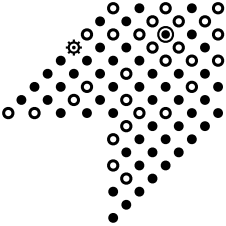


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CultureCIVIC 2021-2024



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Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, İstanbul, İzmir

CultureCIVIC 2021–2024

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Printing and Binding

Ofset Yapımevi
Çağlayan Mah. Şair Sok. No: 4
Kağıthane, İstanbul
Certificate no: 45354

ISBN 978-625-00-2477-5

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Hatay



Foreword


CultureCIVIC 2021–2024 was conceived as a publication that would exhibit what cultural producers, artists, and activists could achieve, as they used art as a tool for social change, as a means to solve their problems and as a channel for their voices.


As you browse the pages of this book, you will find photographs from creatively executed projects in many parts of Türkiye and quotes from project authors. These brief encounters offer a cross-section of several dozens of projects that increase local participation, mobilise communities, diversify cultural expression and create social memory. Instead of compiling a comprehensive catalogue of all the projects, the book invites cultural producers to discover the stories of the artistic and cultural projects supported by CultureCIVIC, and to engage in



dialogues for possible future collaborations. Another element that adds value to the book is the thematic texts by seven authors. These essays point to the positive impact of CultureCIVIC on artistic production, urban culture, collective work, civil space and memory in Türkiye and encourage cultural professionals working in these fields.

According to an independent survey conducted on CultureCIVIC's activities between 2021 and 2024, the programme has paved the way for a significant increase in audience participation and the visibility of cultural events. The experiences of cultural producers who work locally and with communities have shown that CultureCIVIC's contribution to social participation in arts and culture can evoke a strong response in society and facilitate the production of new perspectives. As cultural workers intervened in the public sphere, modes of addressing of social problems were diversified and new





discussions were generated. Artistic practices have been deepened through the connections established between artists and communities. Cultural diversity has been made tangible as a catalyst for social transformation.

We want to extend our gratitude to the teams of 200 supported projects for insisting on bringing up dozens of issues, from urban rights to ecological awareness, from cultural rights to accessibility to feminism and the fight against discrimination, and for the richness they have added to the CultureCIVIC programme partners, programme team and Türkiye's cultural ecosystem.

CultureCIVIC, as a wider community, will continue to understand and magnify the social impact of these works with the support of the European Union in the upcoming programme.

AYŞE ERARSLAN
Director





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Laş û Cih (Body and Place)
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Photo: Hevidar Taş







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Photo: Hasan Vanlık







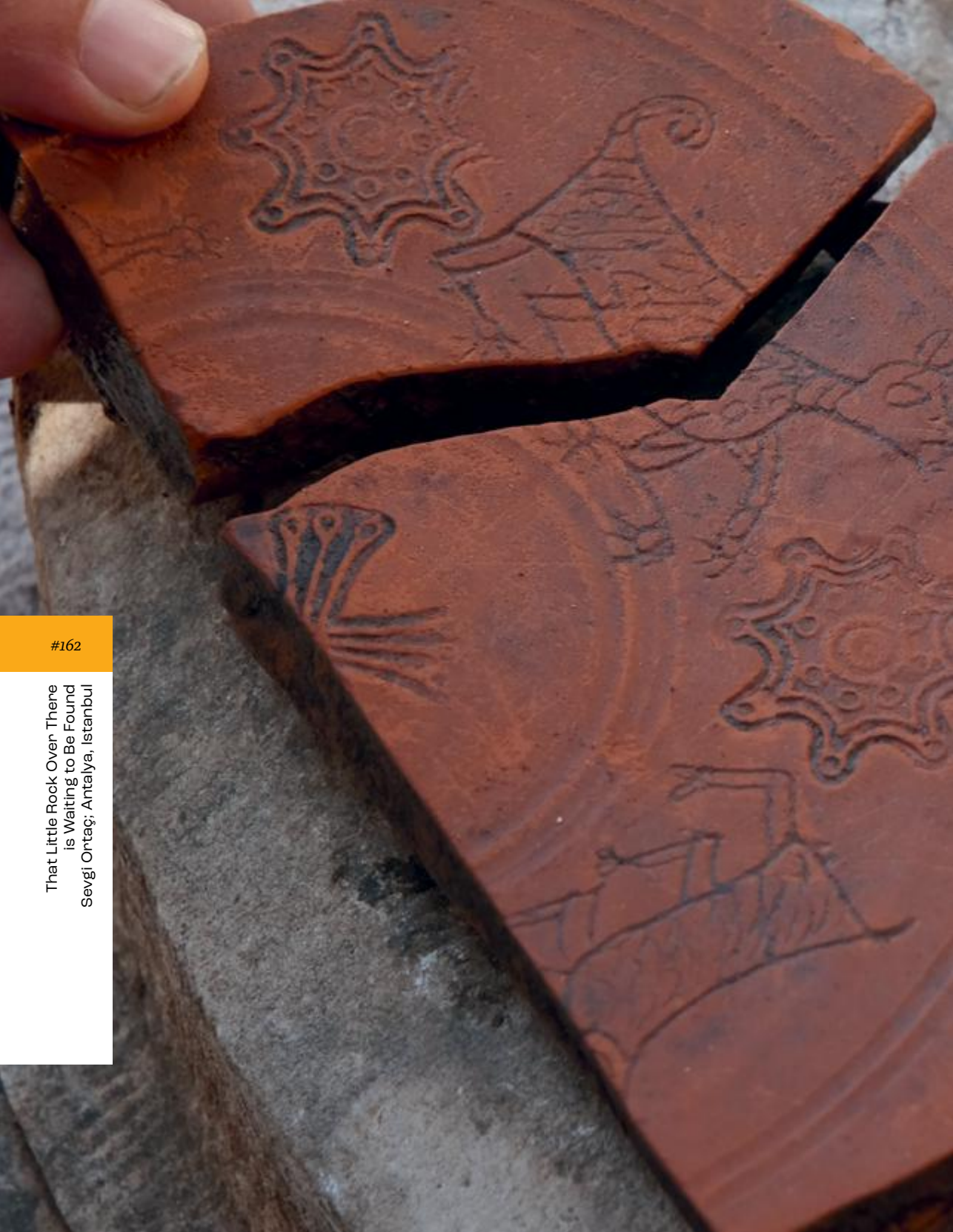


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Four years of CultureCIVIC

NIHAL BOZTEKİN

It was an encounter that triggered powerful flickers in the mind about how art could directly relate to life and aesthetics to politics... The theme of the 8th Istanbul Biennial in 2003, curated by Dan Cameron, was 'Poetic Justice', and photographs adorned a wall in Tophane-i Âmire, one of the venues – a tree, a plate of *künefe*, a child...

This work was *Where We Come From*, by Palestinian-American artist Emily Jacir. Jacir had contacted Palestinians around the world who had been forced to leave their homeland and who did not have the right to return, asking them, 'If I could do something for you anywhere in Palestine, what would it be?' What followed was a two-year process of her trying to fulfil the wishes she received and photographing those moments. These were not grandiose aspirations; they were such seemingly simple actions in the flow of daily life as eating something or hugging someone – not, after all, so simple for people deprived of those opportunities. Some had asked her to drink the water in their village, some to spend time with their family, to eat *künefe*, to play soccer with the first Palestinian child she saw on the street in Haifa, to visit their mother's grave and leave flowers... The photographs we

saw on the wall were of that water, that Palestinian child, that *künefe*. There were no photographs of a grave because the cemetery had been destroyed.

To what extent could a work of art or a performance – be it a photograph, a painting, a sculpture, a film, a piece of writing or a play – mediate the representation (let's not set a goal of achieving justice) of the subaltern subject whose voice is not heard, so that they were heard, and so that they were included, becoming a participant/stakeholder in the work, even if it were just through ideation? So that their name and existence were recorded in history not always as an object but sometimes as a subject? How could one express one's troubles while expressing harsh realities, wars, disasters and all kinds of discrimination, through whatever means one chose, without falling into the trap of 'artwashing', or 'Art is what matters, who cares about the world?',¹ and without disregarding the deep connection established between the viewer/receiver and the work's concerns?

In which areas of social life could the work of art create a transformative or unifying effect, and for which communities in society could the work of art, in addition to mediating the voiceless subject, become an agent? What could it record and pass on from today to the future? What unasked questions could it raise? How could the obstacles and deprivations that stood in the way of the basic needs of this type of production, such as space, visibility, sustainability and permanence, be overcome?

