

decadence

Decadence

Pera Palace, March 2017

Curation

Çisem Asya Albaş, Oğulcan Haşlaman, Alper Turan

Artists

Ozan Atalan, Burak Ayazođlu, Ünal Bostancı, Ayçesu Duran,
Beril Gülcan, Onur Karaođlu, Hakan Kırdar, Muhittinçan,
Öner Taylan Öztürk, Koral Sagular, Sena

IDAART PROJECT.

Decadence

The Transformation of Time

As it was being built in 1892, Pera Palace was an extension to the Orient Express Paris-Istanbul route that had only started 10 years prior. The Western World of the 19th century had fused romanticism with the new possibilities that a growing industry enabled: a wider outreach to the world and new lifestyles to be discovered, thus dawning orientalism. The Orient Express, formed by the Wagons-Lit Company (Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lit,) represents the century well as a joint product of orientalism and romanticism. With an exotic arrival point and the journey itself that has inspired many authors, it promises a fantasy of “travel/story.” Along with that, it assures “comfort,” with food served along live orchestral music in its sleeping cars and its luxurious build with brass, damascened wood and winged chairs, designed by naval architects. The company, hoping to keep up with the advancements in the world, set its Eastern terminal as Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, which had then turned its face towards the West. In the beginning, the route had to be completed through a sea journey between Varna-Constantinople that would take 81 hours and 40 minutes, since there was no railroad towards the West in the Ottoman Empire during that time. Again, as a sign of the times, the Orient Express became more famous for its Western visitors travelling eastbound. It almost seems like the route was one

way only, or at least we’re only aware of the stories of these “visitors.” As an example, after the Hat Reform, thousands of hats and caps were brought to Istanbul on this train.

These carriages were not merely for hosting authors, journalists or hat makers, but sometimes they were also exhibited. The ceasefire agreement that ended WWI was signed between the Allied States and Germany on The Orient Express, on carriage number 2419, near Paris. Later the French, due to its historical significance, exhibited this carriage in a museum.

(During WWII, when Germany invaded France, Hitler wanted to sign the surrender agreement with the French on this historic carriage that Germany signed its surrender in WWI. The Orient Express Carriage 2419 was removed from the museum. On this carriage, this time the French signed to surrender. The carriage was later taken to Germany. In the year 1945, a short time before Germany surrendered, an SS corps destroyed the carriage.)

The Wagons-Lit Company, not only did give the promise of a comfortable ride to its travelers; but also acquired Pera Palace (first half, then full ownership) a building designed by Alexandre Vallaury—a Levantine architect that had built many of the buildings that have transformed Istanbul’s façade—in the styles of Neo-classical in the exterior space, Orientalist in the ballroom and Art Nouveau in the secondary areas surrounding the building. The hotel

was situated in the Pera region that led a Levantine lifestyle, a projection of the European; named after the Greek word for “the other side, beyond.” Pera presented a “Little Europe,” separate from the rest of Constantinople. Aside from being the city capital of social and cultural activities, it was a burgeoning trade and financial district, emerging out after the Big Pera Fire. The way the city had evolved twenty years after the fire was remarkable; the city’s most beautiful streets now lay on the Golden Horn. According to Le Corbusier, Istanbul now had the allure of New York.

Still, in contrast to many European cities, these cities were still illuminated by gaslight. The country was not yet aware of the dynamo, when in 18th century Europe it was being widely used to supply electricity. In fact, there were rumors spread by some communities resisting change that the word “dynamo” sounded like the word “dynamite,” (hence the dynamo would be a dangerous material like the dynamite) that had a particular effect on the public. Maybe due to this fact that Sultan Abdulhamit II didn’t allow an electric dynamo to be placed inside Tarabya Hotel, the most modern building at the time. In fact, the first dynamo was to be placed in Istanbul at the time but Sultan Abdulhamit II declined this offer and the dynamo was built in Tarsus instead, delaying the arrival of electricity to Istanbul.

Pera Palace, the first building other than the Ottoman palaces to be lit with electricity, the first hotel qualified to

European standards; was soon surrounded by embassies, the YMCA street with American diplomats, gilded restaurants that were the abodes of British, Russian and German government officials, licensed brothels, and rival hotels like Hôtel de Londres and Tokatlıyan. What set Pera Palace apart from these hotels was that this was the only hotel belonging to a Europe-wide hotel franchise, since the Wagons-Lit Company had been establishing hotels in major cities for a long while. In that sense Pera Palace is one of the first fruits of liberal economy in the Ottoman Empire; it is a star that shines brightly not because it was unique, but because it presented luxury and safety as a part of a larger franchise. Now the guests had a refuge that both assured them safety and comfort as they would have it in their own home, and also presented a window peering into a rapidly changing empire. The visitors that had set foot on Sirkeci Train Station were carried off to the hotel on palanquins. One of these palanquins is still kept in the hotel lobby to represent the idea of “service” of that certain period. All modern facilities were supplied in Pera Palace: a bath, shower, electrical lighting and a view of the Golden Horn. The first elevator that operated in Europe after the Eiffel Tower was also built here. Istanbulites had experienced an easy climb without fatigue for the first time here and the hotel eventually became a beacon of an age of illumination for the locals, as it ruled brilliantly upon the streets of Beyoglu, which were still lit by incandescent light.

It is as much as physical change in time as well as lighting that transformed the city, the streets and therefore the nights into a public space. Now the day started not when the sun rose or when the morning adhan was read, but on midnight, the day begun to shape up differently from what the people were used to, it became a full 24 hours.

As the railroads expanded in the 1800s, first within Britain and later on an international scale, a new clock system was required to ensure that trains would run in coordination. The earlier discoveries of telegraph and radio waves had enabled instant communication between long distances and helped cities to determine a shared time zone.

In 1884, the International Meridian Conference, with the Ottoman Empire among its attendees, gathered to determine the prime meridian, which was unanimously decided as the Greenwich meridian. The attending countries soon started implementing this rule accordingly. France implemented the Greenwich Meridian time zone in 1911, then in 1915, a time sphere connected to Paris via telegraph was set up on the tower of Istanbul Navy Hospital, showing the new noon hour. This “time sphere” was a large sphere with a piece of metal that visibly fell when the time was being set. With these advancements, the Ottoman clock slowly lost its relevance throughout the Abdulhamit period.



Working hours at government offices were now in European time, clock towers that became widespread in this late Ottoman period also now showed European time. After the declaration of the Republic and every year on, Pera Palace hosted annual New Year's balls with many high-profile government officials attending; in fact, Pera Palace hosted the 1926 ball, when the European time zone was officially made law, and the day was set to start at midnight. Thus, time became a political tool; distances were now determined through a simple rotation of the hands of a clock. In 1921 (1337), Ahmet Hasim penned an essay named *The Muslim Clock*, published in *Dergah Magazine*, expressing his discomfort in the night being placed into a day and how the European time had caused changes in a Muslim society. This text is important not only to understand the era, but also for Hasim's perspective, since with a change of time; a whole way of life had been changed. In 2016, Turkey decided to stop implementing daylight savings time—seemingly a decision to benefit more from sunlight; but this decision added more distance between Turkey and the West, and the country moved closer to the East.

