

ARTIST – CURATED EXHIBITIONS
IN THE EXHIBITION HISTORY OF TURKEY

BY
SEVDA SÜZER



SUPERVISOR
PROF. DR. MARCUS GRAF

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ARTS MANAGEMENT

YEDITEPE UNIVERSITY

DECEMBER, 2019

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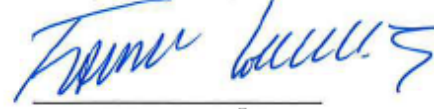
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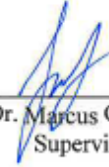
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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.



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PLAGIARISM

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on exhibitions organized and curated by artists in the history of exhibitions in Turkey. Along with the proposition to think and discuss about the concept of "exhibition" and "the history of exhibitions" which are not emphasized enough in the local art environment, the artists' exhibition practices in the field of curatorship starting from the second half of the 19th century to the present were examined. The exhibitions, which are the spatial arrangements that institutionalize the public life of the work of art in its most general definition, have been transformed into tools for producing discourses today, while their essential and only meaning was to display following of artistic production and centering upon selection and presenting actions since their origins in the 15th century. The artist-curator is presented as a different model of the curatorial profession created by this transformation as of the 1990s. However, artists had existed in the history of exhibitions and art history as actors producing ideas on exhibiting art long before the 1970s when curatorship became popular in the world and the 1990s when it was recognized as a profession. This thesis examined this idea in detail in the case of Turkey by briefly touching upon its similar status in the world as well.

Since the beginning of the history of the exhibitions, the artist's interest in exhibitions, the institutionalization of curatorship and the existence of numerous artists who have focused on exhibition practices as well as artistic practices have all created a model named "artist-curator". Today, there is a plethora of artist-curators who organize exhibitions in various collaborations or for biennials and museums. The research focusing on the exhibitions organized by the artist-curators constitutes an important area in the history of exhibitions and, therefore, in the history of art.

Keywords: exhibition history, artist-curated exhibition, artist-curator, artist as curator, exhibition, history of exhibitions, curator, art history



ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Türkiye sergiler tarihi içinde sanatçılar tarafından örgütlenen, organize edilen sergilere odaklanmıştır. Yerel sanat otamı içinde üzerinde çok vurgulanmayan “sergi” kavramı ve “sergileme tarihi” üzerine düşünme ve tartışma önerisi beraberinde sanatçıların, 19. yüzyılın ikinci yarısından günümüze sergileme pratikleri ve küratörlük alanındaki rolleri incelenmiştir. En genel tanımıyla sanat eserinin kamusal yaşamını kurumsallaştıran mekansal düzenlemeler olan sergiler, 15.yüzyıldaki köklerinden bu güne, sanatsal üretimin izinde; seçme ve sunma eylemleri merkezinde, temel ve tek anlamı teşhir etmek iken günümüzde söylem üretme araçlarına dönüşmüşlerdir. Sanatçı- küratör, 1990’lar itibariyle bu dönüşümün doğurduğu küratörlük mesleğinin farklı bir modeli olarak sunulur. Ancak sanatçılar, küratörlüğün dünyada yaygınlaştığı 1970’li yıllar ve Türkiye’de kabul gördüğü 1990’lardan önce sanatın sergilenmesi üzerine düşünce üreten aktörler olarak sergiler tarihi ve sanat tarihi içinde var olmuşlardır. Bu tez, bu düşüncüyü, dünyadaki benzer durumuna da kısaca değinerek Türkiye için ayrıntılı şekilde incelemiştir.

Sergilerin tarihinin başlangıcından beri sanatçının sergileme meselesine olan ilgisi ve pratiği, küratörlük mesleğinin kurumsallaşması ve sanatsal pratiği yanında sergileme pratiklerine de yoğunlaşan çok sayıda sanatçının varlığı ile “artist-küratör” olarak isimlendirilen bir model var etmiştir. Bugün, bağımsız şekilde çeşitli iş birlikleri ile ya da bienaller, müzeler için sergiler düzenleyen çok sayıda sanatçı sergiler düzenler. Bu sergilere odaklanan araştırmalar, sergiler tarihi ve dolayısıyla sanat tarihi içinde önemli bir alanı oluşturur.

Anahtar kelimeler: artist-küratör, küratör sanatçı, sergi, sergiler tarihi, küratör, sergi, sergi hikayeleri, sanat tarihi

PREFACE

Today, a work of art cannot be considered independently of its exhibition. Since the 15th century when the history of exhibitions began, exhibitions have performed many tasks and acquired a wide range of scope and meaning on the basis of displaying.

During the development process of exhibitions, artists acted both on exhibiting their own works and creating ideas on the concept of exhibition. The ideas and practices of artists occupy a significant place in the history of exhibitions and curatorial activities.

This study, which focuses on artists' practices and ideas on exhibition practices in the history of exhibitions in Turkey, aims to form an analysis within the theme of the concepts of "exhibition" and "history of exhibitions", which are not discussed much at the local dimension.

A number of key elements have been effective in determining the subject of my thesis study: The most important element, which includes my reason for my getting and continuing education in this field, is my existential interest in history and art sciences, as well as my passion for research and reading. The second element is the "exhibitions" that brought me and art together with my life in Istanbul. The third element is that while studying in the Art Management department, I worked as an assistant in a few exhibitions curated by my adviser Prof. Dr. Marcus Graf. This process has led me to focus on studying and researching the past and current situation, which I believe to be problematic, of the profession of curatorship. In addition, my curiosity about the attitude of the artists, their perspective, their approach to the issues caused me to reach a decision on this issue.

With the opportunity of this thesis, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to all my wonderful teachers I have met along my education, especially my thesis

adviser Prof. Dr. Marcus Graf. It was one of my biggest chances to have met teachers who reinforced my interest in history, literature and art. I would like to thank my thesis adviser Prof. Dr. Marcus Graf, who has always been there with me, for his understanding of education far from being restrictive, didactic and compelling, his providing a working environment open to different ideas and critics, and his humanistic view of the world and his elegance.

Writing a thesis on a subject that I love, am interested in and enjoy researching does not harbor any difficulty by itself. However, with the challenges I had to experience during this process, the process of writing my thesis became quite difficult. I owe gratitude to my friends who have been with me throughout the process. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to all my friends, especially Gülşah Altinkaya -my primary stress call- with her ever-beautiful heart, positive look and her joy, and Selmin Kuş, Alev Berberoğlu, Selin Söl, Esengül Çelik and Gözde Şahinbaş. I would also like to thank them for listening to the issues surrounding my thesis and for giving me the opportunity to discuss and exchange information.

Endless thanks to the artists whom I consulted for their opinions during the thesis process for sharing the memories of the exhibitions and the documents in their archives with me. My special thanks go to my parents for first providing a happy childhood and an atmosphere of freedom and then for their patience, unconditional labor and love which cannot be paid back with thanks, and to my sisters Sevil, Sema and Semra Süzer for their support and love.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Purpose of the Study

This study, titled Artist-Curated Exhibitions in the Exhibition History of Turkey, aims to explore and analyze exhibitions organized by artists and to reveal the impacts and contributions of artists' art practices and exhibition initiatives to the creation and development of curatorial field. In addition, it is also aimed to demonstrate how effective a role the artists have played in the institutionalization of the profession of curatorship starting from their first exhibition attempts in the late Ottoman periods till the present day through examples and documents.

With these main aims in the background, the study aims to deal with, examine and discuss such basic concepts as exhibitions and exhibition history, which do not draw much attention in the contemporary art field, including academic studies conducted on exhibitions.

Another purpose of the thesis is to show that the artists- curator title had existed long before curatorship profession became popular in the world in the 1970s and it was recognized in Turkey in the late 1980s, and that it has existed since the periods when art met with the public in exhibitions organized by artists, though they were not called curators.

The thesis aims to analyze one exhibition of the artists who produce exhibitions in curator capacity along with their art practices in the contemporary art environment in Turkey and to determine the status of artist-curator in Turkey.

1.2. The Scope of the Study

In the second part of this study, the focus was on ideas about the concepts of exhibition, exhibition history and curatorship which constitute the backbone of the main subject of the thesis and provides for sub-reading as well as the historical background of these concepts. The concept of exhibition was examined through questions such as "What is an exhibition?", "What meanings has it gained through the process?" and the historical development of exhibitions was reviewed. By focusing on the history of exhibitions, the relationship between the history of exhibitions and the writing of art history and the importance of studying the history of the exhibitions were tried to be determined. The definition, function and historical development of curator and curatorship concepts were provided. In the sub-section of artist-curator, the past and present status of the actor in the main subject of the study in the world art history were examined.

In the third part of the study, I initially had dwelt on the idea of a brief overview of the Exhibitions History in Turkey, but as I deepened my research, I noticed artists' active role in exhibition practices and decided to expand this section. And I found it appropriate to change the section heading to "Exhibitions History in Turkey through Exhibition Practices of Artists." In this section, the exhibitions were examined in a wide perspective ranging from the examples of the late Ottoman period to the exhibitions in today's institutions, museums and initiative areas. Important exhibitions and events that triggered exhibitions were presented in a chronological order from 1845 till the present day. However, the exhibitions organized by the artists between 1845 and 1989 were also discussed in a chronological order and brought to the forefront under a separate heading. In addition, the exhibitions and activities of

institutions and initiatives that had an impact on curatorial works and exhibition practices were examined in this section.

The exhibitions called "curated" exhibitions which were organized by artists after 1989 were discussed in the fourth section. The exhibitions titled *Serotonin*, *Istanbul Exhibition*, *Red Exhibition* and *Atsanat / Exhibition* are not exhibitions organized by a single artist, but by all participating artists collaboratively. However, since they coincided with the formation and development phases of the field of curatorship in Turkey, they were examined in this section. Misinformation that was found in different sources related to *Istanbul Exhibition* and *Atsanat / Exhibition* among these exhibitions especially made us feel responsible to include these exhibitions.

With the advent of the 1990s, major changes were experienced in the fields of art and curatorship in Turkey. For this reason, I had decided to create this section with post-1990 exhibitions. However, having felt the obligation to include the *Serotonin* exhibition, I also incorporated 1989 into this section.

In addition to those who continue their career as both artists and curators, exhibitions which were curated/experimented by an artist only once and had a significant impact on the field with that single exhibition were also dealt with. Each exhibition has an imprint including the name of the exhibition, the date, the location, the institution responsible for the organization, the artists and printed publications, if any. In addition to this, the installation photos of the exhibitions were intended to be included, yet this was not possible for some exhibitions. Exhibition venue, catalogs, brochure visuals, press releases were included as needed. Detailed information about the concept of each exhibition was provided through at least one paragraph of text.

1.3. The Method of the Study

Primarily, international books on the history of exhibitions, curatorship and artist-curator issues were reviewed. The past issues and the issues published throughout the process of periodicals in English on artist-curator and curatorship were followed. Master's theses and PhD dissertations written in Turkish and English on Curatorship and Exhibitions History were investigated. The recordings of the conferences and seminars on "artist-curator" were watched, and the published presentation articles and interviews made with "artist-curators" were examined.

In order to form the section on Exhibitions History in Turkey, books, theses, art almanacs, exhibition catalogs, periodicals and art archives especially of SALT Research and libraries on Art History in Turkey were screened.

For post-1989 exhibitions, besides books and various magazine articles, the views of the artists themselves, their experiences and the written and oral information they provided to me were analyzed.

2. EXHIBITION AND CURATORIAL STUDIES

“Exhibitions are hubs of interaction within the art world, the places where artists, dealers, critics, and collectors come together, and where the newest art first comes before the public.”

Bruce Altshuler, 2013

2.1. About the Concept of Exhibition

Exhibitions are very complex structures which need to be addressed and analyzed through the changes in their functions as well as their basic meaning and purpose since the late 17th century when they started to bring works of art to the attention of the public until today, and which need to be defined by asking the question "what is an exhibition?" again and again. This section traces the changing meaning and definitions of exhibitions in the historical and cultural process.

Vesna Madzovski likens exhibitions to a place that is “constantly under construction.” And he emphasizes that with each exhibition new narratives and meanings are created (Madzovski, 2016, s. 13) Exhibitions are mechanisms that have artistic, social, cultural, aesthetic, political, ideological, educational, and economic functions and that create meaning.

It will be appropriate and enlightening to go to the beginning and etymological roots of the word “exhibition” in order to comprehend its various meanings and definitions that changed over time and their status in the contemporary art world. The

word "exhibit" is derived from the verb "exhibere" in Latin ("ex" is "out," and "habere" is "hold"), which means "to hold out" . (Oxford English Dictionary, 2009) Thus, it is defined as "to hold out or submit (a document) for inspection, especially as evidence in a court of law," or, more relevant to us, as "to have (an item) on show in an exhibition." In its most basic sense, an exhibition is the public presentation/display of works of art. From international biennials to fairs, from solo exhibitions to retrospective exhibitions, all exhibitions and all kinds of curatorial definitions exist within this scope. (Groys, 2013, s. 13) However, this definition constitutes merely the basis for display efforts to make sense of the dominant existence of exhibitions today.

The roots of the exhibition as a form of ritual or action date back to ceremonies and festivals held every year or every season in the Middle Ages. During these festivals and ceremonies, artisans presented their mastery to the people of the city and had the opportunity to showcase their best products/productions to both the public and their masters. In this way, the apprentices had the chance to be promoted in their guilds following the inspection of the masters. Therefore, the exhibition emerged as a professional acceptance/approval ritual at a time when expertly-crafted, useful objects were rare. Throughout the Middle Ages, what we know today as visual art was not exhibited publicly. Paintings and sculptures were exhibited by the royal family and nobles in their mansions, castles, and courts as signs of respect and wealth. Until the 17th century, the public's relationship and contact with the visual arts had generally been possible through the huge temples, cathedrals, and mosques in the places of worship of the Middle Ages. (Obrist, 2014, s. 29)

The exhibitions which started in 1673 with the aim of exhibiting the works of the graduates of the art academy and held in the Louvre with the name *Paris Salon* as of 1725 was the main venue for art to be exhibited until the end of the 19th century.

(Antmen, 2010, s. 16) In the *Salon Exhibitions*, different types of art such as historical paintings, portraits, landscapes, busts, and plaster models of large sculptures were exhibited in a style which was established as “salon aesthetics.” The works were exhibited in a hierarchical order according to their sizes and in close proximity to each other. In *Salon Exhibitions*, the main and only purpose is to present and exhibit works of art.

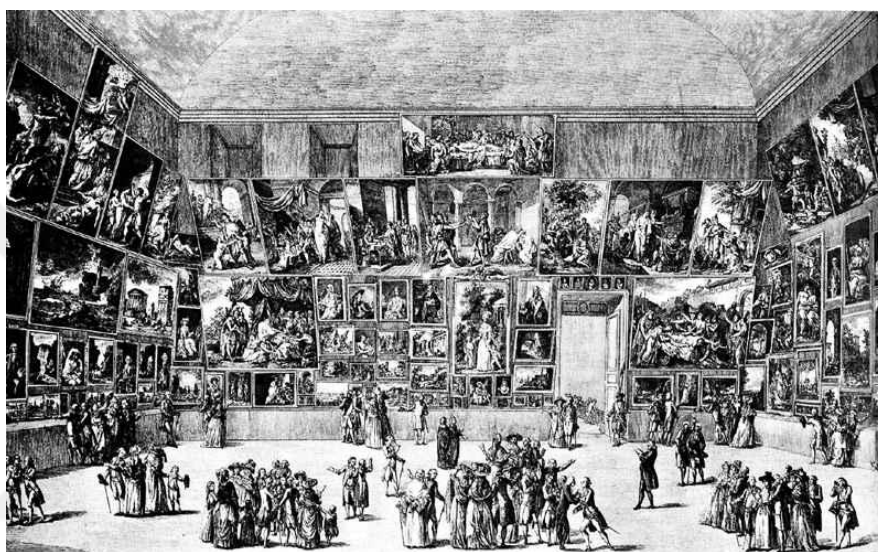


Figure 1 The Salon of 1785 by Pietro Antonio Martini

With the development of democratic states in the 17th and 18th centuries, museums managed by the state emerged. "Nine days after the termination of the monarchy on August 10, 1792, the decision to convert the royal palace building into a public museum was issued as a symbol and expression of the intent of the gains of the revolution." (Schubert, 2000, s. 44) The museum had an important function as a symbol of the new order and society, and the most important means of the museum to realize this function was to make exhibitions. And thus, the first public exhibition on the first anniversary of the Republic was held in 1793 in the Louvre. (Richter, 2011, s. 31) In addition to the display of selected works of art such as paintings and sculptures,

the task and the issue of representing a certain idea, presenting narratives, and creating a new structure began for the exhibitions. In the early 1800s, the German philosopher, art and literary theorist Friedrich Schlegel expressed his experience of the exhibition after his visit to the Louvre during his trip to Paris as such: "Each new exhibition and compilation of old paintings creates a body of its own where several things will appear to the art lover in a new light, which he had not yet seen so clearly." (Locher, 2009, s. 173-187)

The "mega exhibitions" World Fairs, which revealed the structure of nations, which gave them the opportunity to display their commercial production, technological, and architectural development, technological innovations, artistic attitudes and approaches, and which turned each country into a sub-exhibition of a single large exhibition, emerged in the second half of the 1800s. The most spectacular of these exhibitions, which were the means of presenting the imperialist scenes of the ruling powers of the world in the 19th century, were held in Paris and London.¹ (Artun, 2017, s. 118-119)

Terry Smith proposes that we reconsider the meaning of "exhibition" by considering the word "inhibition" as the antonym of the word "implicated." While an exhibition brings together a large number of works within a certain framework, it also leaves out many works. He calls this "exinhibiting." According to Smith, the exclusion of a work from an exhibition is at the same time the emancipation of the work of art. (Smith, 2015, s. 13-37) The refusal of artists such as Gustave Courbet, Edouard Manet (1832-1883), and Claude Monet (1840-1926) by *Salon Exhibitions* led these artists to organize alternative and independent exhibitions. With these

¹ The first one of the mentioned exhibitions, *the Great Exhibition*, was held at Crystal Palace in London in 1851.

exhibitions (*The Salon des Refusés*), they not only exhibited their rejected works, but "they also announced their seeking an alternative to academic painting and demonstrated an opposing stance in this sense" (Antmen, 2010, s. 21) Claude Monet's painting named *Impression, Sunrise*, which was displayed in the exhibition organized by thirty artists who came together in 1874 under the name of "Union of Anonymous Artists," was considered as the opening of a decisive new era in the history of art. With the limits being pushed in painting in terms of subject and technique, exhibition styles and gallery space also went through a great change. According to this new understanding, which emphasizes the unique importance of each work of art, the distance between the paintings exhibited started to increase. A gallery venue was created, enabling the viewer to see each work in a way that is isolated from all possible disturbances. (Obrist, 2014, s. 29) Brian O'Doherty expressed the change caused by this gallery venue created by the new understanding and its importance in art history as follows:

"The history of modernism is almost intertwined with the history of that venue; so much so that, it seems possible by linking the history of modern art with the changes in that venue and how we perceive those changes."

(O'Doherty, 2010, s. 107)

George Simmel described exhibitions as the image of modern art, which has undergone a major transformation, completely differing from the past. He stated that the reflection of modern times, which makes visible the collective actions of many people rather than individual action, can be seen in an art exhibition. He defined exhibitions as "an inevitable extension and result of modern specialization in art."

(Simmel, 2015)² An important aspect of this specialization is now the audience. Therefore, "exhibitions appeared at a particular moment, designed to answer a certain set of specific historical conditions. Forms of display go very deep into human social behavior, from the display of medieval relics to cave paintings and beyond, but the "exhibition" as such was invented in the Enlightenment in Western Europe, as a new form of publicness for a new sort of audience." (Myers, 2011, s. 244)

Between the 1920s and 1950s, significant innovative display approaches emerged, affecting the physical development of exhibitions. With this approach, which emerged with the individual ideas and efforts of the artists El-Lissitzky and Frederick Kiesler on exhibitions and exhibition venue, museum directors, including Alexander Dorner and Alfred Barr, pioneered important developments in the exhibitions. Alexander Dorner, who served as the museum director at Hanover's Landesmuseum from 1923 to 1936, put forth an experimental and discussion-generating exhibition model with the exhibition he organized in May 1929 titled *Original and Facsimile*. In this exhibition he organized for Kestner Society, Costner exhibited thirty-five works by canonical artists such as Cézanne, Renoir, Lorrain, and Tiepolo, along with their high-quality photographic copies next to them. This exhibition, in which the viewer had difficulty distinguishing between the original and the replica of the work, led to long-standing discussions on the subject of reproducibility of the work of art. "Indeed, the exhibition resulted in over six months of heated debates among museum authorities, art critics, and university professors in Germany and left a long trail." (Filipovic, 2016, s. 232)

² Quoted from the translation of George Simmel's article of 1890 titled "Über kunstausstellungen" (Unsere Zeit) which was published at the website of e-skop criticism journal.

The establishment of MoMA as a museum devoted exclusively to modern art is an important turning point in the history of exhibitions. MoMA was founded in 1929 under the founding directorship of Alfred Barr, who played an important role in transforming exhibitions into an experimental structure. Barr made comprehensive and effective initiatives which would guide the future practices of museums and exhibitions, and in 1937, he founded the museum's educational division under the management of Victor D Amico. He organized conferences and guided tours during the exhibitions. This shows that exhibitions now began to be transformed into structures that need to be clarified, explained, and expounded. Barr created an important structure in the transformation of museums and, along with the exhibitions, he caused art to go through - in Karsten's words - a "conceptual revolution." (Schubert, 2000) In Barr's words, the museum was now transformed into "a laboratory for experiments in which the public was invited to participate." The main experiment of the museum which turned into a laboratory was exhibitions.

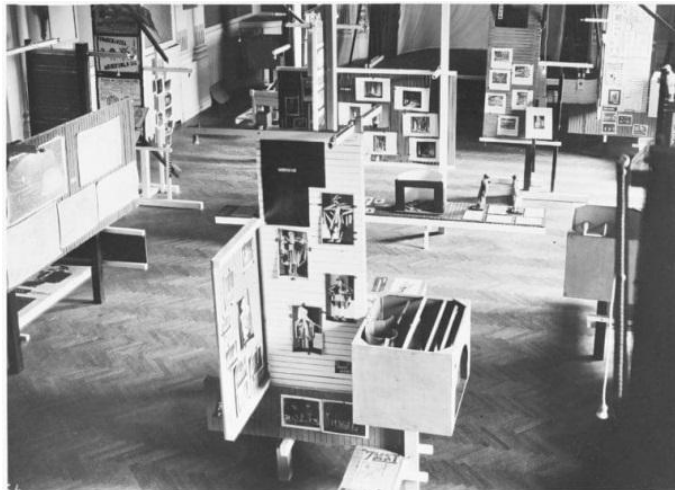


Figure 2 International Exhibition of New Theater Technique, Vienna Konzerthaus, 1924

With the mobile exhibition unit he designed for the Exhibition of *New Theater Technique* held in the Vienna Konzerthaus in 1924, Frederick Kiesler introduced an innovation that would have an impact on the traditional design practices of exhibitions and add a different dimension to the existence of an exhibition as a physical entity. The display system on the horizontal and vertical panels, called the 'Leger and Trager' or 'L' and 'T,' created an active movement space for both the work and the viewer. (O'Neill, 2003-2004, s. 7-10) Kiesler's mobile design unit created an important suggestion of form as a display idea and attitude for the onset of interest that focuses on the exhibitions being experienced by the audience in the following years.

El Lissitzky's striking work on exhibition design, *Abstract Cabinet* was held between 1927 - 1928 at Landesmuseum in Hanover. El Lissitzky was invited by Alexander Dorner, the director of the museum, and a masterpiece, as Arseny Zhilyaev called it, *Abstract Cabinet* came into being. "In the early years of the Soviet Union, even during the period associated with the historical avant-garde, it constitutes the most extreme example of known attempts to transform the museum institution." (Zilhayev, 2017)

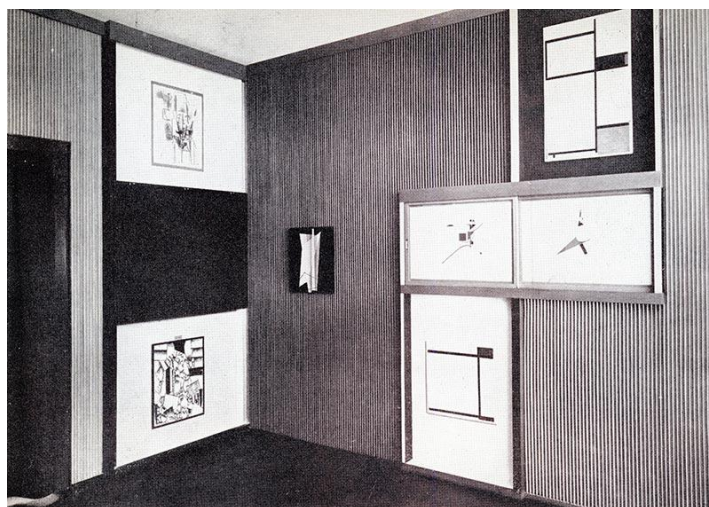


Figure 3 El Lissitzky, *Abstract Cabinet*, 1928, courtesy of Spengel Museum Hannover

According to Brian O'Doherty, El Lissitzky is an artist who organizes exhibitions that can transform public perception with his ideas about exhibition space and design.

Lissitzky "noticed the audience standing on the sidelines and enabled him/her to become a participant." Doherty emphasized that El Lissitzky was perhaps the "first exhibition designer/organizer." He put forward the idea of modern exhibition, transformed the gallery venue into a fictional structure, and enabled the audience to assume an essential role in this fiction. (O'Doherty, 2010, s. 107)



Figure 4 *First International Dada Fair*, Berlin 1920

After the 1930s, in addition to exhibiting works of art or artistic works, exhibitions started more clearly to transform into an intermediary institution where the works of the artists who gathered around a certain idea along with the expression of their problems and ideas were presented, and the projection of social life was displayed. Artist communities organized exhibitions showing their own artistic claims as well as their understanding of presentation/exhibition. For example, in 1920 at the *First International Dada Fair* held in Berlin, Dada artists juxtaposed the text and the image in an authoritarian exhibition style. Surrealist artists displayed an attitude

reflecting their own understanding of exhibitions at the *International Surrealist Exhibition* held in Paris in 1938 and at *Surrealism Application Documents* organized in New York in 1942. (Putnam, 2005, s. 47-65)

Marcel Duchamp was the organizer of these two exhibitions in 1938 and 1942; it became the harbinger of new questionings and changes on museums, exhibitions and venues in the years to come.



Figure 5 *Exposition du Surréalisme*, exhibition designed by Marcel Duchamp, Galerie Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1938

In 1938, Duchamp executed a performative venue design at *the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme* exhibition in Galerie Beaux-Arts in Paris. The exhibition venue was transformed into a fantastic space, and a spatial structure emerged that appealed to the imaginary world of the audience and gave them the impression that they were in a show. At the *First Papers of Surrealism* exhibition he organized in New York in 1942, Duchamp dominated the exhibition with his venue

design named *One Mile of Thread* by which he surrounded the exhibition. Duchamp approached traditional art venue and basic exhibition models with criticism and transformed the exhibition phenomenon into a performative field of action. According to Elena Filipovic, the reason for Duchamp's performative approach in these exhibitions derives from the artist's reflection on what an exhibition is or may be; “in other words, they point to the necessity to rethink the typical space of display, to reconfigure conventions of spectatorial looking, and to permit desire to enter into that place where only a disincarnate viewer was otherwise permitted to be present.”

(Filipovic, 2016, s. 232)

With the cultural transformations of the 1960s, artistic practices also underwent a major change. Along with this, the structure and boundaries of the spaces where art was exhibited began to be crossed. (Antmen, 2010, s. 16) During these years, many artists turned to conceptual strategies by taking interest in information systems, creating an intermediary language, and organizational tactics. “These strategic tendencies often implies a critique of the autonomy of the work of art as an ideological construct. At the same time, curatorship emerged as a creative, semi-autonomous, an individually authored form of mediation, which structured the experience of the work of art and affected the ways in which art was made and communicated to an audience” (O'Neill, 2003-2004, s. 4)

Willem Sandberg, Pontus Hulten, Seth Sieglaub, and Lucy Lippard are among the pioneers who prepared the groundwork of this transformation before the curatorial process that began with Szeeman in the 1960s. "William William Sandberg, a member of the Dutch Resistance Movement who supported experimental artists looking for a way out after the Second World War,” (Foster, 2015) was the curator and director of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam from 1945 to 1962. In an

interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist in 1995, in response to Obrist's question "Which exhibitions influenced you most as you were starting to curate your own shows?"

Harald Szeeman mentioned his admiration for William Sandberg and his knowledge-based approach in his exhibitions as follows:

"...I also admired William Sandberg, director of the Stedelijk Museum until 1963. Sandberg was obsessed with information. Sometimes he exhibited only part of a diptych, for instance, or left a good work out of the show altogether because it was reproduced in the catalogue. For him, ideas and information counted more than the experience of the object. ... Amsterdam in the 1960s was the meeting point, the whole art world converged in the Stedelijk cafeteria under a mural by Karel Appel. Sandberg was very open-minded. He let artists curate exhibitions such as Dylaby, with Tinguely, [Daniel] Spoerri, Robert Rauschenberg, and Niki de St Phalle; he was enthusiastic about new artistic directions: kinetic art, the California "light sculptors," new synthetic materials." (Szeeman, 1995)

While Pontus Hulten curated exhibitions in a small gallery named The Collector in Stockholm in 1950s, in 1958 he became the founding director at the Moderne Museet. After the Andy Warhol Retrospective he curated in 1968, he became the director of large museums such as Paris, Center Pompidou, and Los Angeles Museum of Modern Art and held extensive and significant exhibitions referred to as "large scale." Pontus Hulten worked in special collaboration with artists in exhibitions and organized exhibitions with a curatorial approach that cares about the ideas of the artists.

