant in concerts it is easy to be involved in its operational process. New models of operation of cultural and youth institutions are being applied in its functioning. Daily or on certain events the managers of "HALE 3"

Figure 8. "HALE 3" Concert hall, (2023)
Source: Own photo

invite participants to be involved as volunteers or in the re-creation process.The inclusiveness of the space for culture is also reassured in the numerous events - more than 100 concerts, 25 bazars, 60 exhibitions, 60 cinema screenings (Home, 2017). It is essential to mention that in cooperation with "For You'' NGO , they are implementing "European Solidarity Corps" projects as a hosting organization. The process of inclusiveness through cultural and youth activities is being implemented on a yearly basis involving not just volunteers from abroad but also local ones.

- **Culture as a social bond**

The accession of Bulgaria to the European Union in 2007 brought new opportunities to many young people to study and travel abroad. The intensive labor emigration enabled a part of the tendency of investing in capital but also to recognize more the value of solidarity. Nowadays more and more young people's mindset is focused on contributing to the society through cultural skills and recognizing them as contributing to the well being of the country. Culture is being equally valued as an issue in the debates as the theme of the commons in society. This was also one of the leading themes of the Art festival ''Emergence'' (Emergence Art Fest, 2023) held between 2 – 5 March 2023 in the vicinity of the public halls of Radio Varna station.

Figure 9 . Official logo of the Emergence Art festival, (2023)
Source: Own photo

It was organized by a like - minded informal group of young people - Konstantin Zlatarev and Denitsa Balinova, whose common feature is that both of them have graduated abroad. In times when individualism is prevailing- remote offices, discourses on the need for capacity of working together, this youth cooperation is bringing to debate the need of social ties. Moreover, its motto was on promotion of emerging artists. As it is clarified by the organizers the etymology of the word 'emergence' comes from the Latin root 'emergere' and references the process of bringing something forth, bringing to light.

In line with the festival core principles was also to bring to public artists who have limited access to the digital domain. The festival enhanced on giving opportunities to exhibit artworks, to foster cooperation based on experimentation and to certain point projecting academic experience of the group of organizers from abroad. As one of the organizers Konstantin Zlatarev said in an interview "we want to create a space where, through collaborative practices, ideas emerge and are explored'' ("First Edition of Emergence Art Fest in Varna" ,2023).

The collaborative element in every session, presentation or exhibit where the audience was involved in discussion supplemented the complex theme chosen of 'emergence'– ''The whole is more than the sum of its parts'' ("First Edition of Emergence Art Fest in Varna", 2023). The complexity of culture in narrating the world, in establishing relationships, in creating a community among the dichotomy connection of public and audience were mediums followed throughout the programs. After all it brought personal discourses of the necessity to seek cooperation rather than self -resilience.

3. Conclusion

In addition, we are facing how young people, despite being exposed to the individualism which seems to be intensified by digitalization of the world, are more likely to seek cultural initiatives based on activism. Young people are bringing activism to the cultural spaces and scene in transforming historic heritage into a space for alternative visual forms of culture, in confronting economic interests for the goal of better representation and inclusiveness and in establishing social ties for the sustainability of the commons. Practices like these differ

in their forms of recognition but are equally being validated by public authorities. However, the culture with the people based as well on strong practices of youth activism should continue to be supported with different public tools and mechanisms for the benefit of the operational status of the initiatives.

Literature

Front door of Poligrafiya public building –"Hale 3" main hall (2023).

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"ReBonkers" main entrance indoor – on the left side - poster of the exhibition "Postcards and contraband" (2023).

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A paper by Nataliya Nikolova

Work in progress presentation at 12th September 2023, 01.30 pm CET

Presentation of the outcomes at 26th October 2023, 12.00 am CET

Speaker: Nataliya Nikolova
Moderator: Şafak Ersözlü

"In the last years I am working with predominant focus on youth policies dynamics and the role of different European factors and institutions on impacting on them. My recent interests were triggered by activism of youth people in developing, maintaining new public spaces for culture, transforming historical heritage, creating new topos and features of a historical quarterin my home city of Varna, Bulgaria. Within the study I would like to propose – on site and a desk research through photography, narration, interviews. I would like to present 3 specific examples of youth and civic society activism which will identify and explore these newly formed public spaces of culture as action, as inclusion, as commons and as a social glue."

Within the presentations of the work in progress, Nataliya Nikolova shared the point of view and logical framework regarding the topic as well as the outcomes of the research.

Places ¬ of Cultural Encounters ɣ in Nice

Places of Spontaneous Cultural Encounter in Nice

I always thought about what Pierre Nora called sites of memory, or later Realms of Memory, what preserves history and what is history itself. However, my feelings were always based primarily on theoretical knowledge, on information that preceded the meeting with the place.

When I arrived in Nice, I knew almost nothing about its history and very little about its cultural context. It was a unique experience of empirical research, subsequently supported by the study of the history of the place. The idea of the work is to create layered maps of gradual penetration into the city and try to record and analyse how randomly emerging places of cultural encounters are filled with the power of previous history.

Cultural Palimpsest: Unveiling Layers of Urban Memory in Nice

Building upon the theoretical underpinnings of cultural geography, this project employs the concept of a "cultural palimpsest." A palimpsest refers to a manuscript or piece of writing on which the original writing has been effaced or overwritten, leaving traces of multiple layers. In the context of Nice, the city acts as a living palimpsest, constantly overwritten by the activities, stories, and cultural encounters of its inhabitants.

Embarking on a Personal Odyssey: Navigating Nice's Cultural Mosaic

As I traversed the cobblestone streets of Nice, my journey became a deeply personal odyssey, transcending the academic exploration of cultural spaces. Beyond the theoretical frameworks and scholarly concepts, the city unfurled as a canvas where my own narrative interwoven with its historical tapestry.

The intimate encounters began to redefine my relationship with the city. The café where a chance meeting blossomed into a routine ritual became not just a waypoint but a cornerstone of my experience. The anti-war rally, unexpected yet impactful, marked a moment where the city transformed from a geographical entity to a living, breathing entity with its own pulse.

In the heart of the old town, where history whispers through weathered stones, I found solace. The echoes of past lives, the silent conversations of architectural relics, and the vibrant hues of the Cours Saleya market became threads in the tapestry of my own connection to Nice.

My map, initially a blank canvas, became a visual diary. Each marked point on the map told a story — not just of the place but of my evolving relationship with it. The crystalline lattice expanded beyond its theoretical construct; it became a reflection of my personal growth, curiosity, and the evolving dance between my identity and the city's essence.

In the realm of cultural exploration, the unexpected has been my greatest guide. A wrong turn leading to an art studio, a misread sign revealing a hidden gallery — these serendipitous moments became the brushstrokes on my personal canvas of Nice.

The layers of the city, whether revealed in the intricate architecture of the Old Town or the modern vibrancy of Place Masséna, mirrored the layers within myself. Nice, as a cultural palimpsest, offered not just a glimpse into its own history but an introspective journey into my own.

As this project unfolds, it seeks to bridge the gap between the scholarly and the personal. Nice, with its alleys of memories and boulevards of possibilities, has not just become a subject of study but a companion in my quest for a deeper understanding of culture, memory, and the intricacies of human connection.

Mapping the City: Points of Significance

Here is my map of the city where I found myself in September 2020, when almost nothing worked, it was almost impossible to leave the house and my whole life went online.

The map [1] of Nice, full of attractive places, cultural points, museums, restaurants, libraries, historical monuments, was just white noise for me at first.

Gradually, I began to distinguish individual points on this map. These points appeared by chance - so my friend and I went to drink coffee, and then we met in the same place again and again, and here is an anti-war rally, and here is a church that I knew nothing about before, etc.

These points appeared by chance - but history itself is not accidental.

I highlighted the first few points in the city on this map [2], which became the basis of my crystalline grid of Nice. And these points are connected by a very simple route going through the city, they are strung along this road.

Negresco

Point # 1 [3]

And here's the first one. I named this place on the map after the world-famous Negresco Hotel located here. The hotel [4] is located on the famous Promenade des Anglais in Nice and one of the first protests and then anti-war rallies organised by the Russian community took place here as, i.e. anti-war rally near Negresco [5]. The site was chosen for the protests because of its visibility, but the history of the site itself gave it additional power.

The work of artist Niki de Saint Phalle is in the hotel courtyard [6], she immortalised the famous jazzman Miles Davis. And next door to the hotel is the Memorial for the victims of the Truck Attack in Nice [7] which happened in 2016. Hotel Negresco during the Second World War [8].

Église Saint-Nicolas et Sainte-Alexandra de Nice

Point#2 [9]

The Russian Orthodox Church of Saint-Nicolas and Saint-Alexandra is one of the most beautiful churches in Nice. It was built when Nice belonged to the Kingdom of Sardinia, under the leadership of the Empress of Russia Alexandra Feodorovna, in order to provide a place of worship for the Russian aristocracy who were staying in the region. Consecrated in 1860, it was the first Russian parish church in Western Europe and, after the annexation of Nice to France, one of the first Orthodox churches in France. This church is not subordinate to the diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church; since 2019, it has been attached to the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Near the church [10,12,13] is the Canet cafe [11], which is located opposite the church. Canet is one of the few cafes where you could drink coffee during lockdown, make appointments, and it was from this place that I began to recognize Nice by touch. I came here quite often, even before I went to church for the first time. Here I met a Chechen woman, whose family left Russia in the late 90s, and in the spring of 2022 I drank coffee with a Ukrainian woman and listened to her stories about the miraculous rescue of her parents in Bucha.

Place Massena, this is where the main protests take place.

Opéra de Nice with the boulangerie Jeannot and Saint-François-de-Paul Church.

Fenocchio, the famous ice-cream shop.

Points ## 3, 4, 5 [14]

The author of this Yellow Gorilla [15] is Richard Orlinski. The popular contemporary artist, in collaboration with the city of Nice, turned several neighbourhoods into open-air museums.

Conversation à Nice by Jaume Plensa [16], Spanish artist specialised in monumental art. These seven characters represent seven continents and the communication between the different communities of today’s society.

The photo shows [17] a rally in support of Alexei Navalny, a Russian political prisoner in Massena.

Place Massena. Carnaval, the end of XIX century [18].

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Nice Carnival, the Opera de Nice returned to the Veglione Grand Ball, which was held on February 25 2023! During this ball, different sessions followed one another: the classic Viennese ball – the bal musette – the disco, pop, rock years, as well as electro music with a DJ [19].

The second photo shows a scene from the ballet Cinderella [20]

Fenocchio offers a hundred different varieties of ice cream, there is even tomato ice cream and lavender ice cream. But the main thing is

that if you come to this place, you will definitely meet a friend from another part of the world whom you have not seen for ages! [21]

And on the right is the famous Cathedral of Sainte-Réparate, patron saint of the city and the Diocese of Nice.[22]

Cathedral of Sainte-Réparate in 1930. [23]

Monument aux Morts de Rauba Capeau Point # 6 [24]

Situated on Quai Rauba Capeau (which is why it is often referred to as Monument aux Morts de Rauba Capeau), the Monument to the Dead was built between 1924 and 1928 (though the local authorities' decision to build it was made in 1918). This 32 metres high structure is one of the largest cenotaphs in the entire France. It was erected in the memory of the almost 4,000 locals who died in World War One. Designed by Roger Seasal, it was embellished with bas-reliefs by Alfred Janniot.

Louis Delfino [25], a pilot with 16 certified aerial victories and the last commander of the prestigious Normandie-Niemen regiment engaged on the Russian front, was born in Nice. The city of Nice pays tribute to Louis Delfino every year as well as to the 42 pilots who lost their lives during this epic.