The emergence of CultureCIVIC, as envisaged by the stakeholder institutions, its realisation as a design, the different phases it underwent in this process, what it learned as it proceeded, what it taught as it was learning, and the seemingly humble yet deeply rooted and quite substantial contribution that it has made to the world of thought, arts and culture in Türkiye, the strengthening of not-for-profit organising, and history in the long term, should be pondered while meandering around these questions as we consider the country's democratic realm.

1 'Fias ars, pereat mundus.' Benjamin refers to this sentence in Latin as he discusses fascism's relationship with art. Benjamin, Walter, 1892–1940. 'The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproduction' in *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books, 1969, p. 242.

Art that cares

The literature on culture, arts, and politics is wide ranging. Altuğ Akın, Çelenk Bafra, Ezgi Bakçay, Ulaş Bayraktar, Sema Kaygusuz, and Sarp Keskiner make considerable contributions to the existing canon with their articles. I like to keep in mind that the content and definition of these concepts exhibit a capacity for transformation and flexibility in response to the changes in daily life, identities and communities, and that they do not stand still. At the same time, I think the following sentences by Hal Foster will also make a meaningful contribution to the framework we will delineate here, that is, to remember what CultureCIVIC has facilitated with the projects it supports: ‘Here, then, one might distinguish between a “political art”, which, locked in a rhetorical code, reproduces ideological representations, and an art with a “politic”, which, concerned with the structural positioning of thought and the material effectivity of practice within the social totality, seeks to produce a concept of the political relevant to our present.’²

When we consider the artistic production on the land that we inhabit, we can quickly see how a powerful control mechanism might trigger artists to frequently self-censor. The country’s far past does not present a pleasant picture from this perspective, and lately individuals and communities who explore artistic and cultural production have needed even more support and solidarity to compose their languages against the backdrop of ‘national identity-immaterial values’ that have become weights in the scales of prestige as they have become goods and tools of polarisation. This solidarity should not only be geared towards presenting a work or a project, but should also open the door to creative collaborations that are long term and permanent, so as not to disregard the ‘reproduction of the conditions of previous production.’³

At this point, the goals that CultureCIVIC set out and progressed – by supporting cultural enterprises across Türkiye,

² Hal Foster, ‘For A Concept of the Political in Contemporary Art’, in *Recordings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics*, Washington: Bay Press, 1985, p. 155.

³ Louis Althusser, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. New York: Verso Books, 2014, p. 48.

by contributing to the encouragement of freedom of speech, dialogue, plurality and individual rights, and by prioritising the reach beyond the major urban centres to support artistic and cultural activities, and cultural civil society organisations on a local level, with a grassroots approach – are even more salient.

CultureCIVIC has made it possible for people from civil society as well as the arts and culture industries to co-produce, facilitating projects that respond more flexibly to the complex challenges of our time. It has reinforced the modes of collaboration, participation and networking, and I believe that the country's colourfulness and multiculturalism were made visible in the 200 individual projects that were realised over four years. It was also particularly helpful that the activists and artists did not have to possess a legal entity when applying to the programme, to realise their ideas. CultureCIVIC has been a lifeline in a much-needed space.

– Ceyda Özdemir Ertan
CultureCIVIC Project Coordinator (Goethe-Institut Istanbul)

Some organisations bring rights-based work in civil society and production in arts and culture closer and facilitate dialogues between these two fields. Still, it would not be wrong to say that CultureCIVIC is in a slightly more privileged position, thanks to its definition of this as a mission and the sheer breadth of its scope. It should be emphasised first that the programme aims to expand the increasingly narrowing areas for civil society in the highly complex and risk-filled climate of the world, and in Türkiye in particular, and to open up breathing space, representing an intercommunicating, experience-sharing production environment, to which it can contribute with the support provided by its internal organisation.

The fact that representatives of institutions – each experienced in their field, supporting cultural and artistic or rights-based projects on different scales, and producing such projects within their own structures, while engaged in similar activities – employ different methods, owing to their origins, goals and working disciplines, yet collaborate as a team under one roof and with a common goal, constitutes an example. This is a project implemented in partnership between the Goethe-Institut Istanbul, Anadolu Kültür, the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSÜ), the Institut français Türkiye, and the Danish Cultural Institute Türkiye office, in cooperation with the Embassy of Türkiye in the Netherlands. The structure in question, namely the coming together of these major institutions on an equal footing, creates a prototype for the cooperation, solidarity, experience transfer and joint work that the programme scrupulously emphasises.

The CultureCIVIC programme was developed in 2020 as an arts and culture support programme within the scope of the European Union Civil Society Facility and Media Programme's call for a culture of fundamental rights. From the outset, its central point was to produce and support projects that would surpass conventional methods in the field of human rights struggle, in a political and social environment where freedom of expression and communication channels were increasingly limited, while feeding into this field from different branches. By shaping everything from programme names to corporate identity and communication strategy through experiment and discussion, CultureCIVIC paved the way for people from different institutional sensibilities and working disciplines to become a team.

As someone who's been involved since the beginning, I have seen that CultureCIVIC has made an unequivocal impact. When you step away from your desk and into the field, all of the difficulties and the red tape are forgotten. When all is said and done, the work undertaken here does benefit someone somewhere, and that is a good feeling. Project owners who

benefitted from this programme gained financial experience in managing a European Union project, established ties with public institutions, expanded their field and reached more people overall. This support has made a significant contribution to the growth of certain organisations in certain regions, as well as their range, and a tremendous change has taken place.

– Tolga Güleç, CultureCIVIC Project Coordinator (Anadolu Kültür)

When the programme started, COVID-19 was on the agenda. The pandemic, which engulfed the world at an unexpected time and over an extensive period, disrupted the daily lives of all sections of society, making even more visible the inequality for disadvantaged groups. While those employed in precarious jobs, the disabled, refugees and those living on the streets had difficulty accessing basic necessities, and an increase in domestic violence and harassment was observed.

As arts and culture events that brought people together as a community were disrupted; both those who produced in these fields and their audiences were affected in many ways. The solution offered was to develop new methods urgently, to plan events in the virtual environment, to increase social media channels' artistic and cultural content, and to develop digital archives, although, sadly, only those with internet access and the required technology could benefit from these opportunities. Issuing a call for projects at such a time brought many unknowns, risks and difficulties for the CultureCIVIC team. However, offering such grant support at this time also meant creating a much-needed breathing space.

We weren't a congruous team at the beginning; we argued constantly, and it took time for us to come together. With its many uncertainties, CultureCIVIC is definitely a programme that requires courage. It was handed to us as a 'project vision' on paper. We only had three months for the

programme to take shape and to become the CultureCIVIC we see today. We started work on the programme in March 2021, and announced the first open call in June 2021, though we were experiencing another reality at that time, with the pandemic, and weren't able to make a field trip until the end of the second semester. There were lockdowns, regulations, difficulties with which applicants had to deal while undertaking a project during the pandemic, which is why there were a lot of online projects in our first semester.

– Üstünel İnanç

CultureCIVIC Communications Coordinator (Goethe-Institut Istanbul)

During the evaluation process for the project applications, a selection committee consisting of independent jury members and one member from each partner organisation was formed. To establish a fair evaluation system, a condition was imposed that the same person should not be a jury member for more than three open calls, and thus, a mixed structure was designed for each selection committee. This rotation in the jury structure reflected the diversity that CultureCIVIC prioritises in its projects and geographic regions.

The evaluation criteria, although slightly different for each grant programme, were related to the answers to the following questions. Are the project's objectives clearly stated and compatible with the applied grant programme? Is the project related to a thematic problem that the grant programme wants to address, and does it have an approach that would make a difference? Are the planned activities related to the project's objectives? Does the budget include the necessary details, is it linked to the targeted results, and is it realistic? Does the applicant have experience in managing the project budget? Is the timetable clear and realistic? Do the project's activities and purpose match the needs and context? Are the target groups and activities clearly defined? Does the project owner have the potential to continue work in the field of culture and arts? Has a clear self-monitoring and evaluation plan been prepared?

In the first days of CultureCIVIC, we worked to ensure the transparency of the application selection criteria and the impartiality of our judges. In the model we established, each open call was assigned two independent members who did not work in any of the partnering institutions. We introduced a rule of rotation, whereby judges could be on a given panel a maximum of three times in 14 open calls. CultureCIVIC has been a programme with 1,600 applications and 50 judges. In that respect, it has evolved into a programme where civil society and the arts-and-culture experience in Türkiye can converse and learn from one another.