Pera Palace added novelties to this atmosphere of change; it hosted the first painting exhibition of its era, its first fashion show, and countless balls. At first the hotel seemed like a symbol for everything that is desired yet unattainable; but it still was a product of a time of change. The hotel witnessed an empire fall into lethargy and its destruction, a new era of occupation, formation of a

new country, a republic, and all its transformations throughout the years, changing its façade with each event. The hotel, ever since it was built, has been so elite and limited that it could never fully paint an accurate picture of Turkey; but maybe that's why this place contains so many stories. Throughout its history, it hosted many curious travelers and journalists, then soldiers and pashas, and later high state officials. Pera Palace never really allowed the familiar feeling of the "neutral zone" known from other hotels; it contained stories and schemes, since places that are not permanent impel us to travel, not to rest. The hotel lived through both personal and historical tragedies; many times it switched owners and so changed its strategies. Eventually, having to keep up with change, in the year 2008 the hotel went into a period of renovation that would take 2 years to complete; and through that time, it became somewhat sanitized in an Istanbul that was changing at a speed that was hard to catch on with. Once part of a hotel franchise, Pera Palace was now owned by another hotel franchise originating from Dubai. The times had changed, all the buildings that were around the hotel at the beginning of the last century had first gotten old, then poor, then gentrified. The hotel itself has always been a reflection of Istanbul that it has been a part of for 125 years.

According to Siegfried Kracauer, marginalized areas such as hotel lobbies are platforms for emerging ideas

that will topple temporal spaces. The space thus becomes an extension of thought. “Spatial images are the dreams of society. Wherever the hieroglyphics of any spatial image are deciphered, there the basis of social reality presents itself.” In the year 2017, as we’re sitting in Pera Palace Hotel Jumeirah’s dome shaped hall – where a local feels like a tourist – while everything around us grows languid, the word “decadence” appears in our minds.

A Revolving Door

Derived from the Latin verb “Cadere” (“to fall”), decadence suggests the moral and mechanical decay of a people, the public or the leading power. At the end of the 19th century, the leading figures of symbolism were attacked as “decadents” implying that they are degenerating literature, as they were trying to go beyond the societal and artistic order. Formed by the late period romantics, this group glorified the artificial instead of the natural, convoluted instead of the plain and was proud to be called “decadents;” as it held them separate from the traditional movement. According to Rousseau, decadence is the antithesis of nature and culture; all civilization is decadence, it keeps the person from living a natural life. The concept of decadence, and a period of decadence is a natural consequence of creating a truth; in other words, life and truth are opposite entities and this can only be seen from a tragic perspective.

Nietzsche, who has provided criticisms of the 19th century, seeing it as a time of

decay, argues that decadence occurs in nature, society and the individual. According to him, the manifestations of decadence in society are varied; antiquated ethical viewpoints, an oppressive school system and religion dominating daily life are all ways in which decadence manifests. The individual, against the decadence of society, has to go through a process of enculturation; as a member of society, a living organism and a physiological structure, they are forced to recognize the cultural aspects of a society. As a part of this process the individual sees themselves, other people and the world with these values. After decadence, people become alienated to their instincts, they cut their ties with themselves and everyone else and they become withdrawn.

When looking at Nietzsche’s definition of manifestations of societal decadence, it is unavoidable to not recognize that the same definition holds true in the 21st century; since the world we live in is a constantly re-created art piece, moreover there is nothing “behind” or “beyond” its web of delusions. In this case, it could be said that a state of decadence, as a consequence of a peremptory process could be, to an extent, pre-determined; since what has happened before will happen again, what has been done before will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. But is the reason for this the incidental repetition of history, or the simplicity of human nature? Does a decadent in a collapsing society benefit from corruption by

aestheticizing decay? For Ballard, a detailed ritual of burial is a sure sign of decadence. So where are we when we can't even count the dead? Or, what does art production look like in a world where nothing decays or breaks? Where are we to Ballard? In our Leviathans, where one side sees collapse and the other side progress, how can we prove that we are definitely deteriorating?

When Adolf Hitler was appointed to his self-created chair of the Führer (The Leader), he claimed the new culture formed in 20s Berlin was "decadent," and around 650 art pieces deemed degenerate were confiscated by the Nazis in 1937 and were exhibited in a travelling art show called Die Ausstellung Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art Exhibition.) In visual arts, at the beginning of the 20th century, movements that in time grew

an organic bond, such as Fauvism, Cubism, Dada, and Surrealism were not appreciated internationally. Majority of the German public found these art movements elitist and most of the time incomprehensible. 1920s, the time of the Weimer government, was the starting point of the German avant-garde. For the Nazis who witnessed the Weimer period with disgust, art, like most things, was an area to be overtaken and eliminated. While books burned, universities shut down; over 5000 art pieces made during the decadent period were gathered from museums across Germany and were exhibited under the name of Degenerate Art Exhibition. When the visitors entered the exhibition space, they would come across a large, theatrical Jesus sculpture; the purpose was to scare off the visitors right away at the



beginning. The rooms were organized chaotically, filled up with more work than necessary, some even spread on the floor. The first room was reserved for artwork that were critical of religion; the second room was reserved specifically for Jewish artists and the third room contained pieces that were considered to have been insulting towards Germany's women, soldiers and farmers. "The ideal—cretin and whore," "Madness as method," "Nature as seen by sick minds," were some of the slogans advertising for the show. A few weeks later, after examining the artists' collections and the inventory, a new show was organized with an increased display of 16,558 artworks. Alongside this degenerate art show, The Great German Art Show was organized; but even though it featured artwork from artists like Arno Breker and Adolf Wissel who portrayed, according to Nazis, a favorable ideal of the Aryan German race, the Degenerate Art Show had three times the number of visitors compared to The Great German Art Show.

For "Decadence," exhibiting in Pera Palace, we decided to use the bust detail Hitler's favorite sculptor Arno Breker's 1939 sculpture "Bereitschaft" (Readiness) on our poster. The "Fraktur" font we have used for our title is again the controversial font from the Nazi era. In a lot of European countries, Gothic type fonts such as the German Fraktur started disappearing with the Antiqua font, found in 15th-16th century; however in Germany both fonts existed until the 20th century. In the Fuhrer's 1934 speech in Reichstag, he proclaimed his hatred

of Fraktur; according to him Gothic internalization was irrelevant to the age of iron and steel, glass and concrete, female beauty and male strength. It was industry and politics determining the era, everything else could live under the rule of these two systems.

Between the WWI defeat and Hitler's rise to power, the social changes in 1920s Germany fused with debauchery; to this day, the first association with "decadence" for the Western world. Prostitution expanded in cities crumbling after the war and the first sexual revolution history has seen was born during this time. During that time, there were around 500 erotic nightclubs open to all sexualities and drugs were rampant. This was also the era that comprised the birth of critical theory, Fritz Lang filming, Adorno and Benjamin working, Einstein winning the Nobel Prize, the birth of modern design with the Bauhaus school and Hesse, Doblin and Mann writing. Looking at the course of history, all movements are precursors to the emergence of a contrary movement; in an increasingly liberal society, first acts of condemnation and then attack start to rise and eventually, a charismatic leader with extreme solutions pulls millions of followers to his side.

When determining Decadence as the theme for this exhibition, we took it as it appears in Nietzsche's philosophy and we looked for parallels to states of lethargy in the world we're living in. Today, for us members of the Y Generation, (certainly it is tactless to see

every person living in a period of time in the same generation; it is to ignore sociological, economical and even physical factors) what we have learned in school belong to the past; today people don't die on the streets, it won't be happening anymore, liberty has been won; we're confined to a progressive logic and going back could simply be pleasant nostalgia. However it doesn't turn out to be so, as a generation that met violence later in life, in order for us to understand how close and how internalized it is, we have had to suffer through traumas; we got killed, cornered, we don't know where we belong, we got alienated, threatened, left without any space. In the classical antiquity meaning of the term "decay," personal decay is a mirror to societal decay, and on this simple equation the opposite is also valid. This pressure first brings a public resistance then shared apathy. However, as means of expression are curbed, new creative methods also emerge.