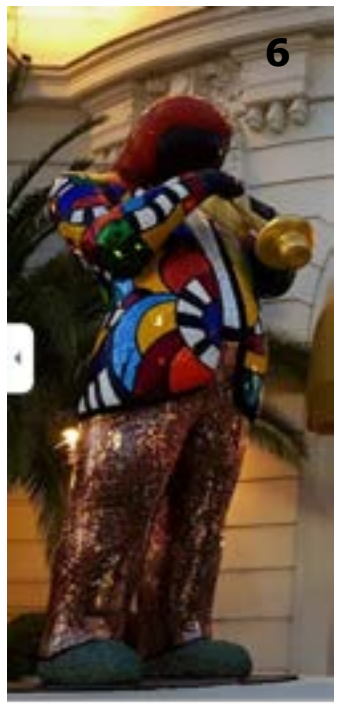
Return of the Names [26]— an annual commemorative event dedicated to victims of Soviet-era repressions. Participants who are gathering on October 29th all over the world read out the names of victims of Joseph Stalin's Great Terror. Last year in Nice the Readings of the names of the victims of the Stalin repressions took place near the Monument of the Dead. Quai Rauba Capeau [27] in the beginning of the XX century, before the First World War.

Again and again - I was very interested in delving into the history and culture of a place, understanding its roots and how they influence us now.

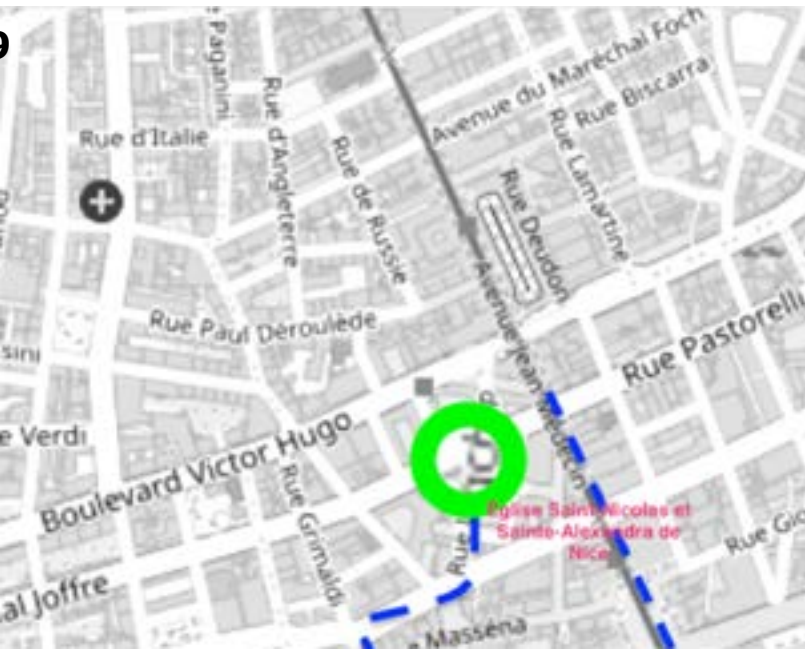

2

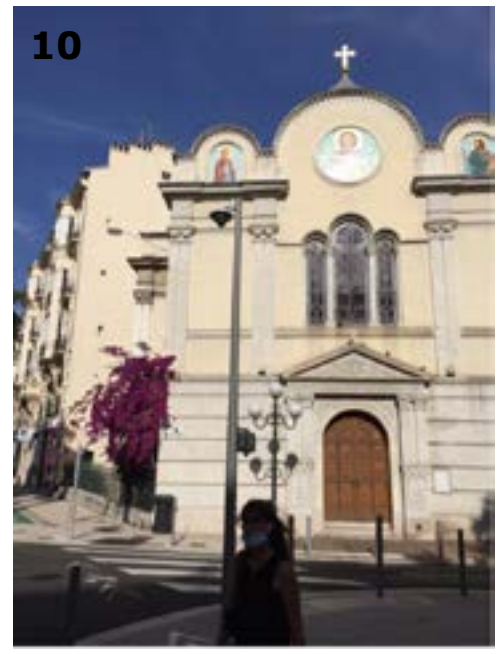

3
Boulevard Victor
Rue du Maréchal Joffre
Rue de la Buffa
Carré d'Or
Rue de France
Rue Dante
Promenade des Anglais
Le Négresco

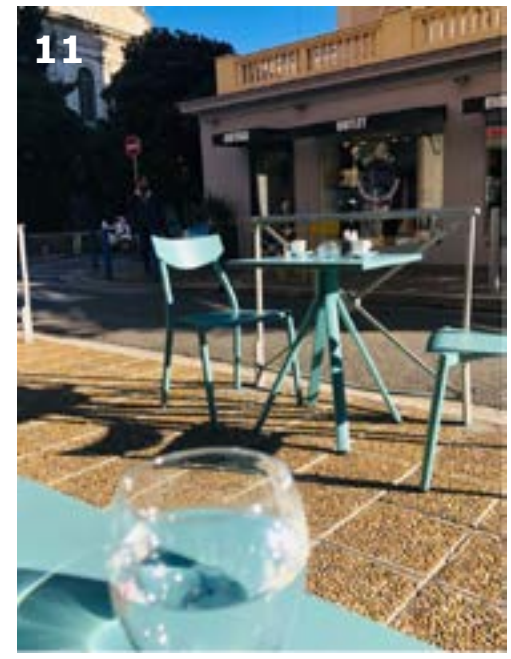

5


6


7


9
Rue d'Italie
Avenue du Maréchal Foch
Rue Paul Déroulède
Rue Pastorelli
Boulevard Victor Hugo
Massena


10


11


14
Fenocchio
Vieux Nice
Opera de Nice


15
Russians
War
NAVALNY

16

17

18

21

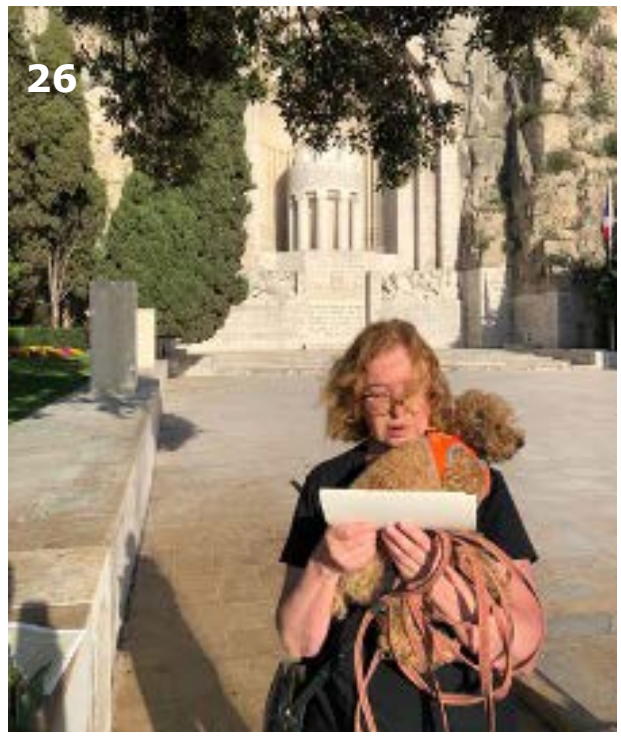
20

23

27

24

25



A mapping study by Natalia Petrova

Work in progress presentation at 25th October 2023, 01.30-02.30 pm CET

Presentation of the Outcomes at 30th October 2023, 10.00-11.00 am CET

Speaker: Natalia Petrova
Moderator: Şafak Ersözlü

“Cultural space is not necessarily an exact physical location, thanks to covid, who taught us how to live in an online space without exact physical reference. And I'd be interested in thinking about spontaneous, unplanned points in the city, places of cultural encounter, unencumbered by formal rules and structures. These might be crossroads where you meet people you know by chance a few times and it's already a permanent meeting place for all sorts of people; food and antique markets where a noisy crowd suddenly forms points of concentration; cafés and bakeries or benches in your own backyard.”
T
hrough the presentations Natalia Petrova shared the point of view and logical framework regarding the topic as well as the outcomes of the research.

A Short History ※ of Micro / Hybrid Art Spaces <> in Izmir: 1980 – 2020

Since early 2000's, Izmir has been consistently hosting a number of independent, self-sustainable and non-profit art spaces that are disappearing or popping up once in a while. Thus this research aims at compiling a glossary of local good examples from 80's to this date in a nutshell, aiming at to reveal the facts that create the background of motivations of "independents" that insist on "keeping their spaces open" regardless of ongoing crisis.

When we look at the efforts of independents of past four decades based in Izmir, Turkey; we clearly and easily recognize that contemporary artists had to create their own spaces as they lacked the support and benefit from public or private parties such as museums, galleries, institutes or the local governments, until the mid-2010s. In this context, visibility of the local potential, quality and the diversity of the scene and insistency of cultural actors to invent new spaces were overlooked or neglected by the national cultural industry, as Izmir was considered as an idle spot though the city itself was suffering from brain drain as the majority of the procreator individuals took the road to Istanbul to become a part of creative industries and the art scene. This brain drain, lack of spaces and a habit of creating comfort zones in order to stay away from the predatory nature of national art scene, brought a tendency to relying upon own resources and a limited audience. Accordingly, continuity and sustainable documentation was frequently interrupted for various reasons; and the contemporary art scene of Izmir is only now trying to recollect and record the traces it left in history. As such, the practice of producing, exhibiting, documenting, and classifying based on an integrated approach is left only to independent archivists and curious scholars.

Regarding those issues above, this research does not only include a glossary of independent art spaces based in Izmir but also supply a short list of events belonging to 80's and 90's that inspired the foundation of many arts and culture initiatives and collectives in the next decades.

I'd like to thank Asst. Prof. Borga Kantürk[1] ; one of the leading figures on Izmir arts and culture scene as founder of various collectives; for supplying the list of events still encouraging cultural actors that are seeking for a starting point to exist on the scene.

1 https://avesis.deu.edu.tr/borga.kanturk

1980 – 1990

The environment that gave birth to the events in the second half of the 80's was led by first-generation artists and scholars[1] such as Cengiz Çekil, Erdağ Aksel, Ann. B. Aksel, Feyzi Saydam, and Halil Akdeniz. Artists from the second-generation[2] , namely as Ekrem Yalçındağ, Vahap Avşar, Mümtaz Sağlam and Ramazan Bayrakoğlu also took an active role in development of the scene. The exhibitions and events listed below and organized by aforementioned names above, aimed at bringing motivation and mobility to a flourishing scene whilst encouraging the next generation to produce.

In this decade, we see that first and the second generation of artists had a common tendency to work with private enterprises namely as Vakko Arts Gallery, Füzen Arts Gallery, Galeri Aygıt, Tuval Arts Gallery, Mask, Oksijen, Epsilon, Can Ajans Arts Gallery, Çanakkale Seramik Exhibition Hall, Temizocak Arts Gallery, Turgut Pura Foundation and İletişim Bookstore besides galleries established by private banks[3] and public institutes such İZFAŞ and National Arts Gallery of Izmir. International cultural offices[4] also played a crucial role by hosting various exhibitions, especially giving the ground of participation of expats or visiting artists from abroad in the process.