— Ayşe Eranslan, CultureCIVIC Director (Goethe-Institut Istanbul)

When it comes to budgeting, which is a crucial topic in arts and culture activities, the unfair distribution, limitations and limits of public institution support, and sometimes their interventions in the content, and the discussions created by private sector support – for example, concerns with their fields of activity, employee policies, or the damage they cause to the environment – are evident. In this case, international or national funds are preferred, so that project owners can produce freely without being restricted, controlled and censored by external elements. When we get down from the stage and sit with the audience, it is possible to see that the share allocated from the budgets to watch arts and culture activities is decreasing and is even on the verge of disappearing completely, as can be seen from the TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute) data. Considering that living standards are deteriorating, a segment of society has difficulty meeting even their minimum needs. In such a case, the budget support to be given to those who will engage in artistic production and make such events easily accessible to local communities, especially in regions and cities outside of the centre, becomes one of the fundamental rights to ‘access, participate and contribute to cultural life.’

I had just moved to Türkiye when CultureCIVIC was being founded; not only was I isolated from the arts-and-culture scene in the country, but I was also experiencing culture clash. What I like most about this project is that it raised my personal awareness. Visiting the cities where the projects were implemented, and meeting the project owners were invaluable experiences. I was touched by people's hospitality. That's why I think field trips are important for CultureCIVIC. In four years, the approved projects have brought hundreds of people in civil society together. One main goal was to establish sustainable relationships. We were able to achieve this through grants and capacity-building programmes. I am proud to be a part of this effort. The challenges we have faced made us stronger as a team, and we are still trying to give our very best.

– Leyla Gümüş

CultureCIVIC Finance Coordinator (Goethe-Institut Istanbul)

The grant programmes launched by CultureCIVIC and the support provided under these headings also gain more importance – especially when one of the main aims is to support artistic production outside metropolises such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. It is also essential to observe that many cities outside the centre are participating in an EU project for the first time, observing how one project guides others and opens up space for civil society in the region.



#154

Fata Morgana
Alper Aydın; Ondu
Photo: Senhat Kir

Driving Change and Transformation, or Arts and Culture as Intervention

ALTUĞ AKIN, PhD

Izmir Ekonomi University, Communications Department

‘Arts and culture’, in the narrowest sense for now, could without doubt play various roles in individuals and societies tackling threatening issues. One of those roles is closely linked to change and transformation in individuals and societies. When appropriately harnessed, ‘arts and culture’ could be considered among the intervention tools that can beneficially change and transform individuals and societies – at least, according to the approach of SBC (Social and Behaviour Change).

Recently, numerous international institutions and organisations, including various United Nations agencies, among which UNICEF¹ is of particular note, have adopted this approach, engaging with an age-old and strikingly philosophical question of how individuals and societies can change and be transformed.² Before moving to the ‘how’ of this change and transformation, we need to agree on a response to the question of ‘why’: Why should individuals and societies change/transform?

1 ‘Social and Behaviour Change Guidance’, <https://www.sbcguidance.org>, accessed 8 July 2024.

2 Altuğ Akın, Selin Türkel, Pınar Umul Ünsal, ‘Infodemic Management for Social and Behavior Change: Youth Mobilization for Combating Disinformation During COVID-19’, *Journal of Health Communication*, 28 (sup2), 2023, pp. 41–48.

Why change?

Why transformation?

Every response to this question is directly linked to its source. For example, an ideal future, as imagined by an institution engaged in scientific activities to the best of its capabilities, would be one in which individuals became more curious, asked more questions, became more critically engaged... According to this scenario, this individual and societal transformation would make the country, region, and society in which they were active, 'better, more beautiful, more liveable'. Such transformation is, then, useful and even necessary. How the transformation is achieved will depend on the agent/institution responding to the question of why, but, in any case, change and transformation are deemed valuable and necessary for a better world/country/neighbourhood.

Evidently, CultureCIVIC shares this perspective. In its institutional language, 'CultureCIVIC supports projects and individuals that encourage cultural dialogue and public engagement, tolerance, freedom of speech, non-discrimination, social cohesion, individual freedoms and democratic

processes.'³ In citing particular concepts and values (cultural dialogue, public engagement, freedom of speech, democratic processes, plurality against discrimination...), CultureCIVIC is mapping out a clear direction of travel for Türkiye in its journey towards societal and individual transformation. And the response to the question of 'why' individuals and societies should change is based on the premise that the country would be 'better, more beautiful, more liveable' as a result.

From the question of 'why' follows the question of 'how': how can individual and societal transformation, for which CultureCIVIC aims, be achieved? But the simple response, via 'arts and culture', is worthy of an in-depth analysis, as neither culture nor the arts is a simple concept or field, and CultureCIVIC, by its own nature, reflects their complexity.

CultureCIVIC's core purpose, the 'how' of change

Let's focus on the conception of individual and societal change and transformation before returning to CultureCIVIC. In this approach, societal issues and problems are

3 'Who Are We', <https://www.culture-civic.org/en/who-are-we/general-information>, accessed 16 July 2024.

experienced on an individual level. In other words, no matter how societal or structural the problems are—and most often, this is genuinely the case—they manifest in the lives of individuals. As the late Uls Baker, referencing Spinoza, said: ‘Nature does not create nations, peoples, tribes, it creates only individuals. And these individuals find their collective belonging only “later”.’

Thus, in the theory of the ‘socio-ecological’ model, the individual is at the centre, and the impact of those individuals on societal layers is represented using expanding circles: nuclear family, group of friends, neighbourhood, tribe, nation.⁴ The issue at stake, the societal problem that is being tackled, is identified with the individual in focus as the assessment is made on the experience of the problem on each layer. Subsequently, the interventions on these layers are developed to decrease the negative impact of the issue on the individual and, if possible, to neutralise it.

The process progresses as a programme in which sometimes individual change and societal transformation predominate, and sometimes the two dimensions are designed in a balanced way.

Therefore, the steps required for the targeted societal or individual transformation to occur or the ‘how of change’ are answered according to this approach. These answers vary depending on the problem, on the social layer in which the problem manifests itself on the individual, and, of course, on the context.

For example, a programme geared towards the problem of child marriage could host a spectrum of interventions, ranging from awareness education at an individual level, for girls and boys considered to be at high risk, and peer-to-peer counselling services for the parents, to mobilisation or meetings against child marriage on a neighbourhood level, and media campaigns and legislature on a national level. The interventions would be constructed on in-depth assessments and analysis, better to understand the issue’s context, and the intervention menu would be extensive.

Some societal and individual change and transformation interventions fall under ‘arts and culture’, and where these are concerned, at least two changes and transformations can be considered. The first one that comes to mind is the change and transformation

4 Urie Bronfenbrenner, ‘Toward an experimental ecology of human development’, *American Psychologist*, 32(7), 1977, pp. 513–531.

that can be triggered in the target audiences: An artwork can potentially impact viewers, receivers and listeners, and such an impact brings about a change. The second and often the less striking change and transformation is concealed in the experiences of the agents of arts and culture during and after the processes of artistic production: if they are correctly constructed and applied, the artistic and cultural producer, its agent, is changed and transformed. This second change and transformation is precisely when we can return to CultureCIVIC.

Driving change and transformation

The main element distinguishing CultureCIVIC from similar programmes implemented in Turkey is the decision to effect change and transformation by focusing on arts and culture actors and supporting their change and transformation. This is followed by supporting those in greater need as much as possible.

Again, in its own words, CultureCIVIC ‘prioritises the reach beyond the major urban centres to strengthen Turkey’s cultural infrastructure with a grassroots

approach.’⁵ To strengthen the values and concepts listed above, such as participation and cultural dialogue, towards the ‘why’ of change, it supports ‘all cultural civil society organisations, initiatives, artists and any individuals, institutions and enterprises with a non-profit mindset.’⁶ Looking at the detail of the provided support, two main methods have been adopted that reasonably complement each other: providing grants and offering capacity-building support. If we use the societal and individual change and transformation approach and terminology, it would not be wrong to define these two methods as ‘interventions’ adopted and implemented by CultureCIVIC.

For example, by providing financial support in four different categories (Grassroots Projects, Structural Support, Intercity Networking and Art Production), CultureCIVIC ‘aims to contribute to the development of dialogue, collaboration, and communication in the arts and culture sector across the country’.⁷ The capacity-building support helps arts and culture workers to access the training they need, especially

5 ‘CultureCIVIC’, <https://www.culture-civic.org/en/who-are-we/general-information>, accessed 19 June 2024.

6 *ibid.*

7 *ibid.*

in cultural administration and civic participation, to produce a field where dialogue in arts and culture and potential collaborations can be realised.