Starting with the second half of the 1960s, Seth Sieglaub continued his career as an art consultant, publisher, and independent exhibitions organizer. Sieglaub concentrated his research on conceptual art and was a pioneer in organizing conceptual art exhibitions.

Lucy Lippard, one of the influential curators who held independent exhibitions since the late 1960s, has also written over twenty books on conceptual art and feminist art as a feminist writer. Between 1969 and 1974, she organized a series of mobile exhibitions titled *Numbers Shows* which included four exhibitions. In addition to exhibitions such as 557,087 (Seattle World's Fair Pavilion, September 1969), 955,000 (Vancouver Art Gallery, 1970), 2,972,453 (Centro de Arte y Comunicacion, Buenos Aires, 1971), c.7.500 (CalArts, Valencia, CA, traveling throughout the US and Europe, 1973-1974), she produced ideas on conceptual art through the concept of the "dematerialization of the art object," which she frequently discussed in her articles.

Along with the aforementioned exhibitions by important curators that demonstrate diversity and courage with their intellectual basis and physical construct and with Harald Szeeman's appearance on the stage, the transition to the curatorial period, which was another stage in the field of exhibition, occurred starting from the end of the 1960s. Harald Szeeman's first independent exhibition in 1969 *When Attitudes Become Form* and in 1972, his being the sole curator of 5th Documenta caused exhibitions to evolve into another form and turn into a means of producing meaning. We see Szeemann in the 5th Edition as an individual exhibition manager and curator who, for the first time in the history of Documenta, was responsible for selecting the artists on his own and determined the subject of the exhibition by himself. (Richter, 2011, s. 231)



Figure 6 *When Attitudes Become Form*, Kunsthalle Bern, 1969

Daniel Buren, one of the artists of Documenta 5, criticized Szeemann's dominant position as a meta-artist in the exhibition catalogue and stated that the subject matter of the exhibitions changed from then on as follows: “The subject of exhibitions tends more to be not so much exhibition of works of art, as the exhibition of the exhibition as a work of art.” (Buren, 2014, s. 43)

The opinion that exhibitions are not perceived as different from the art objects they exhibit and are not distinguished from art installations has started to become widespread. Boris Groys holds the opinion that the distinction between artistic installation and exhibition is no longer valid. According to Groys, today “the basic unit of art is not a work of art as an object. It is the art venue where objects are exhibited: exhibition and installation itself.” (Groys, 2013, s. 13) Exhibitions, like the artworks themselves, represent what can be described as conscious and unconscious

subjects, issues, and ideological agendas. Their unconscious, or less obviously visible, aspects can be understood as manifestations of historical limitations and social codes. (Stainszewski, 1998)

Despite these views, undoubtedly the most important component of an exhibition and the base of all artists, curators, organizers, and all organizing actors is the art objects exhibited. Nevertheless, today's exhibitions mean much more than just selected artists' works of art that occupy a certain space. Each exhibition presents a representation of the thoughts of the organizing curator or of the institution or artist (at least in solo exhibitions), while conveying the discourse of the whole relationship between the formation mechanisms of the exhibition to the public. Bruce Ferguson defined the exhibitions by locating its strategic importance among all other components or interlocutors as "the central speaking subject": Exhibitions are the central speaking subjects in the standard stories about art which institutions and curators often tell to themselves and to us. Further, vision - the historical conditions of visibility through methodologies of perception and technologies of inspection - is the primary subject contemporary theoretical inquiry." Ferguson also considers exhibitions to be systems of strategic representation, a vital part of the cultural industry that Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer have uncovered. (Ferguson, 1996, s. 183)

An exhibition system creates a representation in order to make use of everything in the best way possible, from its always political architecture to its wall colors that always have a psychological meaning, to its always didactic labels, to its always powerful ideological and structural artistic exclusions, to its always dramatic lighting and to its security system as a social complementary form, to its promise of always professionally dogmatic curatorship, from always literary quality and

pedagogically oriented brochures, catalogs and videos, to the aesthetics that are always historically specific to that presentation rather than the moments of production of individual works of art. All exhibitions are a project consisting of a "meaning" or a hierarchy of theological meanings. In general terms, an exhibition is the presentation of selected items to the public in an organized way, as shown by the evidence in the terminology as of the 15th century. "The "presentation" can be physical or virtual, real or projected; the "items" either spectacular or discursive, material or immaterial; and the "public" either known or unknown, composed of one or many." (Filipovic, 2013)

Ultimately, as Boris Groys puts it, each exhibition tells a story by leading the audience like a reader in a certain direction. With their spatial arrangements, exhibitions create a narrative space, a theater stage, from past to present. The first traditional art museums described the story of the emergence of art and the subsequent technical victories by the chronological sequence of the works of art. (Groys, 2013, s. 13) Today, the curator exhibits the story that he/she wants to tell, or usually the story he/she writes about what the institution with which he/she collaborates wants to tell, discuss, and teach, through the works of art and design games that he/she thinks will mediate his/her narrative as a means to present new narrative spaces. "Exhibitions contain and control through nomination, hierarchy and textuality the undependable nature of art." (Ferguson, 1996, s. 183)

2.2. Toward A History of Exhibitions

“To study of exhibitions provides a fascinating route into art history.”

Bruce Altshuler³

(Altshuler, *Salon to Biennial-Exhibition That Made Art History of Curating*, 2008, s. 11)

In many articles on exhibitions, exhibitions are defined as structures that exist for a certain period of time and become an element of the past. For example, “Exhibitions are by definition ephemeral” (Petrešin-Bachelez, 2010) “The ephemerality and lack of absoluteness of an exhibition might be its most important features” (Filipovic, 2013, s. 78) “Exhibitions are by nature fragile, faulty and slippery tools. They are not so effective in telling stories. You cannot read one part of it and leave it on the shelf as you can with a book, you cannot start in the middle or rewind as you can with a video, and you cannot repeat it one after the other as you can with a dance figure” (Kortun, 2017) At this point, Walter Benjamin’s words in his article titled *On the Concept of History*, “The real image of the past is ephemeral. The past can only be captured as a painting which all of a sudden shines and enlightens the moment it shows itself never to appear again,” reminds one of this descriptive property of exhibitions (Benjamin, 2012, s. 41) Reconsidering, evaluating, analyzing and writing about exhibitions that are structures which are experienced at a certain period of time and which experience the time as well turn them into an historical image. Doubtless, the combination of these images forms a canon of exhibitions and

³ “Bruce Altshuler is Director of the Program in Museum Studies, Graduate School of Arts and Science, New York University. From 1992 to 1998 he was Director of the Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum in Long Island City, New York. Altshuler is the author of *Biennials and Beyond: Exhibitions that Made Art History, 1962-2002* (Phaidon Press, 2013), *Salon to Biennial: Exhibitions that Made Art History, 1863-1959* (Phaidon Press, 2008), *The Avant-Garde in Exhibition: New Art in the 20th Century* (Harry N. Abrams, 1994; University of California Press, 1998)”

exhibitions history writing. Curatorship being recognized as a profession and curatorial works being recognized and popular as a discipline/field all over the world have increased the number of research and writing on this field. Most of this research has appeared as publications that focus on exhibitions from a canonical point of view. On the other hand, there have appeared controversial opinions on who would form a canon of exhibitions according to what criteria and whether the history of exhibitions is a subtype of the history of art or it is a discipline by itself. The concept of canon, whose history dates back to Renaissance, to the book Giorgio Vassari wrote in 1550 and updated in 1568 named *The Lives of Famous Italian Architects, Painters and Sculptors*, has recently come to the agenda related to the issue of exhibitions (Erden, 2015, s. 9)⁴ In his article titled “A Canon of Exhibitions,” Bruce Altshuler argues that though the controversy over the history of exhibitions is relatively new, with the change in the general landscape of the history of art, art’s interest in social and institutional histories has increased. Altshuler has accepted that the history of exhibitions appeared as a critical questioning and academic study field in the last decade and highlighted this fact in the introduction to his publication on canonical exhibitions (Altshuler, 2013). Claire Bishop and Lucy Steeds discussed whether the history of exhibitions is a subtype of the history of art in the summer issue of the journal *Artforum* (2014). Steeds strongly argues against the idea that the history of exhibitions is a historical subtype which is formed based on geographical prejudices within the discipline of art history. Bishop, on the other hand, emphasizes that the exhibitions which Steed also included in her publications are made up of works of art belonging to the history of art and they, therefore, should be analyzed under the history of art (O’Donnell, 2016). Lucy Steeds deals with the issue of the history of

⁴ Osman Erden’s essay titled *An Essay On the Concept of Canon in the Field of Art in Turkey* was not included in the journal but printed as an annex and distributed.

exhibitions as a promising research and questioning field rather than its being a discipline or subdiscipline (Steeds, 2016, s. 17). As T.J. Clark mentioned in his article in 1974 *The Social History of Art*, it is necessary to consider artistic production conditions and the public venture of art while writing the social history of art (Clark, 1974, s. 561-562). In this case, the discussion related to its being a discipline or a subdiscipline is unnecessary. The writing of the history of art is doubtless an indispensable field of research. Christian Rattemeyer stated that in discussions related to the history of exhibitions; the two essential elements are far from today's discourse and controversies. According to Rattemeyer, "the first element is related to the recognized canon of important exhibitions. The second element has to do with identifying a scientific terminology and methodology. The exhibitions compiled under the heading of important exhibitions are subjectively chosen by the author's specifications and monopoly without any criteria and these cannot go further than being just a categorization of exhibitions types." Along with many unidentified and undiscussed problems related to methodology, terminology as well as categorization and canon, recognition of the history of exhibition as a field is just a phenomenon resulting from current appreciation (Rattemeyer, 2011, s. 255)

Teresa Gleadowe argues that the interest in the history of exhibitions stems from artists' practices. The conceptual shifts as of the late 1960s caused exhibitions to be perceived as creative activities. Artists turned the exhibition venues into their creative work environment through objects and activities and presented structures where the line between a work of art and an exhibition became blurred beyond the traditional structure of exhibitions. To Gleadowe, while doing these, artists thus proved that the history of art could not be separated from the history of exhibitions. Moreover, along with these developments, the history of exhibitions constitutes the

major part of the curriculum of the education in this field as a tool for determining the role and duties of the curator and identifying the development of curatorial works (Gleadowe, 2011, s. 249)

Kenneth Luckhurst's book titled *The Story of Exhibitions* published in 1951 is one of the preliminary works on the history of exhibitions (Madzoski, 2016, s. 12) (Madsozki, 2013, 12). In this book, Luckhurst dwells on how exhibitions were employed as cultural forms starting from the late 17th century. *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art*, authored by Mary Anne Staniszewski in 1998, examines exhibition designs as a cultural practice and aesthetic tool and the changes it went through over the history of exhibitions of the New York Modern Arts Museum. It is my personal belief that it would not be wrong to state that Bruce Altshuler is the most important person to contribute to the establishment of the history of exhibitions as a field. With his *Salon to Biennial* books titled *The Avant-Garde in Exhibition: New Art in the 20th Century* published in 1998, *Salon to Biennial - Exhibitions that Made Art History, Volume 1: 1863-1959* in 2008, and *Biennials and Beyond: Exhibitions that Made Art History: 1962-2002* in 2013, he helped to form a comprehensive resource on important exhibitions in the history of exhibitions and allowed it to be established as an academic field of study. Jens Hoffmann's book *Show Time: The 50 Influential Exhibitions of Contemporary Art* is also one of the publications that contributed to the history of exhibitions with its canonical approach. Since 2008, Afterall has organized symposiums and lectures under the title of *Exhibition Histories: Books and Events* and has published 10 books that focus on exhibition organization starting from 1955. In addition, Journals such as *The Exhibitionist*, *Manifesta Journal*, *On Curating* that focus on curatorial practices and exhibitions have continued to form resources with solid content for the field.

In Turkey, on the other hand, although there are a few studies and research focusing on important exhibitions of the past, its being established as a field has not come to the agenda yet and a suitable environment for discussion and publication on this issue has not been created. There have been a number of thesis studies on *State Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions*, which occupies an important place in the Turkish art history, *New Trends*, *Contemporary Artists* exhibitions. Nevertheless, the concept of exhibition and the history of exhibitions were not specifically handled. The socio-economic and political situation of the period examined constituted the background of these studies.

Even so, when the content of the theses written on the history of art and recently published books focusing on the modern history of art is examined, one can see a chronological order in reference to exhibitions. And this situation verifies what Harald Szeemann expresses:

“Exhibition history-“It is now widely accepted that the art history of the second half of the twentieth century is no longer a history of artworks, but a history of exhibitions” (Szeemann, 2007).

Most of the sections of the book prepared under the editorship of Halil Altındere and Süreyya Evren, *User’s manual: contemporary art in Turkey 1986-2006*, follow certain exhibitions chronologically. The history of post 1960 art, on which the book focuses, has been attempted to be written through exhibitions. The portfolio titled *First Exhibitions – A Selection* which was prepared by Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu for the 156th issue of *Sanat Dünyamız* journal examined in some sense the first exhibitions in the history of exhibitions in Turkey. Although he did not make a distinction as to the field of the history of exhibitions, in the introduction part of the

portfolio, Şerifoğlu emphasized the importance of examining the exhibitions. By the statement “This portfolio which we compiled under the title of the first exhibitions consists of texts that shed new lights on our art history,” he wanted to draw attention to the fact that the missing issues of art history would be noticed as a result of examining the exhibitions (Şerifoğlu, 2017, s. 41). There is no doubt that the art history today is not evaluated separately from the history of exhibitions. The increase in the number of studies and research on the exhibitions will facilitate the understanding of art. Making the writing of art history clearer and accessing clear information will be possible through a meticulous examination of exhibitions and the sharing of information by the first-hand witnesses. The March 2019n issue of Varlık journal explored today’s writing of art history. In her article published in this journal, Burcu Pelvanoğlu explained the benefit of examining an exhibition by saying “in fact, an exhibition can be a substitute for a book” by referring to Mark Rosenthal (Pelvanoğlu, 2019, s. 11-12)

2.3. Curating / Curator

As exhibitions are performed in a variety of forms, it is not possible to give an exact definition of curatorship; however, in its most general sense, curatorship can be defined as the profession of holding, creating and organizing exhibitions for museums, art institutions, art galleries, companies, schools or for solely individual purposes by someone who identifies himself / herself as a curator.⁵ As a matter of fact, far beyond this general definition, curatorship is a controversial totality of comprehensive works that can be explained by a variety of tasks and models.

⁵ Curatorship was recognized and identified as a profession with the profession code of 262.04 by the Social Security Institution affiliated to The Turkish Republic Ministry of Family and Social Services.

The blurring of the borders between exhibition practices and artistic production practices caused the distinction between an artist and a curator to deviate and led to the profession of curatorship to assume a rather complicated structure. Before the different duties and definitions of a curator are mentioned, it will be useful to have a glance at the origins of the profession and the etymological meaning of the term.

The etymological roots of the term “curator” goes back to the Latin term meaning “guardian.” It is derived from the Latin word “curatus” (guardian of the property) and from the Latin of the Middle Ages “curatus” (priest) and “curare” (take care of, treat, heal), and it is coined from the English words of “curate” (priest) and “curation” (treat) (Acar B. , 2016) Curatorship as a profession first appeared in the period of the Roman Empire. Curators were public service officials who were appointed to guard people who could not take care of themselves. In addition, they were assigned some official duties in a variety of public services. Thus, the Romans established curatorship system in order to provide protection for both people in need and public properties. The duty of a curator later evolved into the responsibility of protecting and healing the spirits of the Christian community within the hierarchical order of the Catholic Church (Madzoski, 2016, s. 30) Towards the end of the 18th century, the curator started to be known with his duties in museums. The curator was now seen as the protector of the collection in the museum for which he was responsible; he had duties such as keeping the works of art, exhibiting them, doing academic research on the collections and works of art and finding sources to enrich the collections. “The director was holding the steer of the museum as an affectionate academician who was supervised by a kind board of trustees.” With the increase in the number of museums, the curator was transformed into a professional person who

protected, kept and exhibited the collection of a museum.” (Schubert, K urat r n Yumurtası, 2004, s. 68)

Hans Ulrich Obrist listed the role and function of the profession of curatorship which gained a professional perspective in that period under four headings:

“1) Preservation. Art had to be understood as a crucial part of nation’s heritage. Thus safeguarding this heritage became a primary responsibility of the curator. 2) Selection of new work. As time passes, museum collections must necessarily be added to, and the caretaker of the museum thus becomes the caretaker of the national legacy which the museum represents. 3) The task of contributing to art history. Scholarly research into the works already collected allows the curator to pass on knowledge in modern disciplinary fashion in the same way as the university professor. 4) The task of displaying and arranging the art on the wall and in the galleries: the making of exhibitions. This is the task that has come the closest to defining the contemporary practice; one could even argue that a neologism is needed, so completely has the curator –as *austellungsmacher*, or exhibition-maker, departed from the traditional role of caretaking.” (Obrist, *Ways of Curating*, 2014, s. 25)

Madzowski suggested that it would be possible to divide the professionalization process of curatorship in the field of art into two as pre and post World War II (Madzowski, 2016, s. 30) The curator whose responsibilities are what is quoted from Obrist is the curator of the period before the war. After the war, the curator who was defined with these certain duties within the museum model appears as a professional whose responsibilities increased and as the creator of the exhibition.

“In the decades after World War II, there was a shift from this type of “museum curator” toward what would eventually be called an “exhibition auteur,” which is to say, the role of the “curator” as we understand it today. (...) The defining of this new role of curator and the resulting discourse of curatorial authorship arguably ran parallel to the establishment of new forms of collaboration between artists and exhibition makers.” (Martini & Martini, 2010, s. 260-275)

The changes in artistic practices along with conceptual movements in the 1960s led to radical shifts in the history of exhibiting and exhibitions. The artists' inclusion of space into their artistic productions or their attempts to transform the space in the 1960s resulted in new responsibilities for the curator.

The most significant change- transformation in terms of the curator's current role is Szeemann's activities. The exhibition titled *When Attitudes Become Form: Works-Processes- Concepts-Situations-Information*, organized by Szeemann in 1969 when he was the director of Bern in Switzerland, was perceived as the beginning of a new era in the new curatorship. With this exhibition, Szeemann invented new opportunities for different artistic production practices of both the curator and the artists. Julian Myers-Szupinska explained Szeemann's invention as: “His invention, in particular, was emblematic. He accorded to himself a mode of being and addressing the world called "exhibition making" that had for centuries been devised and pursued by artists for their own purposes” (Myers-Szupinska, 2016, s. 16-23). With this exhibition, Szeemann “turned the gallery into a studio, with artists travelling to Bern to produce installations and actions that extended into the city streets. Recognizing new art forms that were developing under terms such as earth art, concept art, anti-form and arte povera, the show included projects by nearly seventy artists, including

Joseph Beuys, Michael Heizer, Eva Hesse, Mario Merz, Allen Ruppersberg and Robert Smithson” (Fowle, 2007, s. 11-19).

Szeemann determined the roles of the curator which changed with him as “administrator, amateur, author of introductions, librarian, manager and accountant, animator, conservator, financier, and diplomat.” Hans Ulrich Obrist⁶ added to these roles the roles of “the guard, the transporter, the researcher and the Communicator” (Smith, 2012, s. 113). One of the most important curators of today, Obrist defines the function of the curator through these themes as:

“The curator is a catalyzer. Curators do not invent smart exhibitions. In the worst case scenario, a curator invents a stage, and then collects Works of art in order to display his/her great ideas. In my opinion, curators’ ideas are not interesting at all. Curators assist artists. To me, the real function of curators is, as the French art critique Fênêon put it at the beginning of the 20th century, “art intermediaries and curators are like a pedestrian crossing” (Obrist, 2013, s. 17)

Many roles can be added to the list; however, the two essential duties of the curator since the beginning of professional curatorship have been “selection” and “displaying.” The curator of today uses these two duties in order to express a new story or to form a new structure. The works he/she selects and exhibits turn into media that express his/her own ideas and the new structure he/she forms becomes the work itself. The curator is not different from an artist who makes use of the art of installation, which consists of arrangement specific to a venue, as a tool of expression.

⁶ Hans Ulrich Obrist: Hans Ulrich Obrist (b. 1968, Zurich, Switzerland) is Co-Director of the Serpentine Galleries, London. Prior to this, he was the Curator of the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Since his first show “World Soup” (The Kitchen Show) in 1991, he has curated more than 300 shows. (<https://waysofcurating.withgoogle.com/about/bio>)

The curator holds exhibitions with his/her artistic identity which he/she hides under the so-called “independent curator” term. Along with this line of thinking, Boris Groys defines today’s curator – independent curator – as follows:

“An independent curator is a radically secularized artist. He/She is an artist as he/she does whatever an artist does. (...) He/She does not use objects – including works of art – to the benefit of art; he/she rather exploits and secularizes them. (...) The contemporary curator both does not suffer from the magical weirdnesses of his/her ancestors and is the legal inheritor of the modern artist.” (Groys, 2013, s. 56-57)

The curator is an artist who produces exhibitions as a method of artistic production. The curator’s actions of selecting and displaying continues in the compilations performed by many others – within art or outside art - with or without a professional title in many areas.

“Now, in order to build an identity integrity consisted of small decisions, we pay utmost attention to select the correct visual and to present the right product. In its creative or intellectual action sense, selection used to be within the expertise of the curator. But now, it is possible to curate almost everything, ranging from a photo album on Facebook to a fashion inspiration board on Pinterest, a collection of bookshelves, or to temporary shops where homemade food is sold. It did not used to be this way” (Vidokle & Wood, 2012) The term “curated” is now used for the exhibition of a batch of selections in every field. Any person who does the selection attains the title of curator.

2.4. Artist-Curator

The attempts of the artists to hold or organize exhibitions are not a fashionable practice that has recently developed. The artist-curator can be considered as a new curatorship model and a popular phenomenon which has appeared following the boom related to the issue of curatorship. However, artists had been thinking of exhibiting their works or works that belonged to a collection or other artists long before curatorship became so popular. In the last 50-60 years, the most prominent actor of the World of art has been the curator, and the most important issue has been exhibitions. New ideas related to the concept of exhibition have been developed, and controversies about it have increased. Artists have held such controversies among themselves for a long time. Ultimately, the inclusion of their works in the public life is a matter of life and death. Elena Filipovic, who supports this line of thinking, states that artists have long known the meaning of the question, “What is an Exhibition” (Filipovic, 2013, s. 73). The artist is the first actor to consider the action of exhibition as the presentation of a work of art to a certain class of people or as a tool to provide his/her works with a public form of life.

Such ideas can be traced back to Vassari in the 16th century. An Italian painter, architect and historian, Giorgio Vasari⁷ designed *Galleria degli Uffizi* for the Medici collection and when the collection was moved to here in 1584, it gained a museological aspect. Vasari “historicizes and publicizes a chronologically and biographically categorized collection. By assuming a rational exhibition arrangement, he starts to display the history of art instead of the history of rulers and saints” (Artun, 2019).

⁷ Giorgio Vasari, Arezzo 1511-Floransa 1574.

The most striking example of an artist organizing a solo exhibition is the rogue pavilion which Gustave Courbet held as a reaction to the Hall in 1855. When his works titled *The Artist's Studio* (1854-55) and *A Burial at Ornans* (1849-50) were rejected by the Hall, the artist opened his own exhibition. Courbet held this exhibition in order to demonstrate his stance and attitude against the Hall as well as displaying his paintings. Each of the Futurist⁸, Dadaist⁹ and Surrealist¹⁰ groups held exhibitions so as to display their artistic production forms with the artists' own initiatives¹¹.

Marcel Duchamp is the first person who clearly questioned what an exhibition is, who included the exhibition venue in this questioning and who is one of the most important pillars in the formation of curatorial phenomena. Duchamp's curatorial mechanism has radically changed the terms for exhibition and work of art.

In 1917, Duchamp assumed a curator-like role as the head of the "hanging committee" for the exhibition titled *Exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists in New York* soon before the term "curator" started to be widely used and the "artist-curator" appeared (Filipovic, 2013, s. 8).

In the post World War II period, numerous artists with the title of artist-curator were witnessed to use the exhibition practice as a form of creating a criticizing form and discourse and as a tool for providing a social benefit.

Documenta, which was established as a part of efforts to make the destroyed city of Kassel livable again and is one of the leading art biennials of today, was initiated in 1955 by Arnold Bode (23 December 1900 – 3 October 1977), who is also an artist.

⁸ *The Last Futurist Exhibition of Pictures*, Ptograd, December 19, 1915 – January 19, 1916.

⁹ *The First International Dada Fair*, Berlin, June 30 – August 25, 1920.

¹⁰ *International Exposition of Surrealism*, Galerie Beaux-Arts, Paris, January – February, 1938.

¹¹ Dadaist, Surrealist ve Futurist exhibitions mentioned are included with detailed analysis by Bruce Alshuler in his book *The Avant Garde in Exhibition: New Art in the 20th Century*.

Arnold Bode worked as the exhibition director of Documenta I, and later he was the artistic director of Documenta II (1959), III (1964) and IV (1968).



Figure 7 Arnold Bode at documenta 2, 1959, Photo by Hans Haacke

With Harold Szeeman assuming the role of General Secretary in addition to the role of artistic director of Documenta V (1972), a new period was begun in the history of Documenta, and with the institutionalization of exhibition organizer, a new period in the history of curatorship was entered. Arnold Bode's approach which he started with Documenta has been effective in the formation of curatorship. In fact, His approach to the installation of Documenta exhibitions indicates a totally curatorial attitude, according to what is narrated by those who had the opportunity to work with him. Hans Haacke, who worked as an assistant at Documenta II in 1959, talks about his experience with Bode as follows:

“(...) A new term related to the presentation of art had appeared:

Inszenierung or mise-en-scène, meaning staging or putting on stage, borrowed from the world of theater. When exhibition management and presentation was in question, Bode had no equal. Organizing an exhibition meant more than just hanging paintings on the Wall next to one another.

Special spaces were designed for individual paintings or a group of paintings. As a result of perspectives as one passes from one space to another, a dialogue was established between the paintings that were unusually placed next to each other or hung opposite each other. The flow between the rooms designed relatively in an open fashion had one experience a feeling of continuity, which was different from the spaces with definite borders in the traditional museum architecture or the eternally long line of stands in trade fairs (...) (Haacke, 2009)

On the other hand, before the curator gained an institutional identity, the exhibition named *an Exhibit*, the central conceptual role of which belonged to Richard Hamilton, was held in 1957 with the collaborative participation of Victor Pasmore and Lawrence Alloway.



Figure 8 *an Exhibit*, installation view, Hatton Gallery, Newcastle, 1957

The exhibition was made up of a space arrangement in which transparent boards in different colors were hanging from the roof in right angle to each other. Also, a labyrinth-like environment which allowed the audience to move in was created. As Documenta brought the issue of exhibition management to the agenda and as a result of the vivid art environment of the 1960s, the artists' exhibition practices increased, and many artists and artist groups with the title of artist-curator organized exhibitions. Some of these exhibitions are *Working Drawings And Other Visible*

Things On Paper Not Necessarily Meant To Be Viewed As Art, artist-curator: Mel Böhner (1966); *Avant-Garde Tucuman Arde*, artist-curator group: Argentinian Visual Artists Group (1968); *Apocalipopotese*, artist-curator: Helio Oiticica (1968); *Womanhouse*, artist-curator group: Judy Chicago, Miriam Schapiro, and the CalArts Feminist Art Program (1972); *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles*, artist-curator: Marcel Broodthaers (1972); *Times Square Show*, artist-curator group: Collaborative Projects Inc. (1980); *Freeze*, artist-curator: Damien Hirst (1988); *AIDS Timeline*, artist-curator group: Group Material (1989); *If You Lived Here...*, artist-curator: Martha Rosler (1989); *The Brooklyn Museum Collection: The Play of the Unmentionable*, artist-curator: Joseph Kosuth (1990); *Feux pâles*, artist-curator: Philippe Thomas (1990); *Mining the Museum: An Installation by Fred Wilson*, artist-curator: Fred Wilson (1993); *Rolywholyover A Circus*, artist-curator: John Cage (1993); *The Uncanny*, artist-curator: Mike Kelley (1993); *MOMAS-Museum of Modern Art Syros*, artist-curator: Martin Kippenberger (1993-1997); *Untitled (Knobkerry)*, artist-curator: David Hammons (1994); *The Trial of Pol Pot*, artist-curators: Liam Gillick and Philippe Parreno (1998); *Mapping Sitting: On Portraiture and Photography*, artist-curators: Walid Raad and Akram Zaatari (2002); *Picture Room*, artist-curator: Goshka Macuga (2003); *Nova Popularna*, artist-curators: Lucy McKenzie and Paulina Ołowska (2003); *The Potosi Principle*, artist-curators: Alice Creischer, Andreas Siekmann, and Max Jorge Hinderer (2010); *UniAddDumThs*, artist-curator: Mark Leckey (2014-2015).