1986

In Memory of Joseph Beuys: "Another Art"[5]
Place: Izmir German Culture Center
Date: 10 - 21 March 1986
Participants: Necati Abacı, Halil Akdeniz, Ann B. Aksel, Erdağ Aksel, Turgut Aldemir, Hüseyin Alptekin, Vahap Avşar, Zafer Aytekin, Canan Beykal, Michael Bishop, Lynn Criswell, Cengiz Çekil, Osman Dinç, Ahmet Elhan, Ayşe Erkmen, Adem Genç, Serhat Kiraz, Ahmet Koman, Füsun Önur, Ahmet Öktem, Mümtaz Sağlam, Fevzi Saydam, Sarkis, Yusuf Taktak

"This exhibition was organized with the leadership, will, and effort of a group of artists from Izmir in memory of German Artist Joseph Beuys, who died on 23 January 1986, and was created with the efforts of artists with whom we could make contact."[6]

1987

"Joint Exhibit"
Place: Turkish - American Association of Izmir
Date: April 22nd – May 12th, 1987

Participants: Ann B. Aksel, Ayşe Erkmen, Canan Beykal, Cengiz Çekil, Erdağ Aksel, Füsun Onur, İsmail Saray, Osman Dinç, Pierre Bernard, Serhat Kiraz, Vahap Avşar

"This exhibition consists of the 'works' of a group of artists working at home and abroad, getting beyond the well-known and common artistic attitudes and behaviors. Despite such commonalities, this exhibition is not a 'group exhibition' defined by the artists gathered around certain principles. Therefore, each artist takes part in the exhibition with her or his own unique position and responsibility."[7]

1988

"Joint Exhibition '88"
Place: Turkish - American Association of Izmir
Date: May 4th – 26th, 1988
Participants: A2, Canan Beykal, Cengiz Çekil, Osman Dinç, Ayşe Erkmen, Füsun Onur, İsmail Saray

1989

Ekrem Yalçındağ: "Public Space Project"[8]
Date: December 5th, 1989

1 Born between 1940 - 1955
2 Born between 1955 - 1965
3 Esbank, Akbank, İş Bankası, Yapı Kredi
4 Turkish – American Association, German Culture Center, British Council, Institut Français: The contemporary art scene in İzmir has a long history with international culture offices / centers as those spaces still play an essential role on sustaining the vitality and visibility of the local scene.
5 https://iupress.istanbul.edu.tr/tr/journal/art-sanat/article/joseph-beuysun-anisina-1980lerden-bir-sergi-ve-izmir-cagdas-sanat-ortamina-etkisi
6 Exhibition brochure, March 1986
7 Cengiz Çekil, exhibition catalogue, May 1987
8 https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/kuşaklararası-90lar-podcast-hrSyTtMYgzl/

1990 - 2000

During the decade, current art galleries belonging to private enterprises, bookstores, municipalities and private banks, together with international cultural offices / centers were already in function. Nonetheless, with the addition of spaces such as Yaşar Holding Arts Hall, Mazhar Zorlu Arts Gallery, Arts Hall of Hilton Hotel, Arts Hall of Chamber of Bussiness, Aphrodie Arts Gallery, Çetin Emeç Arts Gallery of Municipality of Izmir, Soyut Gallery a new wave of audience was emerged due with the diversification of spaces.

1991

"Summer Exhibition"
Place: Izmir International Fair
- American Pavilion, 1991
Participants: Ramazan Bayrakoğlu, Yeşim Ercümenliler, Mümtaz Sağlam, Gülay Sağlam, Ekrem Yalçındağ

1992

Curated by Ekrem Yalçındağ and Ramazan Bayrakoğlu; "Fake Invitations" was made of a series of invitations, which consisted of bundle of false announcements that declares "a series of exhibitions will be opened in major art galleries in Istanbul that will feature the works of the leading figures of conceptual art, abstract expressionism, pop art, and minimalism". The exhibitions that would never take place were listed as follows:
"Abstract Expressionists": Jackson Pollock, Mark Rotkho, Willem De Kooning, Robert Motherwell, Arshile Gorky
Place: URART Art Gallery, Nişantaşı, Istanbul"
Dates: May 8th – 26th, 1992
"Conceptual Art Exhibition": Marcel Duchamp, Sol LeWitt, Arakawa, Joseph Kosuth, Walter De Maria, Joseph Beuys
Place: BM Contemporary Art Center, Nişantaşı, Istanbul
Dates: May 6th – 24th, 1992
"Minimalists Selection": Frank Stella, Barnet Newman, Keneth Noland, Clyfort Stil, Ellsworth Kelly, Morris Louis, Ad Reinhardt
Place: RAMKO Art Center, Teşvikiye, Istanbul
Dates: May 4th – 22nd, 1992
"Pop-art exhibition": Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Jasper Johns, David Hockney, Tom Wesselman, James Rosenquist, Claes Oldenburg, Richard Hamilton, Robert Rauschenberg
Place: Gallery Baraz, Kurtuluş, Istanbul
Dates: May 2nd -20th, 1992
In the middle of the decade, ŞANTİYE Gallery[1] became the hot spot. The gallery, founded by architect Merih Dönmez took its name from the ongoing construction whom he transformed the ground floor of a building into a temporary arts space. Having hosted nine exhibitions until the construction was completed and acting as a full-fledged organization designing publications and holding symposiums; the gallery now is regarded as a touchstone in the city's contemporary art history also probably for the first time conducing local artists to create a series of debates based on the issue such as "how and why independent artists shall create their own spaces for exhibitions".

1994 - 1995

"Series of Nine Exhibitions"
February 15th – April 4th, 1994, Güven İncirlioğlu, "ANK.TC"
March 22nd – April 16th, 1994, Ekrem Kahraman, "Nostalgia for Tomorrow/ Prophecies from Yesterday"
April 19th – May 14th, 1994, Ahmet Müderrisoğlu, "Chromagic"
May 17th – June 18th, 1994, Cengiz Çekil, "Exhibition/Installation"
June 21st – July 16th, 1994, Aylin Çöreli Saraçlı, "Doğa/Nature"
October 13th – November 11th, 1994, Selim Birsel & Agnes Perroux, "X"
November 15th – December 9th, 1994, Vahap Avşar & Claude Leon, "X"
December 15th, 1994 – January 12th, 1995 Canan Beykal, "Propositions of Plato"
January 20th – February 18th, 1995, Hüseyin B. Alptekin& MD Morris, "St. Etienne Express (Charbon / Savon)"
February 18th, Symposium (at Izmir Turkish - American Association)
"…Directed by Hami Çağdaş, the panel on 'Contemporary Art and Decentralization' attended by Hüseyin Alptekin, Canan Beykal, Selim Birsel, Cengiz Çekil, Güven İncirlioğlu, Ekrem Kahraman, and Aylin Saraçlı, discussed the concept of decentralization and the artists explored the concept from different perspectives. Naturally, the artists discussed the venues of exhibitions in Izmir (such as construction sites) vis-a-vis the center – Istanbul (power, galleries, and art), Ankara (academic and diplomatic) –, the former staying outside the conventional line thanks to its location and contributing to the contemporary plastic arts environment. The artists tried to add new meanings to the concept of decentralization outside of political discourse, thinking that art would create new contexts in different geographies and alternative spaces, and would initiate new ways of knowing."[2]

1995

"Imagining History"
Place: The ancient city of Ephesus
Dates: October 23rd – November 10th, 1995
Participants: Hüseyin Alptekin & Michael Morris, Selda Asal, İpek Aksügür Duben, Die Fabrikanten-Gerald Harringer & Wolfgang Preisinger, Margarete Jahrmann & Max Moswitzer/Mamax, Gülsün Karamustafa, Hakan Onur, Hale Tenger, and Franz Xaver

1 https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/39780

2 Exhibition catalogue, 1995

"Traces"
Place: Yapı Kredi Izmir Art Gallery
Dates: November 28th - December 22nd, 1995
Exhibition Arrangement: Tomur Atagök
Participants: Tomur Atagök, Canan Beykal, Şükriye Dikmen, Can Değer Fürtun, Gülsün Karamustafa, Nur Koçak, Füsun Onur, Hale Tenger, and Işık Tüzüner

"This exhibition features Canan Beykal's work dedicated to Mihri (Müşfik) Hanım, the first Turkish professional female painter and lecturer; Tomur Atagök's work dedicated to Hale Asaf, again an artist from the early years of the Republic and the niece of Mihri (Müşfik) Hanım; Şükriye Dikmen's work to artist Aliye Berger; Can Değer Fürtun's work to the ceramicist Füreya Koral, again an artist and a member of the same family; Nur Koçak's work to Cahide Sonku, one of the giants of cinema; Füsun Onur's work to Atatürk's mother, Zübeyde Hanım; Işık Tüzüner's work to Halide Edip Adıvar for her personality as an author and revolutionary; Hale Tenger's work to a woman of the people, to Nedime Sara; and Gülsün Karamustafa's work to Ottoman women. This is an exhibition signed with respect from women to women."[3]

1996

Cengiz Çekil, "Installation 96"
Place: İletişim Bookstore Art Gallery

1997

"Penc-ü se: Self-portrait"
Place: Mazhar Zorlu Art Gallery
Curator: Ekrem Yalçındağ
Participants: Arzu Çakır, Hamdi Gökova, Oktay Şahinler, Sevgi Avcı, Esra Demirtaş, Murat Özdemir, Ramazan Bayrakoğlu, and Ahmet Uhri
Dates: 19th – 29th November, 1997
"Penc-ü se: Retrospective"
Curator: Ekrem Yalçındağ
Participants: Arzu Çakır, Hamdi Gökova, Oktay Şahinler, Sevgi Avcı, Esra Demirtaş, Murat Özdemir, Ramazan Bayrakoğlu, and Ahmet Uhri
Dates: December 1st – 10th, 1997

1998

"Crossing the Borders" (Installations)
Place: İZFAŞ Art Gallery
Dates: May 27th – June 14th, 1998
Participants: Cengiz Çekil, Nicole Eisenberg, and Heinz Otto Kamphues
Conference: "Trends in Contemporary Art, Returns, Self-Scrutinization - From Forms to Attitudes..."
Concept: Vasıf Kortun
Place: Dokuz Eylül University Faculty of Fine Arts Campus
Date: December 14th, 1998

3 Exhibition catalogue, 1995

2000 - 2010

The success of ŞANTİYE Gallery effort created a breakthrough that made the way for third-generation artists[1] to curate and organize solo or group exhibitions in temporary spaces, mostly putting forward the approach of self-production. Gathering around a mobile art venue called KUTU, clustering around newly established K2 Contemporary Arts Center, opening up modest artist studios in various districts and taking pubs to organize interdisciplinary events where they can socialize with the audience; third-generation artists took interdisciplinarity to the fore where for the first time digital mediums intervened with conventional arts practices. Alas, dancers and musicians advocating the liberation of collective performance stood with video artists; thus (now defined as) "the golden age of local contemporary arts scene" encouraged the fourth-generation artists[2] who recently graduated from fine arts faculties to stay and produce in Izmir. (This optimistic climate would lead the way to formation of various arts initiatives and collectives, in the following decade.)

In addition to spaces aforementioned on previous chapters, new independent venues such as Artshop, Agora, Artist, Çatı Gallery of International Plastic Artists Association, ECN, Decozone, Galeri A and Kedi Arts and Culture Center contributed in efforts to display the diversity of artistic potential of the city in the beginning of the millennium whilst establishment of public and private institutions such as Arts Hall of Ege University, Arts Hall of Başak Sigorta, Efes Arts Gallery, Kültürpark Tennis Club, and İzmirSanat enriched the inventory of cultural map of Izmir. Also placement of collective exhibitions in shopping malls such as Palmiye and KİPA is now regarded as a bold and curious move.