Arts and culture as an intervention

In summary, when viewed from the perspective of societal and individual change and transformation, these two interventions primarily target the change and transformation of actors in the field of arts and culture, through the support extended to them as individuals and institutions. From these actors, a societal transformation can spread to the audience and consumers of the arts and culture field.

The results of these interventions – that is, the extent to which the individual and societal transformation aimed for by CultureCIVIC has been achieved – are beyond the limitations of this text. However, looking at the works and the arts and culture actors supported by CultureCIVIC, all of which can be examined in this book and via CultureCIVIC's digital channels, will give you an idea. Following the jobs and careers of these actors in the future will provide us with the opportunity to observe the path of the triggered change over time. We will experience together

the contribution of these actors to social change in the direction described by CultureCIVIC. While changing and transforming... ●



ALAN BİR MİLLETİN
AN BİRİ KOPMUŞ DEMENTİR.

B. Akın

11 - 12 HAZİRAN 2024

YER:
TRABZON AKÇAABAT GÜZEL SANAYİLER LİSESİ
KONFERANS SALONU
AKÇAABAT / TR



1881 - 1939
Seyit-i Ayniyani

Veng Bldi, Vini Mebi: Vevnemerdim
(Speak up, Don't Get Lost: Snowman)
Çocuk Sanat Merkezi; Diyarbakır, İstanbul, Tunceli



Rethinking and Creating Theater's Facilities for
Children: Performing the *Cloud Play* in Ankara
and the Earthquake Region; Denya Ağaoğlu





There is Art in Me
Mahir Elvan
Trabzon



Li Déné (In the Church)
Çetoyé Zêdo
Batman, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Van



#125

Ayvalık International Film Festival
Seyir Association
Balıkesir





Not institutions, but instituters

Since CultureCIVIC’s grant programmes are clearly classified on its website and explained through projects, mentioning them here would risk repetition, but it is necessary to mention them anyway, at least to take a look at where they touch the ethos of the country. The grant programmes are grouped under four main headings: Grassroots Projects, Structural Support, Intercity Networking, and Art Production.

Grassroots Projects Grant Programme

The Grassroots Projects Grant Programme was designed to reach out to initiatives and individuals that aim to impact upon local communities and audiences. When we review the projects supported under this heading so far, it becomes evident that their content focuses on social problems in line



BuildConductShare set out to reach music teachers working with children and young people in the centre and surrounding districts of Trabzon and to establish a platform where everyone could share through singing. The choirs formed during the project came together at the 1st Trabzon Choir Festival on 11–12 June 2024. Yiğit Can Aslan, the project coordinator, describes the process thus: “BuildConductShare” is a project targeting music teachers, as well as final-year students in music-related departments who’ll be the

teachers of the future, with an aim to improve their experience in choral music and their conducting skills. Within the scope of the project, in addition to the various activities I personally carried out, we organised workshops with guest instructors. We aimed to share the knowledge and to gain experience in these workshops. Among the participants, we have, for example, music teachers from Yomra and Akçaabat, at opposite ends of Trabzon. With the training sessions, we hope that every instructor, every participant will have at least one choir.’

#101

KURYÖNETPAYLAŞ
Photo: Nesilhan Aydın

with their purpose and it further encourages dialogue between different agents.

Many dead ends await arts and culture activities and, by association, those individuals and communities that produce in this field, especially in areas outside the centre of Türkiye. The fact that the relationship to be established with venue and budget providers and official authorities is based on personal or political proximity criteria – that is, events are planned based on subjective preferences rather than sustainable cultural policies – in addition to priority given to performance and measurability, leaves democratic participation behind. The choice for local activities to focus more on the touristic promotion of the city or region are among these dead ends that immediately come to mind.⁴

When we review this scenario, the importance of the support provided by CultureCIVIC under the heading of Grassroots Projects becomes apparent. The following sections will discuss the numerous projects in question under different headings.

Structural Support

The support provided to various artistic and cultural institutions and festivals is vital in organising a space or a structure, improving or transforming its physical conditions, shaping it and thus ensuring its longevity. This support contributes to the continuity of organisations, individuals, and civil society activities, and increases their capacity to operate independently. While there are relatively more institutions/organisations with this opportunity in large cities, it is difficult for structures outside the centre to access financial support to develop capacity. This support is provided to initiatives that steer away from market criteria such as visitor numbers, ticket sales and profitability; in other words, not to ‘institutions’ that are institutionalised but to ‘instituters’ with establishing practices, fulfilling an essential task in ‘[providing] firmer ground to that or those who do not yet have it, to those whose voices are not really heard or those who are not yet represented.’⁵

4 For a more detailed analysis in this field, please see Ulaş Bayraktar, *Türkiye’de Yerel Kültür Ekosistemi*, İstanbul: İKSV, 2024, p. 60.

5 Pascal Gielen, ‘Emancipating Cultures: From Canonising Cultural Institutions Towards Commoning Art Constitutions’, <https://iletisim.com.tr/dergiler/kultur-politikasi-yillik/5/sayi-2-kultur-politikasi-yillik-2019/10042/kulturleri-ozgurlestirmek-kultur-kurumlar-kanonundan-sanat-olusumlarinda-mustereklesmeye/11838>, accessed 20 July 2024.

Twenty-five organisations or communities were supported under this grant programme in four years. These budgets were aimed at meeting the needs of the applicants, such as providing technical equipment, developing digital capacity, improving infrastructure and physical conditions, transforming and renovating spaces, covering rent or maintenance costs, and establishing libraries, all directly aligned with CultureCIVIC’s emphasis on ‘sustainability’.

One of the organisations supported within this framework was the Yesayan Culture and Literature Association. In Yesayan Hall, Aras Publishing, a publishing house that promotes Armenian literature in Türkiye and aims to preserve Armenian culture, has been hosting various events since 2019. In 2022, the Yesayan Culture and Literature Association was established to carry out national and international academic and cultural studies and to create an archive and research centre. The support provided by CultureCIVIC



One of CultureCIVIC’s structural support grants was to provide the Ayvalık International Film Festival with an office space. The office in Küçük Han, a mid-19th-century building that has reopened after an extensive restoration, was designed as a socialising space where meetings and events could be organised and guests could get together. ‘We always try to cooperate closely with local arts-and-culture institutions and organisations,’ says Azize Tan, festival director. ‘United in this way, we endeavour to expand our

efforts, to make it more beautiful and widespread. The main office of the festival is now located in Küçük Han, along with our hospitality and production units. Guests of the festival drop by to spend time at the Han between films. They have the opportunity to socialise with the festival team and have a comfortable place to speak to one another. Of course, having this base also improves the sense of belonging in the festival. It has become a meeting place for us – somewhere to resume our work and preparations throughout the year, and also a place to bring everyone together during the festival, where everyone can connect easily.

#125

AYVALIK INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL

to the association ensures that the collection of Armenian books, periodicals, manuscripts, audio and video recordings, and various ephemera are preserved in archive cabinets under professional conditions and made accessible.

Support was provided to improve the conditions of the studio established by Çıplak Ayaklar Kumpanyası, (Barefoot Dance Company), a collective structure that has maintained its existence for more than 20 years. In 2007, they transformed an old iron workshop in the Tophane district of Istanbul. The support helped to solve the heating problem and provided the necessary furniture and equipment. The company members and other dance artists can thus easily use the studio in the winter.

Kırkayak Kültür, which carries out its work on the principle of cultural pluralism in two separate centres in Gaziantep, used the support it received from CultureCIVIC to transform Kırkayak Art Centre (Taşev) into an open arts and culture area for the development and recording of city culture, to establish a podcast and video studio within this framework, and to increase the capacity of workshop and exhibition areas, video and film screening sections.

Another organisation that received structural support from CultureCIVIC is the Nesin Foundation, founded by Aziz Nesin in 1973. The theatre hall in the Çatalca centre, which had been awaiting completion for many years, is now ready for public concerts and plays.

The work to transform the stone building adjacent to MAHAL – which was brought to life by the Çanakkale Biennial Initiative, and which has been functioning as a multipurpose art centre since 2013 – into a space focused on art and civil society, began in 2020 during the pandemic. The new structure was added to MAHAL and functioned as a residency and a space where art production, masterclasses and workshops could be held with the support provided by CultureCIVIC. The technical equipment acquired within the project's scope was designed to be utilised independently of the space.

Intercity Networking

This heading focuses on developing dialogue and cooperation between agents beyond centres such as Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir, implementing intercity projects and including cultural actors from other cities in those projects. In this context, film and theatre festivals and writing workshops spread to different cities have been supported to date.