Figure 9 Installation view of first exhibition of *If You Lived Here...* curated by Martha Rosler, Dia Art Foundation, New York, 1989

Besides, various museum and biennial managements were interested in this tendency among many artists to organize exhibitions, and artists were invited to hold exhibitions. In the historical process, a great many artists assumed roles in the organization of large scale exhibitions such as museum and biennial exhibitions. Among these exhibitions, the exhibition series titled *Artist's Choice*, which MoMA has continued since 1989 till present day, comes to the forefront. *Artist's Choice* was started in 1989 with the invitation of the artist Scott Burton by the museum to select works from the collection of the museum and organize an exhibition with these works. The 14th exhibition of *Artist's Choice* series, *The Shape of Shape*, has been curated by the artist Amy Sillman in 2019¹².

¹²For all the exhibitions held within the scope of *Artist's Choice* series, visit: <https://www.moma.org/calendar/groups/19>



Figure 10 Installation view of *Artist's Choice: John Baldessari*, MoMA, New York, 1994

Another artist who was invited to organize an exhibition – long before MoMA’s artist-curator exhibitions – was Andy Warhol. Andy Warhol was invited to curate an exhibition by Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design (RSID) in 1969. For this exhibition he named *Raid the Icebox I, With Andy Warhol*, Warhol followed a selection process, the aim of which was to bring up everything he saw in the storage located downstairs in the museum. Many objects such as chairs, paintings and sculptures, shoes and clothes collections were selected from the storage of the museum and carried to the exhibition venue by the curator Warhol. According to Anthony Huberman, what Warhol did was questioning why he was selected as the curator and challenging curatorship (Huberman, 2017, s. 87).



Figure 11 Installation view of *Raid the Icebox I, with Andy Warhol*, Isaac Delgado Museum, New Orleans, 1970

Another artist who organized an exhibition with a selection for a museum was Joseph Kosuth. He curated an exhibition titled *The Brooklyn Museum Collection: The Play of the Unmentionable* for the Brooklyn Museum in New York between 27 September – 31 December 1990. Kosuth chose from the collection of the museum “100 works belonging to African, Middle Eastern, Classical and African artists. He created a ‘hall style’ exhibition design by placing the works into categories such as ‘The Play of the Unmentionable, female and male nude, the child nude, religious, political controversies” (Hoffmann, 2014, s. 60).



Figure 12 Installation view of *The Play of the Unmentionable* curated by Joseph Kosuth, Brooklyn Museum, 1990

In the recent past and at present, the curatorial structures of important biennials have been formed by artist-curators. Among the biennials curated by artist-curators are 11th Manifesta¹³ curated by the artist Christian Jankovski (11 June – 18 September, 2016, Zurich, Switzerland), the 15th Istanbul Biennial organized by the artist-curator duo Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset, and the 33rd São Paulo Biennial organized with the title of *Affective Affinities* in 2018 by the curatorial

¹³ “Manifesta was conceived in the early 1990s as a nomadic, European biennial of contemporary art, responding to the new social, cultural and political reality that emerged in the aftermath of the Cold War. Following a desire to explore the psychological and geographical territory of Europe and to provide a dynamic platform for cultural exchange throughout the region, it takes place every two years in a different European city.”

projects of seven artist-curators, who are Mamma Andersson (Luleå, Sweden, 1962), Antonio Ballester Moreno (Madrid, Spain, 1977), Sofia Borges (Ribeirão Preto, Brazil, 1984), Waltercio Caldas (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1946), Alejandro Cesarco (Montevideo, Uruguay, 1975), Claudia Fontes (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1964), and Wura-Natasha Ogunji (St. Louis, USA, 1970).

Another significant example is that Francesco Bonami¹⁴, the curator and director of the 50th Venice Biennial, included Gabriel Orozco¹⁵ and Rirkrit Tiravanije¹⁶ in his curatorial team as co-curators. Curatorial approaches such as these that put the ideas of artists in the center are on the increase and gaining prominence.

¹⁴ Francesco Bonami, (b. Florence, 1955) is an Italian art curator and writer who is currently Honorary Director of Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin.

¹⁵ Gabriel Orozco (artist-curator) was born in Jalapa, in Mexico, in 1962.

¹⁶ Rirkrit Tiravanija(artist-curator) was born in Buenos Aires, in 1961.

3. OVERVIEW OF EXHIBITION HISTORY IN TURKEY THROUGH ARTISTS' EXHIBITION PRACTICES

"To exhibit is to find friends and allies for the struggle."

Eduardo Manet, 1867

(Altshuler, 2008, s. 11)

3.1. Historical Origin of Exhibitions in Turkey: First Exhibition Practices in the Ottoman Empire

Exhibition works that formed the basis of Exhibition History of Turkey started to develop as of the second half of the 19th century in the Ottoman Empire period. These developments took place primarily after foreign painters presented their works to the palace. The first exhibition indicated by sources that was held at Çırağan Palace in 1845 for Sultan Abdulmecit and the palace people to see, though it was far from public display and did not fully fulfill the public function of an exhibition, was the *Oreker Exhibition*. It is important that the embassy appointed someone knowledgeable about the organization of an exhibition for the exhibition of paintings sent by the Austrian painter Oreker through the embassy of Austria. (Cezar, 1971, s. 439) This situation shows that the palace cared about the art of painting and exhibition, and it is reminiscent of the curating profession of today. One year after the *Oreker* exhibition, we witness another practice similar to the curatorial profession when Ahmet Fethi Paşa, Tophane-i Amire supervisor, was given the duty of protecting and exhibiting old weapons and works at the Hagia Irene, which was used

as the Imperial Arsenal, in 1846. Ayşe H. Köksal accepts Ahmet Fethi Pasha as the first curator of Turkey due to this appointment.

“He cleans the Sultan's collection of old weapons and ancient Greek-Roman-Byzantine archaeological works with utmost care, makes them ready for exhibition and puts them under protection in the building of Hagia Irene, which was considered as sheltered according to the conditions of that period. With the exhibition methods which could be considered contemporary in that period, he juxtaposes Mecmua-ı Asliha-ı Atika (Old Weapons Room) and Mecmua-ı Asar-ı Atika (Room for Antiquities) in integration with each other. He stages the modernization of the Ottoman Empire in a sense by exhibiting the weapons of the Janissaries, the military unit that was abolished by Mahmut II, together with the new fashion rifles brought from America and the new army uniforms ordered from Italy.” (Köksal, 2012)

Therefore, what Ahmet Fethi Pasha achieved matches the duties and responsibilities of the curator at that time. Fethi Pasha's exhibition model with his protectionist approach to the collection in the exhibit constitutes a significant starting point for the exhibitions and curatorial history in Turkey.

In 1849, the first exhibition of paintings in its real sense and open to public was held at the Military Academy. The exhibition included the paintings of the Military Academy (Harbiye) students and students of the high school within the academy (Harbiye İdadisi) (Cezar, Sanatta Batı'ya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi, 1971, s. 419) Western-style painting education in the Ottoman Empire was first included in the curriculum of military schools as of the 18th century. (Öndin, 2003, s. 188)

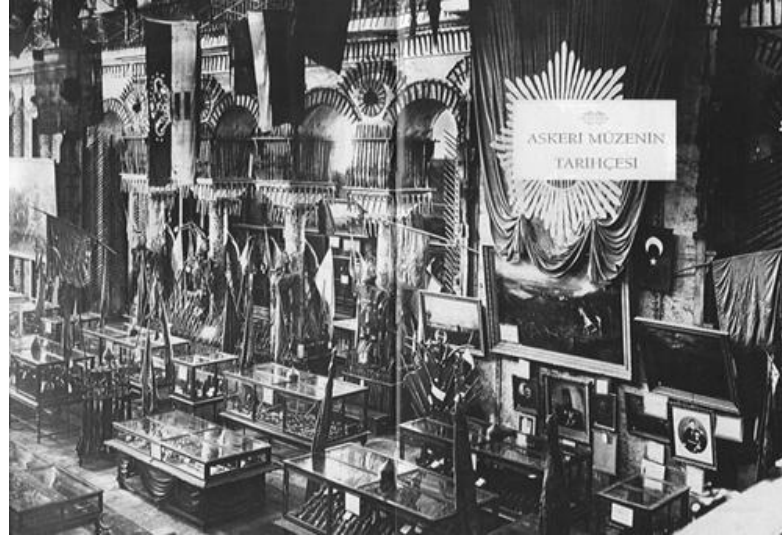


Figure 13 Exhibition design of Hagai Irene Museum

Painting education in military schools takes place very seriously, which is why Mustafa Cezar says that this exhibition should not be viewed as an ordinary school exhibition. (Cezar, 1971, s. 422) In addition to these two early examples, the artists exhibited their works with their personal efforts in various places such as their own ateliers, bookstores and stationery. We can see many interesting examples related to this issue in Mehmet Üstünipek's book entitled *Exhibitions in Contemporary Turkish Art from Tanzimat to Republic*. We gain access to the information that artists exhibited their works in locations accessible to many people such as shops, school buildings, photography studios. Hoca Ali Rıza exhibited his works at a ferry port, Osman Hamdi Bey and Sarkis Diranyan displayed their works in the atelier of well-known photographer Abdullah Biraderler, and Civanyan and Zonaro put up their exhibitions in *Zellich* bookstore. (Üstünipek, 2007, s. 60) In particular, the presentations of foreign artists conducted in their workshops that were concentrated in Pera and Galata regions supported the development of the exhibitions. Zonaro is the most well-known of these artists. Zonaro's home workshop in Beşiktaş, Akaretler No.50 is an exhibition venue named *Galleria Zonaro*, which is also open to everyone

and hosts a permanent exhibition. Zonaro created a permanent exhibition in his workshop and prepared a poster for this exhibition and hung it on the door of his studio. (Öndeş & Makzume, 2003)

Sergi-I Umumi Osmani (Ottoman Exhibition) held on February 20, 1863¹⁷, was the most important initiative that both affected the development of the exhibitions and showed the support of the palace in this area. In the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire participated in large-scale exhibitions and trade fairs, which showed the developments in different branches of industry and architecture reflecting the cultural and economic conditions of the states, as well as commercial products in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry and handicrafts. *London Exhibition of 1851, Paris Exhibition of 1867, and Vienna Exhibition of 1873* were among these. Having been influenced by the importance attributed to art by different states and their approaches to art exhibitions in these exhibitions in which the Ottoman Empire participated, *Sergi-i Osmani* was organized. In *Sergi-i Osmani* exhibition, in addition to industrial and agricultural products, books and treatises and volumes were displayed; in a different section named *Sanayi-i Nefise*, paintings were exhibited as well. (Cezar, 1971, s. 422-423) The fact that a special building was built for *Sergi-i Osmani* indicates that the issue of exhibition was attached high importance. In addition, thanks to this comprehensive exhibition, the public had the opportunity to see works of art at an exhibition for the first time. (Üstünipek, 2007, s. 60)

¹⁷ Mustafa Cezar cites *Tercüman-ı Ahval* newspaper, dated 29 February 1279, issue 299 as the source of the date.



Figure 14 Private building of *Sergi-i Umumi Osmani*, Sultanahmet, 1863

Among the first exhibition activities that took place in the last period of the Ottoman Empire, the artists' own efforts, school exhibitions, and especially the efforts of the artists who taught painting come to the forefront. One of the important efforts in this regard belongs to the painter Pierre Desire Guillemet. In 1871, two years after he founded the first private painting academy, Guillemet organized an exhibition of the paintings of the students of the painting academy. (Cezar, 1971, s. 424) Mustafa Cezar states that this exhibition is important in that, despite being private, it belongs to an academy providing only painting education. Another point that made the exhibition of Guillemet important in 1871 is that a trainer artist is an early example for the “artist-curator” model, which is organized by bringing together pictures of different people (student-artist).

Exhibitions Organized by Turkey's First (Professional) Artist Curator, Şeker Ahmet Pasha

After the first exhibition activities mentioned above, *Şeker Ahmet Pasha Exhibitions*, which many sources refer to as the first exhibition, were organized. Şeker

Ahmet Pasha completed his painting training in Paris as a student of Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904) and Gustave Boulanger (1824-1888). After his return to Istanbul, he held two exhibitions in 1873 and 1875 while he was working as a painting teacher at the art school in Sultanahmet. The reason why these two exhibitions are referred to as the first exhibitions is that they took a long time to be organized with utmost meticulousness. With these two exhibitions, he attracted the attention of the palace and after the exhibitions, he assumed a position in the palace as one of the aides of the sultan. (Şerifoğlu, 2017, s. 50) It is understood from the news that appeared long before the exhibition that the first exhibition held in a hall of the Sultanahmet School of Art in 1873 was a product of a long preparatory work. For the exhibition, advertisements were given to the newspapers at different times, and they were informed that the preparations for the exhibition were progressing, thus aiming at increasing interest in exhibition and painting art and keeping it alive. (Cezar, 1971, s. 425) (Cezar, 1971) The first exhibition, which was opened on Sunday, April 27, 1873, included paintings by the famous painters of the period Guillemet, M. Hayette, Sait Efendi, Mesut Bey, M. Palombo, M. Moretti, as well as the students of the Sultanahmet School of Art, Medical School and Galatasaray Sultanisi. With the excitement and interest in the first exhibition, preparations for the second exhibition began, and the second exhibition was opened on July 1, 1875 in the halls of the building of Istanbul Darülfünun (University). Thirty artists participated in the exhibition, and five of them were Turkish artists, Şeker Ahmet Pasha, Ahmet Bedri, Halil Pasha, Osman Hamdi and Nuri Bey. Entrance fee was charged for both exhibitions organized by Şeker Ahmet Pasha. With the income obtained from the exhibition, the opening of a school for fine arts education came to the agenda. In addition to taking part as an artist in both exhibitions he organized, Şeker Ahmet

Pasha assumes an important role in the history of exhibitions as an artist-curator when the impact of his professionally organized exhibitions is considered.

Elifba /ABC Club Exhibitions (Elifba /ABC Klübü Sergileri)

Elifba Club¹⁸ is a fine arts club which is assumed to be established in the early 1880s. In the art environment stirred up following the two exhibitions organized by Şeker Ahmet Pasha, an effort was made by the artists to come together and act together in order to develop the art. With this effort, they organized two exhibitions in 1880 and 1881. According to the information obtained from the research of Mustafa Cezar, Elifba Club had many members. Although it is not known exactly who is in the management of the club, which is composed of Turks, Turkish subject non-Muslims and foreign members, Turks are thought to be less active. (Cezar, 1971, s. 435-436)

The first exhibition of Elifba Club opened in the first week of September in 1880 with the organization (curatorship) of the Greek Mavrokordato at the Tarabya Greek Girls' School. Due to the fact that a catalog was prepared for the exhibition, Mustafa Cezar sees this exhibition more professional in terms of exhibition features than Şeker Ahmet Pasha exhibitions that do not have a catalog. (Cezar, 1971, s. 435) Mustafa Cezar compares the first exhibition of Elifba Club with the exhibitions of Şeker Ahmet Pasha in terms of the number of Turkish artists participating in the exhibition and the coverage of the exhibitions in the Turkish and foreign press published in the Ottoman Empire. Fewer Turkish artists took part in the first exhibition of Elifba Club than those of Şeker Ahmet Pasha. Elifba Club exhibition was covered more in the Turkish press than Şeker Ahmet Pasha exhibitions.

¹⁸ Although the exact date of establishment of the club is not known, based on the information that the first exhibition was opened in September 1880, it is thought to be opened in the same year at the latest.

Immediately the following year, the second *Elifba Club Exhibition* was opened on April 8, 1881 in the mansion located in Tepebaşı Municipality Garden. The second exhibition was opened in a central place where more visitors could be reached, and an entrance fee was charged to cover the exhibition expenses. While 150 works were exhibited in the first exhibition, 220 works were on display in the second exhibition. It is possible to say that participation, interest and approach to exhibitions increased with this exhibition.

As of the second half of the 19th century, the Ottoman Sultan Abdülaziz's interest and support for painting, the first attempts to exhibit and especially the exhibitions organized by Şeker Ahmet Paşa and the painting lessons given by foreign painters in Istanbul are the main reasons for the increasing interest in fine arts. All of these reasons caused a need to be felt for a school which offered training exclusively in the field of fine arts. When Osman Hamdi Bey was appointed as the head of Müze-i Hümayun (the Imperial Museum) in 1881, he took the initiative of establishing a school for modern painting by taking the model of the Louvre Museum and the Ecole des Beaux Arts. In the wake of these initiatives, in 1883, Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi was established in the building opposite Müze-i Hümayun (the main building of the current Archaeology Museum), which is currently used as the Museum of Ancient Oriental Works. (Köksal A. H., 2012) Osman Hamdi Bey was appointed as the director of Sanayi-i Nefise School, which was founded in 1883 with 20 students. According to Mustafa Cezar, the establishment of Sanayi-i Nefise School opened a new page for the exhibitions. (Cezar, 1971, s. 439)

Istanbul Salon Exhibitions (İstanbul Salon Sergileri)

In the Ottoman period and afterwards, the most important change and transformation in art environment in Turkey in the historical process is the opening of Sanayi-i Nefise School in 1883. The existence of a school focusing on fine arts has shaped and developed the art environment. With the creation of an art environment, important developments in the field of exhibitions were witnessed with *Salon Exhibitions* held between 1901-1903.

With the initiatives of Alexandre Vallauray (1850-1921), one of the professors of the Architecture Department of Sanayi-i Nefise School, and Régis Delbeuf (1854-1911), the director of *Le Stamboul* newspaper published in Istanbul, as well as the support provided by the French ambassador of Istanbul of the time, an artists' club which would bring artists together was founded and named *First Salon of Istanbul* in 1901. In the same year, an exhibition of paintings and sculptures of the members of *First Salon of Istanbul* was organized. *Istanbul Salon's* first exhibition was held in a mansion in *Passage Oriental* (Doğu Pasajı) in Beyoğlu, which belonged to Bourdon, a French merchant. (Cezar, 1971, s. 439-440) The exhibition, which included about 170 works of art, was opened with a ceremony attended by a large crowd. The second *Istanbul Salon* exhibition was held in the building No.414 in Beyoğlu Posta Street in 1902. 325 works of 36 artists were exhibited in the exhibition. In the third exhibition held in 1903, participation decreased, and the continuity of the exhibitions could not be ensured. (Üstünipek, 2007)

The establishment regulation of Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi envisages the establishment of a museum for painting and engraving along with the Asar-ı Atika Museum and the Sanayi-i Milliye Museum. Another article in the regulation

emphasizes the necessity "to build a painting hall that collects the works of the day's artists and especially those who have dealt with the right works." This hall was opened on October 27, 1915 at Sanayi-i Nefise School. Painter Hikmet Bey was appointed as the (protector) curator of this hall exhibition in 1915. (Edhem, 1970, s. 38-41) Hikmet Bey was appointed to the curator position with a salary of 1500 kurus. (Ürekli, 2015, s. 98) To Ali Artun, curated by the artist Hikmet Bey, this exhibition was no different from a fine arts museum. (Artun, 2017, s. 43)

Ottoman Painters Society and Galatasaray Exhibitions (Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti ve Galatasaray Sergileri)

The period in which significant developments took place in the field of art and therefore in the field of exhibitions coincide with the processes of great changes in many areas, which were very important for the political and cultural history of the region. In the years following the declaration of the First Constitutional Monarchy, the establishment of Sanayi-i Nefise, the most important development indicator in the field of art, was followed by many innovations. The first graduates of the school, also known as the generation of 1914, brought a new understanding of art as they returned home after their education in Paris between 1910 and 1914. Following the declaration of the 2nd Constitutional Monarchy, the first independent artist organization in our history, *Ottoman Painters Society* was established by artists, the majority of whom were 1914 generation painters. *Ottoman Painters Society* was founded with the suggestion of the painter Mehmet Ruhi (1880-1931) by a group of artists, such as Şevket Dağ (1876-1944), Sami Yetik (1878-1945), Hikmet Onat (1882-1977), İbrahim Çallı (1882-1960), Agâh Bey, Kazım Bey, Ahmet İzzet, Ahmet Ziya Akbulut (1869-1938) and Mesrur İzzet (1873-1953). Later, Feyhaman Duran (1886-1970), Hüseyin Avni Lifij (1886-1927), Murtaza Bey, Midhat Rebi (1873-1918), Tomas

Efendi, Müfide Kadri (1890-1912) and Rıfat Keçeciöđlu (1861-1939) and Hoca Ali Rıza Bey joined the society. (Güler, 1994) In order to protect the rights of the Ottoman painters and to secure their future, there are two important activities carried out by the society established with the support of Prince Abdülmecit Efendi. The first one is *Ottoman Painters Society Newspaper*, which was published eighteen issues between 1911 and 1914, and the second activity is *Galatasaray Exhibitions*, the first of which was held in 1916 and continued until 1945, and which were important in the history of exhibitions in Turkey for being the first permanent exhibition.



Figure 15 Exhibition view of *Galatasaray Exhibition* (SALT Arařtırma)

The organizers of the exhibitions were a group of members of the society including İbrahim Çallı, who was one of the founders of the society and who returned from his studies in Paris, Mehmet Ruhi, İbrahim Feyhaman, Ahmet Hikmet, Mehmet Sami, Namık İsmail and Şevket Bey. Together with this group, the first exhibition

was formed with the patronage of Abdülmecit Efendi. (Şerifoğlu, 2017, s. 50) The first two *Galatasaray Exhibitions*, were held in Galatasaraylılar Yurdu, the former "Societa Operaia" building, and the following exhibitions were organized in Galatasaray High School building in the summer months when the school was on vacation. Beside the works of 1914 generation painters, the amateurs, young people and students' paintings were also exhibited in Galatasaray exhibitions. With *Galatasaray Exhibitions*, female artists started to take part in exhibitions. In earlier years, non-Muslim Ottoman and Levantine women such as Mademoiselle Stolzenberg and Mademoiselle Serpasian had taken part in the exhibitions organized by Şeker Ahmet Pasha, but the increase in the number of female artists in the exhibitions and the participation of Ottoman Turkish women painters appear with Galatasaray Exhibitions. For example, it is known that Mademoiselle Eleni Ilyadis, Mademoiselle Mari Bahar, Mademoiselle Mari Brizilian, as well as Celile Hikmet Hanim, Harika Hanim, Mahide Esad Hanim, Muzdan Sait Hanim participated in the first *Galasaray Exhibition*. (Antmen, 2005, s. 126-128) A small exhibition catalog was prepared for each exhibition of *Galatasaray Exhibitions*, and there was a charge for entry. (Şerifoğlu) The interest of the state in this exhibition is of great importance for the permanence and continuation of these exhibitions organized with the efforts of artists from the artists' union.

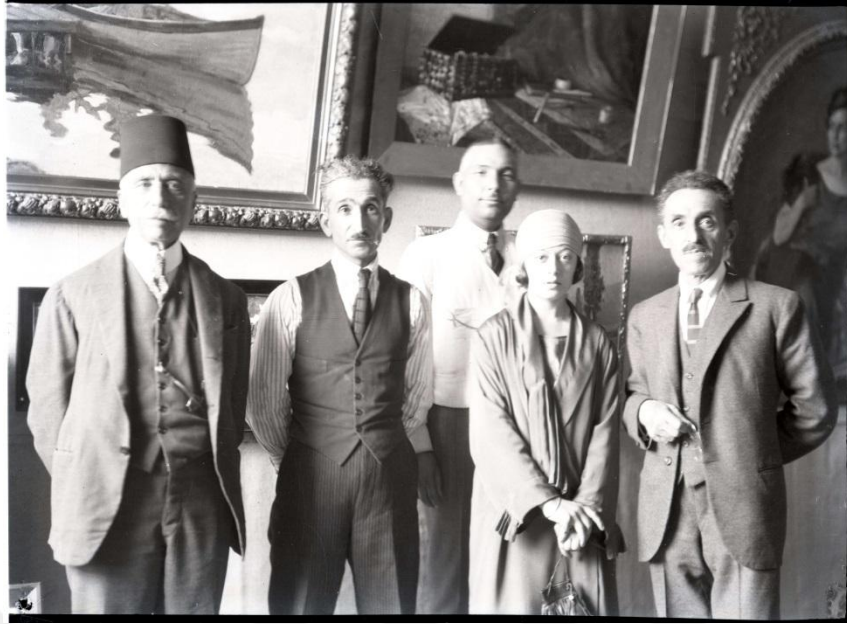


Figure 16 Halil Paşa, İbrahim Çallı and Sabiha Rüştü Bozcalı in *Galatasaray Exhibitions* (SALT Araştırma)

The “Ottoman Painters Society” carries on exhibitions and other activities under different names along with changing order and developing social life. The society was named as “Turkish Painters Society” in 1921, “Turkish Sanayi-i Nefise Association” in 1927, “Turkish Sanayi-i Nefise Union” in 1927 and “Fine Arts Union” in 1929.

With an exhibition accompanying the proclamation of the Republic, the society also shows activity in Ankara. The exhibition opened on 19 October 1923 in Ankara by the society under its new name, the "Turkish Painters Society", is very important for the history of exhibitions and culture and art. This exhibition, which Faruk Şerifoğlu described as "the First Art Event of the Republic", was opened ten days before the proclamation of the Republic with the participation of Subhi Bey, who represented Gazi Pasha, in the Türk Ocağı building. The exhibition was announced on the first page for two days in *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* newspaper. In the process of preparations for the proclamation of the Republic, as we know from Şerifoğlu's narratives, Atatürk also visited the exhibition and ordered various institutions and ministries to purchase half of the works in the exhibition. (Şerifoğlu, 1914 *Kuşağı ve Galatasaray Sergileri*)

Being the beginning of new developments in the field of culture and arts in young Republic of Turkey, *First Ankara Exhibition* sustained its vitality with the interest of the state and society until the 1951.

Attempts of Artists to Show Their Works Independent of Other Works: Solo Exhibitions of Hoca Ali Rıza and Mihri

Hoca Ali Rıza (1858 - 1930)

During the period of the first exhibitions, artists created quite alternative opportunities for the period in order to display their own works. The painter Hoca Ali Rıza Bey exhibited his works by hanging them on the walls of a coffeehouse in Üsküdar district, where he lived his whole life and chose as the subject of his paintings. Hoca Ali Rıza continued this exhibition for a while with changing works. Nuri İyem, who provided this information to us, stated that he found this initiative quite interesting and described it as a model that should be taken as an example by saying, "we also should have done so." (Özdemir, 2002, s. 95)

Mihri Hanım (1886 - 1954), 1918

In the first years of the Galatasaray exhibitions, Mihri Hanım, who was a teacher at İnas Sanayi-i Nefise School, did not attend these exhibitions, which were also attended by her female student painters, and opened a personal exhibition. This exhibition, which she organized in her own house in the Autumn of 1918, was considered an important event at that time. (Antmen, 2005, s. 127) As it can be understood from the documents displayed in the research exhibition held at SALT in 2019, named *Mihri: Nomadic Painter of Modern Times*, this exhibition can be seen as more than a curatorial solo exhibition project representing Mihri's efforts to surpass

the existing position of women in the society in which she lived as well as displaying her works.

In an article published on September 18, 1919 in *Büyük Mecmua*, which included an interview with the artist Mihri, Mehmet Zekeriya Sertel shared the following thoughts about the exhibition:

They said that Mihri Hanım opened an exhibition in Şişli. I went like an ordinary visitor to see the pictures of this woman, which I had never seen before. When I walked through the door, I thought I was entering a mysterious place. The windows were closed, electricity was distributed lightly to the rooms in order to enhance the effects of the paintings, and the exhibition was given a lovely form. (Tongo, 2019, s. 54-58)

Assuming that Mehmet Zekeriya did not go to an exhibition for the first time and saw many exhibitions held in Istanbul at that time, Mihri's professional approach to the layout and her meticulousness regarding light layout of the exhibition can be seen as the reason he was so impressed by this exhibition.

Şişli Atelier and War Pictures and Others Exhibition (Şişli Atölyesi ve Savaş Resimleri ve Diğerleri Sergisi)

One of the most interesting and important exhibitions held before the Republic in the late Ottoman period was held in 1917 with the name *War Pictures and Others* in Galatasaraylılar Yurdu. The distinction and importance of this exhibition stem from several points. The exhibition is the first thematic exhibition that was considered a propaganda tool during the First World War. It was held in an atelier rented in Şişli through the efforts of a number of painters, among whom there was Avni Lifij (1886 -

1927), Ibrahim Çallı (1882 - 1960), Ruhi Arel (1880 - 1931), Namık İsmail (1890 - 1935) and Sami Yetik (1878 - 1945), in an effort to show the power of Turkish people to Europe with an exhibition of war paintings. (Üstünipek, 2007)



Figure 17 Abdülmecit Efendi and painters of Şişli Atelier (Gallery Artist Archive)

The aim was to display the resulting paintings in various European cities. Before the exhibitions in Europe, the paintings were presented to the people of Istanbul in Galatasaraylılar Yurdu. This exhibition, which was held in Vienna in 1918, is the first exhibition opened by Turkish painters in Europe. Celal Esad Arseven, one of the artists in the exhibition, was the exhibition commissioner (curator) and Namık İsmail worked as his assistant curator. (Öndin, 2003, s. 188)

3.2. Exhibitions in the Early Years of the Republic

Revolution Exhibitions (İnkılâp Sergileri)

Revolution Exhibitions were one of the activities considered by the state as a means of representation and can be called another prominent thematic exhibition in the history of exhibitions. *Revolution Exhibitions*, the first of which was organized in

October 29, 1933 in the tenth anniversary of the Republic, continued to be organized until 1936. The themes of the exhibitions were the National War of Independence and the Republican revolutions. The exhibitions which were started with the initiatives of Reşit Galip, the Minister of National Education of the time, became the target of various criticisms. The main reasons for the criticism were that the paintings were mainly about the war rather than the revolutions, and that every picture sent to the exhibition was displayed. These exhibitions held for the last time in 1936 were followed firstly by *Combined Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions* held in 1937-1938 and then by *State Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions* in 1939. (Öndin, 2003, s. 188)

First Exhibitions of the State Museum of Painting and Sculpture Organized by Halil Dikmen and Nurullah Berk (Devlet Resim ve Heykel Müzesi'nin Halil Dikmen ve Nurullah Berk Tarafından Düzenlenen İlk Sergileri)

Turkey's first modern art museum "Painting and Sculpture Museum" was opened under the State Academy of Fine Arts in 1937. The first director and curator of the museum was Halil Dikmen, the artist appointed by Atatürk. In the words of Ayşe Köksal, Halil Dikmen, who was a “charismatic and entrepreneurial curator” ensured the establishment of an effective and dynamic environment as it should be in a modern public art museum early in the first years of the museum. (Köksal A. , 2012) Halil Dikmen, besides being a painter and museum director, was an important neyzen and had a wide intellectual environment. Thus, during his administration, the museum became a meeting point for the important writers, poets, musicians, journalists and painters of the period.