2000 - 2003

İletişim Bookstore Gallery Exhibitions: This small gallery located on the upper floor of the Alsancak branch of the İletişim Publishing House was pretty instrumental in bringing contemporary art to large audiences and it stood out with its stability. Despite of its small size and limitations on production, the gallery made a significant contribution on improving the local contemporary arts scene.

2001

KUTU Mobile Art Space[3]

Manifesting its establishment during the exhibition titled as "Under the Beach: Paving Stones" (curated by Vasıf Kortun at Proje4L - Istanbul); the collective remained active between 2001 and 2005. Presenting a unique model which was completely new to local cultural actors and the arts audience of İzmir;

1 Born between 1965-1975
2 Born between 1975 - 1985
3 Kutuweb.blogspot.com

the collective including founder - curator Borga Kantürk and contemporary artists namely as Elmas Deniz, Gökçen Cabadan, Gökçe Süvari, Evrim Yiğit (architect), and Ali Batı (designer) emphasized the necessity of institutionalization and the efficiency of building a closed-circuit structure in order to open mobile spaces according to create a stance against the ever volatile conditions in Turkey.

2003

K2 Contemporary Art Center (K2)

K2 is known as Izmir's first fully equipped independent contemporary art venue with its galleries, workshop spaces, and library. Founded by a group of artists from the third and fourth generation with contribution from scholars of Faculty of Fine Arts of Dokuz Eylül University; the center which had functioned under the name of K2 Artist Initiative from 2004 to 2007 with a collective manner of Ayşegül Kurtel, Ramazan Bayrakoğlu, Hakan Kırdar, Tufan Baltalar, Esra Okyay, Borga Kantürk, Elmas Deniz, Başak Özkutlu, Gökçe Süvari, Mehmet Dere, Nur Muşkara, Nejat Sati, Merve Şendil, and Duygu Süzen aimed at "accelerating contemporary art production in the city and provoking conceptual discussions". Naturally, in a short while K2 turned into a meeting point and by hosting unique grassroots arts events, it attracted many respected names of the international contemporary art scene, such as Marius Dahl, Samuli Alapuranen, Pirjetta Brander, Elina Brotherus, Maria Duncker, Hana Haaslahti, Gun Holmström, Juha Maki-Jussila, Pasi Karjula, Anssi Kasitonmi, Makro Lampiuso, Petra Limdholm, Liisa Lounila, Anneli Nygren, Annu Pennanen, Heli Rekula, Seppo Renvall, Markus Renvall, Minna Rinne, Pekka Sassi, Aarno Salosmaa, Mika Taanila, Anti Tanttu, Pink Twins, Salla Tykka, Roi Varaa, Oliver Whitehead, Philippine Hoegen, Sylvia Kouvali, Anneke A. De Boer, Lon Robbe, Martina Wolf, Neriman Polat, and Phlippine Hoegen.

2006

The Pub

Sarp Keskiner and Hikmet Kaptanoğlu, the founders of Izmir-based event design and production company Soundworks, took over the artistic direction of this pub under the label of Volt Productions to host interdisciplinary events. Experimental music groups from Izmir such as Abarjazz and Tonguç Gökalp Project curated live performances where they brought local and national visual artists together.
A series of screenings were held between 2006 and 2007 in the venue where current students of Faculty of Fine Arts of Dokuz Eylül University that are interested in video art, new media, and installation found a safe space to mingle to exchange their innovative ideas.

2007

As K2 Contemporary Art Center lost its momentum by concentrating on curation and production of PORTIZMIR triennial[4]; the members of the K2 Artist Initiative went after their ways. Alas, this rupture caused an increase on number of arts and culture collectives, as this time they took an uncompromising stance by refusing to be subsumed by any umbrella structure.

2008

Agora

By re-functioning his studio for a year to host "a project space that includes events focused on contemporary art and electronic music"[5]; Nejat Satı displayed various installations aiming at intertwining two disciplines while simultaneously using the interior and exterior screens of the space.

49A

Established by Mehmet Dere[6]; this micro space[7] located in a remote district called Gürçeşme was active for five years with a manifesto declaring that "contemporary art should find its natural place in mundane life and this is the one and only way to construct its relation with urban environment." Thus, 49A was one of the pioneering examples on the local scene by declaring the necessity of artist run spaces on improvement of an independent local arts scene. So it inspired the forthcoming generations to sustain their own spaces with self- resources and proved that "organizing a series of mind opening events is possible even without any budget".

4 portizmir.org
5 http://nejatsati.blogspot.com.tr/2009/04/agora.html
6 mehmetdere.com
7 http://49-a.blogspot.com

2010 - 2020

Organization of İzmir Culture Summit in 2009 brought a new mind set on encouraging civics to initiate creative networks under an umbrella institution, subsidized by Metropolitan Municipality of Izmir. Hereby, Mediterranean Academy of Izmir[1] is founded in 2011 and the arts and culture board of the directorate led the way to foundation of Initiative for Izmir Culture Pla+form (IKPG)[2] in 2013.

Under initiation of five volunteering cultural managers and artists[3] coming from different backgrounds and disciplines, IKPG started from scratch to invent a civic, bottom - up independent model of its own, while exclusively neglecting any attempts of interference from the local decision makers of the local government to prevent a hierarchy within the network.

Bringing together three hundred and sixty local cultural actors from 2014 to 2020 by organizing monthly meetings and various forums, core team of IKPG[4] led the way to foundation of a diverse network; mostly focusing on execution of basic functions such as:

- Establishing a solidarity network aiming at repairing or enhancing the social bonds between independent creative individuals and grass-root organizations that are already functioning in Izmir;
- Creating a sustainable, democratic, social platform with a bottom-up approach by inclusion of contemporary artists, designers, scholars, researchers, archivists, social entrepreneurs, journalists, film makers, historians, publishers, performers, artist run spaces, collectives and initiatives whilst putting a strong emphasize on enhancing solidarity by advocating necessity of participation of right based fronts and activists to the network, regardless of their focus fields or backgrounds.
- Developing mediums or reorganizing the existing ones in order to increase the visibility of cultural, artistic and creative potential of the city;
- Turning venues into multi-functioning, hybrid spaces and inventing new spaces whilst advocating the usage of public spaces for cultural purposes;
- Taking the role of a matchmaker by bringing directors of venues, art spaces and collectives together in order to ease the problem of finding spaces, concurrently encouraging artist-run spaces and venues on sharing content and co-production;
- Creating an index and a map of functioning venues in thirty towns of İzmir, to reinforce the visibility of cultural and artistic provincial potential of the periphery.

1 izmeda.org
2 facebook.com/ikpgplatform
3 Sarp Keskiner – Borga Kantürk – Cenker Ekemen – Elfin Yüksektepe – Zeynep Gönen
4 Who were also founder members of arts and culture collectives such as KARANTİNA, Darağaç, 6x6x6, Dâhili Bellek, Kendine Ait Bir Oda, Geçici Müdahale Platformu and Maquis Projects.

During 2016 and 2017, IKPG organized eight forums under the titles such as "a glance at local music scene", "local networks of independent publishers", "a glance at performing arts in İzmir", "from the perspective of venue owners", "contemporary arts in İzmir", "open workshops: an attempt to break away from the national education system", "pros and cons of design an event in İzmir", "alternative local practices of learning and teaching process in İzmir". Between 2015 and 2017, the platform hosted various cultural managers and mentors that are based in İstanbul, Afyon, Ankara, Çanakkale, Antakya, Sinop (Turkey) and countries namely as Kosovo, Tunisia, Morocco, Sweden, Germany, Romania, Lebanon, France, Cyprus, Greece, Slovenia and Bulgaria. In addition to that, IKPG core team organized three capacity building summer schools[5] with the financial support of Mediterranean Academy of Izmir in the peripheral provinces between 2017 and 2019, which brought hundreds of members of the network to socialize and focus on issues such as climate change, barter economy, gender equality, alternative pedagogy, invention and invasion of spaces, public arts, equality in access to healthy food and clean water.

As a result of this collective effort also aiming at bringing commons to the fore, independent cultural actors of the network found many occasions to collaborate on intersecting projects led by local governments or relevant institutions that aim to enhance local development with an ecological perspective whilst naturally as a result of the change on the collective mindset; assets of intangible cultural heritage and natural resources came to consideration as essential elements during the drafting phase of cultural and artistic projects, mostly designed to be executed in rural areas. Thus, most of the stakeholders of the local cultural scene in Izmir plus relevant departments of municipalities and CSO's met on the same page and that should be taken as a culmination point or a concrete output of past practices and discussions where each member of the network found a chance to think over on others' concerns and suggestions. Naturally ascending empathy within the network brought a new mindset and created a broader perspective where issues such as de-centralization of culture, placement of interdisciplinary events in rural areas, bringing urban and rural audience together came to the fore.

By applying and advocating a bottom up approach, İKPG has brought together cultural actors of all generations, while increasing their visibility and potentials by frequently emphasizing trans-disciplinarity, togetherness, mutual solidarity, plus the importance of invention of new hybrid, shared micro spaces in order to sustain the independency. As a result, members of the network as representatives of the independent scene had their say in decision-making

5 https://www.youtube.com/@izmirkulturplatform3506

mechanisms and naturally took their well-earned role in designing process of cultural policy actions such as İzmir Modeli[6], Public Space and Urban Level Community Building Strategy for Izmir[7] and massive cultural programs such as Pilot City - Izmir[8], Leading City - Izmir[9], and UCLG Culture Summit[10], which have been carried out under the leadership of Metropolitan Municipality of Izmir. The interest and implementation of European funding programs such as TANDEM Turkey[11], Civil Society Exchange[12], Spaces of Culture[13], CultureCIVIC[14], Sivil Düşün[15] and ORTAKLAŞA[16] from 2016 to this date, strengthened the financial capacity of artists, event designers, cultural managers, curators and right based organizations while providing numerous skills to those independent cultural actors on how to execute and finalize a cultural project with proficiency.

Starting from 2015, Izmir, once regarded as the "capital of brain drain" turned into a dream land for creative individuals living in other megacities who are looking for a new place to settle seeking for a peaceful, liberal and permissive habitat. The intake of internal migration ascended year by year, whilst most of the newcomers chose coastal provinces to settle down though this trend caused a drastic change in the scene which became overcrowded with posh new galleries and art spaces, as a result of unstoppable gentrification. Thus, slashworkers / freelancers already residents of aforementioned provinces had to hand over their artisan shops, studios and artist-run spaces to big time operators and newcomers once were desperately dreaming of a self-sufficient life style in the outskirts had to move away to villages or smaller cities only a few years after their settlement.

Despite of all ups and downs, between 2011 and 2023 numerous artist initiatives and collectives were founded that ran / still run their own micro / hybrid spaces. So, the alphabetical list of the spaces located below presents an evidence of the resilience of local independent actors where their collective obstinacy became the cement of creation of a common ground to live and produce culture together in Izmir.