In Jacques Barzun's *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life*, he deems decadence to be a necessary phase during the natural evolution of societies. When talking about New York, Baudrillard writes: "It is a world completely rotten with wealth, power, senility, indifference, puritanism, and mental hygiene, poverty and waste, technological futility and aimless violence, and yet I cannot help but feel it has about it something of the dawning of the universe."

The one that rises falls, the fallen rise;



ironically this motion doesn't occur in a vertical/horizontal shape, decadence appears in geometric form. "I am a decadent;" says Nietzsche, shortly before he goes insane: "I am also its antithesis." Going through Pera Palace's revolving doors, never closing but also never open, we think of permanence, going back to the beginning, being stuck in a revolving door.

Titles

With Pera Palace as one of its main actors, the exhibition takes its subject as the "cult" figures that have stayed at the hotel and the hotel's personal history when examining its theme of Decadence. Even though it's fairly difficult to pick between the figures that were guests at the hotel in its 125-year history, we decide to set our focus on social, personal and economic conditions in today's Turkey that are

declining into lethargy, hence arriving to a more homogenous list. The first twenty years of the hotel—meaning the period until WWI—isn't only a determinant of our past century, it also pieces together a sample of unsolved cases that manifest themselves in different forms.

Ayçesu Duran's three-piece installation examines the aesthetics of falling through the use of daily objects; it makes us think about our world, filled with the artificial mimicking the natural. The first part of *A Room With a View* presents an image of mountains, formed by towels folded in hotel standards, the towels are always accompanied by the packaging of a water company that includes visuals that claim that the water is originally brought from "the mountains;" the summit is impossibly closer, it passes through our hands at least once a day. The cup with milk flowing is actually a fountain designed for cats to drink out of; the very idea that this is needed is interesting enough on its own, people first domesticate animals, then design an artificial fountain for them. This seems similar to the little struggles of humans trying to fit into small compartmental boxes. The third piece displays a sustained house of cards; these cards lean on an orange instead of Adam and Newton's apple. The reason for this fall is not sin, or gravity. The marble stickers on the playing cards again show an artificial roughness. These three pieces come together and form a harmonic loop; here there are ones who fall, ones who ascend, and ones who recirculate.

The dining table placed in the middle

seems to belong to the hotel as if it was always there and invites visitors to the table. Ozan Atalan's installation, *Acceptance* sets its starting point as Knut Hamsun's novel, *Hunger*. This cult novel, published in 1890, narrates the story of what happens to humans when we deal with physical hunger, through its protagonist. Is it the idea that as we drift away from ourselves that we get closer to nature that surprises us; or is this what humanity actually is? When creating a dinner table alienated to its usual form, Ozan Atalan shows us how much we internalize everything around us that we are alienated from, and questions which one is decadence: is it a perfect dinner table that fits into a culture's pre-set standards, or is it a perfected state of decay that we've all agreed on, disregarding every fault? Impossible to put back together; debilitated any chance of quenching the need for "food," these objects assemble still keeping their preciseness; forks, plates, glasses and candles form the installation, along with sandpaper napkins folded according to hotel standards. Animal instincts and their place in the contemporary individual reach more volumes when it's considered alongside Knut Hamsun. Hamsun, has had to go through hunger just like Andrea did, he knows what it is like to go hungry. He's known for his sympathy for the rise of National Socialism in Europe—after having success with his novels, he was awarded a Nobel Prize in 1943, which he dedicated to Germany's Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels.



After this, the Norwegians couldn't forgive him and they left Hamsun's books at his doorstep, they piled up one by one. Koral Sagular's sculpture, *Untitled*, placed on the left corner of the ballroom, also talks about Hamsun's *Hunger*—here, a small double sided mirror that can turn 360 degrees demonstrates the altered perception of Hamsun's character when he's going through a hunger fit. There is no fixed ground that he can hold on to, the ground is always changing. In a chamber formed by his physical needs and his developing obsession with his pride, he wavers between his decisions. The snake, a representation of the protagonist, hoping to escape these two opposing surfaces makes its move but loses its direction and eventually starts eating itself. Here, the audience experiences the mirror through this dissected snake that passes through the mirror to the other side and ends up attacking its own tail. The audience can catch their own impression on the mirror

only as much as this self-devouring snake will allow them. The golden brass frame on the mirror reminds us of the time period we're focusing on; decadence isn't a wooden frame but a golden brass one. Whatever it is that decadence does to us; mirrors and snakes probably have a lot to say about it.

Burak Ayazoğlu's geometrical sculpture is about Pierre Loti's *Les Désenchantées* (*Unhappy Women*.) Pierre Loti, who stayed in Pera Palace in 1902, is known as an important figure in Orientalist France. He visited Constantinople quite often, here he became a favorite of Western families and published novels set in this geography. Actually, Pierre Loti never liked this new façade of the city; even though he stayed at the ever-changing Pera, he would spend his days in Eyüp looking at city walls and mosque minarets covered under the fog, since he found Beyoğlu artificial

and unpleasant. Loti, especially after his much-acclaimed novel, *Aziyade*, received a lot of letters during his days in Constantinople. One of these letters later became an inspiration for his novel, *Les Désenchantées*. Daughters of a well-respected, Western man of the period and a government official responsible for Ottoman Empire's external affairs, Nuri Bey; Zennur and Nuriye, who were educated according to Western traditions—taking lessons on Western languages, literature and music from private tutors but also their education in Islam not neglected; grew up with romantic era European novels and dreams of this period, but never could get away from Ottoman and Muslim traditions; hence never could get away from their house, and even if they did get out, they would have to wear a veil, never fully finding the world they dream of. Alongside one of the feminists of the era writing with a male penname, Marc Helys, they devised a plan to write letters to Loti, and they managed to get closer to the author with their mysterious style. Between 1904-1905, they frequently and secretly met with Loti, hoping to put the Ottoman woman's struggles and their shared pain on a book and share it with the world. After one of the sisters got forced to marry, in January 1906 they escaped together with fake passports, boarding Orient Express at Sirkeci Train Station. Even though they went ahead with their journey up until Belgrade without any problems, they got stopped on Serbian land due to a telegram sent by their father. However at that time, Serbians and the Ottoman government had a strained relationship,

so the Serbian officials used this opportunity to pledge allegiance to their independence and let the two women keep on with their journey. This escape became a diplomacy issue in Istanbul; the sisters first escape to Venice, then to France. Now they were free to remove their veils. Their escape also got a lot of attention in Europe; this story gets published national newspapers like *La Figaro* under an era-appropriate title, *Escapees from the Harem*. Zennur appeared on a program on BBC radio, even became a model for Rodin. Nuriye, on the other hand, never fully adapted to Europe, saddened; she eventually wore her veil again and returned to her country. This story was penned by Pierre Loti in 1906, but his version was quite different from reality. In the novel, these two brave women never escape their country and die tragically at a young age, they become Zeyneb and Melek, in love with the narrator of the novel, Andre, who we can easily identify as Loti himself. As beloved as Loti was in Turkish land, this novel wasn't



published in Turkey until 1950s. Years later, Alain Quella-Villéger published the real story of these women with *Évadées du harem – Affaire d’État et féminisme à Constantinople* (1906) (Escapees From The Harem – An Affair of Government and Feminism in Constantinople.) In his sculpture titled *Form-IV*, Burak Ayazoğlu constructs an asymmetrical structure from cardboard, when we move closer and look into it, we fall into a more threatening space. The lines that don’t fall across each other on the outside also don’t cross inside. Something is always unequal. Official history says that during the Ottoman period, women never fought for their rights and with the Republic, their rights were given to them without them “demanding” it. Ayazoglu’s work tackles rights given without request, equations that don’t balance, a history that remains half missing. Today, we have to ask what has changed.