In addition, support was given to an intercity artist exchange and residency programme network, a network of civil society organisations, and a project that brings together field experts from different cities and languages.

One of these projects was ‘OPENspace.ART Public Performance Designed with a Focus on Ecology’, developed under the leadership of the Genedos Cooperative and curated by Şule Ateş. Within the scope of the project, performances were designed in regions with different challenges, but with a shared insistence on struggle; the designs were based on the ecological characteristics of that region and the understanding of the nature-conservation efforts of the local people. The collective presentation and final shows of the workshops, performances and video artworks carried out in the districts of Kaş in Antalya, Bergama in İzmir, and Hemşin in Rize, were held in October of the same year at the Kaş Theatre Days.



‘The reason for choosing these three distinct districts as centres was that there were struggles in Bergama against the Euro Gold Mine using cyanide to produce gold, in Hemşin against hydroelectric power plants, and in Kaş against quarries and airport construction. The ecology-based approach of the performances made it essential to consider the unique characteristics of these three districts and to place the existence of the participants at the centre of the work. I did not go to any of these

cities with a clear image or a particular design. I had no idea about what I was going to do, in what kind of environment or with whom. The idea emerged during the preliminary research, during my encounter with those cities and the people that live there. I allowed myself to be led by my interaction with the performance participants and the local people who supported the project. If I were to describe these performances, I’d say, “We conceived a 15-day process together and invited the audience to experience the outcome.”**

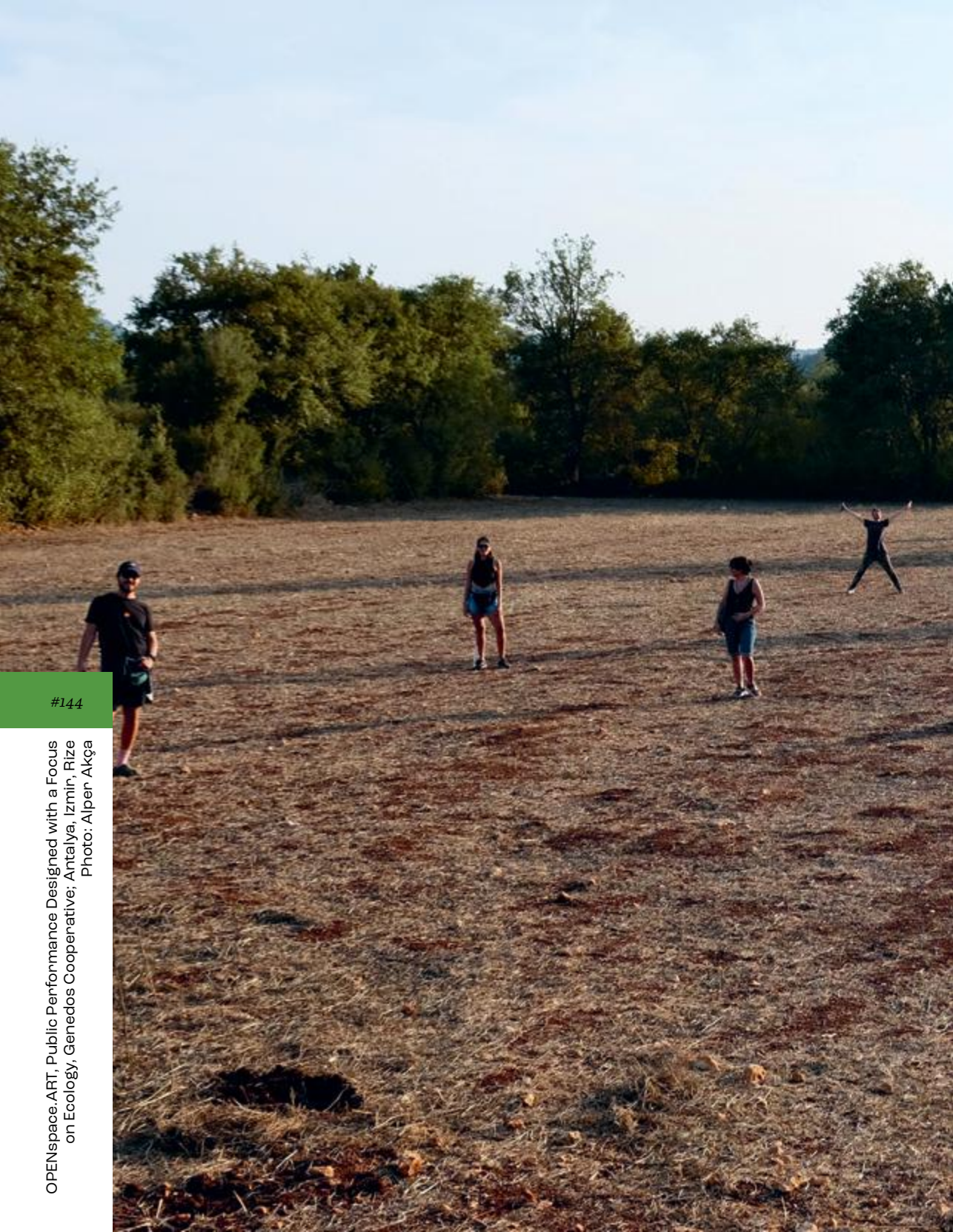
* Şule Ateş, <http://acikalan.org/2023/11/06/acikalan-projesinin-son-performansi-voyn/> accessed 30 September 2024.



Improving the Physical Conditions of
Çıplak Ayaklar Studio
Çıplak Ayaklar Dance Company, Istanbul

#144

OPENspace.ART, Public Performance Designed with a Focus
on Ecology, Genedos Cooperative, Antalya, Izmir, Rize
Photo: Alper Akça







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#129

Transformation of Kinkayak Art Centre
into an Open Space
Kinkayak Kültür; Gaziantep





#122

Habitat for the Arts
Çanakkale Biennial Initiative; Çanakkale
Photo: Saygın Mavinil, CABININ



#145

Anatolia's Memories of Music Meetings
Anadolu Müzik Kültürleri Derneği
Adana, Diyarbakır, Kayseri, Mersin; Photo: Cansu Özbay



Dialogue and Networking

SARP KESKİNER

The concept of dialogue, based on reciprocity in communication, dictates that we first fully understand the corresponding party or parties. This necessity invites us to introduce ourselves to those positioned opposite or parallel to us. A commitment to truly get to know each other encourages the parties to stand side by side to produce solutions to shared problems, so we can walk into the future together. Deepening our acquaintance clarifies which problems, enthusiasms, dreams, practices and expertise we have in common. This clarification process provides various options within our capacity, what we can do together, our initial goals, and the current circumstances. The options we have set up move us towards taking specific initiatives, while the patterns we establish help slowly to shape the collective mind.

While taking these steps essential to the formation of a collective, it is crucial that each participant has an equal say in the decision-making processes. Common needs and goals should be determined by consensus, and unconditional solidarity between participants is a prerequisite. The forms of action that slowly but spontaneously take shape in this initial, fragile phase, form that collective's set of principles over time. If we take inspiration from birds, we can liken this fragile stage to a collective exercise in nest building. If it is not built with cooperation and common sense, the nest that needs to adhere to the branch or wall (the local arts and culture ecosystem) will soon disintegrate. The set of principles necessary to a collective are akin to the architectural principles that create a stable nest. The same set of principles that are so essential

to the creation of a strong, secure nest, helps the collective to establish healthy, sustainable relationships among its peers, and, in later stages, when the conditions are ripe, to establish an inter-organisational local network, in the tradition of mutual learning, cooperation culture, and intra-network compromise. Therefore, seeing, understanding and accepting what we have in common with those in the same ecosystem, assuming that being a companion in rights-based struggles is the core principle, appears as the primary requirement in establishing constructive dialogue.

Managing expectations must be one of the most challenging topics for those who aspire to build local networks. Each participant that wants their voice to be heard, be it an individual or an institution, naturally has different needs and problems that they will want to prioritise at the first meeting. One of the main reasons why many attempts at network building have been in vain from the outset, or why emerging forums with strong agendas can fizzle out, is because they have not been able to create a common ground for expectations, and have cared only about having their voices heard. Thus, it is challenging to determine what interests a mutually sustained network will serve, what it aims for, and how it works or holds

together. Instead of focusing on complaints and disappointments in the initial meeting, it is more useful to look ahead at ways to overcome obstacles, by determining the ameliorating measures for a given situation, and mapping out steps that consider strengths alongside existing advantages. Meeting regularly instead of only when it is convenient declares to the world that there's a lasting commitment to act together, while encouraging potential participants who might have been reticent at the beginning. When a collective takes care to invite disciplinary diversity, when it sets specific agendas for each meeting to gain concrete results and proposals while being open to interventions that enrich the agenda, when it allocates time for the participants to promote themselves and their working areas and to articulate their contributions to the network, when there is tolerance and acceptance of different viewpoints, nothing stands in the way of achieving the goals of such meetings. Achieving disciplinary diversity in those meetings around the same table makes using and learning from various views possible and enriches the mutual learning process.