37 Video Art Gallery: https://www.nobon.net/37videoartgallery
6x6x6: https://www.youtube.com/@6x6x6izmir3
Açık Stüdyo (Open Studio): acikstudyo.com
Alan Pa: @kadropa
AnArt: @anart_seferihisar
Art Venue İzmir: https://www.evrensel.net/haber/492510/hatirlama-karsilasma-birlikte-dusunme-mekani
Balconnection: @balconnection
Be Contemporary: @be.contemporary
Büyük Siyah Kapı (Big Black Door): https://www.otuzbeslik.com/yazilar/buyuk-siyah-kapi-sozde-belirsiz
Commune Art Space: @communeartspace_
Dar Alan Collective: https://daralanart.blogspot.com/
Darağaç: daragac.com
DeCollage Art Space: @decollageartspace
Flash Atölye: https://oliviavalentine.net/Flash-Atolye
Hayy Open Space: https://www.hayyacikalan.com/
I/O: https://tr.linkedin.com/in/gizem-akkoyunoglu-36695419
İro Café: www.facebook.com/irocafe
KARANTİNA: karantinamekan.com
Kendine Ait Bir Oda (A Room of Its Own): @kendineait1oda
Maquis Projects: maquisprojects.com
No 238: @no238_
Nomadmind: nomadmind.org
Rosso Art Space: @rossoartspace
Sarı Denizaltı Arts Initiative: @saridenizalti
Shelter Artist Run Space: @Shelter_Artists_Run_Space
The Letter: www.theletterartgallery.com
Yüksek Oda: @yuksekoda

6 izmirmodeli.com
7 https://www.izmir.bel.tr/CKYuklenen/ENG_PAGES/Strategic_Plan_2020-2024_web.pdf
8 https://www.agenda21culture.net/our-cities/pilot-cities
9 https://www.agenda21culture.net/our-cities/leading-cities
10 https://www.agenda21culture.net/summit/uclg-culture-summit-2021
11 https://www.tandemforculture.org/programmes/tandem-turkey/
12 civilsocietyexchange.org
13 https://spacesofculture.com
14 www.culture-civic.org
15 sivildusun.net
16 ortaklasa.iksv.org

A Paper by Sarp Keskiner

Work in progress presentation at 10th November 2023, 10.00-11.00 am CET

Presentation of the outcomes at 17th November 2023, 02.00-03.00 pm CET

Speaker: Sarp Keskiner
Moderator: Şafak Ersözlü

"Since early 2000's, Izmir has been consistently hosting a number of independent, self sustainable and non-profit art spaces that are popping up or disappearing once in a while. Thus this research aims at compiling all inspiring local good examples while displaying the grass-root ways of 'keeping spaces open in a habitat of ongoing crisis' while bringing together various quotations from local articles and public forums, held or written between 2007 and 2022."

Through the presentations, Sarp Keskiner shared the approach and logical framework regarding the topic as well as the outcomes of the research.

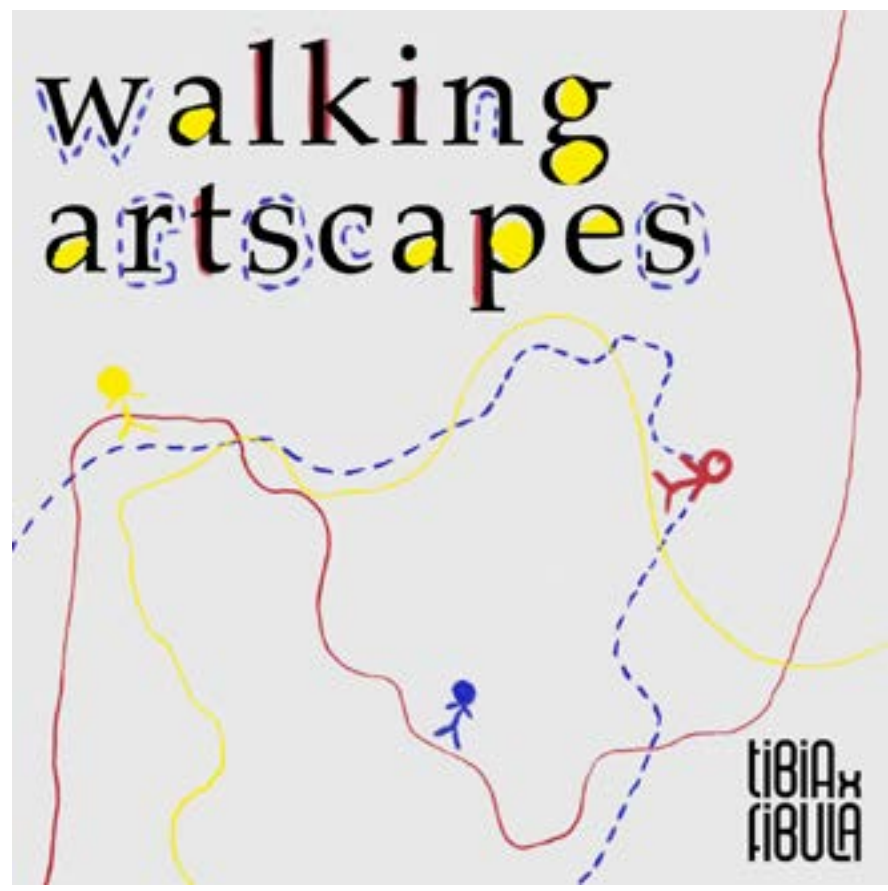
Walking → Artscapes: Exploring the Cultural Dimensions ∞ of Urban Walking Projects Δ in İzmir

tibia x fibula works across disciplines to design and create live experiences and other things. It was founded by Cansu Pelin İşbilen and Fatih Gençkal in 2020. Coming from backgrounds in architecture, performance, design, and social sciences, we are interested in ideas and practices around time and space, body and memory, participation and creativity at the intersection of art and daily life.

Walking Artscapes is a podcast series featuring discussions on the diverse practices and perceptions of walking in contemporary arts and culture as well as their socio-political background and implications. It was initiated as a research project in response to the theme "Diversity in the Perception of Cultural Spaces". The research focuses on individuals and initiatives who have taken up walking as part of their arts practice, research or work. The podcast hosts a guest for each episode and the discussion focuses on their practice. For the specificity of this call, we began with practitioners from İzmir, Turkey, where we live, in an attempt to provide an overview of how different projects impact the city and its cultural landscape. This particular pilot research is intended for expansion into other individuals, initiatives and projects in İzmir, other cities in Turkey and abroad. Hence, the podcast continues with interviews with other cultural actors and projects.

The podcast can be followed on all major podcast platforms and on our website:

www.tibiaxfibula.com



A podcast series by Cansu Pelin Isbilen and Fatih Genckal (tibia x fibula)

Work in progress presentation at 16.00 November 2023, 11.00-12.00 am CET

Presentation of the outcomes at 30th November 2023, 11.00-12.00 am CET

Speakers: Cansu Pelin Isbilen, Fatih Gençkal
Moderator: Şafak Ersözlü

"İzmir, a vibrant city known for its rich cultural heritage, has witnessed the emergence of various art projects that utilize urban walking as a medium of expression. This research aims to explore the diverse perceptions of these art projects and their impact on the cultural landscape of İzmir. The research intends to focus on 6 chosen projects that have impacted the cultural landscape of the city in different ways over the last 5 years: 6x6x6, Darağaç Volta, İzmir Pride Walk, Olive Route by Zeytince Association, İzmir History Routes by İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, Emanet Zaman book walk by Nomad Mind/ Defne Suman. The research outputs culminate in the form of a podcast series featuring interviews with artists and cultural operators."

Within this presentations Cansu Pelin Isbilen and Fatih Genckal shared the point of view and approach regarding the project as well as the outcomes of the research.

Diversity !? in the Perception of Poplar Union as a Local Cultural Center ● in East London

As a cultural practitioner invested in the work with communities, I have always been interested in placemaking. This was at the heart of my academic research formalised in my role of the Lead of Space and Place Research Hub (https://spaceandplacelcc.wordpress.com) at the University of the Arts where I am a Senior Lecturer. The hub consists of a dozen of academics and practitioners across UAL who focus on their own experience of urban environments, predominantly in London and in their surroundings. The members of the hub explore placemaking processes, interrogate spatial discourses and study public and private sphere, intimate and interior spaces, geographic terrains and mapping practices.

In anthropology, space is described as a geographic, physical location, whilst place gives it an ascribed meaning, cultural identity or the "personality". I understand places through academic frameworks deriving from memory studies, as well as art and design practice. These fields intersect to shape my knowledge of sites and peoples that populate them. My own work within socially engaged art and design sometimes directs me to places I do not know whilst other times they are familiar, local or even "next door".

I started investigating transitions of both communities and places during the London Olympics in 2012 when the UK capital hosted the Games. The accelerated regeneration process which resulted in aggressive dislocation of residents from the poorest boroughs in the city's East marked the beginning of the shifting social and geographic landscape. The ground was bulldozered over, blatantly welcoming Olympic sponsors – corporations who were never to back off from there. Their profit was guaranteed by the build-up of new neighbourhoods for the rich that sprung on industrial as well as residential sites previously owned by the local council.

At the centre of that new, gated community is the Westfield shopping centre, glowing above the train and bus station like a cross on a church. It features showrooms of those corporations which overshadow the sublet units at dilapidated Stratford shopping centre, left on the other side of the road - the same as the poor who stayed in the area. As an artist living at this site proclaimed the cultural and the sports quarter of the city, I was in the midst of this change. The newly established Create festival, which gathered and delivered cultural provision of five London boroughs where Olympics were held in – Hackney, Newham, Greenwich, Waltham Forest and Tower Hamlets offered creative professionals a participation in the Olympic dream.

Instead of buying into it, we, the residents were working with other locals on assuring that we and our views of gentrification are considered by the Olympic Committee and its developers. Twenty years later, we are still struggling with those developers who migrated their ties from the Olympic Headquarters to the heart of communities – our local governments and contractors they hire to deliver community

maintenance. Those developers negotiate with our councils the value of our lives through the erection of our houses, social, education and health centres as well as our workplaces. They sprung up the whole neighbourhoods in the spots which surrounded the Olympic village, arenas, offices. One of those is encircling the Bartlett park, right by the housing block in Poplar district at Tower Hamlets borough where I live.

Situated on the north bank of the River Thames and immediately east of the City of London, the borough of Tower Hamlets spans the traditional East End and includes the already regenerated London Docklands area. Its Mayor Lutfur Rahman from Aspire party has a history of corruption because of which he has been once removed from the same position and elected to it again a few years after. The borough sits at the edge of financial quarter and it is populated by the Asian majority. Those residents, like me, are mostly migrants who have traditionally been inhabiting the East since the 16th Century. Our existential needs have always been huge because many arrived as refugees from wars, establishing our wellbeing, settlement and housing needs, the community priority.

In the wake of such a necessity by the large number of borough residents, the council was and is overwhelmed. Coupled with the financial crisis, changes in local government and lastly, the Covid pandemic, the council delegated the housing crisis solution to the third party – private property developers. One of those corporations is Poplar Harca (https://www.poplarharca.co.uk), a housing and regeneration community association, started 25 years ago by a resident and the company is now the landlord of about 10,000 homes in the area. It markets itself as the organisation which is "leading a £2.5bn place-shaping programme including new homes, education, healthcare, faith buildings, business and community spaces".

Poplar Union

Poplar Harca opened our local arts & community centre, Poplar Union (https://poplarunion.com) in 2017. The Union is a charity "[c]ommitted to supporting the local residents through art, culture and wellbeing" and to enhancement of physical and social prosperity of Poplar locals and its neighbours. It offers a variety of cultural activities, family sessions, health and wellbeing classes, workshops, festivals and other events. Its great location in the park and by the canal attracts a range of generations and it sits in front of one of the most loved playgrounds in the borough and beyond.

The space itself consists of three main rooms: Betty's, Mike's and the Library. Betty Bristow and Mike Leggett were community heroes, and I am lucky enough to live in Betty's flat since she passed away. I learnt there about Ebeegees residents group she formed three decades ago with her best friend, 88 year-old Eileen Groves who still lives next door and coaches me daily in community work.