After Dikmen, artist Nurullah Berk was appointed as the director of the museum from 1962 to 1969. Nurullah Berk, a member of the *D group*, was a frequent visitor of

Paris museums and had strong international connections. With his experience abroad, he produced ideas on exhibitions and the museum and offered suggestions before he became the director of the "Painting and Sculpture Museum". According to the information provided by Köksal, in the period he took office temporary exhibitions were given emphasis, and he organized two temporary exhibitions per year. Among these exhibitions, *20th Century French Art*, which was opened on June 16, 1969, has a distinguished place in the history of exhibitions. Ayşe Köksal explains the information about this exhibition and the importance of the exhibition:

The exhibition included 50 works by 50 French artists, renowned between 1890-1950, including important figures in modern art such as Signac, Picasso, Braque, Gris, Matisse, Gauguin, Leger. Moreover, this exhibition was not established by agreeing with a museum as it is often done today and bringing some of the works in its warehouses. Nurullah Berk personally toured the main galleries of Paris, selected the works, negotiated with the galleries one by one, arranged the works separately, briefly "curated" the exhibition. When he brought the most extensive exhibition of French art to his museum until that time, it can be said that he did this with a motivation that is hard to see and hard to comprehend today. Even though it was such an important exhibition, there was not even "duhuliye money" (entrance fee). The doors of the Painting and Sculpture Museum were opened to people from all walks of life, from artists to tradesmen. (Köksal A. , 2012)

The exhibition organized by Nurullah Berk was visited by a large audience. It was widely published in the press. *Ankara Art* journal reported that the exhibition was visited by over 40 thousand people, and it wrote "The Painting and Sculpture Museum was circumambulated by the audience for five weeks." Ayşe Köksal defines this

exhibition curated by Nurullah Berk held in 1969 as Turkey's "... first "blockbuster exhibition ..." (Köksal A. , 2012)

Between 1939 and 1950, exhibitions supported and organized by the State gained importance in exhibition practices. Public House Exhibitions, Homeland Tours Exhibitions and the State Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions are the leading ones. *The State Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions* is the only exhibition activity that has been carried out by the state since 1939. It was a new and qualified organization in terms of having a directive and a selective committee in the first years it was held for the period, (Öndin, 2003, s. 188) but it has lost its importance since the 1950s.

Independent Painters and Sculptors Association Exhibitions (Müstakil Ressamlar ve Heykeltıraşlar Birliği Sergileri)

“The Independent Painters and Sculptors Association” was founded in 15 July, 1929 as the first artist association of the Republican Era. by Refik Fazıl (Epikman), Cevat Hamit (Dereli), Şeref Kamil (Akdik), Mahmut Celaledin (Cûda), Nurullah Cemal (Berk), Ali Avni (Çelebi), Zeki (Kocamemi), Muhittin Sebati, Ratip Aşır (Acudoğu) and Fahrettin (Arkunlar). (Pelvanoğlu, 2007) A mission determined and a regulation written by the association were prepared. In the regulation of the association, there were such activities in articles related to exhibitions as “opening exhibitions in big Provinces” and “opening exhibitions abroad and inviting foreign artists to open exhibitions in the country” The independent artists who took art education in Paris and Munich with the support of the state attracted attention with their idealistic approaches and became an important representative of the development of the modernization process in Turkish Painting with the reflection of the movements developing in the West in their works. Thus, by organizing exhibitions in many cities

outside Istanbul in the light of the ideals they determined, they played an important role in spreading the understanding of modern painting throughout the public. (Öndin, 2003, s. 188)

Group d Exhibitions (d Grubu Sergileri)

Group d was founded in 1933 by Cemal Tollu, Zeki Faik İzer, Abidin Dino, Nurullah Berk, Elif Naci and Zühtü Müridoğlu. The group does not act on any rules or missions' path. The periodic gathering of six young artists at Zeki Faik İzer's house in Cihangir and their conversations on art and accompanying works of the group do not represent a certain understanding of art. The aim of the group was to "show and promote modern art through exhibitions and establish an innovative attitude."

(Üstünipek, 2007) The first exhibition of the group was held on October 8, 1933 in Narmanlı Yurdu, Mimosa Hat Store, which was unoccupied at that time. The venue was given to the group free of charge for one month and there was no entrance fee for the exhibition. Unlike previous artist groupings, Group d takes a more opposing approach and assumes a progressive stance. In the first exhibition, the design works of the artists were displayed. "The works of design which could only be seen in the artist's studio until that day were exhibited for the first time. They suggest that their designs be seen as a form of expression." (Antmen, 2005, s. 128) *Group d* opened exhibitions in different places such as Beyoğlu Community Center in 1934, Old Mountaineering Club in 1934 and French Theater Hall in 1935. In the exhibition at the French Theater Hall, they used different exhibition techniques for their period, such as hanging paintings on curtains. This situation made a sound impression and the exhibition was repeated at the Ankara Exhibition House. (Üstünipek, 2007)

Between 1950 and 59, the number of exhibitions increased by more than 100%. The exhibitions, which were organized with the support of the state to a great extent starting with the foundation of the Republic, began to be organized with individual efforts by the 1950s. Individual efforts had an effect on opening new exhibition spaces, and private galleries such as Maya, Ertem, Milar and Helikon were opened. (Gürdaş, 2008, s. 54)

3.3. First Exhibitions with Conceptual Tendency in the History of Exhibitions, 1960 - 1977

In the art and exhibitions which developed through the sponsorship of the state until the 1950s, though support was still expected from the state, new alternatives were sought in the 1960s. According to Ahu Antmen's statements and findings, it is observed that Turkish artists entered a struggle for civilianization and autonomy with a more critical approach together with individual and social attitudes, not to growth in the national field. Collective exhibitions began to be organized as an alternative to the Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions organized by the State, and many artists supported this trend by participating in these alternative exhibitions. According to Antmen, the foundations of important developments and the vibrant art environment in the 80s were laid by alternative exhibitions held in the 70s. Between 1960 and 1970, *the State Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions* start to draw criticisms. Criticisms were directed at the directive of the exhibition, the formation of the jury, and the quality of the works chosen. In the publications of the period like *Sanat Dünyası (The World of Art)*, *Dost (Friend)*, *Ulus (Nation)*, *Varlık (Existence)*, criticisms on these issues appeared a lot. (Gürdaş, 2008, s. 54)

in 1963 and 1964, *Contemporary Turkish Painting and Sculpture Exhibition* was held in Brussels, Paris, Vienna, Berlin and Rome. It has an important place as an art activity which drew a lot of attention both at home and abroad, though not exhibited in Turkey. The major factor in its importance is that the exhibition led to new expansions and ideas with criticisms and discussions on the issues of locality and universality in art. The exhibition was realized as a joint project of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of National Education, and the works to be exhibited were chosen by a jury headed by the art critic Jacques Lassaigne invited from France.

In the mid-1960s, Türk Ticaret Bank and Halk Bank organized exhibitions in spaces they allocated in their branches. Furthermore, in 1962, exhibitions were held at Vakko Art Gallery, which is located at the buildings No. 125 - 17 in the Vakko Store, İstiklal Street. Another important exhibition space for Istanbul was the City Gallery, which was opened in 1954. The City Gallery started to be known as Taksim Art Gallery in 1967 and hosted important exhibitions of the period. Diplomatic missions of foreign countries and official institutions also offered exhibition spaces in the 60s. The Turkish-German Cultural Center, the American Cultural Association, the French Consulate, the French Cultural Center, and the State Fine Arts Galleries filled a huge gap in this field by providing space for important exhibitions.

The 1960s are also considered as the beginning of the historiography of contemporary art in Turkey.¹⁹ The artistic orientations of the artists who went abroad in those years for art education after they returned home form the roots of Contemporary Art in Turkey. Sarkis and Altan Gürman are the most important actors of this period. They have been the pioneers of new developments and changes in the matter of exhibition

¹⁹ He begins the introduction section of the book prepared under the editorship of Süreyya Evren and Halil Altındere named "Instruction Manual 2.0: Contemporary Art in Turkey, 1975-2015" by addressing the 60s.

with their artistic production as well as their personal exhibitions. According to Khalil Altindere's comments in the book which he prepared jointly with Süreyya Evren, *User's Manual 2.0 - Contemporary Art in Turkey*, both artists are the first ones to have thought in line with "the conceptual tendencies."

Sarkis, 1960

Sarkis opened his first exhibition in Istanbul Art Gallery owned by the municipality in Istiklal Street in 1960. The gallery accepts Sarkis's written application for the exhibition, but all the expenses and creation of the exhibition would be the artist's responsibility. Sarkis personally took care of all the works for the exhibition such as transportation, layout, hanging the paintings and invitation. (Zabunyan, 2010, s. 47) The artist, who moved to and settled in Paris in 1964, worked as an exhibition director at the Sonnabend Gallery, one of the important galleries of Paris, to earn his living. Elvan Zabunyan states that Sarkis started to think about the exhibition space according to the works to be exhibited at this time and that he opened his own exhibitions in the same gallery starting with 1970 and also applied the understanding of "exhibition as a comment." Sarkis, who thought a lot on the concept of exhibition, participated in exhibitions which formed important milestones worldwide such as *When Attitudes Become Form* in 1969 and *Magiciens de la Terre* in 1989. He is an artist who re-thinks about the concept of exhibition in every exhibition in a broad perspective and interprets and shapes his own exhibitions with beyond-curatorial approach. His first exhibition/installation at the Maçka Art Gallery in 1986 during his life in Paris, *Rookie Street*, is very important for the history of contemporary art in Turkey. (Zabunyan, 2010, s. 47)

Altan Gürman, 1967

Altan Gürman's first solo exhibition he organized at the Turkish-German Cultural Center in 1967 has great importance in terms of the History of Exhibitions and the History of Contemporary Art in Turkey. Altan Gürman is the first artist to have produced works by using tools and equipment beyond the traditional forms of painting and sculpture production in Turkey. In his personal exhibition in Turkey in 1967, the audience and the Turkish art circles witnessed for the first time the use of tools- equipment/objects in painting other than paint.

Füsun Onur, 1960

After the exhibitions of Altan Gürman and Sarkis in the 60s, Füsun Onur's first solo exhibition she held at the Taksim Art Gallery after having completed her education in the United States in 1970 is a new and different exhibition for art history as well. Beyond the usual understanding of sculpture at that time, the exhibition consisting of the placement of works in which the use of objects came to the fore created controversy. In her book on Füsun Onur, Margrit Brehm summarizes the discussions created by the exhibition by including the artist's own words and emphasizes the importance of the exhibition:

"They considered my art as an imitation of western art. Besides, the content was too heavy for most of the visitors to digest. They couldn't watch what I did. Most of them thought there was no exhibition whatsoever. 'Is the exhibition ready?' they were asking. I was replying 'yes.' It wasn't easy, but I didn't care." says Füsun Onur... There was no platform on which new trends were discussed or just exhibited within the borders of Turkey, let alone the lack of international information exchange, especially in the field of

contemporary art. On such a background, that is, in an environment where minimalism, conceptual art and NULL were not known, Füsün Onur's different installation was regarded as a downright revolutionary step in public opinion. Perhaps more important than this is that the artist took a personal stance not only about making art, but also the necessity of exhibiting it without a demand or a market. (Brehm, 2007, s. 32)

İsmail Saray *An Event (Bir Olay)* 1975

In 1970s, İsmail Saray was an artist who stood out with conceptually-based works he produced, who displayed his works in the important alternative exhibitions of the day, and who used exhibition forms which were perceived as new in Turkey. Saray is renowned with "his works that primarily criticize Turkey's economic, political and cultural structures and cover the concept of 'authority' (Özayten, 2013, s. 126) Born in 1943 in Kütahya, the artist received his art education at Ankara Gazi Education Institute and graduated from there in 1968. Between 1968 and 1970, he completed his graduate studies in sculpture at Saint Martin's School of Art in London and his master's degree at the Royal College of Art from 1970 to 1973. When he returned from London, he worked as a teacher at Samsun Institute of Education where he was appointed by compulsory service. He participated in exhibitions in Istanbul and various international exhibitions including Paris 1977 Biennial in the 70s when he was in Samsun. During his teaching career in Samsun, in 1975, he organized "a performance activity/exhibition" named *An Event*. The activity "An Event", which included spatial installation organized by Saray and the performance he put up in collaboration with his students, was referred to as an exhibition by Nilgün Özayten in her doctoral dissertation entitled "The Post-Conceptual Art and Similar Trends in Turkey between 1965 - 1992" in the annexed part named "The Object Art/Conceptual

Art Exhibitions in Turkey between 1967 -1992." With reference to this, I also personally consider *An Event* is an exhibition. İsmail Saray, the artist and the organizer of the exhibition, explained the purpose of the exhibition with the following sentences:

An Event was realized one year after I was appointed to the newly established Samsun Education Institute, Department of Painting. My goal was to create a more dynamic environment with the participation of students and new teachers arriving from Europe. *An Event* was a very complex performance work with multiple elements and multiple themes. The formal aspect of the performance consisted of film and slide projection, cloth bags in three different colors and colored water that the speakers drank during the performance. In the performance that lasted about an hour, a student from the Department of Literature read a story of Ronald Dahl. While the student was reading the story, a film called *Black Sea Waves* shot by myself was being shown via an 8mm film projection. At the same time, a dia projection was projecting photos of two peddlers selling pigeon feed... *An Event* created question marks in the minds of the participants and the audience, which was my main goal. In this period, I thought that it was necessary to perform a multi-faceted performance in terms of both form and content in order to remove the concept of art, which was dominated by painting and sculpture, from the narrow space in which it was located.²⁰ (Ed. Duygu Demir, Sezin Romi, 2018)

²⁰ Cited from the text in the book written by İsmail Saray in August 2014 and published by SALT Research named "İsmail Saray."



Figure 18 View from the Performance, *An Event*, 1975 (SALT Archive)

Ismail Saray's *An Event* exhibition, in which the classroom environment was transformed into an exhibition venue and the focus was on the representation of performance and arrangements with objects as a form of artistic expression, is one of the most interesting and different examples for the period.

Şükrü Aysan *The Exhibition (Sergi)* 1976 - 1978

Şükrü Aysan is another artist who produced ideas on the concept of exhibition in addition to artistic production in the 1970s. During his education in Paris between 1970 and 1975, Aysan studied pioneering art movements such as Minimal Art, Arte Povera, Land Art and Conceptual Art. When he returned to Turkey after his education, he started to work at the State Academy of Fine Arts and promoted conceptual art both at the academy and across the country, initiating discussions on conceptual art. The activity entitled *The Exhibition*, which Şükrü Aysan carried out in 1976 in the State Academy of Fine Arts Mimar Sinan Hall, was "the first Conceptual Art display to be opened in Turkey which consciously applied spatial 'installation'." (Sanat Tanıtımı Topluluğu) Nilgün Özayten expressed the importance of this exhibition with these words: "The solo exhibition he opened in the halls of the State Academy of Fine Arts was an exhibition that attracted the attention and was out of the

usual forms of art at that time." The artist also exhibited this exhibition in 1979 in an open space in Kilyos with the name, *Intervention into Natural Environment Through Artistic Objects*. (Özayten, 2013)

In the following years, he continued his exhibitions in academy halls, including his students. Also, he took the lead in the realization of *New Trends* (Yeni Eğilimler) exhibitions and the founding of *Art Definition Society* (*Sanat Tanıtımı Topluluğu*). He took an active role in organizing the exhibitions of both organizations. In an interview, Şükrü Aysan shared the following information about the relationship of artist candidates who studied art at the academy with exhibition and his own practice of exhibition organization:

Students must definitely exhibit their works at graduation and even before graduation. There should be continuous exhibitions. Because art uses space. It is related to space. The so-called installation is the exhibition. And at that time, examples of the exhibition were constantly shown. There was an effort to educate students on this subject. For example, there were term exams. There would definitely be an exhibition at every term... In the period when we were students and assistants, we had the best halls. For example, Osman Hamdi Hall downstairs was a very valuable hall. Not everyone could have an exhibition there. Because opening an exhibition in this hall meant a kind of approval by the Academy of Fine Arts as an artist. Very important exhibitions were opened there. I worked in the organization of some of them, such as the French Art Exhibition. It was a great exhibition where original works were displayed. Then, the exhibitions of the teachers who worked hard here and whose art was at the highest level were opened. This was a very precious place here. Any

reproduction exhibition or a similar exhibition could not be opened in this hall.

(Aysan, 2001)²¹

3.4. Collective Exhibitions Phase: Exhibitions Shaped by Solidarity Between Artists

Art Definition Society Exhibitions (Sanat Tanımı Topluluğu Sergileri)

Art Definition Society was founded in 1977 by Şükrü Aysan, Serhat Kiraz, Ahmet Öktem and Avni Yamaner. The society defines itself as:

It has also assumed the role of a school, revealing, more and more comprehensively, what Conceptual Art is; While the original work of Art Definition Society is being developed, Conceptual Art education is also given. It is not an art group in the usual sense. The Art Definition Society aimed, from the very beginning, to be an original art event.

With this idea, the Art Definition Society organized its first exhibition at the Istanbul State Fine Arts Gallery between 10-29 November 1978. The second exhibition of the society took place between 22 March - 5 April 1980. The following information about this exhibition is shared on the Society's website:

"... works filtered through a common approach are placed in the gallery space. This activity is literally an 'installation.' Besides, in the context of this study, the Artist Script titled Script as Art was published [although this form was first created by Ismail Saray (Leonardo) in our country, it was mentioned, named and evaluated by the ADS for the first time]. This work of art which was

²¹ Taken from the interview on the website of Art Definition Society. The date of the interview, the interviewer of which was not specified, was 21 February 2001.

created in the form of a book also included texts on Conceptual Art (such as Şükrü Aysan's and Joseph Kosuth's texts)."



Figure 19 *Book as Art* exhibition, installation view: Şükrü Aysan's work, 1980 (photo by Ahmet Öktem, SALT Archive)

The third exhibition of the society was an installation named *Betiksanat (Script Art)* held between 5 - 10 January 1981. The Installation-Exhibition presented a collection of artists' scripts (books) that were previously prepared by the society and the books of many well-known artists. Following these three exhibitions, the society continued to exist with artist scripts and activities. Today, the activity of the Art Definition Society is limited to the location of the society and a certain number of participants. In the art event held on a certain day of the week, the idea of art is discussed through philosophical texts.

Outdoor Exhibitions (Açık Hava Sergileri)

The 1970s, which started with the exhibition of Füsun Onur, include significant developments in terms of the history of exhibitions, new formations and collective exhibitions. Exhibitions emerged that presented changing and

differentiating forms of art production and conceptual tendencies. The exhibitions were organized with the support of official or private organizations under the leading efforts of the artists, far from the state support. The first alternative exhibition that emerged in the 1970s is *Outdoor Exhibition*, which is an award-winning exhibition with high participation organized by the Association of Lovers of Archaeology Museums. *Outdoor Exhibition* was organized four times between 1974 and 1977.

New Trends Exhibitions (Yeni Eğilimler Sergileri)

In 1976, a body named "Planning and Programming Group" which consisted of academy members was established by the State Academy of Fine Arts in order to form a future perspective. The group planned an event to be held every two years named *Istanbul Art Festivals. New Trends Exhibitions* were organized six times every two years between 1977 and 1987 within the scope of Istanbul Art Festival. And the last New Trends exhibition was organized in 1994. In the first exhibition of *New Trends*, which was a competitive exhibition, although a distinction such as painting-sculpture, original print, and photography was made, this distinction was not made in the next five exhibitions, and the award was given under the title of "new tendencies" by removing the limitation of tools, equipment, application and space. Şükrü Aysan explains the motivation of, *New Trends Exhibition* as follows:

"The biennial is an activity that the academy started and decided to be organized every two years in order to reveal the hidden potential of existing or emerging plastic arts, to present innovations in the Turkish art environment to the art environment and to the public with its concrete results, and to provide an opportunity for discussion by comparing the works of Turkish artists with those of other nationalities." (Aysan, 1983)



Figure 20 Installation view, *Exhibition of New Trends in Art*, 1983 (SALT Arařtırma: Tomur Atagök Archive)

The New Trends Exhibitions are the most important exhibition activities that made many artists focusing on conceptual art and continuing their practice by using different tools and techniques visible and known. When the artists participating in the six exhibitions are considered, it is understood that it is an exhibition that has a great impact on today's art as well. řükrü Aysan, Tomur Atagök, Füsun Onur, Ayşe Erkmen, Serhat Kiraz, Canan Beykal, Cengiz Çekil and Mehmet Güteryüz are some of the artists whose works were exhibited and awarded.

Contemporary Artists İstanbul Exhibitions (Günümüz Sanatçıları İstanbul Sergileri)

Contemporary Artists Exhibition, which was initiated by the “Association of Painting and Sculpture Museums” founded in 1980, is the longest-running competition exhibition with its changing superstructure and continues its existence today. The first three exhibitions between 1980 and 1983 were held under the name of *Contemporary Artists Open Air Exhibition* in the garden of the Museum of Painting

and Sculpture. Starting with the fourth exhibition, due to the difficulties experienced in the protection of the works in the open air, it was moved to a closed space and turned into an award-winning exhibition. (Atagök, 2010, s. 41) The initial aim of the exhibition was “to support the Museum as well as to make art interesting and popular among people; to establish communication between different art disciplines and to stimulate visual art activities in the summer months when art activities are reduced.” (Gençel, 2014, s. 8) The exhibition continued in line with these aims until the 90s. However, the developing art environment and the increasing number of different exhibition spaces reduced the interest in the exhibition. Therefore, various changes were made. As of 2001, a conceptual subject was determined and the works started to be selected accordingly, and the works determined by the curator were exhibited instead of the selection committee. Today, the exhibition continues with the support of Akbank Art and annually exhibits selected works on the topic determined by a jury. In addition to being exhibited, the first three works selected are rewarded with money.

A Cross Section of Turkish Avantgarde Art (Öncü Türk Sanatından Bir Kesit)

A Cross Section of Turkish Avantgarde Art, held five times between 1984 and 1988, were exhibitions that arose without a commercial concern by the artists' own efforts. According to Solmaz Buldunay, Tomur Atagök and Yusuf Taktak led the organization of the exhibitions. (Buldunay, 2008) The first, third and fourth exhibitions were held at Atatürk Culture Center, the second at Yıldız Technical University, and the fifth at the Museum of Painting and Sculpture Movement Pavilion. Starting with the first exhibition, it attracted attention with the criticism of the use of the word "pioneer" and the responses of the participating and organizer artists to these criticisms through the exhibition. Tomur Atagök's article in the catalog

of the second exhibition explains the purpose of the exhibition as a response to these criticisms:

" *A Cross Section of Turkish Avantgarde Art* was planned and realized in order to eliminate the language difference between the artist and the society and to integrate the contemporary artist with the society. As a creator, observer, thinker, commentator and even a guide, the artist's contribution to the renewal of the society's traditional thought and appreciation systems by presenting his/her original creativity to the society is gaining importance as a social task through art... The artists who participated in *A Cross Section of Pioneering Turkish Art Exhibition* through invitation associate on expressions 'shaped by contemporary thinking and reasoning' while making arrangements ranging from painting to sculpture and from sculpture to space through contemporary materials and practices." (Atagök, 2010, s. 114)

Canan Beykal, who took part in the third exhibition, responded to the "avangard" discussions with her work in the exhibition. The work reflected the spelling and definition of the word "pioneer" in four different languages through photography. (Beykal, 2013, s. 126) Some of the artists who took part in *A Cross Section of Pioneering Turkish Art Exhibitions* were Mustafa Ata, Tomur Atagök, Füsün Onur, Cengiz Çekil, Serhat Kiraz, Hüsamettin Koçan, İbrahim Örs, Yusuf Taktak, Bedri Baykam, Canan Beykal, Ayşe Erkmen, Gülsün Karamustafa, Kemal Önsoy, and Sarkis.

In Memory of Joseph Beuys, Another Art, Collective Exhibition Show (Joseph Beuys'un Anısına, Bir Başka Sanat, Toplu Sergi Gösterisi) 1986

While exhibitions such as *New Trends, A Cross Section of Pioneering Turkish Art, Contemporary Artists Exhibitions* were held in Istanbul in the 1980s, an exhibition was organized by Cengiz Çekil at the German Cultural Center in İzmir in 1986. *Twenty four artists living in Izmir, Istanbul, Paris and London participated in the exhibition held under the title of "In Memory of Joseph Beuys, Another Art, Collective Exhibition Show"* between March 10-21, 1986. As Necmi Sönmez states in his book written on Cengiz Çekil, *A Witness*, "this was the first exhibition in the world held for Beuys, who died on January 23, 1986." According to Necmi Sönmez, this exhibition "had an important starting point and main idea in terms of the development of contemporary art in Turkey, and displayed the curator Çekil's understanding of art in that period in a document-like fashion. ...it literally had and alternative orientation." (Sönmez, 2008, s. 64-65)



Figure 21 Poster of joint exhibition, 1986 (SALT Araştırma)

Cengiz Çekil explains the formation of the exhibition in a text he wrote for the exhibition:

“... "This exhibition/show consists of the works of the artists who could meet on some common grounds. In this way, by questioning the artistic activities we observe around us, it will be possible to discuss the questions related to art, artist, artistic value etc. once again but from the very beginning."

Cengiz Çekil uses the word "exhibition" in many places, as he did in the quotation above, together with the word "show" which could be considered an alternative and a synonym. He uses nomenclature in his works that evokes the issue of exhibition itself. As in the names such as "Installation", "Arrangement", "Arrangement No: 2" and the name of his personal exhibition in 1994 "Exhibition/Installation", the issue of exhibition can be considered as the main problematic of his works. Following *In memory of Joseph Beuys, Another Art, Collective Exhibition Show*, Çekil organized two more collective exhibitions in Izmir. It is also important that these exhibitions took place outside of Istanbul. When Cengiz Çekil is examined in terms of these collective exhibitions, his works and the relationship he established with space in art production²², it can be said that he played an effective role in an important stage of the development of exhibitions in the 1980s.

A, B, C, D Exhibitions

The exhibitions named *A, B, C, D Exhibitions* were started with the initiative of the artists who participated in *A Cross Section of Pioneering Turkish Art* exhibitions and who tended to use and place objects in their works. The nomenclature

²² The artist's works and sketches can be viewed in the book on the artist named "A Witness, Cengiz Çekil", prepared with the authorship of Necmi Sönmez and the editorship of Rene Block from Yapı Kredi Publications.

of the exhibitions was based on the number of artists attending each year and then the progress of the alphabet. The first exhibition was held in 1989 with the title of *10 Artists 10 Works: A*, the second exhibition with the title of "8 Artists 8 Works: B", the third exhibition with the title of "10 Artists 10 Works: C" Atatürk Culture Center, and the "10 Artists 10 Works: D" exhibition was held in Maçka Art Gallery in 1993. The C exhibition in 1992 was organized by the curator Beral Madra. The poster of the exhibition included the expression "Producer: Beral Madra" instead of "curator", but



Figure 22 Installation view, *10 Artists 10 Works*, Atatürk Kültür Merkezi (AKM), 1989 (SALT Archive)

this was because the use of the expression "curator" was not completely established at the time. "The common feature of the four exhibitions is the absence of classical painting and sculpture. It is known that the exhibitions involve spatial arrangements and use of objects with conceptual emphasis." (Beykal, 2013, s. 126)

3.5. Exhibitions from the 1990s to the Present: The Professionalization Process in Exhibition Practices

The international expansion of the Turkish art in the 1990s stands out as the most important development. The Istanbul Biennial, which began in 1987 with the phenomenon of curating that became prominent in those years and the conceptual exhibitions and still continue to exist, has opened new ways in the production and exhibition of art.

The Istanbul Biennial (İstanbul Bienali)

The Istanbul Biennial, which has been organized by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV) every two years since 1987 is the most important phenomenon that has enabled the international expansion of the Turkish art since the 1990s. The first event that was held in 1987 with the name of International Istanbul Contemporary Art Exhibitions *was followed by the second exhibition and named the Istanbul Biennial* in 1989. The first two biennials organized in 1987 and 1989 were held under the general coordination of Beral Madra. Madra's job description in the event matches that of a curator, but since the use of the expression "curator" had not appeared yet, she was named the coordinator. In the 3rd Istanbul Biennial held in 1992, the exhibition was organized within the framework of a concept for the first time, and the curator model was adopted with Vasif Kortun. With the 4th International Istanbul Biennial, a single curator system was introduced, and the exhibition was organized for the first time by René Block, a foreign curator. Starting with the fourth Biennial, the Turkish art world had the opportunity to meet important curators such as Rosa Martinez, Paolo Colombo, Yuko Hasegawa, Dan Cameron, Charles Esche, Hou Hanru, WHW curatorial collective, Jens Hoffmann, Adriana

Pedrosa, and Carolyn Christov-Bkargiev with their thematic subjects. In 2019, the 16th Istanbul Biennial was organized by the French writer, academician, curator Nicolas Bourriaud with the theme of the Seventh Continent.