Setting off from the same story and novel, Hakan Kırdar’s installation, *Decadence/A Woman’s Liberation Problem*, puts an emphasis on decadence. A three-legged Fiskos table with one leg broken reminds us the three trivets of judiciary, and the judgement-allegation-defense, judge-prosecutor-lawyer triads. Modernist objects that seem like they were just on the table but now have swept away on the floor are a view from the death of modernity. . On the plane these objects are spread on, there is a carpet woven with bulghur rice and at the middle of the carpet appears a poem. As the poem playbacks to the voices of women that are mentioned in it, it also alludes to the

carpet given as a present to Pierre Loti by Atatürk, after professing his attachment to Atatürk and to the Republic. However, a few years prior, Loti was quite displeased with the modernization of the country. Nazım Hikmet Ran writes: “Even you/ You Pierre Loti!/ Through our yellow tarpaulin hides/ Among us/ The traveling/ Typhus louse/ Is closer to us than you are/ A French Officer! /The ones who don’t know should learn/ You’re nothing but a charlatan/ Charlatan!/ Selling his putrid French cloth/ With five hundred percent profit to the West: Pierre Loti!/ What a bourgoise pig you turned out to be/ If I believed in spirit separate from entity/ The day the Occident broke free/ Your soul I would crucify/ by the bridge/ And smoke a cigarette against it.”

Öner Taylan Öztürk’s video installation integrates images from one of Pera Palace’s visitors—cult director Hitchcock’s films unto videos from a certain era of Istanbul, emphasizing the sudden modernization in society, and projects these images on an installation made up of big jars filled up with milk. When examining the agony of transformation, it first and foremost questions how things from previous generations came to be the way they are and how government-ruled transformations reflect on the society. The milk in the jars denote how much organic material is prone to decay, until this exhibition ends the milk will go sour and spoil. In contrast to Ayçesu Duran’s *A Room with a View*, here instead of the milk freely spilling, it is trapped, supposedly

protected and therefore it represents the efforts to “preserve” an industrial naturality.

The portrait that appears to be dancing in perpetuity is Muhittinçan’s piece entitled *Iffet-I Endam*. As one of the first famous guests of Pera Palace, Mata Hari came to the city in 1907. Due to her extraordinary dancing ability in her childhood, she was selected as a servant to Goddess Shiva. A Dutch man decided she will marry, so she went to Europe, her first daughter died of poisoning, her marriage ended. At the end of 1903 she moved to Paris and showed her Indian dances to Europe’s audiences hungry for new experiences and gained much acclaim. She stayed in various European cities throughout the years. In 1917, she fell under suspicion due to the German attachés she has been meeting up with; during WWI it was thought that she was a German spy working against the French. Even though she was being suspected, she returned to Paris and she was executed by a firing squad. During her execution, she asked for her eyes to not be tied, her question was a question every war victim has asked? “What will they gain by killing me, will they win the war?”

Four photographs in Beril Gulcan’s photography series (*We’re Drowning, Together, I try, Lost,*) takes its subject as Agatha Christie’s lost 11 days. As it is well known, she stayed in Pera Palace frequently between the years of 1926 and 1932 and it is rumored that she wrote her book *Murder on the Orient Express* here. In 1926, Christie’s car

was found near a pond, crashed into a tree, with luggage thrown out. When the author reappeared in 11 days, she would never address these days when she disappeared, and to this day what she did in those days is still unknown. At the end of the 70s, a speculation spread around that Warner Brothes wanted to make a script of these lost 11 days and they had consulted a medium. The medium had said: “The key to Agatha Christie’s disappearance is in Pera Palace, Room 411,” and this initiated daily dialogues between America and Pera Palace. Gulcan’s photographs fictionalize these lost days, uncertainty and disappearance. Even though the photos are reflections of Christie’s disappearance, they can also be seen as essays on our disappearances.

Another series in the mirrored room is Sena’s *Decadence Series*, made up of nine pieces pressure printed on paper; this series takes its subject as the actress Zsa Zsa Gabor, who died only a few months ago. Gabor also stayed at Pera Palace when she visited Istanbul; born in Hungary and made it all the way up to Hollywood, she married exactly nine times. Among her husbands were Conrad Hilton, George Sanders and Felipe de Alba. In an interview given later, she recounts the story that she had an affair with Atatürk when she was not of legal age and she had looked for his macho attitude in her husbands ever since. From her birth to her death, Zsa Zsa Gabor draws a perfect image of an arrivist, when her last husband was 36;

she paid a lofty amount to the Princess of Anhalt Marie-Auguste for her to add her husband to the royal family register and added the title Prince to his name, hence when Gabor died she died a princess. The pressure prints carry symbols from Gabor's life, while aiming to investigate "rising/arriving somewhere." Ambition and rising up; the goal is always to keep rising higher, and this goal appears differently every day as a fruit of what she has done and what she has been through.

Pera Palace exists not only with its famous guests, but also with stories where it is the object and the subject. As it strived to remain neutral during WWII, Turkey hosted many international meetings, intelligence agencies, spies and diplomats. In the year 1941, Bulgaria

Bulgary expelled all employees of the British Embassy; in result 60 British people arrived to Istanbul aboard the Orient Express and were settling in Pera Palace, when a bomb exploded. The elevator fell, the windows in the domed hall crashed, piled on the entrance hall, the damascened wood pieces shattered and a fracture occurred from the ground floor to the cellar, resulting in three deaths and 21 injuries. It was later revealed that Bulgarians working for Germany had planted a bomb inside one of the British Ambassador's suitcases. Ten newspapers that reported on this incident were shut down for disturbing the public. All these events are almost a predecessor for similar events in 2016, albeit with a different context—assassinations of ambassadors, exploding bombs, banned newspapers



are indeed motifs of a period of crisis. The bomb exploding brought along an economic drought for the hotel, this was important above anything else for Misbah Muhayyeş, the hotel's owner at that period. During the time when property owners not residing in Turkey were removed from Turkish citizenship, Pera Palace was first sold to Emlak Bank, then in 1928, to Beirut native Misbah Muhayyeş, who was awarded a Turkish citizenship status due to his support for the Turkish military. Even though he was planning on rebuilding the hotel, the image of the hotel torn down by the bomb had shown him how close the war was and it was traumatic. Social life had moved from Pera to Taksim, people no longer wanted imperial decoration, but buildings with clean lines and modern furniture. Muhayyeş retreated to his room one day in 1954, ordered a whisky and was found dead the next morning. It is told that Muhayyeş, who had spent his life alone, a few days before he died had told his friends: "My cat is dead, I cannot live any longer."

Ünal Bostancı, with his installation named Teessur, pairs a golden PVC cat skeleton with a sound installation and pays his tribute to Muhayyeş. The hotel's owner had seen the demise of probably the two most important beings in his life at the same time; his business was sinking and his cat "Bon" had died. "Bon" is an adjective meaning good, beautiful in French, and his death was the death of all "beauty." While all evidence pointed to suicide, the Turkish press published the news with the subhead: "The millionaire overcome with sorrow

after his cat's death drank until the morning and fell on the ground, injuring his head. In the morgue report his cause of death was revealed as heart failure." What was more important anyways was the death of "Bon."