It is her comment that Poplar Union "does not respect pensioners" and how it is only good to "young professionals", which made me interested in the centre itself. This sense of lack of respect to history that Eileen was refereeing to was mainly directed to the café because she was used to pay £1 for a plain black coffee purchased with a little milk, just like the tea. Many versions of that simple beverage from cappuccino to americano were not her cuppa and for her, they serve only as an excuse for a more expensive hot drink. Combined with the lack of invitations to come over to the centre, join the activities or provide a consult about the place, which she often provided to local organisations as a pillar of the community, made Eileen feel resentful of Poplar Union. Therefore, she would not go nor encourage her pensioners' group to meet there.

As I was keen to join different generations living in the area, predominantly elder, settler population and newly arrived, younger inhabitants, I made it my business to build a bridge between the two and explain the reasons for this barrier to Poplar Union leaders. I have used the opportunity at one of the centre's events to speak to Poplar Harca representatives, but I only got a barrage of self-marketing and praise about the achievements they saw as success of their work in the locale.

However, when I spoke to colleagues from Poplar Union, they were listening. They seem genuinely interested in the issues I was raising, perhaps because we were speaking the same language at the junction of creative and non-government sector. They saw my desire to connect local residents, regardless of their class, race, gender and heritage. They told me that they would like to meet Eileen due to the wealth of her experience with the community and asked if they could use me to set up that encounter. I was happy to oblige and informed Eileen that she is not forgotten.

They also confided in me about their own position in Poplar Harca and the challenges it presents. For example, the café at the centre's entrance does not belong to them even though it is the welcoming space of the whole organisation. The E5 company, with headquarters in another borough rents it from Harca. Its arm in Poplar trains refugees to bake bread, which justifies its charitable existence at the spot. However, the bread, as most of the products they sell is expensive in this gentrified set-up affordable to the freshly arrived, but not for largely South Asian population, which purchases their fruit and vegetables in a run-down Chrisp Street market.

Moreover, the newbies pressured the council to renovate that market, so they can ensure the presence of outlets with produce which supports their organic lifestyles. This resulted in the closure of the Co-op(erative),

a supermarket with cheap food. Instead of it, we now have Spar, one of the most expensive food chains for our daily needs.

The cultural programme of Poplar Union also mainly reflects the interests of the residents in immediate surrounding. These young families live in recently built high-rises, work in managerial, technical or supervisory roles and can afford paying for events organised by the Union. Even though many activities are free, one can be engaged there for a few hours, so needs to have a drink or a snack, however challenging the cost of it is. This is the reason why many, like Eileen, choose not to go to the centre.

In this sense, it is hard to distinguish between the provision of the café and the offer by the centre. The uneasy relationship between the two, somewhat advanced the tension between local groups, even though Poplar Union was created to unite diverse communities of the neighbourhood. Eileen was reluctant to visit the centre, but its staff worked hard to draw her and her pensioner's group in. She started going to the tea dance and last winter, she agreed to have her group's jubilee party at the Poplar Union. She was delighted with the reception by the staff and us, her neighbours, came to support this event.

Poplar Bakehouse

The local café, Poplar Bakehouse claims on its website: "We have learnt how to source our coffee beans, finding community-owned, origin-based exporters that reinvest profits and resources back into the supply chain as well as considering the impact on all their stakeholders, from employees and suppliers to communities, customers and the environment itself." This statement is not different to Starbucks', Gail's' or any other independent coffee shop or bakery which is advocating for the preservation of the planet via community support and circular economy.

Their ethos is the same as Poplar Union's, as well as Poplar Harca's, but it is difficult to establish the difference between genuine concern for the community and the brand rhetoric in the interest of business growth. For that understanding, one has to be on site and crucially, talk to all of its stakeholders. Eileen is as important interlocutor in this quest as are my friends from another borough, who come to the centre for good coffee, nice walk and a great playground for their daughter.

I spend time at Poplar Union mostly for work, as my neighbours Hally and Sanjay do – getting away from the flat a bit, sweetening the office correspondence with a cake. I had my birthday lunch there one year too. Artistic Director of the centre, Paolo Fiorentini (https://paolofiorentini.com) holds regular workshops in the space whilst studying psychotherapy. Through his interaction with the people from the neighbourhood, he is gaining an insight into their mental health and wellbeing. Last time we spoke, Paolo was developing a great concern for the state of the community and had a strong desire to ensure that Poplar Union provides an adequate support for all affected by the hardship in the locale which is increasing daily.

He is hoping to advance a "social prescribing" programme the centre has committed to in partnership with Queen Mary University of London. Social prescribing involves linking patients in primary care with services provided by the voluntary and community sector. Therefore, Poplar Union can be a spot where most vulnerable come for support and care, not only a place for us, 'young professionals' to relax of work. For the success of this, we all need to try to assure not just our co-existence, but an exchange between us, more actively led by the centre. This guided exposure to and facing each other, would help us devise a shared set of values as local residents and place our differences to one side for the purpose of building a mutual set of interests.

Poplar Harca needs to reflect on their achievements more profoundly, in consultation with Polar Union staff and the local residents who know Poplar best. Their poor up-keep of our flats corresponds with the poor up-keep of our community centre. No wonder then that our longstanding community members like Eileen cringed on the news of the opening of Poplar Union – the trust in Poplar Harca, our housing provider is gone with their huge expansion and enormous drop in housing maintenance standards.

In such an environment, chronically under-resourced Poplar Union staff is doing their best to respond to the needs of the locals whilst Harca builds other sites like Poplar Works (https://poplarworks.co.uk). Diversifying their portfolio to projects in cooperation with higher education and other businesses, Poplar Harca promotes their brand and claims further successes without looking back at the clutter and hurt they left behind.

Instead, Harca should acknowledge the consequences of their focus on property development rather than community maintenance and realise that without the health of their community, there will be no wealth for their organisation either. They should invest in Poplar Union, rather than its café and allow the centre staff to own the whole of its space. This would further enable the transfer of the employees' responsibility for the site to the community, so the residents can also feel both the duty to and ownership of it, regardless of their ability to afford being in that place. We could then play, pray and cook together and people who eat together, stick together.

A paper by Nela Milic

Work in progress presentation at 20th November 2023, 09.30-10.30 am CET

Presentation of the outcomes at 27th November 2023, 10.00-11.00 am CET

Speaker: Nela Milic
Moderator: Şafak Ersözlü

“This research project addresses diversity in the perception of Poplar Union, my local cultural centre in east London. It sprang a few years ago as part of Poplar Harca, a large cooperative housing association replacing local government’s housing provision.”

Through the presentations, Nela Milic shared the point of view and approach regarding the topic as well as the outcomes of the research.

Poster ⌥ as a Cultural § Space

Jules Cheret, Librarie Ed. Sagot A che Estampes, 1891

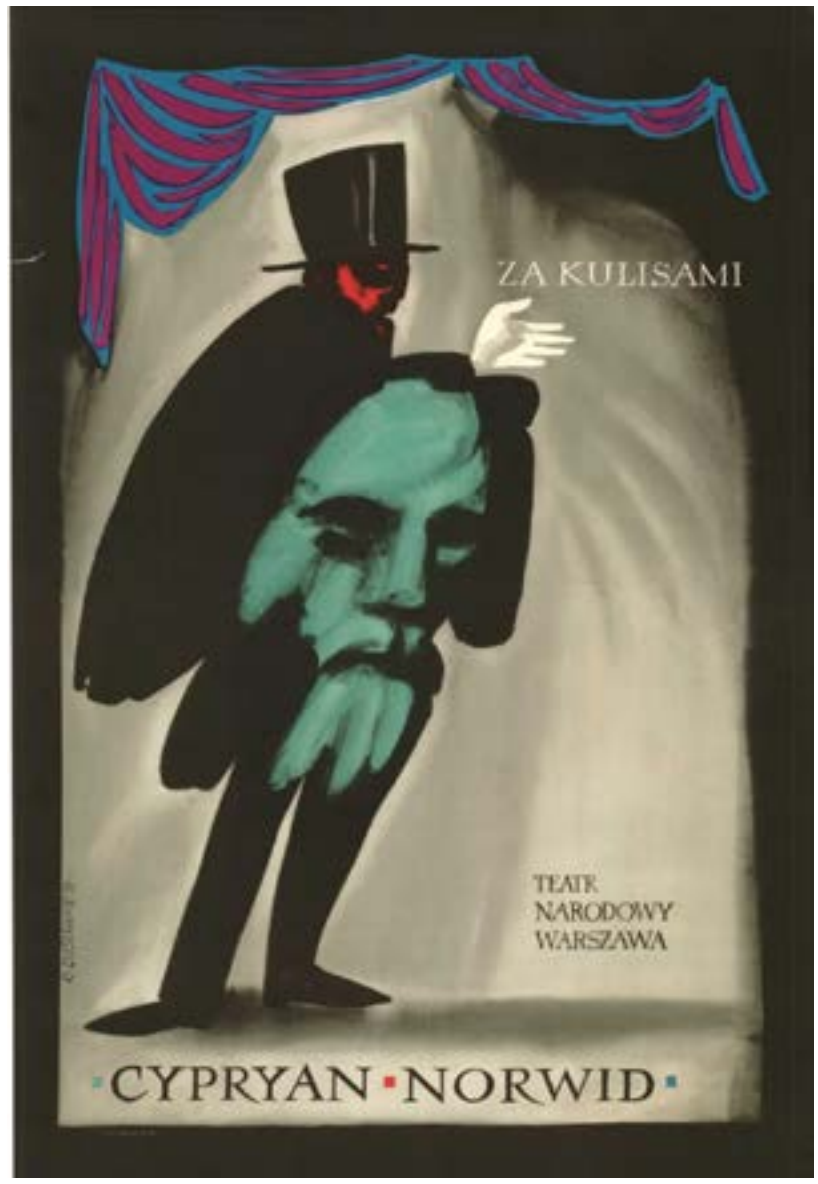
It can be argued that the development of the lithographic printing process gave rise to the modern poster design that we are familiar with today. The technique of lithography, which is thought to have been the forerunner of offset printing today, allows for the separation of colors on a stone to facilitate printing, allowing for the creation of numerous large-scale prints in various colors. This printing method has a very low rate of wear compared to other methods like woodcut printing, which enables quick and high-volume production. Even though lithography was initially developed in the 1840s, it wasn't until Jules Chéret developed the technique of dividing the poster image into three colors in the 1860s that the technique was actively used in the production of posters (Döring, Beyerle 2020). This technique is known as three-stone lithographic printing. Furthermore, because of his approach to the poster, which saw it not only as a message-bearing interface but also as a work of art with high aesthetic value, Chéret can be referred to as the father of fine art posters. This understanding was quickly accepted in France, especially in Paris. This marks the start of the belle époque, or golden age of posters, which is centered on Paris in France (Meggs, 2006).

During this time, a lot of social and cultural events happen; nightlife, cabaret, shows, operas, concerts, and other events of a similar nature led to an extensive creation of posters. painters were commissioned to create these posters, as Paris was a popular destination for artists in this era. Famous illustrator and artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec developed his own distinctive style by creating posters that highlighted cabaret and nightlife. Illustrative posters, particularly those created by Alphonse Mucha, introduced a completely new style and extremely high aesthetic value with the rise of Art Nouveau towards the end of the 19th century. The primary characteristic of these posters is their public display, which turns Paris's streets into cultural spaces. Public areas such as roadways, building facades, but most notably, unique poster towers, have developed into places of culture where one can view excellently designed posters These poster towers have posters placed to them from every direction, making them visible from all directions in a 360-degree circle (Rymer, 2019).