Artist-curated Biennial - The 15th Istanbul Biennial

The 15th Istanbul Biennial was held by artist - curator duo Elmgreen & Dragset with the theme of *A Good Neighbor* between September 16th and November 12th. Since 1995, Elmgreen & Dragset have been involved in artistic production and curatorial work together. The artist-curator duo's artistic work takes place in a wide range of works, including sculpture, performance, installation and theater. Among the important international exhibitions that they participated in as an artist are "Istanbul (2013, 2011, 2001), Liverpool (2012), Venice (2009, 2003), Gwangju (2006, 2002), São Paulo (2002) biennials" (<http://15b.iksv.org/iyibirkomsu>, 2017). Among the prominent curatorial works of the artist-curator duo are the exhibition named "Curating Worlds" that was awarded with the Special Mention in the 53rd Venice Biennial, single pavilion exhibition they curated for the Danish and Scandinavian Pavilions named *The Collectors*, the public art project in Munich in 2013 titled *A Space Called Public*, and again in 2013 the exhibition named *Tomorrow* at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Elmgreen & Dragset's 15th Istanbul Biennial themed "Good Neighbor" focused on the concepts of home and neighborhood. The biennial exhibitions shaped by 40 different questions such as "Is a good neighbor someone living like you?", "Is wanting a good neighbor asking for a lot?", "Is a good neighbor a foreigner whom you are not afraid of?" took place in Istanbul Modern, Galata Private Greek Elementary School, Pera Museum and Küçük Mustafa Paşa Hamamı, ARK Kültür in Cihangir and artist studios located in Asmalımescit. The

works of 56 artists from 32 countries dealing with the concepts of home, neighborhood and belonging were exhibited.²³ (15. İstanbul Bienali , 2017)

The first exhibitions of the first curators: Beral Madra - Vasıf Kortun - Ali Akay

The relationship of the Turkish art with sociology, philosophy and political issues starts to strengthen in 1990s. In these years of increasing postmodern debates in the art world and the Academy, the books of philosophers such as Foucault, Lyotard, Deleuze, Guattari and Baudrillard were rapidly translated into Turkish. (Acar B. , 2016, s. 93) Barış Acar states that quotations from these philosophers under the name of "criticism of great narrative" were reflected onto the exhibitions curated by Ali Akay such as *Globalization-State, Misery, Violence* (1995), *Minority* (1996), *Ecology and Periphery* (1998). Burcu Pelvanoğlu comments in a similar way on the art production and environment of the 1990s:

“The 90s was a period in which a different language was established, curatorial exhibitions began, non-profit institutions emerged, postmodern theory was just translated, and some book works were produced... The 90s was a period of rapid reading and adaptation.”

Barış Acar exemplifies the certain signs that made up the artistic environment of the 90s through artists and their works and lists them as follows:

"... 1) Criticism of hegemony, which is a product of the Republican ideology through the questioning of political, ethnic and sexual identities, 2) revolt against the caste structure determined by the aristocratic language coordinated

²³ This paragraph has been compiled with the information obtained from different press releases of the İstanbul Biennial before and after the exhibition.

by the state-art relationship, which is nourished by academy-based elitism in the art world, 3) the effort to establish the “new” with the principle of "the indeterminacy of style" against the dryness of the positivist language of art history and the categorization led by a formalism dressed with an unsavory socialism, 4) the total denial of the category of modernism, 5) the return of the social unconscious as narrative, where the present is emphasized against historiography... Vahap Avşar's "Freedom and Adventure" (1992), Hale Tenger's "I Know Such People" (1992), Aydan Murtezaoğlu's "The Blackboard" (1992 - 1993), Emre Zeytinoğlu's “Memory of the State”(1993), Selim Birsnel's “Blood Sleep” (1995), Genco Gülan's “The Slum” (1995), Halil Altındere's “Dance with the Taboos” (1997), Şükran Moral's “Bordello” (1997), Kutluğ Ataman's "Women Wearing Wigs" (1999)" (Acar B. , 2016, s. 93)

One important exhibition held in line with the above ideas and information presented by Barış Acar and Burcu Pelvanoglu were *Remembrance - Memory* exhibitions curated by Vasıf Kortun. *Remembrance - Memory* exhibitions are exhibitions where the phenomenon of curating, even the independent curator model formed without an institutional commitment, is clearly integrated into the art environment. Ali Akay explains the relationship of these exhibitions and works in the exhibition with sociology, politics and philosophy as follows:

“...Vasıf Kortun realized themes that would establish the links between art and politics within the context of the subjects he dealt with in *Remembrance - Memory* exhibitions. The main focus of these exhibitions was the distinction between the themes of remembrance and memory, and the relevance of memory to the social. The publications of PSD being handled by Deniz Şengel

and including articles on art and sociology in these books, Hüseyin Alptekin being an artist with a philosophy background and claiming that art has become a kind of knowledge may be considered among the phenomena that prove the unity between social sciences and art.

Beral Madra, Vasıf Kortun and Ali Akay, who were the curators organizing exhibitions supporting these explanations, became the most important actors in the field of art in the early 1990s. The formation and development of the curatorial field in Turkey has been possible through the individual efforts of these curators in line with their intellectual work. Beral Madra and Vasıf Kortun are the figures who started the international mobility of the Turkish art and artists and strengthened their names. If we look at the pioneering curatorial works organized by these three names, the first exhibition organizers with the title of curators:

Beral Madra, who received archaeology education, entered the field in 1984 with the art gallery she founded with the name Gallery BM. After coordinating the first two biennials in 1987 and 1989, she removed the word "gallery" from Gallery BM and continued the non-profit BM Contemporary Art Center between 1989 and 2012. *Art / Texnh* (1992), *The Scaffold* (1994), *XAmple* (1995), and *Dialogues* (1996) are some of the first curatorial works of Beral Madra.

Vasıf Kortun has a history and art history education background and is a curator who has assumed an important role in the professionalization of curatorship in Turkey. In addition to being the director of the 3rd Istanbul Biennial, *Remembrance/Memory* (1991) and *No. 50 - Remembrance/Memory 2* (1993) exhibitions are among the first examples of exhibitions with a curator in Turkey. Following these exhibitions, Kortun, who lived in New York for a while, continued to organize exhibitions in his

own space, Contemporary Art Project, upon returning to Istanbul. Subsequently, he continued his works in the field of art under various corporate structures until 2017.

Ali Akay, after completing his doctorate in sociology in France, returned to Turkey in late 1990. Akay produced the concept "Megapolises" for this period. And he assumed the editorship of the *Sociology* magazine that began to be published in 1992, which he defined as the magazine of the "Megapolises" period. (Akay, 2015, s. 82) Ali Akay started to organize conceptual exhibitions as of the early 1990s. In 1993 at Urart Art Gallery, he organized an exhibition co-curated by artist-curator Emre Zeytinoğlu named *A Deconstruction of the Urinal*. For the first time in this exhibition, the first curatorial collaboration was realized together with an artist clearly using the title of a curator (Yücel, 2015, s. 214). *Globalization-State, Misery, Violence* curated by Ali Akay at Emre Zeytinoğlu's atelier in 1995 occupies a place in the history of exhibitions as an important curatorial exhibition. According to Osman Erden, the curator Ali Akay "expressed his opposing stance against the locality problem he detected in art, sociology, and press in the field of art with this exhibition." (Erden, 2011, s. 62) Ali Akay explains the conceptual framework and formation of the exhibition as follows:

"...The "megalopolises era" of the new world order developed under the dominance of capital is a period in which large, giant-sized, densely populated cities have become the center of the world, the state cannot control the national boundaries, and the new technology and the powers that concern capital are dominant. While these relations caused deep wounds in the legal and social structure of the state, they brought about homelessness, micro-nationalism and violence. I decided to organize the "State Misery Violence" exhibition in order to get these sociological and political problems to be analyzed from the point

of view of the artists' intuition. We met with eight artists and held meetings. The group consisting of Gülsün Karamustafa, İsmet Doğan, Müşerref Zeytinoğlu, Emre Zeytinoğlu, Ahmet Müderrisoğlu, Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin, Michael Morris and Bülent Şangar have been thinking about this issue for two years.” (Akay, 1996, s. 204)

Beral Madra, Vasıf Kortun and Ali Akay form the basis of the Turkish curatorial field with important exhibitions that are shaped by their own curatorial attitudes developed through different disciplines and approaches.

Youth Action Exhibitions (Genç Etkinlik Sergileri)

Youth Action/Youth Action Exhibition exhibitions are just as important as the first conceptually curated exhibitions in the 1990s. The exhibitions, held four times between 1995 and 1998, were organized by UPSD (International Association of Plastic Arts). According to Süreyya Evren, what makes these exhibitions "legendary" that reflect the spirit of the period is that "they are open to all disciplines, independent, dynamic, non-competitive platforms." (Evren, 2015, s. 16) *Youth Action* exhibitions are exhibitions in which all artist from all over Turkey less than 35 years of age and from different disciplines and educational backgrounds could participate. Throughout the exhibitions, performances, open sessions, seminars, panels, workshops, film screenings and concerts were also held. Tomur Atagök explains the opportunities provided to young artists by the side activities of the first *Youth Action* exhibition, which was held with the "Borders and Beyond" theme in 1995, as follows:

"This event, which included happening, performance, concerts and presentations, was primarily a workshop. By creating an environment for the collaboration of artists and the comparison of works within the framework of a

determined subject, the program created a striking environment that led young people to watch and comment on each other in the working phase. ...The workshop, in a way, seemed to assume the duty of educational institutions that support contemporary thought and art but that have not yet considered to include "installation" as a method within the scope of art education just like painting and sculpture." (Atagök, 1995, s. 177)

According to Ali Akay, the interaction and learning space created by the exhibitions and events was not only for the participating young artists, but it also "influenced critics, university professors, art historians and journalists" as an activity for a broader environment. (Akay, 2015, s. 82)

Şirin İskit *Mobile Exhibition: A City Tour in Istanbul* (Seyyar Sergi: İstanbul Şehir Turu)

Although large scale and socially interactive exhibitions were brought to the forefront by the Istanbul Biennial and curatorship being established in the 90s, the three-day *Mobile Exhibition* organized by the painter Şirin İskit with a desire to share her works with the public has an important place. This exhibition was organized by the artist in an effort to show her works to more people and did not have a conceptual starting point, but it was a different example for its period as an exhibition model. It can be said that it used a curatorial method that represented itself. As a method of exhibiting, *Mobile Exhibition* employs "Istanbul City Tour" with the works placed in the vendor car. The artist Şirin İskit describes her exhibition in an interview she gave 21 years after "*Mobile Exhibition: A City Tour in Istanbul*" as follows:

“...Because I felt the need to get out of the canvases to the streets, I carried out the "mobile exhibition" in a street vendor car. In Turkey, art was being

followed by only a very small audience, I wanted to appeal to the people on the street, my job was not intellectual, mostly kids were excited in front of my works, the adults were saying, "very brave, very lively, but these paintings are not suitable for homes, they are both very big and too colorful, they will not match with the couches and curtains." I wanted to address the child in the people through the colors, the communities that we call "primitive", the Anatolian villagers, the children are not afraid of color, they rely more on their instincts; the instincts start to be suppressed with a little education and the humans get away from themselves. The "mobile exhibition", which I walked around the streets for three days, made people smile and got them to ask questions; I had reached my goal."

Women in Anatolia in Ages and Women Artists from the Republic to the Present Exhibition (Çağlar Boyu Anadolu'da Kadın ve Cumhuriyet'ten Günümüze Kadın Sanatçılar Sergisi)

A multi-participatory women's exhibition realized with the support of the State in the 90s also come to the forefront in research conducted on exhibitions. In honor of the 70th anniversary of the Republic, two women's exhibitions were opened in 1993 at the Archaeology Museum with the initiative of the General Directorate of Monuments and Museums of the Ministry of Culture. Günsel Renda, Muhibbe Darga, Nazan Ölçer, Fliz Çağman and Tomur Atagök were in the advisory board of these exhibitions titled *Women in Anatolia in Ages* and *Women Artists from the Republic to the Present*. These exhibitions hold an important place as "the first major exhibitions focusing on the presence and production of women in Turkey." (Antmen, 2017, s. 92) The works of 66 women who were born between 1883 and 1960 were displayed at the exhibition. The exhibition, which was organized in a chronological development,

included works of painting, sculpture, ceramic works as well as space arrangements and conceptual works of art. Tomur Atagök explains the content of the exhibition in the catalog of *Women Artists from the Republic to the Present* as follows:

“Although the exhibition is not organized within the framework of a theme or language and art, it aims to reveal the authentic and creative personality of the known/unknown woman through the anonymous works she has produced in Turkish culture for years, documenting the universal artist identity of the Turkish woman with the most characteristic works of the artists. (Atagök, 2010, s. 41)

3.6. Exhibition Practices on the Axis of Institutionalization in the 2000s

When the 2000s were reached, the formation of institutional structures that shape the art environment in Turkey, private capital, the increase in the number of galleries and art fairs led to the formation of an art market. The curatorial exhibitions that began in the 1990s increased in the 2000s with the introduction of many new curators. With curatorial field courses being offered in the newly established art management departments²⁴ and with the participation of those who received curatorial education abroad, the field of curating can be said to have become professional in the 2000s. Art institutions and museums such as Garanti Platform, Project 4L, Istanbul Modern, Siemens Art, Akbank Art, Pera Museum and Sakip Sabanci Museum have been opened or have been restructured to adapt to contemporary art. The Istanbul Biennial continued to be the most important art event of the field in the 2000s, and Sinop, Mardin and Çanakkale Biennials were important components of the process as

²⁴ Undergraduate programs providing Art Management education were established in Yıldız Technical University Faculty of Art and Design and Yeditepe University Faculty of Fine Arts in 1998, and it was offered in Kültür University Arts and Design Department in 2002.

the representatives of contemporary art field outside Istanbul. In addition, artist initiatives also appear as important formations of the area in the 2000s. Together with all these dynamics, the increase in the number and quality of exhibition spaces has affected the professionalization of exhibition practices and curating.

Vasif Kortun and Ali Akay, the two actors who played an important role in the formation and development of the curatorship in Turkey, also took the leading role in the stage of the institutionalization of art and the establishment and transformation of museums and art institutions. They continued their studies in the field of exhibition by using the private capital power of the newly established art institutions and museums.

Project 4L - Elgiz Museum

The museum, which still exists today as the "Elgiz Museum", was founded in 2001 by Can Elgiz under the name of "Project 4L Museum of Contemporary Art." In 1999, when the paths of Can Elgiz and curator Vasif Kortun converged, the idea of creating a contemporary art platform between the two developed. In an interview he had with Vasif Kortun in 2011, Can Elgiz attributes his motivation to establish such an institution to his love of art. However, he adds that "the functioning of such an institution cannot be realized by just loving the art" and that the establishment of the institution would not have been possible if it had been for someone like Vasif Kortun "who had contemporary art connections both in the international arena and in Turkey." (Kortun, 2011) Project 4L was opened with the exhibition that was held in 2001 under the curation of Vasif Kortun with the title *Becoming a Place*²⁵. Then, the

²⁵ *Becoming a Place* was held between 21 September and 24 November 2001. The artists who participated in the exhibition are: Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin, Gülsün Karamustafa, Hale Tenger, Can Altay, Halil Altındere, Tina Carlsson, Erik Göngrich, Hakan Gürsoytrak, Aydan Murtezaoğlu, Bülent Şangar and 'Room Project'.

exhibition *Look Again*²⁶ was again curated by Kortun. Following this exhibition, Vasıf Kortun developed a discussion environment with the participating artists on the practices of exhibiting through the e-mail platform he established.²⁷ Vasıf Kortun's third exhibition curated for Project 4L *Under the Beach: Pavement Stones* was held between November 22nd, 2002 and January 17th, 2003, with the assistant curation of the artist - curator Halil Altındere. This exhibition can be considered as an exhibition in which three artists who still continue their work as artist-curator today participated and which was their first appearance in the curatorial field for two of them. Borga Kantürk, who was among the artists of the exhibition, presented a gallery and art space alternative with the "BOX" project in the exhibition. The "BOX" exhibition, which was included in the *Under the Beach: Pavement Stones* exhibit, hosted the exhibition *Boredom* curated by Borga Kantürk. In the CV of the KUTU, the exhibition was tagged as follows:

"Hello Boredom"

Curator: Borga Kantürk

Artists: Gokcen Cabadan, Elmas Deniz, Gokce Suvari

Venue: Proje4L Istanbul Contemporary Art Museum

(within the scope of the exhibition "Under the Beach: the Pavement Stones")

Date: 22 October 2002 - 17 January 2003 (KUTU Web)

²⁶ "Look Again" took place between 21 December 2001 and 23 February 2002. Artists in the exhibition: Gülçin Aksoy, Nancy Atakan, Ergin Çavuşoğlu, Cengiz Çekil, Kutlu Gürelli, Borga Kantürk, Servet Koçyiğit, Hakan Onur, Serkan Özkaya, Şener Özmen, Neriman Polat, Hale Tenger, Erdem Yücel

²⁷ Correspondence between artists and curators is available at SALT Research online resources. (<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/10239>)

Another artist-curator in the exhibition was Ferhat Özgür. Among the many exhibitions curated by Ferhat Özgür was *Leaden Circles Dissolved In The Air*²⁸, which he organized at Elgiz Museum that had a different structure after the transformation process of Project 4L. Halil Altındere, whom we see as an assistant curator in this exhibition, held his first curatorial exhibition, *I'm too Sad to Kill You*, in Project 4L.

In addition to experimental exhibitions from 2001 to 2004, Project 4L (now known as Elgiz Museum) organized speeches given by leading international curators Hans Ulrich Obrist, Chris Dercon and Charle Esche.

As Elgiz Contemporary Art Museum as of 2004, the institution has been continuing its existence in the field of art with an approach that focuses on its own collection.

Platform Contemporary Art Center / SALT

Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center, founded by Vasif Kortun within Garanti Bank in 2001, has created an important art space that brings together many people with speeches, conferences and workshops organized in addition to the exhibition program it continued until 2008. Besides, it has supported many researchers with its structure that functions as an international research center with the importance it attaches to archiving.

Since 2011, three different structures under Garanti Bank, Garanti Contemporary Art Center, the Ottoman Bank Archive and Research Center, and Garanti Gallery, have been united under one roof and named SALT and still continues its existence as an important art institution. Vasif Kortun, in a speech he made while leaving this

²⁸ "Leaden Circles Dissolved In The Air" was held between March 1 - April 28, 2018. The artists in the exhibition are: Kezban Arca Batibeki, Ahmet Elhan, Güneş Terkol, Fatma Çakmak, Ezgi Tok, Chuluyarannon Siriphol, Tanja Boukal, Sefa Çakır.

position in the institution after having completed this transformation with a large team, stated this merger process as follows:

“SALT has tried to reverse interests from the moment it was established; reducing three institutions to one was like an earthquake. Although it's a lousy approach to partition museums, it takes time to change the established habits. It was never easy to get rid of the shady, arrogant and esoteric professional jargon of decades. With design groups, on one hand, and “expert discussions” from different fields which we think have done valuable work and very serious homework, on the other hand, we have been through a process as diversified as possible.” (Kortun, 2018, s. 259)

The institution, which continues its exhibitions and activities in three buildings named SALT Beyoğlu, SALT Galata and SALT Ankara, provides the most important resource and research support in the field with the research center and the library located in SALT Galata.

SALT also holds research-oriented exhibitions focusing on the history of exhibitions and prepares e-publications. Held on February 8 - April 22, 2012, *We Were Talking Then*²⁹ is a re-exhibition of three previous exhibitions. The statement included in the bulletin prepared for the exhibition "*We Were Talking Then*" is the visualization of the research continued by SALT for exhibitions held in Turkey which enable specific periods to crystallize in the culture medium beyond commercial considerations, which constitute breaking moments, and which may have historical significance with their processes and spaces," (SALT, 2012) also emphasizes the importance that the institution attaches to the history of exhibitions.

²⁹ *We Were Talking Then* re-evaluates *No. 50/Remembrance Memory II*, *GAR* and *Globalization-State, Misery, Violence* exhibitions held in Turkey in the first half of the 90s.

Akbank Art (Akbank Sanat)

Akbank Art, which was established in 1993 by Akbank within the Sabancı Group, focused on contemporary art with a new restructuring in 2003. With the mission of being "The place where change never ends" (Hakkında:Akbank Sanat), it is an art institution that organizes activities in different fields such as modern dance, theater, classical music and jazz concerts, panels, children's workshops as well as contemporary art exhibitions that are still ongoing today. The institution continues its art activities in the six-story Akbank Art building on İstiklal Street. The entrance and the first floor of the building, which includes an art library on the fourth floor, are reserved for exhibitions.

In addition to exhibitions and exhibitions in which the organization contributes to the curatorial field, the "International Curator Competition"³⁰ and the "Contemporary Art and Curating" program organized for the first time in 2019 are among the activities of the institution.³¹The "Contemporary Art and Curatorship" program realized in cooperation with "Open Dialogue Istanbul" is a seven-month seminar program coordinated by Billur Tansel. Curatorial training is carried out in Turkey for the first time with this scope and duration.

Following Akbank Art's re-structuring, the exhibition program consists of curated and conceptual exhibitions. The first curated exhibition of the institution, *Future*

³⁰ The "International Curator Competition" and exhibition organized by Akbank Art to support young curators, to encourage new projects in contemporary art and to increase interest in curatorial works was an event coordinated by curator Başak Şenova. The exhibition of the competition held for the fourth time in 2016 was censored and canceled by the institution. It was not organized again after the resignation of Başak Şenova.

³¹ Open Dialogue Istanbul is "a nomadic and contemporary international art project founded by Billur Tansel in 2015 to promote intercultural dialogue between curators and art actors at an international level." (<https://www.opendialogueistanbul.com/en/>)

*Democracy*³², was curated by Ali Akay, one of the first curators, in 2013. Ali Akay also worked as a consultant during Akbank Art's re-structuring period. Ali Akay, Levent Çalikoğlu and Hasan Bülent Kahraman are among the curators who have organized the most exhibitions at Akbank Art since 2003.³³

Among the past exhibitions of Akbank Art, an exhibition named *Beyoğlu 14 - 18* was organized by Ömer Uluç in 2013 with the title of "artist - curator." (See Section 4: Exhibitions Organized by Artists)

Istanbul Museum of Modern Art (İstanbul Modern)

Istanbul Modern was established in 2004 in the 4th Warehouse building which had previously been used as an exhibition venue in the Istanbul Biennial. The museum, with an area of eight thousand square meters, was opened with *Observation - Comment - Diversity* (Curators: Ali Akay, Levent Çalikoğlu, Haşim Nur Gürel), A

³² The artists who participated in *Future Democracy* exhibition curated by Ali Akay are Seza Paker, Şener Özmen, Altan Bal, Cem Gencer, Claude Leon, N.Gamze Toksoy, Suzan Kleinberg, Zeliha Burtek.

³³ Some of the exhibitions curated by Ali Akay, Levent Calikoglu and Hasan Bulent Kahraman within Akbank Art are as follows: Future Democracy (Curator: Ali Akay): Altan Bal, Cem Gencer, Claude Leon, Gamze Toksoy, Seza Paker, Suzan Kleinberg, Sener Ozmen , Zeliha Burtek (September 10 - October 18, 2003), Ghost Line (Curator: Ali Akay, Levent Calikoglu): Selim Birsnel, Elif Celebi, Tayfun Erdogan, Ayse Erkmen, Inci Eviner, Leyla Gediz, Ahmet Ogut, Serkan Ozkaya, Sener Ozmen , Gökçe Süvari, Yusuf Taktak, Fatma Tülin (23 January -28 February 2004), Boredom and Rainbow (Curator: Levent Çalikoğlu): Serkan Ağırgöl, Tufan Baltalar, Ali M. Demirel, Murat Gülbay, Mustafa Horasan, Box v.4, Ali Batu, Gokçen Cabadan, Elmas Deniz, Murat Güneş, Borga Kanturk, Gökçe Süvari, Ömer Orhun, Ceren Oykut, Vedat Ozan, Denizhan Ozer, Günnur Özsoy, Seçkin Pirim, Nalan Yirtmaç (May 7-June 12, 2004), Sarkis, A Milestone, (Curator: Ali Akay) Sarkis (April 7 - May 28, 2005), Angel Faced Stranger (Curator: Levent Çalikoğlu): Ergin Cavuşoğlu, Ali M. Demirel, Paul Eachus, Simon Faithfull, Dryden Goodwin, Gül Ilgaz, Shona Illingworth, Rachel Lowe, Harold Offeh, Denizhan Özer, Serkan Özkaya, Şener Özmen, Erkan Özgen, Seza Paker, Neriman Polat, Pınar Yolaçan (17 May-24 June 2006), Hybrid Narratives (Curator: Levent Çalikoğlu): Işıl Eğrikavuk, Harold Offeh, İrfan Önürmen, Denizhan Ozer (5 September - 20 October 2007), Twin Body (Curator: Ali Akay): Brice Dellsperger (2 November - 15 December 2007), Neurocinema (Curator: Ali Akay): Laurent Grasso (9 January- 20 February 2008), Internal – İnflux (Curator: Hasan Bülent Kahraman), Zeren Gökten (1 May -7 June 2008), Always the Same Song (Curator: Ali Akay), Brice Dellsperger, Wang Du, Ayşe Erkmen, Leyla Gediz, Seza Paker (13 May-10 June 2009), Megalopolis (Curator: Ali Akay), Mounir Fatmi, (26 January – 19 March 2011), Words, Objects, Concepts (Curator: Hasan Bülent Kahraman), Marcel Broodthaers, (24 September – 24 November 2014), Art Coincidence / The Art of Coincidence (Curator: Hasan Bülent Kahraman), Nurtaç Ulutürk, Kıvanç Martaloz, Burak Eren Güler, Elif Boyner, Fırat Engin, Erdal İnci, Seydi Murat Koç, Doruk Kumkumoğlu,, Ardan Özmenoğlu, Eda Soylu, (30 September – 3 December 2016), Self/Cycle (Curator: Hasan Bülent Kahraman), Sudarshan Shetty, (10 September – 31 October 2019).

Selection From the Turkish Photograph After the Republic (Curator: Engin Özdenses), and *Towards Istanbul Modern* (Curator: Fulya Erdemci) exhibitions. In addition to exhibitions and events organized for a country without a museum for many years, it is a living space where people can spend a long time with its library including art books and exhibition catalogs, restaurant and museum store as well as workshops organized by the education department. The museum continues its program with retrospective, collection and thematic exhibitions. Some of the outstanding exhibitions organized at Istanbul Modern are as follows: *Sarkis: Site Exhibition*, (Curator: Levent Çalıkoğlu). The exhibition, which was organized between 11 September 2009 and 17 January 2010, focused on Sarkis's fifty years of artistic life starting from his first works in the 1960s. Sarkis works diligently for the event programs organized along with the exhibitions. At *Sarkis: Site Exhibition*, there was a comprehensive program to be organized by Sarkis and the education department of Istanbul Modern "which included activities complementing each other." (Geçmiş Sergiler: Sarkis: Site Sergisi)

Current Time Past Time exhibition (Curators: David Elliot, Rosa Martinez), held between September 6 - December 2, 2007 at Istanbul Modern, focused on the twenty-year history of the Istanbul Biennial until 2007. In the exhibition, 50 works of 42 artists who took part in the Istanbul Biennials were presented under the subtitle "The Traces from the International Istanbul Biennial in 20 Years." (Geçmiş Sergiler: Şimdiki Zaman Geçmiş Zaman)

The exhibition "Erol Akyavaş Restrospective" held between 29 May 2013 - 1 December 2013 and Burhan Doğançay's retrospective exhibition named *Half-Century of City Walls* held between 23 May and 23 September 2013 were curated by Levent

Çalikoğlu, the head curator of the museum at the time, and currently the general director of the museum.

Another important exhibition of the museum, *Dream and Reality*, took place between September 16, 2011 and January 22, 2012, focusing on the production of women artists from 1900 to the present. Curated by Fatmagül Berktaş, Levent Çalikoğlu, Zeynep İnankur and Burcu Pelvanoğlu, *Dream and Reality*³⁴ exhibition was named after the book of the first female novelist Fatma Aliye and Ahmet Mithat with the same title. The exhibition aimed at "drawing attention to the productions of women artists and reminding them of their position in the history of art as well as bringing the situation and problems of women in the social sphere into question." (Geçmiş Sergiler: Hayal ve Hakikat) Women artists participating in the exhibition were Mihri Hanım, Melek Celal Sofu, Belkıs Mustafa, Güzin Duran, Nazlı Ecevit, Fahrelnissa Zeid, Aliye Berger, Bedia Gülerüz, Sabiha Rüştü Bozcalı, Nermin Faruki, Sabiha Ziya Bengütaş, Hale Asaf, Maide Arel, Şükriye Dikmen, Eren Eyüboğlu, Semiha Berksoy, Füreya, Frumet Tektaş, Zerrin Bölükbaşı, Leyla Gamsız, Naile Akıncı, Tiraje Dikmen, Bilge Civelekoğlu Friedlaender, Bilge Alkor, Candeğer Furtun, Tülay Tura Börteçene, Alev Ebüzziya Siesbye, Füsün Onur, Nil Yalter, Tomur Atagök, Neşe Erdok, İpek Duben, Nur Koçak, Nevhiz, Seyhun Topuz, Meriç Hızal, Nancy Atakan, Gülsün Karamustafa, Canan Beykal, Ayşe Erkmen, Azade Köker, Fatma Tülin, Hale Arpacıoğlu, Canan Tolon, İnci Eviner, Kezban Arca Batıbeki, Handan Börüteçene, Canan Dağdelen, Hale Tenger, Selda Asal, Selma Gürbüz, Aydan Murtezaoğlu, Gül Ilgaz, Şükran Moral, Arzu Başaran, Gülay Semercioğlu, Mürüvvet Türkyılmaz, Neriman Polat, Canan, Nezaket Ekici, Esra Ersen, Ebru Özseçen, Elif

³⁴ *Dream and Reality* is a two-part romance novel, first published in 1892. The first part of the novel titled "Vedat" was written by Fatma Aliye and the second part titled "Vefa" by Ahmet Mithat.