In addition, it is helpful to re-establish the network's principles, to quash attempts that will create power hierarchies or

lead to discrimination and marginalisation in meetings aimed at networking. Another reason why such networking initiatives remain ineffective may be that parties who come together in local networking meetings or forums generally present their complaints and suggestions, exchange ideas, and then retire to their corners until the next meeting. However, meetings that result in collective socialisation enable the parties to get to know each other more closely. Acquaintances established in environments where sincerity comes to the fore strengthen the network's belonging, thanks to the common elements discovered with the joy and excitement specific to the bond of conversation.

In the context of establishing common grounds, we have witnessed the emergence of a set of shared qualities that can bring together the fragmented constituents of the network – which, for the past decade, we have labelled 'independents' – to the same axis. When limited personal resources force us to produce only irregularly and precariously, when we're dragged into panics that impede specialisation in a field as a result of the one-shot project approach, or when we're too concerned with getting ahead in the competitive environment of the culture industry, for the parties will

have neither the will nor the effort to initiate in-depth dialogues. Too often, we see persistent initiatives driven by a handful of people bent on guarding their space, no matter in which city they are active. Thus, one should not be surprised by how the independent stage, in which initiatives and collectives lead the way, shrinks and expands; when moving as a collective, being widely dispersed and itinerant serves well to survive in times of crisis.

The persistence of the independent initiatives that shape the artistic and cultural life in most cities in Türkiye to remain and produce where they were born, where they live, or where they have just settled, points to the dynamic uncanniness concealed in the womb of uncertainty. In the context of the resilience of independent ecosystems, the dynamic state of uncanniness offers exciting opportunities because it is unclear which weed will flourish on which mountain, side by side with which other flora. Networks appear and disappear, and agents become vigilant and seek ways to survive together in the absence of the comfort zones provided by periods of stability. The dynamic state of uncanniness, the first phase of which we experienced from the mid-90s to the mid-2000s, has remained uninterrupted since 2010. As the trend suggests, the

networks continue to produce brand new ecotones bearing a rainbow of colours as they grow rhizome by rhizome like couch grass.

In the past five years we have come to the end of the phase of understanding and making sense based on the findings and suggestions put forward in the forums and discussions of what will and should happen 'from now on'. At this point, the questions determining the future agenda of networks that have left behind the local acquaintance phase may be the following: how could locally organised arts and culture ecosystems turn into regional networks? If they can be transformed, what common points do these networks agree on, and how do they reach a collective consciousness to jointly address issues such as ecology, the right to the city, gender, species equality, art, tangible and intangible heritage, and memory? Acting across cities has now become an absolute priority for those who progress by taking inspiration from the mycelium's¹ uncanny dynamism or couch grass's rhizomatic expansion.² Intercity networks are now seeking to make solidarity and cooperation

permanent on an interregional basis or, to create an analogy, to consolidate the energy they have produced with low wattage wherever they are, in an organised manner, and to deliver the consolidated energy to dead branches.

By nature, each network is nomadic and can produce change, abundance, resonance and resistance only in mycelia communication with other networks. They aim, then, is to construct regional networks, to foster creative individuals and organisations that are active in the same locale and region and who are not our competitors but our comrades. Destructive competition translates into a slow death in non-governmental organisations and creative fields. If seeking collaboration, solidarity and resource sharing is to open up to mutual learning, this adds to the resilience of all parties. In reviving dead branches, competition should be completely neutralised (or left to the industry where it belongs), and we should create flexible, experimental models that can encourage many different organisations/networks to take advantage of resource development.

1 We can describe mycelium, which consists of trillions of appendages that enable plants to share nutrients with each other and also work as an interplant message transmission system, as the 'neural network of the underground'.

2 One of the characteristic features of rhizomatic expansionism's structure, which escapes from the coding and representation system and progresses by constantly establishing new relations, is openness to the new. Because of this characteristic feature, rhizomatic thought emerges as a kind of 'nomadic thought' against established indicators.

When establishing these models, we should establish mechanisms that make for permanent mutual learning to find the dialogue among the urban constituents and regional stakeholders on solid ground. We can develop these mechanisms only if we are mindful of the structures of resources, infrastructure, labour and opportunities, if we listen to the actual needs, if we are experts in the details, if we have gained the skill of being in dialogue with the public sector, and if we include local inhabitants in the processes of design and decision-making. A regional network that has reached such an order has arrived at the right time to engage with international networks. This is when we can look for opportunities that can be created with sister cities through municipalities as a starting point.

We need to know that the way to engage with international artistic and cultural networks, and to establish sustainable subsequent interaction, is for the network components to be fully aware of the regional potential and able effectively to transfer this potential to international networks. Suppose the first step to convey this potential is to conduct a series of needs analysis and measurement studies with the participation of urban stakeholders. In that case, the second step is to achieve multilayer mapping and to bake that in. Maps

produced in the light of the data obtained from needs analysis and measurement activities make the urban potential visible, awaken the city to its potential, and create the synergy that will bring artistic and cultural production together with all kinds of rights-based struggles on the same ground. As the synergy grows, production flows from the centre. At that point, the parties begin to look at the same horizon, and agreeing on the horizon will carry the resulting synergy from city to countryside and from countryside to city at the end of the day. When this is the case, cultural production and producers become increasingly disentangled; exhibitions, performances, screenings, workshops and research go beyond well-established venues. Only in this way can the interdisciplinary perspective become a general approach, which will take account of all the characteristics and values specific to the city.

Now is the time also to touch on the role of sustainable documentation in network-building and on making these networks durable. Audio-visually documenting the organised activities and all the meetings geared towards producing a common ground, while network-building and broadcasting these documents on media that are easily accessible by the public, inspires and encourages initiatives that

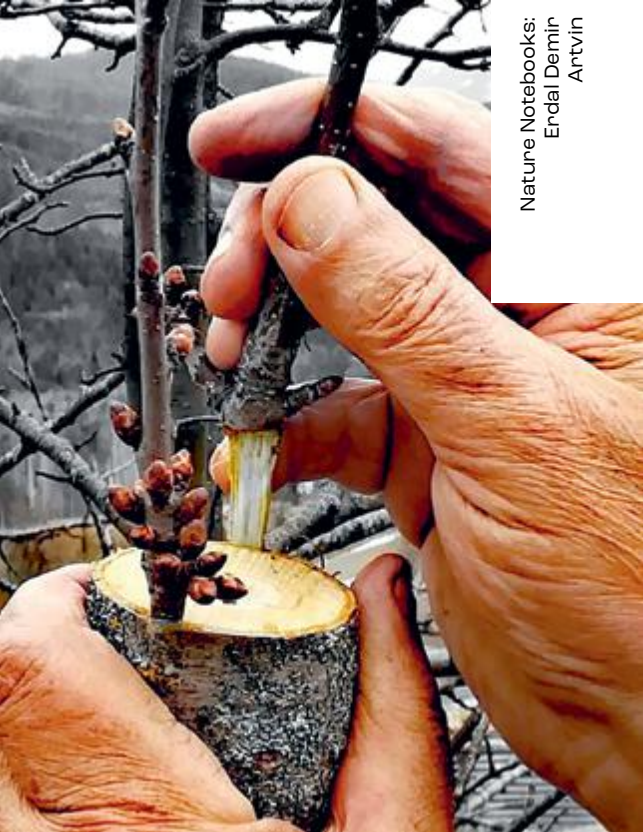
have begun to take similar steps at different locales. An inability to form a memory in the field of culture might be a result of an absence of method. However, each network creates its own method, and, further, sharing this method with other networks and taking the initiative to extend the reach of the network's output are necessary tasks in this journey. The next generations can only thus take their cue from what has been achieved and what has not, and why.