Alongside the destruction caused by World War II, there were major technological and sociological shifts instigated in the second half of the 20th century. Similar to how rocket technology and the space race were significantly facilitated by the competition created by the war, visual image production was also greatly influenced. Propaganda posters, created by both sides in various visual languages to convey their respective cultural narratives, provided a significant representational space during the war. The Russians and Germans created stylized, neoclassical posters, while the Americans and British used a more illustrative language. But the necessity of producing propaganda quickly and continuously resulted in the creation of a cultural habit to create and also consume posters (Eskilson, 2007).

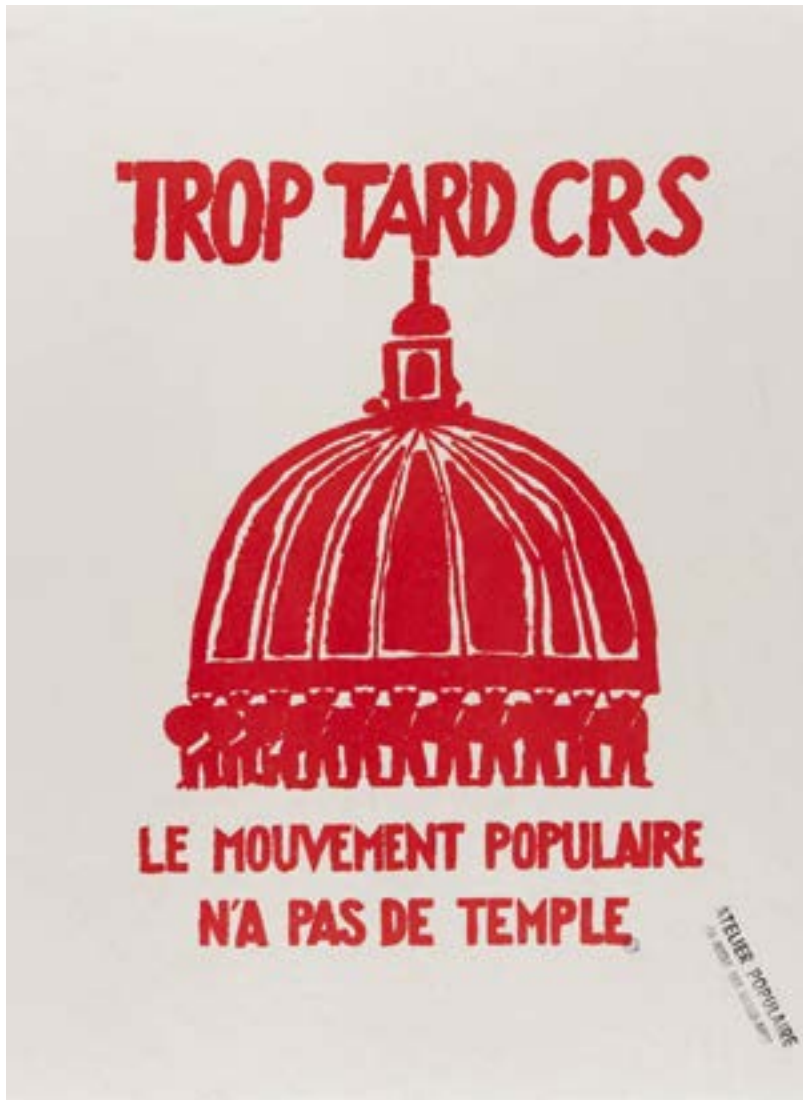
James Montgomery Flagg, Uncle Sam, 1917

In discussing the role played by posters during the Iron Curtain era between the Eastern and Western blocs, it would be appropriate to mention the Polish Poster School after World War II. Significant censorship was in place during the oppressive Cold War era, particularly in Poland where communism and Russia had an impact. There emerged a visual language created over more than 30 years by the Polish Poster School in an era where all cultural production was subject to government filters and censorship procedures. The government's control over limited production tools and technological resources resulted in the production of more illustrative posters that aligned with the Fine Arts concept. These pieces, in which illustrations predominate, are a crucial illustration of how technical limitations guided the development of a distinctive visual style. By means of the symbolic narratives crafted within the anti-censorship posters, a metaphorical construction of meaning was revealed (Meggs, 2006).



Roman Cieslewicz, Behind the Scenes, 1958

Posters used during the 1968 Paris student riots and protests are another outstanding illustration of the visual language produced by the urgent needs and technical limitations of the ongoing Polish Poster School and the community it has formed. With the slogan "Citizens, run to art!" the streets erupted in May 1968, and students took over the Fine Arts Faculty and built barricades. These actions weren't just student protests against the oppressive government; they were part of a larger movement by the people of Paris to stand up for their rights to democratic discourse. Silkscreen printing played a central role in the protests, as the Fine Arts Faculty and its students used it to quickly produce posters for the daily demonstrations. Using just one color, they generated a series of highly stylized but incredibly abstract and effective posters that allowed them to print two thousand posters every day. The demonstrations took place in the evening, and these posters were used to publicize them throughout the city during the day. It would be proper at this point to bring up another



Poster denouncing police repression, Mucem, 1968

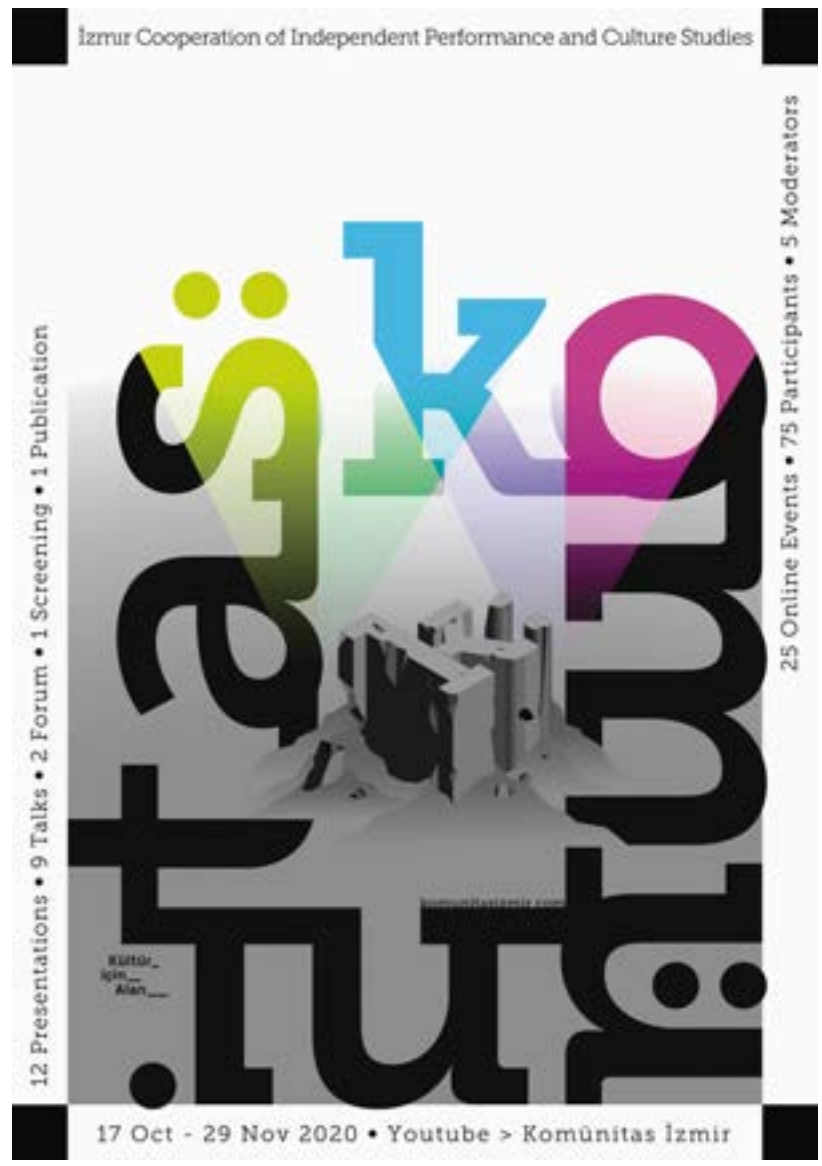
set of posters made by a cultural community instead of to a community fighting for democratic representation and social rights (Eskilson, 2007).

As an example of the multicultural production of the 1960s, let me also bring up the Montreux Jazz Festival. Since 1967, the *Montreux Jazz Festival* has invited Swiss and international artists to create posters for the event, starting a tradition that is still going strong today. This annual jazz festival's posters have grown into a massive collection that graphically captures the aesthetic and design elements of the eras in which they were produced. Looking at the Montreux Jazz Festival posters with the sense of belonging created by this collection, it is possible to say that all the artists who have been involved in the festival from past to present have expressed their own styles, thereby documenting the visual arts and design concepts.

Starting from this point, as a response to the question "is poster as a cultural space?", it is possible to develop the claim "poster as a cultural space". Because the poster unquestionably creates a cultural space when all of these examples are taken into account. It does not necessarily have to be a physical space, but conceptually representing a cultural representation is sufficient. This can be achieved by embodying the representation of a single culture or community, by turning into an exhibition on the streets as seen in the Paris student riots and the Belle Epoque era, or by becoming the carrier of a certain culture through years of documentation. And of course, posters occupy a certain place both in the digital environment and in urban spaces today, thus transforming into a cultural tool. I want to expand this discussion using five posters I made, after moving it along with historical examples.

"komünitas" is a poster I created for a cultural project that took place in 2020, for which I also designed the logo. I designed a series of posters by carrying the same frame from the typographic representation of the community brought together by the logo and the frame that forms the borders of the poster. Of course, the collaboration of "komünitas" in independent performance and cultural activities is a very local example and works specifically in the city of Izmir. Therefore, it was a project based on performance artists in Izmir and their practices, thoughts, presentations they choose to share, and performances as well as training on performance, yet having a broad reach nationally.

The letter "K," which appears in the center of the "komünitas" poster and functions as a historical relic, in an ancient stone texture, paying homage to the tradition of performance artists who lean toward antiquity. By combining various colors created by three light rays, it also symbolizes a modern viewpoint; as a result, it emphasizes tradition while offering a fresh viewpoint. As can be seen in the digital archive, a solution was reached to create 24 different versions of the same poster for 24 different events, with the numbers of this series visible in the empty space in the middle.



komünitas, 2020

On the other hand, there is a “square” that can be referred to as a "digital space" designed along with the poster for "komünitas." I'm not sure how accurate it would be to call the website designed for the project, which serves as the city where the community brought together by the project lives or gathers, a cultural space, but this digital space constructs the places where participants come together. Considering that all events took place online and digitally during the pandemic and Covid-19 restrictions, we can say that the project has an important digital representation. Thanks to the website's design as a digital "urban scape," the "About" section acts as a gateway to entering the city, the "Events" section resembles a square where the city begins and we enter into that digital realm. The "Forum" section we see as we ascend the platform allows us to see the basic historical identity of performance and theater rooted in ancient Greek culture. While the "Publications" section resembles a library, there is an exit to the outside associated with "Contact" at the port. Finally, the "Participants" on an island or aboard a ship, floating on the sea, visualize the channels that nourish the city. These elements work like highly stylized digital traces of ancient Greek city construction, akin to agoras and forums. Since "komünitas" is a project made up entirely of a community of people who have come together to share and listen about expertises, it can be said that such a characteristic visualization does indeed work.