Çelebi, Leyla Gediz, Bengü Karaduman, Aslı Sungu, İnci Furni, Nilbar Güreş, Seda Hepsev, Ceren Oykut, Ekin Saçlıođlu, Gzde İlkin, Güneş Terkol, Atıl Kunst.

Sabancı University Sakıp Sabancı Museum

It was founded in 2002 with the addition of a modern gallery after the donation of "Atlı Köşk", which was once used as a private residence by the Sabancı family in a large garden in Emirgan, to Sabancı University to be transformed into a museum with all the collections and belongings present in the building. In 2005, the exhibition areas at the Museum were developed and rearranged. (Müze Tarihi: Sabancı Üniversitesi Sakıp Sabancı Müzesi) Following these arrangements, exhibitions which drew a lot of attention from all segments of the public started to be organized in an effort to display and introduce the works of the leading artists of the Western art in Turkey. The first of these exhibitions is *Picasso in Istanbul* exhibition. In this exhibition, which was the first major exhibition of its kind held in Turkey for a Western artist, 135 works of Picasso covering Picasso's entire production period were displayed. (Sergiler: Sabancı Üniversitesi Sakıp Sabancı Müzesi)

With its exhibitions focusing on Western art and leading Western artists, the Sabancı Museum has had a great contribution in the large numbers of crowds who formed long lines at the entrance of the museum to gain the habit of visiting exhibitions by attracting the attention of people far from art. Until the 2000s in Turkey, no institution or gallery other than the Istanbul Biennials allocated much space to the exhibitions of foreign artists, nor did they organize such a large scale exhibition as the

"blockbuster"³⁵ exhibitions organized by the Sabancı Museum. Among the other "blockbuster" exhibitions organized by the museum are *A Surrealist in Istanbul: Salvador Dalí* Curator: Montse Aguer Teixidor (20 September 2008 - 20 January 2009), *Monet's Garden* Curator: Marianne Matthieu (9 October 2012 - 6 January 2013), *Anish Kapoor in Istanbul* Curator: Sir Norman Rosenthal (10 September 2013 - 5 January 2014), *Joan Miró. Women, Birds, Stars* (September 23, 2014 - February 1, 2015).

Pera Museum

It was opened in 2005 by the Suna and İnan Kırac Foundation in order to share the collections of the foundation named "Orientalist Painting", "Anatolian Weights and Measures" and "Kütahya Tiles and Ceramics" with the general public through exhibitions. In addition to displaying the collections, Pera Museum organized the exhibitions of master artists by cooperating with international museums and foundations³⁶. Some of these exhibitions include *Jean Dubuffet: Meeting with a Great Artist of the 20th Century* (26 October 2005 - 08 January 2006), *Rembrandt and His Surroundings / PATTERNS* (October 20, 2006 - January 07, 2007), *Marc Chagall Life and Love: Print, Pattern and Paintings* (23 October 2009 - 24 January 2010), *Pablo Picasso Engravings and Ceramics from the House of His Birth* (05 February - 20 April 2014), *Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera from the Gelman Collection* (December 23, 2010 - March 27, 2011). (Geçmiş Sergiler: Pera Müzesi Web Sitesi)

³⁵ The motivation and history of these so-called "blockbusters" can be traced back to 1967, when Thomas Hoving was appointed director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and instituted widely influential policies designed to draw upon, and create, broad-based public interests, which were tapped through sophisticated marketing techniques. (The Art Bulletin, Vol. 68, No. 3 (Sep., 1986), pp. 358-359)

³⁶ In cooperation with the leading museums, collections and foundations such as Tate Britain, the Victoria and Albert Museum, St. Petersburg Russian State Museum, JP Morgan Chase Collection, New York School of Visual Arts, Foundation Maeght, joint projects were developed and exhibitions were organized.

Borusan Art

Borusan Art was established in 1997 under the Borusan Kocabıyık Foundation. The foundation, which focuses mainly on classical music, contributed to the field of fine arts with "Borusan Art Gallery", which functioned between 1997 and 2006, and "ArtCenter/Istanbul", which was active between 2008 and 2013. Between 1999 and 2006, Borusan Art Gallery hosted fifty-four exhibitions. In addition to a great many exhibitions curated by Beral Madra³⁷ and Ahu Antmen³⁸, Borusan Art Gallery hosted many exhibitions curated by Necmi Sonmez, Rosa Martinez, Michele Thursz, Elga Wimmer, Mathias Arndt, Young Chul Lee, Fumihko Maki, and Anne Marie Eze.

(Borusan Sanat Galerisi)

Numerous foreign curators draw attention in the exhibitions organized at Borusan Art. Borusan Art Gallery is important in that it introduced the approaches of exhibiting in different styles from the field of international art and exhibitions to the Istanbul art environment.

Between 2008 and 2013, ArtCenter/Istanbul provided a low-cost workshop environment for young artists and organized a curated group exhibition at the end of each period of the workshops.

Siemens Art

³⁷ The exhibitions organized by Beral Madra at Borusan Art Gallery are as follows: *Document Distance II* (March 2005 - May 2005), *Evaporations* (15 September - 9 October 2004), *Self Portrait* (December 2002 - February 2003), *Geranium Garden* (December 2001 - January 2002), *Istanbul Departure - Return III* (October - November 2000), *Color of Music* (September 2000),

³⁸ The exhibitions organized by Ahu Antmen at Borusan Art Gallery are as follows: *New Suggestions New Propositions 14* (July - October 2005), *New Propositions 13* (June - July 2005), *New Propositions 12* (June - August 2004), *New Metropolis* (October - November 2002), *New Propositions 9* (August - September 2002), *New Propositions 8* (June - August 2002), *New Propositions 6* (June - July 2001).

Siemens Art was established in 2004 as a social responsibility project of Siemens company in Turkey with the aim of forming "a contemporary art and artistic research center." (Hakkında: Siemens Sanat)

The exhibitions of Siemens Art between 2004 and 2007 were held exclusively under the curatorship and consultancy of Marcus Graf³⁹. As of 2007, T. Melih Görgün and Mürteza Fidan, whom we know of as artist-curators, acted as consultant and curator. In addition, exhibitions were organized by different curators in the venue under the consultancy of the duo. Since 2007, the institution has been holding an exhibition named *Borders Orbits* that brings together young artists. Since 2014, without a venue belonging to Siemens Art, *Borders Orbits* exhibition series has continued, but Siemens Art has not organized any other exhibitions or activities.

Some of the exhibitions organized by the artist - curator duo, T. Melih Görgün⁴⁰ and Mürteza Fidan⁴¹ at Siemens Art include *Ambiguous Status*: David Shillinglaw, Aksel Zeydan Göz and Erkut Terliksiz (8 January - 22 February 2008), *Accent and Staying Silent*: Özlem Gök, Tunca Subaşı, Melike Kılıç, Johannes Vogl (07 December 2011 - 22 January 2012), *Different Lives - Encounters and Inventions*: Nezaket Ekici, Shahar Marcus (05 December 2013 - 10 January 2014).

³⁹ Prof. Dr. Marcus Graf, who is the head of Art Management Department and has been working as an academician at Yeditepe University since 2003 and giving lectures on exhibition practices and curatorial studies, has been a curator in Istanbul since 2001 at various art institutions and organizations including Siemens Art, Contemporary Istanbul and Plato Art. Some of the 13 exhibitions curated by Marcus Graf at Siemens Art between 2004 and 2007 are as follows: *Life* (16 January - 3 March 2004), *Thousand Lies of Identity* (26 May - 2 August 2005), *Beautiful* (3 October - 31 December 2006), *Art and Money* (23 January - 18 March 2007).

⁴⁰ T. Melih Görgün is working as a professor at Mimar Sinan University. He is also the founding director and curator of the Sinop Biennial "Sinopale."

⁴¹ Mürteza Fidan works as the member of faculty at Marmara University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Painting. Since 1996, he has been participating in solo and group exhibitions as an artist and organizing curatorial exhibitions.

Arter

Arter was opened as an establishment of the Vehbi Koç Foundation (VKF)⁴² in the field of contemporary art on İstiklal Street in 2010. As of 2007, the Foundation started to create collections of works of art post 1960. The 35 exhibitions held in the building on İstiklal Street between 2010 - 2018 mainly focused on art production in Turkey after 1960. In addition to the works in the collection of the Foundation, it also displayed works and artists not included in the collection and supported the production of 183 works. Arter was opened in Dolapdere in September 2019 with all the facilities required by a museum and exhibitions. (Hakkında: Arter) Beside the exhibitions, there is a library, performance areas, cafe, bookstore and conservation laboratory, which are not available in the building on İstiklal Street. Arter's first exhibition in 2010, *Starter*⁴³, was curated by Rene Block⁴⁴. Emre Baykal has been leading the curatorial team since 2010. Although there are occasional joint curatorial exhibitions of the curators within the curatorial team, exhibitions that mostly reflect their individual curatorial attitudes are organized. The institution maintains this approach in the exhibitions organized in its new venue in September 2019.

Galleries

In the early 2000s, many galleries were opened in Istanbul. The number of spaces where the artists can gain visibility increased with the galleries that emphasize the artists' personal exhibitions and representations. Many of the newly opened galleries also focused on the international visibility of the artists they represent by participating

⁴² VKF was established in 1969 to operate in the fields of education, health and culture and arts. The Foundation's initiative to form a collection in the field of contemporary art began in 2007.

⁴³ From 8 May to 31 October 2010, *Starter* exhibited works of 83 artists, most of whom were foreign artists. (<https://www.arter.org.tr/starter>)

⁴⁴ In 1995, he curated the 4th International Istanbul Biennial. He was the director of the Vehbi Koç Foundation's art space, TANAS, which was founded in Berlin in 2008, until it was closed in 2013.

in international fairs. Galerist was first opened by Murat Pilevneli in 2001, followed by Rodeo, NON, Outlet and Sanatorium galleries, which included internationally renowned artists. Numerous galleries were opened in succession along Tophane-Beyoğlu-İstiklal line and in Nişantaşı region. In 2010, as galleries located in the same region, Gallery NON, Outlet, Gallery Apel, Rodeo, artSümer, Gallery Mana, Daire Gallery, Mars, Pi Artworks, Elipsis Gallery, Pg Art Gallery, and Pilot began to produce a map with the information of their own exhibitions through a formation called Tophane Art Walk. Rampa, CAM, Çağla Cabaoglu Gallery, Dirimart, X-ist and Mercury Gallery were opened in the region extending from Beşiktaş to Nişantaşı. With the launch of Contemporary Istanbul Art Fair in 2006, the development of the market gained momentum.

Although Elipsis, Galeri Mana and Rampa Galleries have been closed, along with the newly opened art galleries such as Mixer, Öktem Aykut, Krank Art Gallery and The Pill, the art market and exhibition space have improved since 2013.

Biennials outside Istanbul

SİNOPALE, Mardin Biennial and Çanakkale Biennial enable different regions of Turkey to meet with contemporary art through exhibitions and accompanying activities that shattered the Istanbul-based structure of the Turkish Art environment and adopted the participation of people living in the region.

The Sinop Biennial (Sinopale) was organized by the European Cultural Association of Sinop Biennial, which has been organized 7 times since 2006. The International Sinop Biennial was founded under the leadership of artist-curator-academician T. Melih Görgün. Sinopale was formed with Melih Görgün's idea of doing something in Sinop, which appeared during his travel to his hometown Sinop with his friends such as

Beral Madra, Mahir Namur, Handan Börüteçene, Sinan Niyazioğlu and İpek Duben. (Görgün, 2019) The aim of Sinopale was explained as follows: “Sinopale is a project that enables civil society to come together in a "sharing-based art production" model in order to develop culture and art based dialogue in the context of local development. This bi-annual project aims to enable urban citizens of all ages to re-perceive their own living spaces by having a future vision, to reflect on urban problems, to share common historical memory and to organize it for art production, to work locally, nationally and internationally in order to create a better social living space.”

(Sinopale)

International Çanakkale Biennial

International Çanakkale Biennial is supported and organized by the Troy Culture Association⁴⁵ and CABININ⁴⁶ within an institutional framework. The first edition of the biennial was held in 2008, and the 6th edition was organized in 2018. For each biennial, a conceptual framework is determined by the curatorial team. The curatorial team of the first two biennials consisted of artist-curator Denizhan Özer⁴⁷ and Seyhan Boztepe. During the third biennial, Denizhan Özer did not participate in the team, and Beral Madra, Deniz Erbaş and Fırat Arapoğlu joined the curatorial team. CABININ is referred to as the curator of the biennial held with the theme of "Before the Past After the Future" in 2018. Deniz Erbaş was the managing curator, and Seyhan Boztepe was the Biennial Director.

Mardin Biennial

⁴⁵ Troya Culture Association was established in 2012 to operate in the fields of art, education and social activities. (<https://www.canakkalebienali.com/troya-kultur-dernegi/>)

⁴⁶ Çanakkale Biennial Initiative (CABININ) is a non-profit, Çanakkale-based initiative consisting of participants from different fields and occupational groups. (<https://www.canakkalebienali.com/cabinin/>)

⁴⁷ Denizhan Özer graduated from Uludağ University, Faculty of Education, Painting Department in 1985. Özer, mainly an art coordinator and curator, also has art practices.

Organized biennially since 2010, the Mardin Biennial is organized under the leadership and directorship of Döne Otyam. Mardin Biennial stands out with its increasing number of supporters and selection of curators. The first Mardin Biennial was curated by Döne Otyam under the title of *Abracadabra* between June 4 - July 5, 2010. Among the supporters of the first Mardin Biennial were the Mardin Governorship and the GAP administration. The second Mardin Biennial was organized by Paolo Colombo⁴⁸ between September 21, 2012 - October 21, 2012 with the title of *Double Take* with the aim of “creating a unique way by presenting new encounters and meetings within the urban fabric while taking the cues from the splendor of the architectural, historical and cultural layers of the city.” There were numerous organizations among the supporters of the Mardin biennial. No curator selection was made for the third Mardin Biennial. Director Döne Otyam explained the curators or curatorial structure of the biennial, the framework of which she defined to be *Mythologies*, as follows: "People of Mardin, and the majority of the artists are from Mardin, too. There will be 'artisans and craftsmen' among them. Thus, a counter-alternative is being offered against the biennial model in which a foreign curator, in a place he/she barely knows, single-handedly decides what the exhibition will be, who will exhibit, and how they will exhibit." Mardin Metropolitan Municipality and Artuklu Municipality continue to be the main supporters of the biennial, and the number of supporting private organizations increases with the third Biennial. The 4th Mardin Biennial was organized with the title of *Beyond Words*, which was a joint curatorial work of Fırat Arapoğlu, Nazlı Gürlek and Derya Yücel. That Biennial was the most prominent Mardin Biennial. The reason for the success of that biennial, which attracted a lot of viewers from Istanbul, was the selection of artists and the

⁴⁸ Paolo Colombo, who curated the 6th Istanbul Biennial in 1999, has been an art consultant at Istanbul Modern since 2008.

collaboration of curators. The theme of all Mardin Biennials was influenced by the rich cultural texture of the city and the impressive ethnographic and architectural structure of the city.

3.7. The Approach of Nonprofit Art Formations Towards Exhibitions

Anatolia Culture: Diyarbakir Arts Center, DEPO

Anatolia Culture, a nonprofit cultural institution, was established in 2002 to bring together civilians and business people interested in arts, and to support the activities accompanying art and culture discussions outside of Istanbul. Anatolia Culture believes that regional, cultural, and lifestyle differences can be understood and evaluated without bias through sharing art, and thus social consensus can be achieved. In the activities of the association, concepts such as "cultural life, citizenship, identity, and belonging" are at the forefront. (Hakkımızda: Anadolu Kültür, 2019) The art activities of the association continue with Diyarbakir Art Center established in 2002, and DEPO established in 2009. In addition, it continued its activities in Kars Art Center between 2005-2009.

Diyarbakir Art Center has exhibited the works of regional artists as well as other artists who continue their work in different parts of Turkey in Diyarbakir and neighboring regions since 2002. Moreover, it has hosted various curated exhibitions and the exhibitions of the leading curators in Turkish art. Some of the exhibitions curated by Beral Madra include *Multiplied Works*⁴⁹ (7 September - 11 October 2002),

⁴⁹ The artists who participated in the *Multiplied Works* exhibition were the following: Erdag Aksel, Selda Asal, Yilmaz Aysan, Alpaslan Baloglu, Hulya Botasun, Handan Borutecene, Tayfun Erdogmus, Nilufer Ergin, Inci Eviner, Bilge Friedlaender, Melih Gorgun, Selma Gurbuz, Guven Incirlioglu, Günseli Kato, Serhat Kiraz, Melike Abasiyanik Kurtic, Ahmet Oktem, Lerzan Ozer, and Ozlem Tari.

*Consumption of Justice*⁵⁰ (1 - 22 May 2005), *Password: Istanbul*⁵¹ (31 January - 6 March 2003). René Block, the curator of the 4th Istanbul Biennial, also curated an exhibition at Diyarbakir Art Center named: *Love it or Leave it* (2 - 21 October 2004). The venue, which displayed the solo exhibitions of many artists, has also hosted various exhibitions held in Istanbul or other cities. For example *the 23rd Contemporary Artists* exhibition was displayed at Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality Guest House as an event of DAC between 25 September-3 October, 2004 following the Istanbul display. *Never Again! The Facing the Past and Apology* (4-29 June 2013) exhibition was turned into a mobile exhibition visiting different cities of Turkey after being displayed at DEPO in Istanbul, and as a DAC activity, it was exhibited at its third stop following Izmir exhibition at Diyarbakir Sumerpark Amed Art Gallery. (Hakkımızda: Anadolu Kültür)

DEPO is situated in a building formerly used as a Tobacco Warehouse located in a region that occupies a central place on the artistic map of Istanbul where the art galleries of Tophane, Karakoy, Istanbul Modern, Istiklal Street, art institutions, and museums are concentrated. DEPO, which has been focusing on exhibitions addressing political and social problems within contemporary art practices since 2009, is a venue that provides space for numerous talks, panel discussions, and workshops attended by the local people. DEPO, which supports academicians, researchers, and especially artists, cooperates with various art and educational institutions and provides support

⁵⁰ The artists who participated in the *Consumption of Justice* exhibition were the following: Ali Aksakal, Andrej Derkovic, Behrang Samadzadegan, Evrensel Belgin, Heba Farid, Iliko Zautashvili, Lamia Joreige, Oliver Musovik, Bassam Al Khouri, Panayiotis Michael, Ruben Arevshatyan, Zehra Sonya, and Maha Abu Ayyash.

⁵¹ The exhibition was held in October 2002 in Istanbul WestLB building before Diyarbakir. With the participation of artists from Diyarbakir, the exhibition was expanded and displayed at DSM. The artists who participated in the exhibition were the following: Melih Apa, Fatih Balci, Burak Delier, Hakan Gursoytrak, Murat Gok, Gul Ilgaz, Berat Isik, Cuneyt Kurt, Sitki Kosemen, Catrin Otto, Erkan Ozgen, Sener Ozmen, Mustafa Pancar, Fatih Sungurtekin, and Cengiz Tekin.

based on the principle of "cooperation and sharing."⁵² In the exhibitions of the institution, archival exhibitions that bring social problems to the agenda, that investigate and question the issues which have been penetrated into the history of the country as social wounds, that are fed from the archives, and that do not avoid experimentation come to the forefront.⁵³

Karşı Sanat

Founded in 2000 by Feyyaz Yaman, Karşı Sanat creates an atmosphere for exhibitions that critically approach social, economic, political, and cultural issues. The Karşı Sanat's approach to the issue of exhibiting is explained on the website of the formation as follows:

"It refuses to be a mere exhibition venue – in other words, a gallery - with the assertion that free and creative art will develop in such a disciplinary environment, not in a 'gallery' where the existing understanding which integrated with the cultural industry is maintained. Therefore, rather than considering the works it exhibits as just objects of exhibition, it aims to make sense, associate, and question all of them separately and as a whole in their historical perspectives. Exhibiting constitutes the platform with content and data which is necessary for the fulfillment of the mission that the Counter Art has undertaken." (Hakkında: Karşı Sanat)

⁵² During the time I worked for different galleries and formations in this field, when we needed technical equipment and information/ideas in the events and exhibitions organized, Asena Gunal, the coordinator of the institution, and the whole team were very helpful. We have had the opportunity to cooperate in exhibitions numerous times.

⁵³ For exhibitions, see: <http://www.depoistanbul.net/sergiler/>

The Counter Art has also included exhibitions organized by artists themselves independently. A series of exhibitions held under the names of *Domestic Product* (2000), *Voices From the Homeland* (2001), and *Family Only* (2003) are among these exhibitions. The first exhibition named *Domestic Product* which was held by the members of the Excavation group, Antonio Cosentino, Gulcin Aksoy, Gul Ilgaz, Irfan Onurmen, Memed Erdener, Nancy Atakan, Neriman Polat, and Raziye Kubat in 2000 was followed by the *Voices From the Homeland* exhibition that was organized between 11 April-8 May 2001 with the inclusion of Nur Kocak into the team. The organizers, as well as the artists, of "Voices From the Homeland" described the exhibition as "The voice of our subconscious that has infiltrated from the past to the present ... The sound of the television which starts and finishes broadcasting with the soldiers and the National Anthem... The sound of the uniformed choir, the image of singers in a single line ..." The team also emphasized that *Voices From the Homeland* was not "just a nostalgic title." (Kültür: Bianet) Another exhibition, which is the continuation of these two exhibitions, was organized in 2003 under the title *Family Only*. The organizers and artists of the exhibition were Nancy Atakan, Gulcin Ozdemir Aksoy, Nazan Azeri, Taner Ceylan, Antonio Cosentino, Patricia Frischer, Memed Erdener, Gul Ilgaz, Nur Kocak, Levent Morgok, Doreen Maloney, Raziye Kubat, Irfan Onurmen, Neriman Polat, Nalan Yirtmac, and Ozcan Yaman. In this exhibition, the expanding team concentrated more on the issue of establishing an exhibition and divided the labor as promotion-press, catalog design, and printing during the formation process of the exhibition. The focus of the *Family Only* exhibition is on the concept of "family." Different ideas on individual, social, economic, and political planes that come together under this concept were put forward

by the artists. The organizing artist group explains the exhibition with the following sentences in common:

"This exhibition focuses on the micro worlds, the situations in the family order. The phrase "Family Only" is a sign that we see a lot in our daily lives and is an indicator of the chain of discrimination, warnings, and prohibitions we experience in society. At this point, one can think about who protects who from whom and for what purpose, who describes what and whom as other, and what powers and responsibilities are given to whom and for what purpose.

This is because the family is also a pursuer of the compromises concerning macro systems. In this case, how a family is defined becomes important. What ties a family together? Blood relation? Tradition?"

Hafriyat

Founded in 1996 by Hakan GURSOYTRAK, Antonio Cosentino, Murat Akagunduz, and Mustafa Pancar, the *Hafriyat* group organized many exhibitions between 1996-2009. The founding artists definitely participated in *Hafriyat* exhibitions. Apart from this, different artists participated in each exhibition. Established as a group, *Hafriyat* identified itself as an artists' initiative towards the end of the 2000s. Since their first exhibition in 1996 at the Kare Art Gallery, they established themselves as a platform of discussion, and all the exhibitions they held are based on this platform. (Pelvanoğlu, 2009, s. 351) *Hafriyat's* exhibitions were held mainly in Istanbul and other cities, namely Diyarbakir, Eskisehir, Ankara, and Nevsehir. In 2004, they also organized an exhibition in Munich, Germany with the exhibition name "Falsche Welt" (False World). On May 1, 2007, they moved to their own settlement in Karakoy. In this venue, they both organized their own exhibitions

and created space for the exhibitions of other artists. *Hafriyat* terminated their exhibitions and events in 2009.

The Apartment Project

It was founded by Selda Asal in 1999 on the ground floor of an apartment building in Asmalimescit in Beyoglu and continued its activities and exhibitions until 2012. Selda Asal expressed the purpose of its establishment as meeting the needs of artists for independent and interdisciplinary sharing and exhibition space in the late '90s. (Asal, 2007) They organized exhibitions using the three windows on the façade of the 24-square-meter apartment as a showcase, or in other words, as a display area. In its early years (1999 - 2005), they organized exhibitions that combined a display venue-art space and the window display method of a shop selling products. This structure created an atmosphere of discussion and reflection on the methods of exhibition while also allowing the street and anyone passing through the street to establish communication with the exhibition and works exhibited.

The opening exhibition, with reference to the expression "bring luck with one's foot," which is used with the hope of bringing luck, was named *Shoe Store*⁵⁴ (September 16 - November 30, 1999).

Following the first exhibition, some of the exhibitions coordinated by the artist Selda Asal are *Cleaning Material Store* (2000), *Store of Dreams* (2008), *Waiting Room* (2005), *All About Lies* (2007), and *Nothing Goes Well* (2007).

⁵⁴ The artists who participated in the *Shoe Store* exhibition were the following: Ali Aigner, Erdag Aksel, Huseyin Alptekin, Halil Altindere, Selda Asal, Fatih Aydogdu, Yilmaz Aysan, Selim Birsal, Thomas Busch, Ela Cindoruk, Tunc Ali Cam, Elif Celebi, Smedar Dreyfuss, Haldun Dostoglu, Ayse Erkmen, Inci Eviner, Genco Gulan, Christian Hutzinger, Sirin Iskit, Gulsun Karamustafa, Dieter Kleinpeter, Vasif Kortun, Joseph Kosuth, Julia Lohmann, Beral Madra, Werner Mally, Butsch Morris, Murat Morova, Lothar Peter, Katharina Philgren, Leyla Sakpinar, Zineb Sedira, Sermin Sherrif, Hale Tenger, Dimitri Tzamouranis, Canan Tolon, and Muge Ulug.

BAS

Focusing on artist books and printed materials produced by artists, *BAS* is a formation that was founded in 2006 by the artist Banu Cennetoglu. *BAS* is a formation that deals with the issues of creating a collection of artist's books by an artist and publishing and exhibiting them in Turkey in an independent way and pursuing its efforts within this scope. Art books and printed materials publishing, which is carried out in many cities of the world by many artists independently, has unfortunately not developed in Turkey. In addition to large publishing houses, independent art-artist publications take part in international art-artist's books-publications fairs with practical and effective exhibitions.⁵⁵ *BAS* is the only Turkish formation that has exhibited/been exhibited, and that has participated in these fairs with the artist books and artist book collections which it has published.⁵⁶

Among the important exhibitions it organized between 2006 and 2011 are: *Exhibition of Artist's Books by Sol LeWitt* (December 15, 2009 - January 12, 2010) and between 1988 - 1995, the archival exhibition of "CORRIDOR DELIVERY WORK," a group that forms artist's publications and books, *CORRIDOR 1988 - 1995* (May 10 - June 5 2010)

Videoist

Videoist is an independent artist initiative focusing on video art. It was established by Hülya Özdemir and Ferhat Satıcı in Istanbul in 2003. Videoist organized exhibitions displaying selections of video art and made an effort to create a large archive of video art. Among the screenings and exhibitions whose selection was

⁵⁵ The LA Art Book Fair, New York Art Book Fair (<https://printedmatterartbookfairs.org/>), and SF Art Book Fair (<https://sfartbookfair.com/>) are some of these fairs held by Printed Matter Inc.

⁵⁶ Between 2006 and 2011, *BAS* participated in art book fairs 9 times. It participated in NY Art Book Fair in 2008, 2009, and 2011.

performed by Videoist are Istanbul Modern (2007), Goethe Institute Istanbul (2008), Diyarbakır Culture Center (2008) and Portable Art (2010) held within the scope of 2010 European Cultural Capital Project. Having moved to Mardin in 2014, the initiative continued its activities with a non-profit art venue where the participants interacted with each other. Videoist organized exhibitions, projects, discussions-lectures and video screenings within the scope of its art activities. All the activities and works of Videoist were realized without any sponsorship thanks to the support of the participants, especially the personal efforts of Hülya Özdemir and Ferhat Satıcı.

PIST /// Interdisciplinary Project Venue

PIST /// Interdisciplinary Project Venue was founded by the artists Didem Ozbek and Osman Bozkurt as an independent art project using three neighboring shops in Pangalti as its venue. PIST is an alternative interdisciplinary project venue that includes presentations in fields of art as well as architecture, music, literature and writing, interviews, exhibitions, and guest artist programs. I am under the impression that among the many activities carried out by PIST, the projects titled *Reserved* and *We Are Open for Exhibition Setup* are particularly important for current exhibition practices.