Onur Karaoğlu's performance named Hemingway Fantezi Odasi takes its subject as Hemingway; who arrived to Istanbul in 1922 as some kind of a war reporter. Later he became an author who was writing about his own generation after the war, the most intense period of American decadence, which he defined as the "Lost Generation." Karaoğlu, focusing on Hemingway using his life experiences as an inspiration for his novels—turning life itself into a vessel and blending it into fiction, prepares a performance piece in Pera Palace room 420, where Hemingway stayed during his visits. The visitors go upstairs with the bracelets given to them at their arrival and they are expected to put a 50-metre string that is going around the room through their bracelets. The visitors then move around the room with a crowd following them and they interact with the eight performers inside, and they can leave only when they have completed walking around the whole room.

There is another important room on the fourth floor in Pera Palace, the mysterious room of Agatha Christie. Leaving the ballroom, still in the 1900s, and going up to the fourth floor, to Das Art Project.'s installation named Susurluk in room 441, we are suddenly transported to November 1996.

The Susurluk Accident, where the three trivets have appeared in a different manner, and what remains from it, “a moment of darkness for continuous light,” are repeated in this room. The room that hosted Agatha Christie, a renowned crime fiction writer, is illuminated and blackened with short breaks. This is a pacifist protest method, in time adapted by other mass movements, but originally used by the Turkish public in the 90s to make their voice heard against a failed justice system. The “government-mafia-politics” trio is maybe always together and always will be; but the question “Why?” never gets answered. Where are we now, which sources did today’s lethargy feed from; it can’t be known if Christie would be able to illuminate the unsolved murders, forgotten cases and the justified questions; but it is obvious that the key to this secret is not in this room.

Now again, we can walk through the revolving door, weave into a changing Istanbul and carry on with our path.





Pera Palas ve “Dekadans” Sergisi Üzerine

Emre ZEYTİNOĞLU

Bir kentin tarihi, tutulmuş birtakım kayıtların bize öğrettiklerinden ibarettir elbette. Bu kayıtlar, ilk bakışta kuruluş ve gelişim serüvenlerinin, nüfus ve göç hareketlerinin, savaşların ve el değiştirmelerin, doğal felaketlerin ve yeniden yapılanmaların vb. bir toplamıymış gibi görülür: “O yer”de ayrı ayrı kimlerin muktedir olduğu ve böylece kentin hangi yaşamlara tanıklık ettiği üzerine kronolojik bilgilerdir bunlar. Oysa bir de o değişen yaşamların birbirlerine sızması söz konusudur; öyle ki: Bir yaşam biçimi, belirli bir dönemde kapanıp diğer bir dönemde bambaşka bir akış ile karşımıza çıkmaz. Bu yaşam biçimleri birbirlerini yok etmek adına bir mücadeleye giriştikçe, diğerinden hep “bir şeyler” kaparlar. Bir önceki yaşam biçimine kaba güçle bir saldırı, yalnızca güçlünün zaferiyle bitmez; “eski” ile “yeni” arasında, denetlenemez bir etkileşim ile biter: Bir “entropi”den (yani, bilimde telaffuz edilen “denetlenemez bir enerji”den) söz edebiliriz bu noktada... Ve bu durumda, bir kentin tarihini yansıtan kayıtların yanına, oranın kültürel dinamiğini de eklemek zorunda kalırız. Ya da ikisini de aynı anda değerlendirmek zorundayızdır.

Böylece, kültürel dinamiklere bakarak, bir kentin hangi “eski”yi geride bıraktığı ve hangi “yeni” yaşam biçimini tercih ettiği hakkında bir saptama yapmak da çok karmaşık bir problemi karşımıza getirir. Eğer bir kent, radikal bir girişim sonucunda ve belirli siyasi kararlarla bir değişime, bir yıkıma tabi tutulmamışsa, oradan “eski”yi silip atmak olanaksızdır;

hatta o radikal değişim ve yıkım girişimlerine rağmen bu silip atma çabası, çok zaman başarılmaz. Çünkü “o yer”de “eski”ye ait izler, ayağımızı bastığımız, yürüyüp geçtiğimiz “şimdiki zaman” katmanında, kesinlikle kalacaktır. Bunlar bazen belirsiz, soluk izlerdir; yıllar öncesinden gelen şarkılar, şiirler, resimler, fotoğraflar, filmler, öyküler, romanlar gibi... Kimi zaman da bir parkın ya da bir arsanın bir köşesinden görünürken, birkaç temel taşı gibi... Ama bazen de bu izler, son derece güçlü biçimde gündelik yaşamımızda yer alırlar; evler, dini ya da sivil ya da kamusal yapılar, köprüler, kuleler gibi... Bu yüzden, bir kentin mevcut mimari dokusu, o soluk izlerin yarattığı tasavvurların yanında, “şimdiki zaman”a her zaman somut bir “geçmiş” ekler ve bu iki zaman arasındaki sızmanın en önemli kanıtını oluşturur. Doğan Kuban’ın bir örneği ile söyleyecek olursak, birbirlerinden birkaç dakikalık yürümemesafesinde bulunan modern bir otel ile Ayasofya arasında 1480 yıllık bir süre vardır ki Sultanahmet semtinde gezinen bir kişi, kentin fiziksel yapısı içinde kültürel bir “sürekliliği” algılamadan, zamanlar-arası bir yolculuğa çıkmadan geçemez.

Kentin fiziksel yapısı, “eski” ile “şimdiki zaman” verilerine dair sızmaların bir kanıtı ise, o halde kentte bizzat gördüğümüz her somut “şey”in varlığı da siyasi ve kültürel tarihin bugün ile ilişkisini önümüze serer. Şimdi sanatçılar, İstanbul’un en ünlü kültürel yapılarından biri olan Pera Palas üzerinden, aynı

mekânda bir sergi gerçekleştiriyorlar. Hemen şunu belirtelim: Kentin Tepebaşı semtinde, Alexander Vallaury'nin yaptığı ve 1892 yılında hizmete açılan bu otel de bize, bir yanda büyük bir otoparkın, diğer yanda da yeni otel ve işyeri yapılarının arasında, “şimdiki zaman” düzleminde 125 yıllık bir zaman geçişi sağlıyor. O nedenle, Pera Palas tarihi üzerine yapılacak her kültürel (ve tabii, siyasi) saptama, doğallıkla bugün ile yakın bir bağı işaret edecek. Ne var ki bu sergi, doğrudan Pera Palas'ı tanımlamak, tanıtmak ya da onun üzerine yorumlar yapmak amacını taşıyor; serginin adı: “Dekadans”... Kısacası, Pera Palas özelinde “dekadans” kavramını ele alan bir sergi bu...