Although they are subjects of healthy and necessary questioning, it is essential, perhaps, to reconsider concepts that retain their validity on the agenda of cultural administration, such as 'public space intervention through art', 'participatory approaches in the construction of decision-making mechanisms', 'creative industries,' 'social inclusion' and 'access to culture for disadvantaged communities'. Suppose the right to culture is the right to the city. In that case, every community in society, without exception, has to become an active part of the phases of design, planning and application. A 'target audience' must urgently shed its position as a 'viewer who will witness the event', or as a passive beneficiary as the subject of quantitative measurements. The path to achieving this is to include all

communities in the processes of design, planning and application, to ensure they benefit equitably, and to make the viewer part of the process of production, putting aside orderly quantitative promises on paper to seek programming founded on indices that will correspond to signs that will have resonance in real life. Otherwise, imagination or 'the first idea that comes to mind' displaces dialogue between parties, and projects become close-circuit events, always appealing to the same crowd. Then, the meaning of creating space for dialogue dissipates. Finding and preserving this meaning is vital, as networks can remain active through what they learn from their viewers, participants, and the public. Models deemed exemplary, as they could be carried out across different locales, rather than being one-shot projects, are thus appreciated by the public, taken seriously and supported.

Our primary concern is to create a true transformation and to achieve this in collaboration with local, regional, national and international networks; then, the best practice would be to set aside the definition of 'target audience' and to focus on practices founded in the field of civic studies, anchored in nature-culture,³ cyclical, healing, inclusive but also sensitive to local sensibilities. ●

3 A cultural management approach that sees nature and culture as elements that join together and transform each other, and therefore proposes to consider culture, art, and ecology together.



#166

Nature Notebooks:
Erdal Demir
Artvin



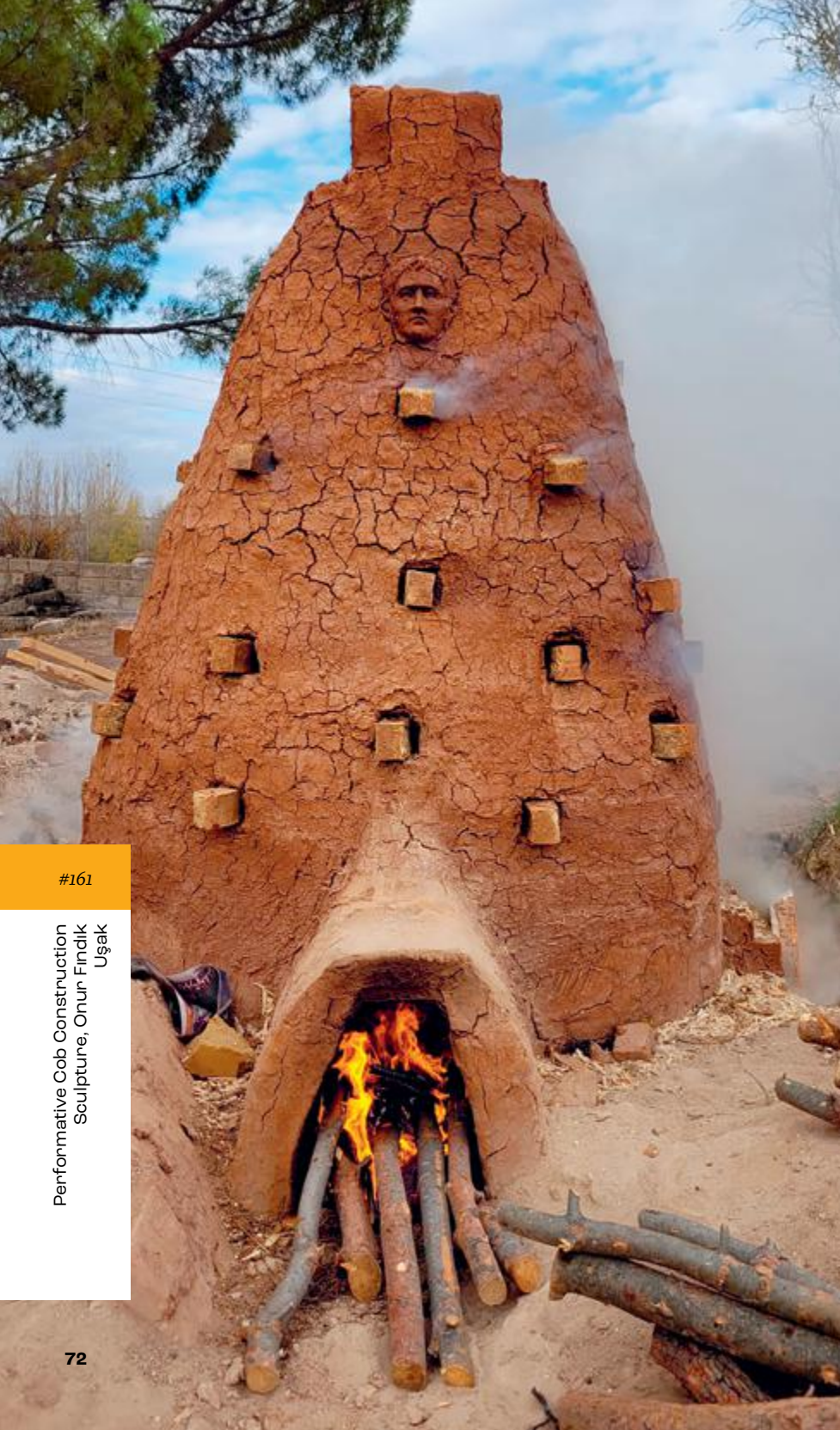


#158

Hive
Beyza Durhan, Aslihan Mumcu
Ankara, İstanbul, Mardin, Şirnak, Tekirdağ







#161

Performative Cob Construction
Sculpture, Onur Fındık
Uşak

Art Production Fund

This programme, which is open to applications from artists and artist collectives between the ages of 25 and 45 who are residents of Türkiye and work in the field of visual arts, provides support for works that will be developed under the mentorship of prominent figures in the field of art in Türkiye. The goal is thus to provide mentorship, experience sharing, cultural infrastructure development and networking opportunities to the artists invited to the project. The programme focuses on the participation of artists from a wide geographical area extending beyond cultural centres such as Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir.

Instead of artists considered bright back in their youth who are well recognised today, the age limit means that the new generation is given the opportunity to produce and gain visibility. It is essential for artists who have individual practices to experience the process of writing and applying for a European Union project, to create the conceptual frameworks for their work, and to think about the social impact of the artwork, which are significant gains for the artists.

The support, while modest in monetary value, has a long-term impact on applicants, as this programme brought young artists to the notice of exhibition venues and artistic and cultural institutions, and introductions made through the programme allowed new collaborations. In this field of artistic production, where artists' sensibilities, work and production disciplines can be very different, supporting individual projects as well as ensuring that artists meet each other, learn about each other's work and find the opportunity to work with mentors is also perfectly aligned with the 'networking' approach that CultureCIVIC frequently emphasises.

'CultureCIVIC's principal mission is to create social impact through art by combining the arts and culture with the civic sphere. Since it's a civil-society-oriented project, working on the logical framework with a focus on social impact, and placing project activities as the essence, was difficult for those

who experienced it for the first time, but it certainly broadened horizons. Many of the projects focusing on artistic work also created a public agenda for their exhibitions through the fieldwork. Other projects would come together in public events; artists working together in joint meetings and carrying out their work with mentors enabled us to create a collective network. I think that prioritising collectivity by introducing the vocabulary and working principle of civil society to the field of arts and culture has been CultureCIVIC's most important impact.'

— **Nevra Arslantürk**, CultureCIVIC Project Coordinator
(Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts)

Polyphonic projects

The projects that CultureCIVIC has supported for the past four years, under the grant programmes I have outlined above, are diverse. The groups the project authors are addressing, with the goal to make their voices heard, and with whom they are engaged in joint production, are spread across a broad spectrum: children, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, refugees... The locations are also unusual: different cities in Türkiye, a prison, a mountain village, a theatre stage... Likewise, the forms of expression are diverse, such as documentary films, stage plays, oral history testimonies, exhibitions, workshops, concerts and choir work. When viewing the projects from this perspective, the inspiration provided by the 'acts' of the project owners and the CultureCIVIC team that has invested their intellects and efforts in this programme for so long will guide the text.