Reserved was a series of exhibitions organized on July 7-9, 2006 that consisted of 15-minute solo exhibitions of the artists under the common theme of "Momentary Impact" (Gulcin Aksoy, Osman Bozkurt, Asli Cavusoglu, Isil Egrikavuk, Extrastruggle, Gozde Ikin, Ahmet Ogut, Didem Ozbek, Ani Setyan, Erinc Seymen, Yasemin Toksoy, Vahit Tuna, and Nalan Yirtmac). The project turns into a three-day exhibition-setup performance. Each artist had the chance to display their works on PIST's venues, showcases, and on the street within this 15-minute period. They

organized a different side event by broadcasting a radio program from the studio established at PIST 2 during the exhibition. *Reserved* places the issue of questioning the act of setting up an exhibition at the conceptual focus of the exhibition by altering the usual process and structure of exhibitions.

Another project of PIST which focuses on the issue of setting up an exhibition, *We Are Open for Exhibition Setup*, includes a series of applied workshops, lectures, and exhibitions. Every week between September 11-26, 2012, a different program took place. The applied workshop phase was carried out under the coordination of Jeremy Johnston, who is an expert on exhibition organization and design⁵⁷, with 10 people selected among the applications made to PIST. "This program will address the different stages of exhibition preparations. Tools, materials, methods, security, all stages of exhibition setup, teamwork, audio/video, and exhibition design and date have been discussed." (<http://pist-org.blogspot.com>, 2012) During the two-week program, presentations and discussions were held with the workshop participants under the management of Jeremy Johnston on Tuesdays, followed by exhibition setup work on Wednesdays. On Wednesday afternoons, discussions were organized with experts in their fields and in the evening, openings of exhibitions were held. The exhibitions lasted two days and on Saturdays the exhibitions were collected with the help of the participants of the workshop program. This project is extremely important as an applied curatorial training model with an expert exhibition producer at a time when curatorial training was limited to the courses taught in the art management departments of a few universities. The artist Evrim Kavcar, who participated in the workshop, talked about this workshop in 2017 when we worked together in an

⁵⁷ Jeremy Johnston, who lives in New York and provides services such as exhibition design, installation, and curatorial service, is one of the co-founders and directors of the formation called "Darling Green" (<http://www.darlinggreen.com/>), which works with major art institutions such as the Bard Graduate Center, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and MoMA PS1.

exhibition she took part in, and stated that it proved to be very useful for her in her professional life.



4. EXAMPLES OF EXHIBITIONS CURATED BY ARTISTS AFTER 1989

4.1. The Seretonin 1 Exhibition

Exhibition Details

Exhibition Title: *Seretonin 1*

Organizer (institution / museum / gallery): -

Artist-Curator(s): Artists' self-curated show

Dates: October 3 – 15, 1989

Location: Feshane, Eyüp, İstanbul / Gazhane, İstanbul

Artists: Arhan Kayar, Atilla Özdemiroğlu, Aysun Aslan, Cana Dölay, Çağatay Karaçizmeli, Gürel Yontan, Işık Yenersu, Komet, Korhan Gümüş, Tan Oral, Türkel Minibaş

Publication (catalogue / book and other printed matters): poster, brochure, invitation



Figure 23 Installation view of *Seretonin 1*, Feshane, 1989

Content of the *Serotonin 1* Exhibition

Serotonin 1, which was the first of a series of exhibitions organized by a group of young artists who came together and planned to hold each year at a different building of the 19th century that was important in the social and cultural history of Turkey, was displayed in 1989 in the Feshane building where fez was produced in the Ottoman Period. As it was emphasized on the last page of the brochure of *Serotonin 1*, "*Serotonin 1 in Feshane is an organization realized by the artists themselves whose names were included in the brochure.*" The first works for organizing the exhibition started with Çağatay Karaçizmeli's, one of the artists who participated in the exhibition, sharing the photos of the Feshane building with Cana Dölay and other artists just before the attempt of Istanbul Municipality to restore it. The history and structure of the venue and the fact that it greatly influenced the artists create a driving force for the exhibition. In fact, the artists decide to organize the exhibition traditionally every year in similar idle buildings. In line with this decision, the second exhibition, *Serotonin 2* was held in 1992 in the building named Gazhane. However, after the second exhibition, this initiative did not continue.

The artists, who started to look for sponsorship for the exhibition *Serotonin 1*, organized it after having found the required support. Different from a traditional exhibition venue, Feshane led artists to adopt an attitude other than traditional art production and exhibition methods. The exhibition did not take place around a specific topic or conceptual framework. There is no explanatory text in the exhibition brochure, but the explanation of the name chosen for the exhibition was given on the inner cover, which suggests that the exhibition has an implicit reference under this name.

During our interview on the exhibition, the artist Komet stated that the exhibition was not organized around a conceptual subject, but that works in which each artist reflected his/her own political stance and his critiques of the political and cultural agenda were included in the exhibition.⁵⁸ The exhibition is almost as big as a live event. The exhibition was transformed into an installation form that continued to be installed throughout the process (12 days) through the installation, video-installation and performance works of the artists. Having watched the video recordings of the exhibition shot during the opening and performance and at different times, I can say that there were a lot of viewers and it was a very popular exhibition. Komet's performance in which he read a Turkish dictionary in a cage, an arrangement in which he referred to Danil Buren, and his work in which he wrote Mehmet Akif Ersoy's poem, "The Painter is Right" in large fonts on a red background were included in the exhibition. Gürsel Yontan made an arrangement in which he created soil dunes and named each dune with an emotional state such as love, sadness, joy and jealousy. At the same time, during the performance, he also experimented thinking and reflecting about death and life by burying himself in one of these dunes up to his throat. The works of other participating artists were also performative. For this reason, the exhibition was visited between 17:00 and 21:00 during the period of performances for 12 days.

⁵⁸ On 17 and 21 November 2019, an oral interview with the artist Komet on the *Serotonin* exhibition was held.

4.2. The İstanbul Exhibition

Exhibition Details

Exhibition Title: *İstanbul Sergisi*

Organizer (institution / museum / gallery): -

Artist-Curator(s): Artists' self-curated show

Dates: 1 – 21 October, 1992

Location: Taksim Sanat Galerisi, İstanbul

Artists: Emre Zeytinoğlu, Haluk Gedik, Lerzan Özer, Murat Sinkil, Müşerref Zeytinoğlu, Şeyma Reisoğlu Nalça

Publication (catalogue / book and other printed matters): Exhibition book with text by Ali Akay

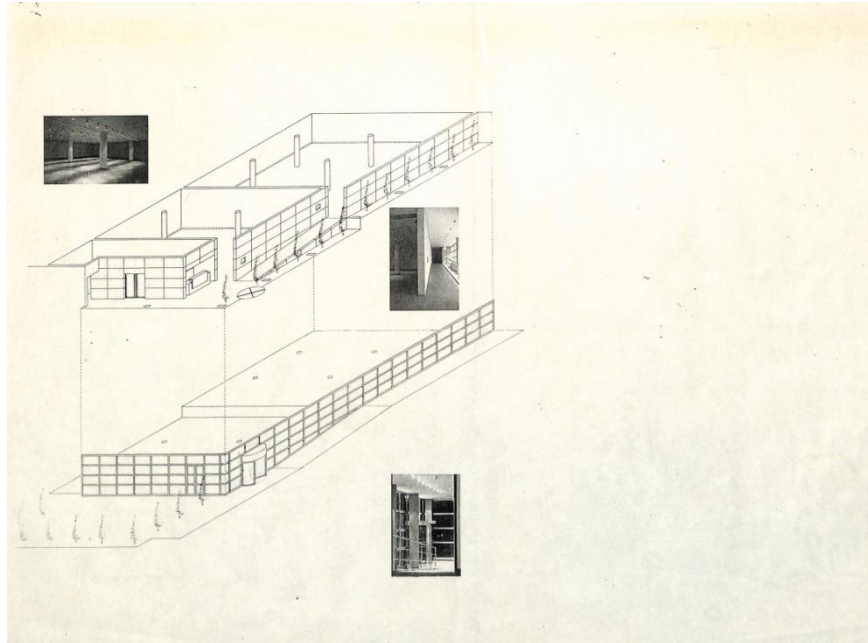


Figure 24 Exhibition space of *İstanbul Exhibition*, gallery plan of Taksim Sanat Galerisi 1992

Content of the *İstanbul Sergisi* Exhibition

Held at Taksim Art Gallery between 1-21 October 1992, the Istanbul Exhibition was organized by participating artists Emre Zeytinoglu, Haluk Gedik, Lerzan Ozer, Murat Sinkil, Müşerref Zeytinoglu, and Şeyma Reisoğlu Nalça. The aim of the exhibition was to start a discussion on the current status of Istanbul within the context of the changes in the social structure of the city and the developing economic relations.



Figure 25 Exhibition book of *İstanbul Sergisi*, from archive of SALT Research

Although the exhibition was not organized with a curatorial claim, it coincided with the period in which the first curated exhibitions were held. Ali Akay was interested in the *Istanbul Exhibition*' since he found the exhibition similar to the Megalopol concept he created and the subject of the Istanbul Biennial. So much so that, he participated in the meetings of the artists who made up the exhibition and wrote a text for the book of the exhibition helped it to be published as a book. Ali Akay's close interest in the exhibition led to the misconception that the exhibition was

organized by Ali Akay. The information that Osman Erden included in his doctoral dissertation regarding "*Istanbul Exhibition, which was not curated by Ali Akay but organized by himself, in his own words, in 1992* (Erden, 2011, s. 69) " was not confirmed by Emre Zeytinoğlu with whom I corresponded about the exhibition. Emre Zeytinoğlu explained the formation of the exhibition as follows:

"...there was no curator, no organizer in that exhibition ... we did it (the artists in the exhibition) by coming together and again we artists determined the concept through lengthy discussions. Ali Akay did not take part in these processes ... and I participated as an artist, not as a curator. Only after all the discussions were completed, concept texts were formed and even the works were determined, Ali Akay began to participate in the group's discussions. Finally, we offered Ali to put together the catalog text, and he wrote it."

4.3. Atsanat / Exhibition (Atsanat / Sergi)

Exhibition Details

Exhibition Title: *Atsanat / Sergi*

Organizer (institution / museum / gallery): BM Çağdaş Sanat Merkezi

Artist-Curator(s): Komet (artist-curator) and Beral Madra (curator)

Dates: November 25 – 28, 1993

Location: BM Contemporary Art Center, Akkavak Sok. 1#1 Nişantaşı, İstanbul

Artists: Arzu Başaran, Bala Arıduru, Berna Erkin, Birol Kutadgu, Can Maden, Elvan Alpay, Emre Zeytinoğlu, Erkan Özdilek, Figen Altıntaşbaş, Gonca Sezer, Gülsün Karamustafa, Hale Tenger, Hülya Botasun, Hüseyin Özinal, İnci Eviner, Mevlut

Akyıldız, Murat Morova, Müşerref Zeytinoğlu, Nazan Azeri, Su Yücel, Teoman Madra, Zafer Mintaş

Publication (catalogue / book and other printed matters): -



Figure 26 Exhibition views of *Atsanat / Exhibition*, 1993, courtesy of BM Contemporary Art Center

Content of the *Atsanat / Sergi* Exhibition

The exhibition titled *Atsanat / Exhibition* was organized with the idea and leadership of the artist Komet as a reactionary stance against Aksanat's opening exhibition and with the support of Beral Madra as the co-curator. Although it was only a three-day exhibition, it had wide repercussions.

In its opening exhibition, Aksanat displayed the paintings of Turkey's 7th President Kenan Evren as an amateur painter which reflected his love of horses. Both due to a reaction against the September 12, 1980 coup and the presentation of Kenan Evren's paintings while many painters of the period were excluded, the exhibition drew the reaction of many artists and art professionals. During my interview with Artist-Curator Komet in his workshop in October 2019, Komet expressed that he wanted to organize an exhibition consisting of his own paintings of horses in order to show his reaction. However, since he did not have enough time to create an exhibition because he had to return to Paris, he invited his friends to the exhibition which he wanted to name *Atsanat* and thus the exhibition started to take shape. After Komet shared his idea with Beral Madra, they invited artists and completed the curatorial process together.

4.4. Ret Exhibition

Exhibition Details

Exhibition Title: *Ret*

Organizer (institution / museum / gallery):

Curator(s): Artists' self-curated show

Dates: November 1994

Location: Tayfur Sanlıman's Studio, Asmalımescit

Artists: İnel İnal, Alper Ulaş, Fatma Binnaz Akman, Türkan Karaali, Gaye Yazıcıtuñ

Publication (catalogue / book and other printed matters): afiş – broşür



Figure 27 Binnaz Akman's installation, *Ret Exhibition*, 1994 (from *Hürriyet Gösteri*, January, 1995)

Content of the *Ret* Exhibition

The story behind the organization of the exhibition is also interesting. While the two of the participating artists were sitting at a café and discussing the exhibition they wanted to organize, Tayfun Sanlıman sitting at the adjacent table overhears the conversation. Then, Tayfun Sanlıman, who is a photography artist, tells them that he owns a flat newly restored to be used as a workshop for himself and that he can offer this venue for their exhibition. Thus, the artists solved the problem of finding the venue and without wasting time set out to work for the organization of the exhibition.



Figure 28 İnel İnal's (left) and Alper Ulaş's (right) installations in *Ret Exhibition*, 1994 (from *Hürriyet Gösteri*, January 1995)

İnel İnal, who shared this information, said that the venue was a perfect fit for an exhibition and that as a result they had the opportunity to realize the installations they had in their minds and display them with ease. The artist also stated that venues for exhibitions were very limited in number in that period and that chances of organizing independent and alternative exhibitions were very low. Ali Akay wrote an article in

1995 January issue of *Hürriyet Gösteri* journal on the exhibition titled “What The RET Exhibition Reflects.” What carries the exhibition to the present day and makes us aware of the exhibition is again Ali Akay’s article published in the book *User’s Manual 2.0: Contemporary Art in Turkey* with the title “Art Environment in the 1990s and Youth Activity Exhibitions”. Unfortunately, however, the name of the exhibition was misspelled as RED. Akay stated that this exhibition was one of the important exhibitions of the period and emphasized that it must be considered as “an exhibition that handles art with its political dimensions and questions the system itself” (Akay, 2015). In his article published in *Hürriyet Gösteri* journal, he wrote, “the attitude of the artists and the political-aesthetic aspect of the works were satisfactory” (Akay, 1995, s. 58-60).

4.5. Tracks (İzler)

Exhibition Title: *Tracks (İzler)*

Organizer (institution / museum / gallery): Turkish Woman Union, İstanbul

Artist-Curator: Tomur Atagök

Dates: March 8 – 24, 1995 (İstanbul);

Location(s): Yıldız Technical University, İstanbul

Artists: Tomur Atagök, Canan Beykal, Şükriye Dikmen, Candeğer Furtun, Gülsün Karamustafa, Nur Koçak, Füsün Onur, Hale Tenger, Işık Tüzüner, Hale Arpacıoğlu
(Hale Arpacıoğlu İstanbul sergisinde var ancak İzmir ve Adana'da yok)

Publication (catalogue / book and other printed matters): Catalogue.

TOMUR ATAGÖK'TEN	HALE ASAF
CANAN BEYKAL'DAN	MİHRİ (MÜŞFİK) HANIM
ŞÜKRİYE DİKMEN'DEN	ALİYE BERGER
CANDEĞER FURTUN'DAN	FÜREYA KORAL
GÜLSÜN KARAMUSTAFA'DAN	OSMANLI NİSA SOYAĞACI
NUR KOÇAK'TAN	CAHİDE SONKU
FÜSÜN ONUR'DAN	ZÜBEYDE HANIM
HALE TENGER'DEN	NEDİME SÂRÂ
İŞİK TÜZÜNER'DEN	HALİDE EDİP ADIVAR

Figure 29 From exhibition catalogue, 1995

Content of the *Tracks (İzler)* Exhibition

The *Tracks* Exhibition was curated by the artist Tomur Atagök in 1995. In addition to being an artist, Tomur Atagök is one of the leading figures who played an important role in the development process of museum field, curatorship and exhibition organization. She took the lead in the organization of exhibitions such as A Cross Section of Pioneering Turkish Art and Contemporary Artists Exhibition. Tomur Atagök, who has been the curator, co-curator and member of organization board of many exhibitions, worked as the deputy director of Art and Sculpture Museum and academically contributed to the fields of museums and curatorial works by establishing Museology Master's program at Yıldız Technical University.

The artist's *Tracks* exhibition appears as a production of the artist's feminist aspect. As the artist-curator Tomur Atagök stated in the exhibition text using the expression, "seeing the exhibition beyond an artistic action", these words are a proof that the primary reason for the artist to organize this exhibition was her considering the exhibition as a form of action like an artist's instinct. The *İzler* Exhibition was organized as the manifestation of the thoughts triggered by the artist's feminist aspect in the form of action, but neither the artist-curator Tomur Atagök nor any other artist or art author defined the exhibition as feminist. Nevertheless, in a recent article authored by Ahu Antmen titled "First Female Exhibitions in the 1990s", the *İzler* Exhibition was described as the first feminist exhibition in Turkey (Antmen, 2017, s. 93).

Ten female artists participated in the exhibition as a result of the call made to women who studied on identity, women and culture. Each artist produced a new work attributed to a female artist, author and a person of culture who has a significant place

in the history of Turkey for the exhibition. This was indicated by the phrase in the exhibition text, “from women to women, signed with respect.” Although Tomur Atagök owns an organized archive and it has been studied on and presented to the public recently by SALT Research, no installation photograph related to the exhibition exists. The exhibition was repeated in the same year in Izmir and Adana.



4.6. GAR Exhibition

Exhibition Title: *Gar Sergisi*

Organizer: Sanart (Association of Aesthetics and Visual Culture)

Artist-Curators: Selim Bırsel, Vahap Avşar, Claude Leon ve Füsun Okutan

Dates: May 3 – 4, 1995 / **Planned Dates:** 3 - 15, 1995

Location: Ankara TCDD Gar and Gallery of Gar

Artists: Vahap Avşar, Ayşe Selen, Şahsuvar Aktaş, Cengiz Çekil, Paul DonkerDuyvis, Ayşe Erkmen, Hasan Bülent Kahraman, Claude Leon, Aydan Murtezaoğlu, Ladan Shohrahk Naderi, Füsun Onur, Joseph Semah, Paolo Vitali

Publication: -



Figure 30 Exhibition invitation of *GAR*, 1995 (from SALT Araştırma: Yusuf Taktak Archive)

Content of the GAR Exhibition

The GAR Exhibition was organized with the efforts of, or more accurately, with the curatorship of the artists Selim Birsel, Vahap Avşar, Claude Leon and Füsün Okutan at Ankara Railway Station by moving away from the traditional exhibition venues with an aim to bring art to a larger audience. Most of the artists participating in the exhibition displayed works in the form of installations. However, long before the planned date of closing, the exhibition was confiscated and closed on the second day of its opening day on the grounds that it disrupted the moral of the society, and therefore, it is known in the Turkish History of Exhibitions as the exhibition that was censored and forbidden. On behalf of the organizers of the exhibition, Selim Birsel explains all the artist the situation in detail and the exhibition gets closed. However, since the works included in the exhibition reflected the artistic production and social problems of an era with their conceptual issues and formal approaches, it is frequently featured in retrospective research and exhibitions. For example, it was revisited within the scope of a research exhibition held at SALT and e-publication focusing on the history of exhibitions. In the e-book published within the scope of the exhibition *It Was a Time of Conversation* in which the exhibition was revisited, the artist and one of the curators of the exhibition, Selim Birsel, explained the curatorial approach of the exhibition and the exhibition itself with the following words:

“When I look back at GAR again today, in retrospect, this exhibition had a successful, robust curatorial structure and works that could establish a dialogue among themselves and that had high-quality signs and data that I would describe as true from a plastic point of view. We were not curators then, and we are not now. We were artists, we are artists; and only artists can overcome impossible jobs with the invisible bond between them and say the

most effective words through their works. GAR was an exhibition that should exist (Birsel, 2013, s. 68)



4.7. Efes -The Imagination of History (Efes – Tarihin Hayali)

Exhibition Title: *Efes- The Imagination of History (Efes – Tarihin Hayali)*

Organizer: Fabrikanten Grubu ve Avusturya Konsolosluğu Kültür Ofisi

Artist-Curators: İpek Duben, Gülsün Karamustafa

Dates: September 22 – October 10, 1995

Location: Efes Antik Kenti Kazı Alanı

Artists: Hüseyin Alptekin & Michael Morris, Gülsün Karamustafa, Hale Tenger, Selda Asal, Hakan Onur, İpek Duben, Franz Xaver, Gustav Deutsch, Margarete Jahrmann & Max Moswitzer, Gerald Harringer & Wolfgang Preisinger

Publication: Sergi broşürü⁵⁹



Figure 31 Gülsün Karamustafa and project team, Efes, 1995 (from SALT Archive)

⁵⁹ Avusturya Konsolosluğu Kültür Ofisi'nin sanatçı ve serginin küratörlerinden Gülsün Karamustafa'ya gönderdiği mektupta "Fabrikanten grubu ile serginin bir dökümantasyon olarak kataloğunun hazırlanması ve 1996 yılının ilk yarısında basılması konusunda görüş birliğine vardık" yazar ancak böyle bir yayın gerçekleşmemiştir.

Content of the *Efes -The Imagination of History* Exhibition

Cultural offices of foreign countries have been active in the field of art and exhibitions in Turkey since the 1950s. *Efes – The Imagination of History* exhibition was organized within this context by the initiative and support of The Cultural Office of Austria. The Cultural Office of Austria invited İpek Duben and Gülsün Karamustafa to organize the exhibition. In addition to being organized by artists, *Efes – The Imagination of History* exhibition holds an important place in the history of exhibitions as it was one of the rare curatorial works organized in the public sphere. The exhibition aimed to emphasize the time-free and geography-free aspect of art by including Turkish, Austrian and American artists and to approach the questions asked and the concepts questioned in all geographical regions by associating them with the concept of history. Organized in open space, the exhibition consisted of interactive and performative works, and a great many people interacted with the works displayed in the historical site.



Figure 32 Exhibition view from *Efes-The Imagination of History*, Efes, 1995

4.8. Beyoğlu 14 – 18

Exhibition Title: *Beyoğlu 14 - 18*

Organizer: Akbank Sanat

Artist-Curator: Ömer Uluç

Dates: March 19 – April 22, 2004

Location: Akbank Sanat, Beyoğlu, İstanbul

Artists: Ali Osman Gencer, Aslı Girgin, Aykut Ayaztuna, Bahadır Baruter, Banu Demirci, Ekin Saçlıoğlu, Elfe Uluç, Erim Bikkul, Ertuğ Sönmez, Evrim Kavcar Temir, Eyüp Öz, Gülay Semercioğlu, Halil Nadir Ede, İnci Furni, İrfan Önürmen, Emo Tembelçizer, Ömer Serkan, Bakır, Ramize Erer, Simla Zeynep Zorlutuna

Publication: Catalogue

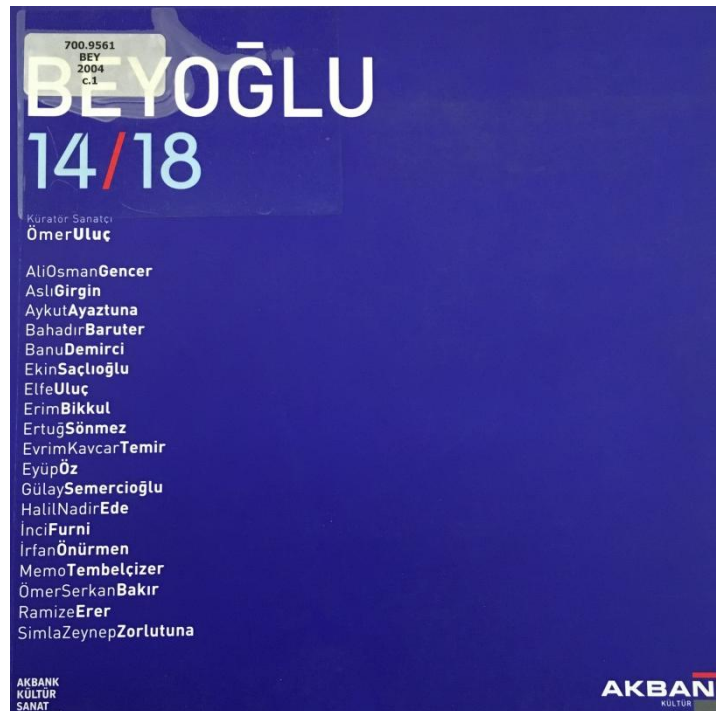


Figure 33 Exhibition catalogue of *Beyoğlu 14/18*

Content of the *Beyođlu 14 - 18* Exhibition

Beyođlu 14 -18, which is the first and only exhibition curated by the artist Ömer Uluç, was organized under an institutional structure, which is Akbank Art. The reason why the exhibition was named *Beyođlu* was explained by the artist-curator Ömer Uluç as “*Beyođlu* Neighborhood is the place where important, effective and interesting art originate from.” By adding the door number of the exhibition venue, the exhibition was titled as *Beyođlu 14 -18* by Ömer Uluç. The exhibition gave Ömer Uluç the opportunity to meet the contemporary art and artists of the period, while it was an interesting and tiring experience for him at the same time (Uluç, 2004, s. 10) In an effort to display a variety of artistic productions such as paintings, sculptures, photographs, cartoons, and videos, works of art on *Beyođlu* were displayed in the exhibition.

4.9. Koyun Platformu ve K rat ryel Őizofreni

Exhibition Details

Exhibition Title: The Sheep Platform and Curatorial Schizophrenia (*Koyun Platformu ve K rat ryel Őizofreni*)

Organizer: AKM

Artist-Curator: Bedri Baykam

Dates: December 24, 2003 – January 19, 2004

Location: The Atat rk Cultural Center (AKM), İstanbul

Artists: Bedri Baykam, B lent Bakan, Denizhan  zer, Murat  elik, Volkan Aslan

Publication (catalogue / book and other printed matters): Book: *Bedri Baykam İftiharla Sunar – Koyun Platformu – K rat ryel Őizofreni Ameliyat Masasında*

Content of the *The Sheep Platform and Curatorial Schizophrenia* Exhibition

It was organized by the artist Bedri Baykam as a visual form of his critical thoughts on curators and curatorship. A criticized role of the curator was brought to the agenda with the exhibition, and controversies and polemics with the leading curators of the period were experienced. Rather than the exhibition itself and the works on display, the performance realized at the opening of the exhibition attracted more attention and found place in the press. As the opening performance of the exhibition, 41 sheep were brought to the Atat rk Culture Center, where the exhibition was held. Baykam criticized curators by stating that they were shepherds who treated artists as sheep. The exhibition was organized as a tool to criticize the curators who direct artists and interfere with their form of expression.

4.10. Sobe!

Exhibition Detsils

Exhibition Title: *Sobe!*

Organizer: -

Artist-Curator: Leyla Gediz

Dates: September 4 – 30, 2007

Location: Bilsar Building

Artists: Melis Ağazat, Semiha Balcı, Banu Birecikligil, Gökçen Cabadan, Çınar Eslek, Karolin Fişekçi, İnci Furni, Minna Henriksson, Gözde İlkin, Burçak Kaygun, Gülşah Kılıç, KOP-ART, Gül Kozacıoğlu, Tamsin Morse, Ceren Oykut, Gökçe Suvari, Güneş Terkol, Elif Uras, Nalân Yırtmaç, Pınar Yolaçan

Publication (katalog/kitap): -



Figure 34 Exhibition view from *Sobe!*, 2007, by courtesy of Leyla Gediz

Content of the *SOBE!* Exhibition

Sobe! exhibition, curated by the artist Leyla Gediz as her second exhibition, was organized in 2007 with the support of Galerist and Bilsart. Galerist sponsored the production expenses of the exhibition, while Bilsart supported the exhibition by providing the venue. Leyla Gediz held her first curatorial work with the exhibition named Air Pocket in 2007 at Galerist where she was represented as an artist with the support and guidance of Murat Pilevneli, the founder and director of the gallery at the time. She has curated and co-curated numerous exhibitions since 2007. For the artist, exhibitions are a practical matter in the focus of exhibition work, but they are a holistic action that reinforces the expression of the artist and art through its intellectual processes. The artist-curator Leyla Gediz does not consider exhibitions as a temporary platform that the audience experiences within the announced dates. Leyla Gediz shared her ideas about exhibition and exhibitions with me as follows:

“The word “art” encompasses all processes of creation, sharing and interaction, from the first signs of the work exhibited being conceived in the mind to fluctuations that are formed as it is exhibited. The exhibition is in the midst of these processes.” (...) “Students of art history cannot comprehend contemporary art production independently of the exhibitions. Group exhibitions provide a literature of their own (social-political-aesthetic), while solo exhibitions are the paths of the individual journeys of the artists. The exhibition is the moment of meeting. Without meeting, no interaction is possible, and no art history can be written.”

The primary reason why Leyla Gediz has become a curator is her desire to make visible the artists and works she likes and is influenced by. In her first exhibition, she

decides not to take part as an artist in the exhibitions she is the curator of and does not, but in the exhibitions she organizes, from time to time, she forms the theme of the exhibition with the desire to see and show how the subjects she deals with in her own paintings are handled by other artists. Air Pocket exhibition is named after her painting in which the artist has focused on the subject of emptiness, and this exhibition is based on how different artists she loves and follows connect with the issue of emptiness. Sobe! is an exhibition organized by Leyla Gediz with the aim of "getting women out of where they are hiding." The exhibition was held with the participation of female artists except Gökçen Cabadan. The focus of the Sobe! exhibition is bringing together urban young women who have found a way to live together with tyrants and bullying, and presenting an artistic criticism of gender discrimination and the place of women in society from the women's point of view through the exhibition. The artist-curator wanted to demonstrate a pluralistic approach by presenting different forms of production from different geographies. Detailed preliminary studies were carried out, from the layout-design of the exhibition to the opening evening party. Leyla Gediz referred to these preliminary steps stating, "it was an excellent preparatory process." In the exhibition, the artist Erol Eskici helped Leyla Gediz and worked as the assistant curator.