Another poster worth mentioning is the poster for one of the annual conferences organized by the Design History Society in 2022. This conference was published under the theme of *Design and Transience*. It can be argued that this poster also has spatial representation and transforms its own medium into a place. The Design & Transience conference focused on the transience of design, design research, and design historiography within its theme and call for papers. Thus, the visual metaphor of the wooden puzzles known as "Burr puzzles" from the Far East was used as a central visualization technique in typography. The anatomical parts of the letterforms that make up the typography were interpreted as pieces of this puzzle. These pieces, which come together by chance at a certain point in time, appear as a letter for a moment, and we see the solution happening momentarily before they scatter and return to an unsolvable chaos. This visualizes the transience of all the design research and problem-solving processes we do within the poster, and at the same time, it illustrates the pursuit of that human pleasure of deconstructing and constructing again and again on purpose.

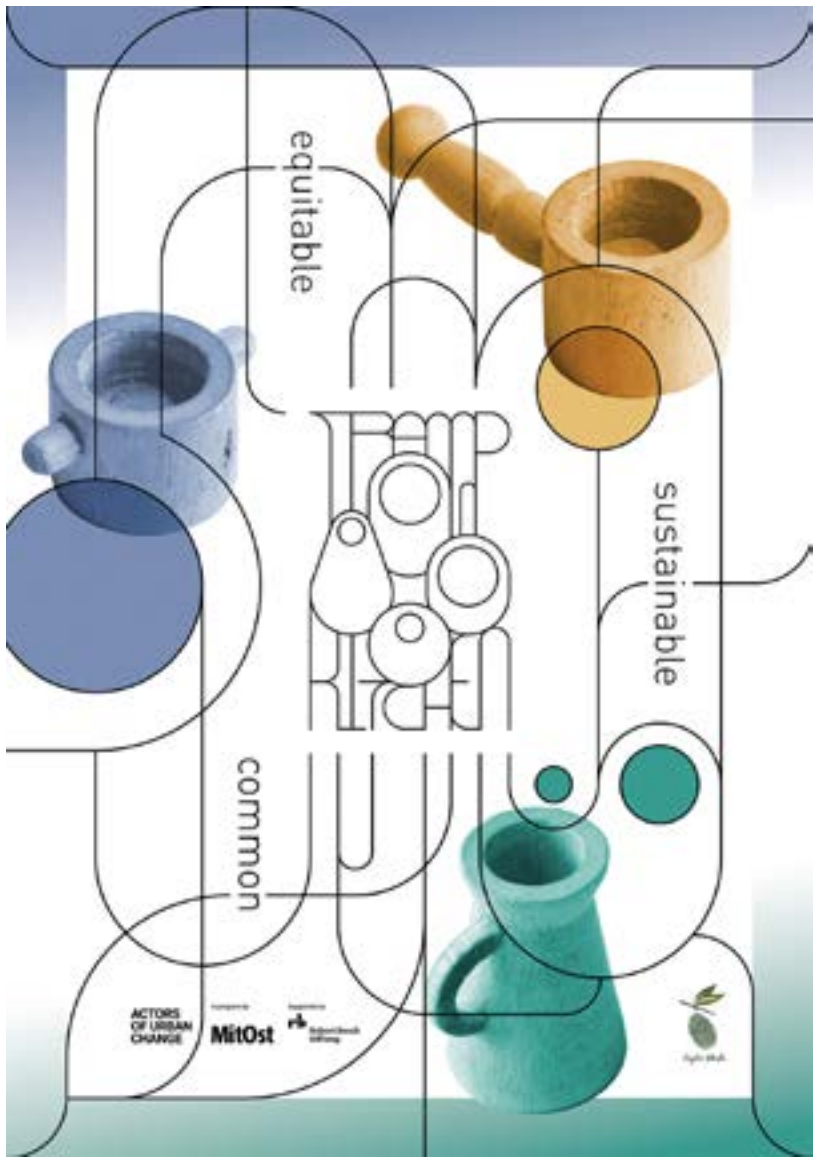
The cultural imprint of this poster lies in the fact that, when the poster was initially conceptualized, it was envisioned to have small illustrative figures at its edges. Especially considering the campus where the conference took place, the Izmir Institute of Technology,

Design and Transience, 2022

was reflecting the sense of tranquility, slowness, being outside the city, being in harmony with nature; which all represents the city of Izmir and the Mediterranean region. I made the decision to reflect these aspects on the poster. I included small illustrative details such as a fisherman on pause, an airplane soaring in the sky, and a pine tree swaying in the wind in the poster space. However, when I discussed these details with the organizing team, we decided that insisting on representing the local cultural fabric was too assertive of an approach, and I took a step back and removed those components from the poster. Thus, we settled on a purely typographic representation and the singular visual expression of the "Burr puzzle." During the design process, I had formed a deeply emotional relationship with the cultural imprint of the local area. However, upon reflection, I now see that the poster carries a strong narrative in its current state, and adding a second narrative layer would definitely blur the tone of the poster.

Let's move on to the *"Tramp Kitchen"* poster. Designing both the logo and the poster for "Tramp Kitchen" was one of the most challenging and least favored works for me. However, it turned out to be one of the most praised, awarded, and admired works. The "Tramp Kitchen" logo was chosen as the best logo of the year by the *Graphic Designers Association* and also received a special typography award. Additionally, the poster was deemed worthy of exhibition at the Peru Design Biennial. I believe this puts it in an important position within

the "most loved, most hated" dilemma. It's crucial to remember that the representation of the project through the designer's poster is entirely independent of the relationship the designer has with their own poster. The "Tramp Kitchen" project was a discussion on how clean food circulates within the city and how its accessibility can be increased: the visualization of the community it created is strongly expressed both in the logo and in the relationship established with the photographs in the poster, extending from typography to the stained-glass-like network formed by lines.



Tramp Kitchen, 2021

Within the grid provided by this stained-glass-like texture, it was possible to create a bilingual version and meet all the visual representation needs of the logo and the poster. This visual identity, which continues on both social media and its own website, has become the primary communication interface for this project, which forms its own community and has strong connections on the streets, and therefore spreads widely throughout the city. In the logo, stylized kitchen utensils are placed in the middle of "Tramp Kitchen." Also in the poster, these forms, seen as photographs, are wooden and very small kitchen toys. When designing for "Tramp Kitchen," I came across wooden toys from my childhood during a period when I was organizing my own belongings. I photographed them and incorporated them into the poster, thus creating a work where I chose to transfer from my own personal cultural space to the poster.

The fourth example is the poster for the Izmir Mediterranean Biennial with the theme *"Looking at the Same Water".* This poster has been an application that I deeply loved, felt connected to, enjoyed creating during the production process, and dedicated a lot of time to its typographic playfulness, transferring manual manipulations to digital. As a result, I had no doubts about the strong narrative of the poster. However, despite my fondness of this poster, it had a fate where it was deemed non-functional by the decisive team of the event and was terminated just six days before the launch of the biennial, even though it had been in active use for eight months. This illustrates that despite being designed to continue their lives and become publicized after representing the events they symbolize as cultural spaces, posters can be completely canceled by certain decision-making mechanisms, rendering them invisible. Especially considering that physical representations such as printed posters have become scarce in today's world where digital representations such as social media and

Looking at the Same Water, 2023

tasarim ile / with design, 2021

websites dominate, when a poster is completely eliminated from digital platforms, all traces of its existence and representation can also be erased. So, it will be as if this poster never existed.

The situation with the "Looking at the Same Water" poster should not be confused with the natural end of a design object's lifespan after fulfilling its purpose. Certainly, every graphic product turns into ephemera once it completes its function. Tickets, postcards, posters, and brochures eventually convey the message they were designed for and cease to exist.

However, the situation with the "Looking at the Same Water" poster can be summarized as the disqualification of a poster that had just begun its life and had not yet fulfilled its function, resulting in the disregard of its visual representation. This ignorance of visual representation, conceptually, also defines the cultural space of the Izmir Mediterranean Biennial. Therefore, unfortunately, the biennial has lost its power, become deaf in terms of communication, and lost its visual identity.

The last example I want to share within the scope of this article is the poster for the project *"tasarım ile/with design."* The project invited design actors and citizens of Izmir, known for its design city identity, to generate questions about the relationship between design and the city and to think together. The aim was to contribute to creating a suitable climate for the development of a design understanding in Izmir that is more permeable and where citizens are aware of, interpret, and demand its continuity. The identity and approach used in the project, like in "komünitas," were an attempt to visualize a wide range of events under one series. The grid and poster series created accordingly provided an opportunity for a wide range of visualization that would meet and respond to the visual communication needs of many different events. However, looking at the visual language used throughout the poster and logo, we encounter interventions that typographically address the principle of coming across with people in unusual placements within the city's flow with some interventions that have been extraordinary in the normal text flow but still maintain readability. These geometric transformations, which are a continuing approach in all visual interfaces of the project, have resulted in a series where different alternatives are created for each letter, as they repeat in the new interfaces designed for the communication needs of all events.

tasarim ile / with design logo on urban scape, 2021

The specially designed sets of letters, which can be called typographic agents, revealed a collaborative effort between myself and Onur Yazıcıgil, another graphic designer and font designer from Istanbul, as a result of our aim to increase interaction and dialogue among designers. This collaboration led to the creation of a typeface named *"Ncounter"*. As a project focused on increasing interaction and dialogue among designers and thinking about the city to make the design understanding in the city more permeable, "tasarım ile/with design" project was responsible for the creation of a design object. A digital article detailing the entire production process has been published on the *Manifold* website. This project has contributed to the design literature and has also created a significant opportunity for interaction by allowing the font to be downloaded and used for free. It can be said that the typographic agents in the poster form a cultural space both in physical space in the city and in the digital realm. Moreover, even though the project's active events have ended and the poster has lost its original function, it is possible to emphasize that the created cultural space continues to have a lively interaction that sustains its purpose.

Through these five selected works, it is evident that the poster medium occupies a cultural space that can sometimes be easily removed from both physical and digital representation, occasionally requiring a choice between local and international identity, extending from personal memory to public memory, and often serving as a platform for interaction among actors within a community, yet its existence is unquestionably vital. Unlike other graphic products, the poster medium is directly related to the social bonds that constitute a community and sometimes even forms some of these bonds itself. Serving the communication needs, posters, as a part of the cultural space covered by the content they convey, are undoubtedly one of the fundamental components of culture production, whether directly or indirectly.

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Nccounter typeface specimens, 2022

A paper by Emre Yıldız

Presentation of the process and the outcomes
at 20th November 2023, 13.00-14.00 CET

Speaker: Emre Yıldız
Moderator: Şafak Ersözlü

“The visual communication tools of cultural events like flyers, brochures, handouts, promotional products and especially posters are important elements of these particular events which extend in social aspects in terms of intent as well as ideology. The poster as it is, represents not only a clean message of any event, it also manifests a temporary but valid space in digital and urban scape. This space is free for designers and event owners to exploit according to their values, preferences and activities they choose to reflect to the community concerning the executed cultural event. Thus, the poster becomes a cultural medium, directly tied to the event it presents, but also inevitably independent as a result of its nature and material. As an active actor in means of communicating within the cultural realm and also sowing the citizens with the proper aspects of the upcoming events or activities, the poster itself becomes a new layer for cultural commitment and opens a progressive frame for discussion about impact, efficiency and involvement. I intend to examine these potential discussions through a survey of the posters I designed for various cultural projects. The route I hope to draw stretches from abandoned design decisions into multilayered participation experiences. Five of my most loved/hated poster designs will be used to project the particular proposition: Is poster a cultural space?”

Through the presentations Emre Yıldız shared the approach and logical framework regarding the topic as well as the outcomes of the research.

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The Diversity !?
in the Perception ~
of Cultural § Spaces

2024

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