“Dekadans” kavramı üzerinde duralım: Fransızca bir sözcük bu: “Décadence”... “Düşüş”, “gerileme” ve “yıkılış” anlamında... Tam anlamıyla olumsuz bir kavram... Kökü, Latince “cadere” (“düşmek”) fiilinden geliyor... Kaynaklara bakıldığında, ilk kez Roma İmparatorluk döneminin son zamanlarında, kültürel ve edebi kalitenin bozulması üzerine elaffuz edilmeye başlanıyor; sonraki tarihlerde de bu kavram, pek çok durum için kullanılıyor. Sözgelimi 19. yüzyıl Fransız edebiyatında, bu kez de burjuva kabalığına ve klasik düzene bir tepki olarak Paul Verlaine'in öne çıkardığı “décadent” eğilimine rastlıyoruz; bu sözcük de aynı köke ait “düşen”, gerileyen” anlamına geliyor: Edebiyatta daha kapalı metaforlar ve giderek artan süslemeler... Aslında “dekadan”ın olumlu bir hale dönüşmesi gibi yorumlanabilir. Verlaine'vari kullanım biçimi: Düşlere, aşırı duyumsamaya, incelikli bir güzelliğe tutkuyla sarılmak;

marazi bir kötümserliğe varıncaya kadar... Charles Baudelaire'in sembolizmine uzanan bir tavır bu... Bununla birlikte, “dekadan” sözcüğü üzerinden bir tartışmayı Türk edebiyatında da görüyoruz: Ahmed Midhat Efendi, Servet-i Fünun'culara karşı “Sabah” gazetesinde bir yazı yayımlamış (1897) ve onları, ağır, anlaşılmaz ve süslü bir dil kullanmaları yüzünden eleştirmişti. Ahmed Midhat Efendi'ye göre bu şairlerin ne dillerinden ne de düşüncelerinden bir şey anlaşılabilirdi; onların yaptıkları, Fransız dekadandanlarının yaptıklarından, yani kendilerini anlaşılmaz kılmaktan başka bir şey değildi; o nedenle Servet-i Fünun'culara “dekadanlar” tabirini yakıştırdı.

Ne var ki Cenap Şahabettin'in, Ahmed Midhat Efendi'ye yanıt olarak aynı yıl “Servet-i Fünun” dergisinde yayımladığı “Dekadizm Nedir?” yazısı, “dekadans”ın nasıl olumlu bir kavram olarak “dekadan”a dönüştüğünü ve bu niteliği ile edebiyat dünyasına girdiğini söylüyordu. Cenap Şahabettin, özetle “Fransız edebiyatında ‘geriye gitmek’ anlamının, eski büyük eserlere yeniden bakmak, onların dil özelliklerini ve niteliklerini geliştirerek, yeni bir edebiyat yaratmak” olduğuna işaret ediyordu. İşte bu yazı, Fransız “dekadan” tavrının bir açıklaması olduğu kadar, Servet-i Fünun'cuların da niçin divan edebiyatında olduğu gibi, Farsça, Arapça sözcüklere, türetmelere, yabancı tamlamalara başvurduğunu ve bu yolla nasıl “yeni” bir edebiyata yönelebileceklerini açıklamaktaydı. Servet-i Fünun'cuların “dekadan” tavrılarının gerçekten “yeni” bir edebiyat yaratıp yaratmadığı konusundaki

tartışmalar, iyimser bir düşünceyle sonuçlanmadı. Onların edebiyatının gereksiz yapmacıklarla doldurulduğunu ileri sürenlerin sayısı hayli fazladır. Fakat yine de Cenap Şahabettin'in bu yazısının alt-metninde, bizim ufkumuzu açan ya dadüşüncelerimizi netleştiren bir şey var: “Dekadans”ın, “dekadan” sözcüğü ile birlikte kullanılarak, olumsuz biçimde “gerileme” olduğu kadar, o “gerileme”nin “yenilik arama” ya da “eskiyi yeniden düşünme” anlamına da geldiği... Başka bir ifadeyle: “Dekadans”ın sözcük anlamının esnetilmesi demek oluyor bu... Bu yazının başında da belirttiğimiz gibi, “eski” ile “yeni” arasında bir sızmanın, denetlenemez bir enerjinin olduğu...

Tam bu noktada, Pera Palas'taki “Dekadans” sergisine tekrar dönelim. Burada sanatçılar, Pera Palas tarihi üzerinden birtakım okumalarla yapıtlar gerçekleştirirlerken, önce ağırlıklı olarak, bu otele gelip bir süre kalan ya da bir biçimde orayla ilişkili bazı göndermelerde bulunan Batılılardan konu açıyorlar. Pierre Loti, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Alfred Hitchcock, Agatha Christie, Ernest Hemingway, Mata Hari gibi ünlü kişiler bunlar... Sonra da yine Batılıların bakış açısıyla, Doğu'ya yakıştırılmış öykülere uzanıyorlar... Ve giderek bu sergi, bir “oryantalizm” sorgulamasına dönüşüyor. Söz konusu sorgulama, bize ilk aşamada serginin ana karakterini veriyor. Belki de “dekadans”ı, yani “düşüş”ü ve “yıkılış”ı ima eden bir sorgulama burada doğuyor. Ardından da “oryantalizm”in uzantısında temellenen siyasi, ekonomik ve kültürel bir sistem gündeme getiriliyor ki böylece “dekadans”ın “gerileme” ile ilişkisi bugüne taşınıyor.

Tam olarak, eski dinamiklerin bugüne taşınması ya da “eski”nin “yeni”ye sızma halinin ortaya konulması...

Fakat yine de karmaşık bir durum ve buna bağlı olarak da bir soru var; her şey Pera Palas'ın yapılışı ve hizmete açılışıyla mı başlıyor? Bu otelin önemli simgesel özellikleri belleklere yerleşmişse de bunun yanıtı, kesin bir “evet” değil kuşkusuz. Her ne kadar, o dönemde kendisini Tophane ve Galata'nın kargaşası, avamlığı ve yasadışı pratiğinden tecrit ederek, İstanbul'un en “elit” semti olan Pera'ya yapılan bu otel, “en konforlu otel” olarak tarihteki yerini alıyor, hatta Osmanlı saraylarının dışında ilk kez elektrikten yararlanan ayrıcalıklı bir yapı olmayı hak ediyorsa da İstanbul'un kültürel açıdan “dekadans”ını tek başına üstlenmiyor. İstanbul üzerine Batılının oluşturduğu “oryantalist” bir bakış açısı, elbette bu otelde filizlenmedi. Bu kente, yine aynı bakış açılarına sahip olan Batılı gezginler geliyor, İstanbul'u yalnızca kendi görmek istedikleri gibi görüyor, onun hakkında uzaktan oluşturdukları tasavvurlar ile kendi öykülerini “yazıp” gidiyorlardı. Bir başka söyleyişle, Tophane ve Galata'nın avamlığı ve tehlikelerle dolu yaşamı, Pera'nın güvenli ortamından daha “şiişsel” görünüyordu. Şurası doğru: Pera Palas da zaten bu amaçla yapılmıştı; Paris-İstanbul seferini yapan ünlü “Orient Express”in yolcularını ağırlamak için... Ve onların, “İstanbul düşleri”ni daha rahat kurabilmeleri için.

Oysa Pera'nın tek konforlu oteli de Pera Palas değildi. Örneğin, Brendan ve John Freely'nin yazdıkları “Galata, Pera, Beyoğlu Bir Biyografi” kitabını

okuduğumuzda, Batılılara hizmet verecek kalitedeki otel ve pansiyonların, henüz 19. yüzyılın başında açılmış olduğunu öğreneceğiz.