Figure 35 Exhibition view from *Sobe!*, 2007, by courtesy of Leyla Gediz

4.11. 24 Hours Petrol (24 Saat Petrol)

Exhibition Details

Exhibition Title: *24 Hours Petrol (24 Saat Petrol)*

Organizer (kurum/galeri): Batman Association for Culture and Art

Artist-Curator: Fikret Atay

Dates: October 1 – 5, 2009

Location: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture, Batman

Artists: Abdullah Tunç, Barış Eviz, Canan Budak, Çiğdem baran, Endam Acar, Fatih Tan, Fatma Akıncı, Gülbin Ekinci, Hakan Irmak, Fırat Bingöl, Hamit Can, Helin Anter, M.Ali Boran, Mehmet Çeper, Mehmet Ögüt, Nail Yardım, Necmettin Tarkan, Nurullah Görhan, Pınar Süer, Sabri Özdemir, Suat Ögüt, Ugur Orhan, Yeliz Şenay, Zeynep Erpolat

Publication (katalog/kitap): -

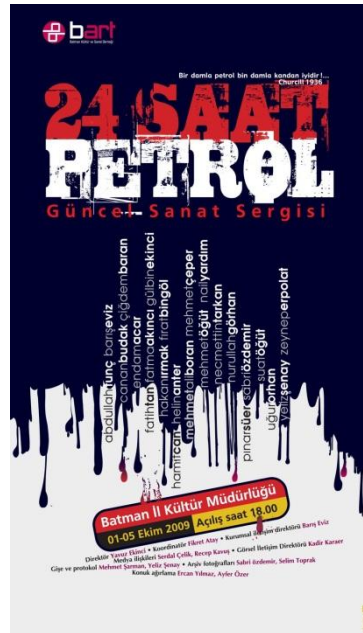


Figure 36 Poster of *24Hours Petrol* exhibition, 2010, (from Fikret Atay)

Content of the 24 Saat Petrol Exhibition

24 Hours Oil Exhibition is Fikret Atay's first and only curatorial project in Turkey.

Fikret Atay works on curatorial projects and exhibitions as well as his art practice in Norway, where he lives. Fikret Atay stated that although he used the title of curator in his curatorial projects, he never considered himself as a curator and that he saw the exhibitions he organized as works of art. Producing an exhibition is an artistic expression for Atay today. *24 Hours Petrol* exhibition was held in Batman far from Istanbul, which was the center of exhibitions. Fikret Atay's artistic practice, as in this exhibition, produces discourses about the geography in which he was born and to which he felt a sense of belonging. While he was determining the concept and name of the exhibition, the artist-curator was inspired by Thomas Hirschhorn's exhibition titled *24H Foucault*. Atay invited 24 artists from Batman and its vicinity or those who, in some way, addressed this region in their art works. He asked the artists he invited to deal with and interpret the relationship between oil and life and the city. They searched for sponsorship and received a small amount of support for the exhibition to be held in Batman. Batman Cultural Center supported the exhibition as the venue sponsor. The support of local administrations to contemporary art exhibitions is almost nonexistent in our country. However, this exhibition was able to get support from the governor and the municipality. The governorship provided the transportation and accommodation costs for the artists, and the municipality supported the exhibition by organizing a dinner on the opening night.

4.12. When Ideas Become Crime (Fikirler Suça Dönüşünce)

Exhibition Details

Exhibition Title: *When Ideas Become Crime / Fikirler Suça Dönüşünce*

Organizer: -

Artist-Curator: Halil Altındere

Sergi Koordinatörü: İz Öztat

Dates: September 1 – October 10, 2010

Location: Tütün Deposu / DEPO

Artists: Gülçin Aksoy, Nevin Aladağ, Hüseyin Alptekin, Anti-pop, Burak Arıkan, Caner Arslan, Volkan Aslan, Atilkunst, Vahap Avşar, Tufan Baltalar, Ramazan Bayrakoğlu, Bashir Barlakov, Canan, Aslı Çavuşoğlu Burak Delier, Mehmet Dere, Ersan Deveci, Nazım Hikmet Richard Dikbaş, Elçin Ekinci, Gökçe Erhan, İnci Furni, Murat Gök, Deniz Gül, Özlem Günyol & Mustafa Kunt, Nilbar Güreş, Altan Gürman, Hakan Gürsoytrak, Hazavuzu, iç-mihrak, Gözde İlkin, Berat Işık, Gülsün Karamustafa, Ali Kazma, Levent Kunt, Can Kurucu, Ali Mihrabi, Ahmet Öğüt, Suat Öğüt, Serkan Özkaya, Şener Özmen, İz Öztat, Nejat Satı, Erinç Seymen, Cengiz Tekin, İrem Tok, Nasan Tur, Nalan Yırtmaç

Publication (catalogue / book and other printed matters): Exhibition catalogue as a *Birikim* journal.



Figure 37 Exhibition view of *When Ideas Become Crime*, 2010, (photo from DEPO)

Content of the *When Ideas Become Crime* Exhibition

Halil Altındere was a prominent figure in the art environment between 2000 and 2010 with his exhibition practices in addition to his artistic practice. He positioned himself as an artist-curator and organized exhibitions that stood out among other exhibitions in Turkey between those dates. These exhibitions include: *I Am Too Sad to Kill You!* (2005) Project 4L; *Free Kick* (2005) Hospitality Zone of 9th Istanbul Biennial, Antrepo 5; *Be Realist, Demand the Impossible* (2007) Karşı Sanat. Halil Altındere expressed his own curatorial stance, his approach and the position of the curator as an artist in Turkey as follows:

“My understanding of curatorship differs slightly, perhaps due to the influence of being an artist myself. I am considered one of the earliest examples of the artist-curator term in Turkey. Not a single artist has ever had a serious curatorial effort in this sense in our art environment. Those that existed were collective exhibitions organized by artists without a curator. (...) However,

there has been no one who took all the responsibility directly and maintained it with its publication, exhibition and continuity. (...) I start to organize an exhibition in reverse order, that is, I do not start with the concept and select a work, but develop a concept based on the works I have chosen. (Altındere, 2010)

In the exhibitions curated by the artist Halil Altındere, political stance and ideas come to the forefront among the concepts that develop based on the selected works, as he stated above. Inspired by the exhibition *When Ideas Become Form* organized by Harald Szzemann in 1969 and as reference to it, the name of the exhibition was determined as *When Ideas Become Crime*. The artist-curator Altındere aimed to bring together contemporary artists from different generations, attitudes and languages in a structure under the name of the exhibition determined as a slogan.. The exhibition, which was announced in the press release with the words " the most comprehensive contemporary art exhibition of the year, investigating the limits of freedom", is an independent curatorial project. However, the exhibition was supported by the art institution DEPO as the venue sponsor and collectors Canan Pak, Tansa Mermerci, Leyla & Arif Suyabatmaz.



Figure 38 Exhibition invitation of *When Ideas Become Crime*, 2010 (from DEPO)

4.13. Unfair Provocation (Haksız Tahrik)

Exhibition Details

Exhibition Title: *Unfair Provocation (Haksız Tahrik)*

Artist-Curator: CANAN

Dates: March 8 – 31, 2009

Location: Hafriyat, Karaköy, İstanbul

Artists: Atıl Kunst (grup), Aylin Kuryel, Çağla Cömert, Canan Şenol, Didem Yazıcı, Dilek Winchester, Evrim Kavcar, Filmmor (grup), Fulya Çetin, Gülçin Aksoy, Gülizar Önen, Güneş Terkol, Hale Tenger, İnci Furni, Nalan Yırtmaç, Neriman Polat, Nil Yalter, Nilbar Güreş, Oda Projesi (grup), Özlem Gök, Sezgi Abalı, Şükran Moral, Yasemin Özcan Kaya, Amargi sanat atölyesi (grup)

Publication: A publication with same name as the exhibition and consisting of interviews with feminist women under the editorship of Ayşegül Sönmez was published by Amargi Women's Solidarity Cooperative.



Figure 39 Exhibition view of *Unfair Provocation*, 2009, Hafriyat (Photo by Sezgi Abalı)

Content of the *Unfair Provocation* Exhibition

The *Unfair Provocation* exhibition, which came out in a period when the artist CANAN continued her artistic practice focusing on feminist subjects, dealt with the relevant article of the Turkish Penal Code, which facilitated harm to women in society. With this project, which she called action-exhibition, CANAN brought together not only contemporary artists but also many theorists, academics and activists working on feminist issues. According to the information provided by CANAN, the organization stage of the exhibition took place quite professionally with the fund provided by Amargi, a feminist association. Thanks to this funding, it was possible to pay royalty to the artists as an appreciation of their production support and participation, which is not a common practice in Turkey. Although there have been exhibitions of women in the History of Exhibitions in Turkey, the first exhibition which discussed openly the concept of feminism is the *Unfair Provocation* exhibition. The exhibition gained a performative dimension by integrating with its side events that dealt with women's issues and the status of women in Turkey. With a book having the same name as the exhibition, texts on important artists, writers, and thinkers for feminist theory were compiled under the editorship of Ayşegül Sönmez. Though the *Unfair Provocation* exhibition is CANAN's first and only curatorial project, it stands out in the history of exhibitions.

4.14. PARK: bir ihtimal

Exhibition Details

Exhibition Title: *PARK: bir ihtimal*

Organizer: Düzenleyen yok, Garanti Bankası'nın desteğiyle

Artist-Curator: Can Altay

Dates: May 2010 – January 2011

Location: Nişantaşı Cumhuriyet Parkı, Şişli, İstanbul

Artists: Davetli sanatçılar: Nil Norman, Ceren Oykut, Sinek Sekiz

Project Team: Özgür Atlagan, Onur Ceritoğlu, Elif Kılıç, Nihan Somay, Ateş Uçul

Graphic Design: Future Anecdotes

Publication: It has a catalog, and an e-book reinterpreting the exhibition was also published in 2017 by SALT.



Figure 40 A view from part of *Park: bir ihtimal* exhibition, 2011 (Photo by Laleper Aytek)

Content of the *PARK: Bir İhtimal* Exhibition

PARK: bir ihtimal is an outdoor exhibition curated by the artist Can Altay. It is the only exhibition that Can Altay organized as a curator. However, Altay performs some professional works on exhibition organization under the structure named Fai⁶⁰ (Future Anecdotes). The design of the collection exhibitions named *The Way Beyond Art* (Programme: Van Abbe Museum, 2019) which will be open to visitors between 2017-2021 at Van Abbe Museum, one of the important contemporary arts museums in Netherlands, was realized by Can Altay & Aslı Altay.

PARK: bir ihtimal was organized at Nişantaşı Cumhuriyet Park as a public space exhibition which was based on a critical opposition to the narrowing of public space perception and spaces. Altay, who shaped his artistic practice around the thoughts considering 'space' from a physical perspective as well as with its social, economic, and cultural aspects, designed the park as an organism living with the public. With its exhibition design, the park has become a platform to spend time and a social meeting spot.



Figure 41 A view from *Park: bir ihtimal* exhibition, 2011 (photo from sinekseviz)

⁶⁰ Future Anecdotes is a graphic and spatial design studio founded and managed by Can Altay and Aslı Altay working closely with artists, curators, architects and cultural institutions. (https://www.futureanecdotesistanbul.com/Future_Anecdotes_Istanbul/fai.html)

4.15. %100 Peace (%100 Barış / %100 Aştiyê)

Exhibition Title: %100 Peace (%100 Barış / %100 Aştiyê)

Organizer: Adasanat

Artist-Curator: Emre Zeytinoğlu

Dates: February 2 – 14, 2011

Location: Adasanat, İstanbul

Artists: Ani Setyan, Anti-pop, Artin Demirci, Aşkın Adan, Barış Seyitvan, Buket Güreli, Bülent Fidan, Cemil Cahit Yavuz, Emre Zeytinoğlu, Ekrem Sami Kızıltan, Ender Özkahraman, Esat Tekand, Eyüp Öz, Fulya Çetin, Gamze Olgun, Gülizar Önen, Hakan Gürel, Hakan Gürsoytrak, İrfan Önürmen, Kadir Çıtak, Kemal Seyhan, Nalan Yırtmaç, Mehmet Çeper, Mehtap Yücel, Memet Güreli, Menekşe Samancı, Metin Üstündağ, Nazım Hikmet Richard Dikbaş, Orhan Taylan, Seçkin Aydın, Selda Asal, Semih Poroy, Seyhan Atamer, Sinan Şanlıer, Süreyya Acar, Şefik Özcan, Şerif Kino, Taner Güven, Temür Koran, Turgut Yüksel, Ümit İnatçı, Veysi Altay, Yonca Saraçoğlu, Zeycan Alkış,

Publication (catalogue / book and other printed matters):-



Figure 42 Poster of % 100 Peace, 2011, Adasanat

Content of the %100 Peace (%100 Barış / %100 Aştiyê) Exhibition

Emre Zeytinoğlu has had an influential role in the contemporary art environment in Turkey since the 1990s as an artist, curator, academician and critic. The artist has taken part in many important exhibitions in the history of contemporary art as an artist, organizer, or curator. Although he does not share a collective archive of his curated exhibitions on a platform, for example through a website, as a result of a research it can be seen that he has curated numerous exhibitions within the contemporary art scene. Beyond the networks of grouping and marginalizing which we are familiar with in the contemporary art environment, Emre Zeytinoğlu has organized exhibitions in collaboration with galleries and art institutions with different styles. The following thoughts of the artist on the exhibitions include the reason for this:

"If you feel the need to 'say' something and you realize this 'saying' with a work of art, you express them; this becomes an exhibition... Or if you want to say what you want to 'say' in collaboration with others, this also becomes an exhibition. The role of the exhibitions is transmitting what you 'say' to the audience. It is as simple as that..." (Zeytinoğlu, 2019)

Another phenomenon that attracts attention in the exhibitions he organizes is the large number of artists. This shows Zeytinoğlu's aim to convey what he wants to say and his thoughts in a pluralistic integrity. In the exhibition he organized at Adasanat in 2011 named 100% Peace (*100% Aştiyê*), he brought together forty - six artists who wanted peace and who wanted to say something about the ending of the fighting environment created by one of the most important political problems of the country.

In addition to the artist-curators prominent in organizing the exhibitions detailed above, the artists Borga Kantürk and Ferhat Özgür also continue to work on exhibiting practices as curators as well as artistic practices.

Apart from the artists who have organized exhibitions as curators, many artists have tried curatorship in contemporary art environment and organized exhibitions. Some of these exhibitions are:

Drawing Thoughts, artist-curator: Sevim Sancaktar, C.A. M Gallery (2015); *Floating Tactics After A Sunken Island*, artist-curator: Sibel Horada, Daire Sanat, (2017); *A Roon of Our Own*, artist-curators: Arzu Yalçintaş ve Güneş Terkol, Ark Kültür (2017); *Becoming: Cure as Care*, artist-curator: Cemre Yeşil, Daire Sanat (2018); *206 Rooms of Silence: Etudes on Prinkipo Greek Orphanage*, artist-curator: Hera Büyüktaşçıyan, Galata Rum Okulu (2018); *A Roon of Our Own*, artist-curators: Arzu Yalçintaş ve Güneş Terkol, Ark Kültür (2017); *Kurtulunmamış*, artist-curator: Çağrı Saray, Corpus G (2018); *A Day at Hotel*, artist-curator: Erinç Seymen, Gallery Ziberman (2018); *Unearthly Blockade*, artist-curator: Rafet Arslan, Kare Art Gallery (2018) *Olympos Exhibitions 1: Portrait*, artist-curator: Taner Ceylan, Sadık Paşa Konağı (2019)

5. CONCLUSION

In the shortest and most general sense, exhibitions, specifically art exhibitions, are presentations of selected works / works of art to the public as of the 15th century (though the public's access to them was limited between the 15th and 17th century); in other words, they are the beginning point of the public life of art. This basic definition of the exhibitions is accompanied by the actions of selection and presentation at the center of the dominant role they have acquired today. Through the structural and semantic evolution of selection and presentation (the mode of display) in the historical process, exhibitions have evolved from the field of display into mechanisms that produce meanings. This process has always been focused on the change of actors performing the activities (artists, curators, artists-curators, museum directors, exhibition producers) as well.

The exhibitions held as a reaction to the Hall exhibitions that started to be organized in the 17th century under the title of *Paris Hall*, in which the works chosen by a committee formed by the academy were presented together with the exhibition method known as "hall aesthetics", were the indicators of the first change. Along with a new selection method (in which the unselected ones were selected) in the exhibition that Gustave Courbet organized for his rejected works in 1855 and the exhibition named the Rejected Hall that was organized by the artists whose works were not accepted in 1863, a distant exhibition method that aimed works of art to be perceived on their own was applied.

After the first public exhibition held in Louvre in 1793, the didactic museum exhibitions focusing on the audience, together with the transformation of the

exhibition venue to a white cube, include significant change processes for the structure of the exhibitions. Throughout the 19th century, exhibitions were presented as the projection, image structure and the most important indicator of modernism in art.

The most important changes regarding the selection and presentation of exhibitions took place after the 1920s. Alexander Dorner, El Lissitzky, Alfred Barr, Frederick Kiesler, and Marcel Duchamp were among the leading actors of these exhibitions where the selection of the work and the object to be exhibited, the exhibition venue and the exhibition itself were now questioned and new techniques for the exhibition methods were presented. Exhibitions were transformed into installations representing artistic thinking and idea. In the 1960s, changes in artistic practices gave birth to completely different methods, ideas in displaying art and exhibition producers, namely curators. Artwork as conceptual art and installation created a model of free curation as a professional interface for the display of art. Exhibition forms as a work of art that helped exhibition producers such as Seth Sieglaub, Lucy Lippard and Harald Szeeman transform into independent curators were created. Basically, the artistic practices of the artists and their actions focusing on the exhibition of art have created the field of curatorial work. In the words of Hans Ulrich Obrist, who is called the Star Curator, "Curating always follows art; it's not the other way around." (Obrist, 2017, s. 389) Thus, from the late 1960s onwards, the professional exhibition producer became a creative artist who organized exhibitions under the profession of curator. These changes introduced with the 60s increased the interest in the history of the exhibitions.

The reason for this is that, tracing works of art in the footsteps of artistic actions and practices, investigating and writing the history of art was no longer

possible without tracking the exhibitions. The history of art began to be discussed through the history of exhibitions. Today, “history of exhibitions”, which is given as a course in Museum and Exhibition Studies and Curatorial Studies education programs and on which there are many published books and periodicals and conferences are held, is recognized as an academic research field.

Since the beginning of the history of the exhibitions, the artist's interest in exhibitions and practices together with the institutionalization of the profession of curatorship and the existence of numerous artists who have focused on exhibition practices as well as artistic practices have created a model named "artist-curator" (artists as curator).

Today, there is a plethora of artist curators who independently organize exhibitions in various collaborations or for biennials and museums. The research focusing on the exhibitions organized by the artist- curators constitutes an important area in the history of exhibitions and, therefore, in the history of art.

So far dealt with in a global sense, curatorial practices that follow artistic practices and artists' exhibition practices and occupy a significant place in the history of artists' exhibitions present a similar picture in Turkey in a local context.

When the origins of History of Exhibitions in Turkey are traced, few exhibitions such as the painter Oreker's exhibition organized for the palace in 1845 in the final periods of The Ottoman Empire - the first exhibition held according to the sources -and the first public exhibition organized at the Military Academy in 1849 come to the forefront. The artists' presenting and exhibiting their works and paintings was only possible with their own efforts. The artists displayed their works in their own workshops and in various places that might attract the attention of the public. Hoca Ali Rıza exhibited his works at a ferry port, Osman Hamdi Bey and Sarkis Diranyan

displayed their works in the atelier of the renowned photographer of the period, Abdullah Biraderler, and Civanyan and Zonaro put up their exhibitions in Zellich bookstore. (Üstünipek, 2007) In particular, the presentations of foreign artists conducted in their workshops that were concentrated in Pera and Galata regions supported the development of the exhibitions. Zonaro is the most well-known of these artists. Zonaro's home workshop in Beşiktaş, Akaretler No.50 was also an exhibition venue named *Galleria Zonaro*, which was also open to everyone and hosted an exhibition at all times. The painter Pierre Desire Guillemet, who founded the first known painting academy in 1871, organized an exhibition of his students' paintings in 1873, two years after the opening of the school.

The great international exhibitions that the Ottomans participated in after 1850 improved the perspective on the exhibitions. In a private building built in 1863, an exhibition titled *Serg-i Osmani* was organized. In *Serg-i Osmani* exhibition, in addition to industrial and agricultural products, books and treatises and volumes were displayed in a different section named *Sanayi-i Nefise*, along with paintings. (Cezar, 1971) Another reason for the increase in exhibition works during the period was the efforts of the artists who went to Paris for education and returned to homeland. After his education in Paris, Şeker Ahmet Paşa set out to open exhibitions as soon as he returned to his homeland. Seker Ahmet Paşa exhibitions, which have a significant place in the Art History in Turkey and are the most known exhibitions, were organized two times, in 1873 and 1875. Şeker Ahmet Paşa worked as an artist-curator in these exhibitions.

The exhibitions of associations, clubs and societies that were formed by the artists' initiatives to organize exhibitions have a remarkable place in the history of exhibitions. In fact, these exhibitions constituted the totality of all exhibition practices

of the period. Elifba Club Exhibitions, Istanbul Hall Exhibitions and Galatasaray exhibitions are important formations and research areas for the artistic environment of the period, artistic practices and contemporary art history research. The Hall Exhibitions organized by the initiative of Sanayi-i Nefise School teachers were held three times between 1901 and 1903. Apart from the independent halls of the teachers, an article regarding the creation of a painting hall was included in the founding specifications of Sanayi-i Nefise School. Accordingly, only one hall exhibition was organized by Sanayi-i Nefise School in 1915. The person in charge of this exhibition was an artist. The painter Hikmet Bey was appointed as the protector (curator) of this *Hall* exhibition in 1915. (Edhem, 1970) Hikmet Bey was appointed to the curator position with a salary of 1500 kuruş. (Ürekli, 2015) The Galatasaray Exhibitions organized by the Ottoman Society of Painters established by artists are the first exhibitions that turned into a long-term exhibition series as an artist organization. Other than the above-mentioned display of their own works in public places by artists individually, we encounter two exhibitions that could set an example for independent exhibition organization attempt. These two examples, which took place in the first quarter of the 1900s, can be seen as examples of self-curated exhibitions. The first is the exhibition by Hoca Ali Rıza of his paintings in a coffeehouse in Üsküdar. The artist used the coffeehouse as an exhibition venue and renewed the exhibition for a long time by changing the paintings at certain times. Another example is Mihri's ten-day exhibition held in his studio in 1918. The examples in which artists used their ateliers for presenting their works at the same time increased in number in that period, but Mihri turned his atelier into an exhibition venue rather than presenting his works. According to the statements of the visitors, it is seen that they were impressed a lot by the layout of the exhibition and the light was considered an important issue. When it

is evaluated in terms of exhibition methods of the period, it stands out as an important exhibition.

Just before the Republic, with the idea of using exhibitions as a means of demonstrating the power of Turkish people to Europe during the First World War, a workshop was set up where prominent artists of the period such as Avni Lifij (1886 - 1927), İbrahim Çallı (1882 - 1960), Ruhi Arel (1880 - 1931), Namik İsmail (1880 - 1931), and Sami Yetik (1878-1945) would produce paintings for these exhibitions. The paintings produced in this workshop which was named Şişli Workshop due to its location in Şişli were first exhibited in Galatasaraylılar Yurdu in Istanbul and then in Vienna in 1918. Exhibitions were not organized in many European cities as envisaged. Celal Esad Arseven, one of the artists, was the exhibition commissioner (curator) and Namık İsmail was his assistant (assistant curator) at the Vienna Exhibition, which was the first exhibition opened by Turkish painters in Europe. (Öndin, 2003)

The exhibitions that were formed by the artists coming together develop and increase in number with the support of the state in the Republic Period. The Revolution Exhibitions (1933 - 1936), organized as a means of representation of the state, and the exhibitions organized by the State Museum of Painting and Sculpture stand out in this period. The management of the State Museum of Painting and Sculpture and organizing exhibitions were carried out by artists during this period. The first director of the museum, the artist Halil Dikmen, "ensured the establishment of an effective and dynamic environment in the museum as it should be in a modern public art museum." (Köksal A. , Resim ve Heykel Müzesi'nin İlk Yıllarına Dair, 2012) Subsequently, the exhibitions held during the museum directorate of the artist Nurullah Berk took their place among the most important exhibitions of the period.

In the early years of the Republican period, the associations of artists and their exhibitions came to the fore. "The Association of Independent Painters and Sculptors" (1929) is the first of these associations and was established with the mission of opening exhibitions in different provinces. "Group d", founded in 1933, also gathered "in order to display and spread modern art through exhibitions and to set forth an innovative attitude" (Üstünipek, 2007). They organized exhibitions in different venues such as Mimoza Hat Store (1933), Beyoğlu Halkevi (1934), Old Mountaineering Club (1934) and French Theater Hall (1935). In "group D" exhibitions, works such as sketches and designs which were previously not displayed in exhibitions were included.

In the 1960s when different trends in the Turkish artistic environment started to slowly appear, there were initiatives of artists which reflected their quest for individuality, and the support from the state was diminished, collective exhibitions again increased thanks to the efforts of artists. The artistic orientations of the artists, who went abroad for art education in those years after they returned home, form the roots of Contemporary Art in Turkey. Sarkis and Altan Gürman are the most important actors of this period. They have been the pioneers of new developments and changes in the matter of exhibition with their artistic production as well as their individual exhibitions. Post-1960 artistic practices and artists ensured that the issue of exhibition was also taken into consideration and formed the preliminary development of curatorship, which emerged in the late 1980s and more specifically in the 1990s.

In the 1970s, Şükrü Aysan assumed an important role in the spread of conceptual art through exhibitions he organized with "Art Definition Group", which he pioneered and which produced ideas and thoughts about the concept of exhibition besides artistic production. Aysan also played an important role in the organization of *New*

Trends exhibitions held between 1977-1987. *New Trends* exhibitions have an important place in the history of the exhibitions as the most important exhibition activity that made many artists visible who focused on conceptual art and continued their practices by using different tools, equipment and techniques. Another important collective exhibition that started in 1980 and still continues today in a different corporate structure is *Contemporary Artists Exhibition*. In the 1980s, we encounter exhibitions that make the critical ideas and approaches of the artists visible, where the use of objects and different tools and equipment intensified along with traditional methods in their artistic practices and installation attempts are visible. This approach which started with *New Trends* exhibitions continues with *A Cross-section of Pioneering Turkish Art* and *A, B, C, D* exhibitions. The artists themselves take the responsibility of organizing these exhibitions. In that period, artists are still the main actors who question the issue of exhibition besides art production methods. In 1989, with Beral Madra being the organizer and coordinator of the Istanbul Biennial, we see the presence of another actor. The third of the *A, B, C, D* exhibitions was curated by Beral Madra in 1992. In the exhibitions until then, the tendency to exhibit and present one's works rather than curatorial approach was in the foreground.

With the exhibitions organized by Beral Madra, Ali Akay and Vasif Kortun in the 1990s focusing on sociological infrastructure and issues, the existence of the curator was recognized and the profession started to be established. However, the tendency of artists to organize exhibitions continues.

Serotonin 1 and 2 Exhibition, Red Exhibition, Istanbul Exhibition, Atsanat / Exhibition included in the final part of the thesis constitute an important area in the history of exhibitions as exhibitions of artists who mostly have come together under the leadership of an artist for the presentation of works that include a critical thought

and an action of opposition. These exhibitions can be considered as structures that support the establishment process of the curatorship profession. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, we come across many examples of many artists holding exhibitions exactly the way curators today do. Artists have been the most influential and effective actors from the very beginning in the exhibition of art works. I believe that the most important reason for the emergence and development of curatorship is the changing and differentiating artistic production. For this reason, curatorship has to follow artistic production as a method and advance. In Turkey, an educational structure for curatorship, which is not recognized as a profession even by important curators but has been given an occupation code by the state, has not been established yet. Today, anyone who can identify a topic at the simplest level and bring together the work of several artist friends is a curator. This situation has made the exhibitions organized by the "artist", who has had a voice over the art of exhibiting since time immemorial and developed ideas, all the more important. It is quite difficult to encounter a curated exhibition in Turkey which creates discussion-criticism on a specific topic and can have a political stance. Stance against the opening exhibition of Aksanat, which is still remembered and discussed as a subject of controversy, was put forward by *Atsanat* exhibition with Komet's initiative and idea. As co-curator in organizing the exhibition, Beral Madra did not spare her support, but the idea that sparked this exhibition belongs to Komet. The exhibitions organized by Halil Altındere, which were too political to cause him to face various lawsuits, the exhibitions by Tomur Atagök, CANAN, Leyla Gediz dealing with women's problems and supporting women artists, and the exhibitions by Emre Zeytinoğlu based on philosophical and sociological backgrounds have all contributed to the formation of powerful and questioning curatorial approaches.

In addition, the approach that questions what curating is and wants to test this role and the ideas of people who wish to support the visibility of the different artists they love and like have been influential in the organization of exhibitions by artists. Many significant examples in which artists have shown their presence as curators in the History of Exhibitions in Turkey and current curatorial practices have proven themselves and have been established.



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