Bunların tümü de Pera'daydı ve daha çok "Grand Rue"ye, yani şimdiki İstiklal Caddesi'ne dizilmişlerdi. O sırada en göze çarpan otellerden biri, şimdi Demirören Alışveriş Merkezi haline gelen, Osmanlı Bankası Umum Müdürü Mösyö Emile Devaux'ya ait bir konaktan dönüştürülmüş "Grand Hotel de Luxembourg" idi. "Orient Express" in yolcularına ev sahipliği yapan mekân, Pera Palas öncesinde burasıydı. Üstelik bu otelin de Pera Palas'takilere benzer ünlü müşterileri olmuştu, Pyotr İlyiç Çaykovski gibi... Aynı cadde üzerinde, şimdiki Tokatlıyan İş Hanı'nın yerinde ise 1895 yılında, Pera Palas ile aynı tarihte açılmış "Hotel Splendide" vardı; Mıgırdıç Tokatlıyan'a ait bu otelin adı, kısa bir süre sonra "Hotel M. Tokatlıyan" olarak değişmişti ki onun da müşterileri, yine son derece ünlü kişilerdi: Lev Troçki gibi... Pera Palas'ın müşterilerinden Agatha Christie'nin de başka bir İstanbul gezisinde, bu otelde kaldığı yazılıyor. Çok daha önceki yıllarda (1841) H. C. Andersen ise İstanbul'a geldiğinde, Pera'da "Hotel de la France" adlı bir otel de kaldığından ve oranın konforundan söz ediyordu: "Sonunda Bay Blondel'in işlettiği Hôtel de la France'a gelebilmiştik; kapıdan girer girmez Avrupalı bir dekorasyon ve konfor karşıladı bizi. Fransız ve İtalyan görevliler merdivenlerden inip çıkıyorlardı, odalar ferah ve güzeldi, 'Table d'hote', Avrupa'daki büyük kentlerin lüks otellerindeki kadar mükellef

yemekler sunuyordu" ("İstanbul'da İki İskandinav Seyyah" / K. Hamsun-H. C. Andersen").

Pera semtinin otelleri, yalnızca konforlu olmakla anılmamalı. O dönem, bir yandan da tüm bu lüks otellerin, büyük şirketler tarafından paylaşılmaya başlandığı zamanlardır. Bir anlamda, Batılıların seyahatleri, para akışıyla ve yeni sermaye gruplarının ortaya çıkışıyla da eşzamanlı bir hareketi öne çıkartıyor. Knut Hamsun, 1899 yılındaki İstanbul gezi notlarında aynen şöyle yazmıştı: "Şapkalarında sırma harflerle otellerin ismi yazılı adamlardan birini seçerek kendimizi eline teslim ediyoruz. Bir başka adam seçmiş olsaydık bile, bütün otellerin mülkiyeti aynı kartele ait olduğundan, yine aynı kartelin başka bir otelinde bulacaktık kendimizi" ("İstanbul'da İki İskandinav Seyyah / K. Hamsun-H. C. Andersen).

Bu yazıda anlatılanları, belki sergi adına şöyle toparlamalı: Pera Palas, döneminin tek örneği değildir elbette; ama o yapı bugün kendi varlığını hâlâ sürdürmekte olduğundan, zamanlar arası bir sızmanın, yaşamlar-arası ilişkilerin en başta gelen örneklerindedir. Daha önce de belirttiğimiz gibi Pera Palas, 122 yıllık bir zaman diliminin, bugün bir bütün halinde algılanmasına olanak veren en güçlü görüntülerden biridir. Yürüyüp geçtiğimiz "şimdiki zaman" düzlemi, eğer bizi bir kentte uzun zaman yolculuklarına çıkartabiliyorsa ve o yolculukta da bugün içinde bulunduğumuz durumların birtakım ipuçlarını sezebiliyorsak, bu, karşımızda beliriveren o yapı (ya da ona benzer bazı yapılar) sayesinde.

Pera Palas bize en fazla Őunu anlatıyor: “Oryantalist” bir dnemin, sermaye sistemi ile yoĐurulup gncel ve daha ezici bir sisteme evrildiĐini... Yani “dekadans”ın olumsuz yanını... Ama diĐer yandan da tm bunların algılanmasını saĐlaması bakımından Pera Palas’ın ve onun zerinden bir tarih okumasının nemi de yadsınmamalı. İŐte “Dekadans” sergisinin en arpıcı yanı da bu iki karŐılıklı durumu, yine eŐzamanlı bir biimde ortaya koyması olmalıdır.

həpimiz düşmədəyiz
şu gördüğün el düşüyor
nəyə baxsan həp o düşüş
ama biri var ki bu düşənləri
elləndə tutuyor
çünşək və sonsuz

Rainer Maria Rilke

hepimiz düşmedeyiz
şu gördüğün el düşüyor
nereye baksan hep o düşüş
ama biri var ki bu düşenleri
ellerinde tutuyor
yumuşak ve sonsuz

Rainer Maria Rilke

Müslüman Saati

Ahmet HAŞİM

İstanbul’u yenileştiren ve yerlisini şaşırtan istilâların en gizlisi ve en tesirlisi yabancı saatlerin hayatımıza girişi oldu. “Saat”ten kastımız, zamanı ölçen alet değil, fakat bizzat zamandır. Eskiden kendimize göre yaşayışımız, düşünüşümüz, giyinişimiz ve kendimize göre, dinden, ırktan ve ananeden hayat alan bir zevkimiz olduğu gibi, bu hayat üslubuna göre de “saat”lerimiz ve “gün”lerimiz vardı. Müslüman gününün başlangıcını şafağın parıltıları ve nihayetini akşamın ışıkları tayin eder. Madenden sağlam kapaklar altında saklı tutulan eski masum saatlerin yelkovanları yorgun böcek ayakları tarzında, güneşin sema üzerindeki hareketiyle az çok ilgili bir hesaba uyarak, minenin rakamları üzerinde yürürler ve sahiplerini, zamandan aşağı yukarı bir sıhhatle, haberdar ederlerdi. Zaman sonsuz bahçe ve saatler orada açan, kah sağa kah sola meyleden güneşten rengarenk çiçeklerdi. Yabancı saati kuşatmasından evvel bu iklimde, iki ucu gecelerin karanlığıyla simsiyah olan ve sırtı, çeşitli vakitlerin kırmızı, sarı ve lâcivert ateşleriyle yol yol boyalı, heybetli bir canavar halinde, bir gece yarısından diğer bir gece yarısına kadar uzanan yirmi dört saatlik “gün” tanınmazdı. Işıkla başlayıp ışıkla biten, on iki saatlik, kısa, hafif, yaşanması kolay bir günümüz vardı. Müslüman’ın mesut olduğu günler, işte bu günlerdi; şerefli günlerin olaylarını bu saatlerle ölçtüler.

Gerçi, astronomik hesaplara göre bu “saat” ilkel ve hatalı bir saatti, fakat bu saat hatıratın kutsal saatiydi. Güneş

saatinin adetlerimiz ve işlerimizde kabulü ve ezan saatinin geri safa düşüp camilere, türbelere ve muvakkithanelere bırakılmış battal bir “eski saat” haline gelişi, hayata bakış tarzımızın üzerinde korkunç bir tesire sahip olmamış değildir. Giden saatler babalarımızın öldüğü, annelerimizin evlendiği, bizim doğduğumuz, kervanların hareket ettiği ve orduların düşman şehirlerine girdiği saatlerdi. Bunlar, hayatı etrafımızda serbest bırakan geniş ilgisiz dostlardı. Gelen yabancılar ise hayatımızı sonu meçhul bir düstura göre yeniden tanzim ettiler ve ruhlarımız için onu tanınmaz bir hale getirdiler. Yeni “ölçü” bir deprem gibi, zaman manzaralarını etrafımızda darmadağın ederek, eski “gün”ün bütün setlerini harap etti ve geceyi gündüze katarak saadeti az, meşakkati çok, uzun, bulanık renkte bir yeni “gün” vücuda getirdi.

Bu Müslüman’ın eski mesut günü değil, sarhoşları, evsizleri, hırsızları ve katilleri çok ve yeraltında mümkün olduğu kadar fazla çalıştırılacak köleleri sayısız olan büyük medeniyetlerin acı ve nihayetsiz günüdür. Unutulan eski saatler içinde eksikliği en ziyade hasretle anımsanan saat akşamın on ikisidir. Artık “on iki” solgun yeşil sema altında, ilk yıldız karşı müezzinin Müslümanlara hitap ettiği, sokakların lacivert bir sisle kaplandığı, ışıkların yandığı, sinilerin kurulduğu ve yarasaların mahzenlerden çıkıp uçtuğu o dokunaklı ve titrek saat değildir. Akşam telakkisinden koparak, kah öğlenin hararetinde ve kah gece

yarılarının karanlığında gizli bir zamanı bildiren bu saat, şimdi hayatımızda renksiz ve şaşkın bir noktadır. Yeni saat, Müslüman akşamının hüznü ve gösterişli dakikasını dağıttığı gibi, yirmi dört saatlik yabancı “gün”ün getirdiği geçim şekli de bizi fecr aleminden uzak bıraktı. Başka memleketlerde fecri yalnız kırdan şehre sebze ve meyve getirenlerin ahmak gözleriyle ıstırap çekenlerin şişkin kapaklar içinden bakan kırmızı ve perişan gözleri tanır. Bu zavallılar için fecrin parıltıları, yeniden boyuna geçirilecek olan hayat ipinin kanlı ilmeğini aydınlatan bir ışıktır. Halbuki fecir saati, Müslüman için rüyasız bir uykunun sonu ve yıkanma, ibadet, neşe ve ümidin başlangıcıdır. Müslüman yüzü, kuş sesleri ve çiçek kokuları gibi fecrin en güzel tecellilerindedir. Kubbe ve minareleri o alaca saatte görmemiş olan gözler, taşa en ilahi anlamı veren o akılları hayrette bırakan mimariyi anlamış değillerdir. Esmer camiler, fecrden itibaren semavi bir altın ve semavi bir çini ile kaplanır ve İslam ustalarının bitmemiş eserleri o saatte tamamlanır. Bütün mabetler içinde güneşten ilk ziya alan camidir. Bakır oklu minareler, güneşi en evvel görmek için havalarda yükselir.

Şimdi heyhat, eski “saat”le beraber akşam da, fecir de bitti. Birçoklarımız için fecir, artık gecedir ve birçoklarımızı güneş, yeni ve acayip bir uykunun ateşlerinden, eller kilitli, ağız çarpılmış, bacaklar bozuk çarşaflara dolanmış, kıvrılırken buluyor. Artık geç uyanıyoruz. Çünkü hayatımıza sokulan yeni ve fena günün eşliğinde çömelmiş, kin, arzu, hırs ve haset sürülerinin bizi ateş saçan

gözlerle beklediğini biliyoruz. Artık fecri yalnız kümeslerimizdeki dargın ve mağrur horozlara bıraktık. Şimdi Müslüman evindeki saat, başka bir alemin vakitlerini gösterir gibi, bizim için gece olan saatleri gündüz ve gündüz olan saatleri gece renginde gösteriyor.

Çölde yolunu şaşırınlar gibi biz şimdi zaman içinde kaybolmuş kimseleriz.

*Dergâh, c.1, nr.3, 16 Mayıs 1337/1921
(Bu yazı Dergâh Edebiyat Sanat Kültür Dergisi'nin Cilt: I Sayı: 4 / Haziran 1990 tarihinde 19'uncu sayfada yayımlanmış olan metin gözden geçirilerek az da olsa yeniden sadeleştirilmiştir.)*





Ozan Atalan
"Acceptance"
2017
Ready Made
Installation



Burak Ayazoğlu

"Form-IV"

2017

115x93x130cm

Mixed Technique, Cardboard, Epoxy,

Plexy, Acrylic, Fiberglass

Sculpture



Ünal Bostancı

"Affection"

2017

PVC Cat Skeleton, Marble

(30x60x27cm);

Audio (180' loop)

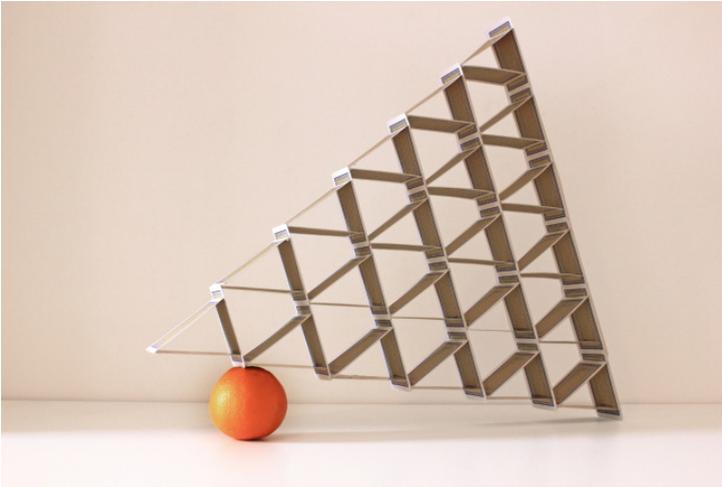
Installation



Ayçesu Duran
“Room with View 1”
2017
Installation



Ayçesu Duran
“Room with View 2”
2017
Installation

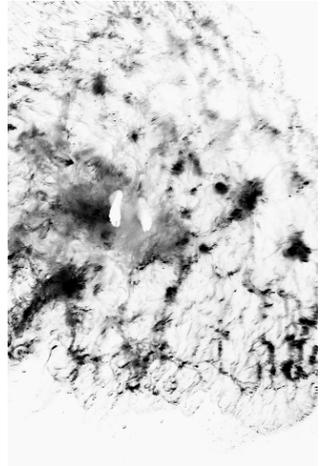


Ayçesu Duran
“Room with View 3”
2017
Installation





Beril Gülcan
"I Try"
2017
54x110 cm
Photography



Beril Gülcan
"Lost"
2017
45x68 cm
Photography



Beril Gülcan
"Together"
2017
52x68 cm
Photography



Beril Gülcan
"We're Drowning"
2017
54x95 cm
Photography



“Hemingway Fantasy Room”

Directed by:

Onur Karaođlu

Performers:

Aren Fındık

Burak evik

Can Gven

Dila Yumurtacı

Hakan Kalgıdım

Hicran Demir

Melek Nur Dudu

Merve Uzunosman

Ahmet Yařar



Hakan Kirdar

"Decadence / Problem of Women's Liberation"

2017

Variable Size

Installation



Muhittincan

"İffet-i Endam"

2017

115x220 cm

Mixed Technique on Canvas



Öner Taylan Öztürk
"Fluidity of Paradox"
2017
Jar and Milk
Video Installation, 3'00



Koral Sagular

"untitled"

2017

63x39 cm

Rice framed Mirror, Stuffed Albino Snake

Installation



Sena

"Decadence Series" 9 Pieces

2017

35 x 50 cm

Photogravure Printing on Paper



DAS Art Project.
"Susurluk"
2017
Installation













Special Thanks

Pera Palace Hotel Jumeirah's Administration and Staff,
Can Erol, Yasemin Vargı, Ayşe Umur, Emre Zeytinođlu,
Pınar Kartal Timer, Tolga Egemen, Yađmur Yıldırım, Orhan Taner,
Bora Olgunsoy, Ufuk Şahin, Can Küçük,
Beril Ece Güler, Sena Ofset, Sena Balkaç



IDA ART PROJECT.