For the children, with the children

Photography artist İsa Çelik talks about his first encounter with cinema as the youngest child of a low-income family in the Gülnar district, on a plain high in the Taurus Mountains in Mersin: 'Gülnar is in the mountains. There is no electricity; we hadn't even heard of electricity. One day, I heard bam bam footsteps of children, and I heard a man yell



#6

MAYBE A MOVIE
COMES TO TOWN

Director Sidar İnan screened films in the villages of Bitlis through a mobile cinema for children from local boarding schools who did not have access to cinema. The children didn't just watch the films – they went from house to house and did some old-fashioned shouting to inform everyone about the place and time of the screening, they set out the chairs while the projector was being prepared, they decided which film to watch together, and answered questions asked by Sidar İnan during intermissions. Sidar İnan, himself a Bitlis native, says that his aim was to create a 'core memory' in the minds of the children. 'I tried to realise one of my childhood dreams for the children today. We start by playing games together, then we show the film. It's a very nice core memory for them. After we learn the children's names, we tell them to spread the word to other children in the village, and they get very excited. More children come, all very interested. It's a nice experience for them.'

into a metal pipe: "Folks, pay attention. Civilisation's latest invention, cinematography, is here. This evening, you will see *Gold Rush* by the famous artist Şarlo [Charlie Chaplin was widely known by this name in Türkiye] in the middle school garden." What is cinematography? Who is Şarlo? What's a film? We had no idea. The man was yelling out, the pied piper of Hamelin. He is in the front, and we are behind him. We went to the middle school garden. They placed chairs they had found from the summer coffeeshops and transformed it into an open-air movie theatre.'⁶

6 İsa Çelik in conversation with the author, May 2024.

For children at an economic and/or social disadvantage, deprived of their fundamental rights and with no access to education or artistic and cultural activities, art plays a healing and transformative role in how they relate to life. Such an encounter can also light a flame of passion in some children – as with İsa Çelik – for placing art at the centre of their lives.

Then, when we look at children who are victims of disaster or migration, who have been exposed to traumatic experiences, there is a risk that reactions such as fear, anxiety, loss of self-esteem, anger, withdrawal, freeze response, split consciousness and denial, could become permanent and reach a pathological level. When we look at refugee children specifically, layers such as exposure to violence, losing relatives, inability to adapt to a new place, language barriers, exclusion, and health and security deficits are added to these dangers.

The number of projects that focus on this field is small. Projects produced with children or geared towards children are motivated by ‘the thought that every child has the right to move and to have fun’. The activities include circus events for children who are suffering from socioeconomic difficulties and in regions that receive migration; animation workshops that aim to develop the children’s thinking, analysis, imagination, project-building, communication and creativity skills; theatre projects, inspiring generosity and good deeds without expecting reciprocation, teaching the children in the earthquake zone to be valuable individuals in society; fairy-tale theatres that are motivated by producing psychosocial support for the children; and photography and painting workshops.

After the Kahramanmaraş-centred earthquake on 6 February 2023, which also impacted upon the surrounding cities, numerous projects were developed, aimed at working with the affected children and with would-be volunteers. One of these projects, supported by CultureCIVIC and in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut Istanbul Library, ‘Applied Artistic and Cultural Studies with Children Affected by the Earthquake’, was realised on 6–7 July in the physical space of Goethe-Institut Istanbul, with participation online. Dr. Udo Bär, pedagogue, trauma therapist, writer and publisher, facilitated this workshop, presenting practical information and exercises to activists, artists and social workers

working with Hatay's children and youth. Dr. Bär wrote a text addressing adults who accompany earthquake victim children, titled 'The Needs of Children and Youth after the Earthquake'. In this guiding text, Bär writes that when children cannot find the words to express themselves, they can use painting, games, music, or even banging pots and pans to get their voices heard. Even when they have the words in their vocabulary, creative and indirect methods can help them cope better with their pain.

In Hatay, a city directly impacted upon by the earthquake, Mavi Kuş Solidarity Group Children's Workshops organised events and art workshops for children from various age groups to coordinate not-for-profit initiatives, teachers, child development experts, artists, psychologists and other volunteer teams. In these events, children's participation was a key component. For example, in the film screenings, children were not only viewers but also gained information on the film's background, made comments afterwards and later discussed the film, transforming the workshop into a lesson in cinema. Another city that was affected by the earthquake was Adıyaman. The project 'Tell Your Story', which Mordem Art developed here and realised through the support of CultureCIVIC, was geared towards children aged five to 13; the play *Eko is Travelling to the Sun*, which had interactive parts, was staged here. The play includes themes of environmental pollution, global warming, the impact of toxic gas, the benefits of upcycling and recycling, and a nature-life-centred view of life from the perspective of children, in addition to organising art workshops. In puppet-making workshops, the children set up the stage and used puppets to help to articulate their emotions.

Among the projects realised for children, animation or film screenings and workshops play a significant role. For example, the 'Journey into the World of Animation' project in Diyarbakır included workshops that trained children between the ages of seven and 15 to create characters, to write scripts, to use a camera and photography, and gave them training in 2D and 3D animation. Yeni Sinema Kolektifi showed Kurdish animations to children under the title 'Silver Screen in Village Squares', travelling to 15 villages in Batman. In the villages near the Munzur mountain in Erzincan, workshops for children, on theatre, photography, creative arts, sports and children's rights, were organised.



#81

TELL YOUR STORY
Photo: Barış Işık

Coordinator Barış Işık explains how the ‘Tell Your Story’ project was organised under Mordem Sanat thus: ‘Mordem Sanat is an arts-and-culture institution working to improve children’s access to art, researching artistic forms for the preservation of cultural heritage for future generations, and offering a space for independent artists. We applied to the local projects grant opened by CultureCIVIC. We drafted our project to perform a play on stage for a thousand children and also to organise a puppet-making workshop for them. By the end we had reached 1,879 children almost twice the number envisaged. ‘Tell Your Story’, which was a joint effort with CultureCIVIC, focused especially on the central and rural areas of Adıyaman. We were thinking about how a child can overcome, or, rather, move away from a traumatic situation in the most light-spirited way possible, and we wanted to show that another kind or manner of communication could be found.’



#81

Tell Your Story
Mordem Sanat, Adiyaman
Photo: Barış Işık





#22
Dry Summer
Eldem Sanat Alanı, Eskişehir
Photo: Kayhan Kaygusuz



From Creative Act to Shared Precarity: Dynamics of Artistic Production in Türkiye

ÇELENK BAFRA

*Idea and experience will never coincide in the centre;
only art and action can effect a synthesis.*

— JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

We are in an era in which we talk about research and production rather than genius and creativity in the arts. Moreover, we now know that the creative act is not just about individual success stories but also about artistic processes that go through multiple collaborations and challenging experiences and are even interwoven with failed attempts, B-plans and bold mistakes. Linda Nochlin, who initiated a global discussion of ‘Why have there been no great women artists?’, emphasises that art today is not a liberated and autonomous activity

by an individual equipped with superior powers and influenced by artists from earlier generations and social circumstances. On the contrary, when we look at it in terms of both the artist’s development and the nature and quality of the work of art, the conditions for making art develop in a specific social environment. In other words, artistic production is an inseparable part of the social structure. Therefore, whether it passes through art academies and is equipped with market mechanisms and patronage systems, or whether it is reinforced

by the myth of the ‘lone artist’ and the ‘immortal creator’ full of exciting ideas and endless inspiration, artistic production is ‘mediated and determined by specific and definable social institutions’.¹ From this perspective, looking at artistic production in Türkiye requires focusing on the visibility and sustainability of productions that emerge as works of art or in other forms and defining the conditions of the artists’ creation through the social infrastructure and superstructure.

Consider the conditions of creative acts and production within the context of obstacles or opportunities that artists find in their artistic processes. First, you need a critical perspective on artistic and creative industries as a whole, through concepts such as class, cultural working class, artistic labour, fees and intellectual property. To this you can add legal and financial conditions of the precarity and freelance work, which are issues that concern a wider community than just artists, and even the differences created by the established connections and networks that one is involved in, or as Pierre Bourdieu puts it, one’s ‘cultural and social capital’. While research on the working conditions

and professional problems of artists and other art producers is growing in the sociology of art, it would be naive to consider artistic production in Türkiye as exempt from these factors. To make a living, artists, whose main preoccupation is the creative act, are forced to work professionally in academia or in entirely different fields in addition to commissioned productions, instead of focusing on art production full time. This means that most artists only conduct their research and production part time or periodically, if they are not to face the most severe insecurities that await freelance cultural workers.

The most pressing of these are low income, lack of insurance and deprivation of rights such as professional development, holidays, healthcare and retirement. Unlike unions that insure artists abroad, or public institutions that provide free studio space, in Türkiye, where even housing conditions are becoming difficult, the lack of a studio space dedicated to research and production, or the inadequacy of an existing studio, must be added to the obstacles to artists’ production. When we further add to this the increasing costs of rapidly changing

1 Linda Nochlin, ‘Why have there been no great women artists?’, *Women, Art and Power*, New York: Harper & Row, 1988, p. 158.

and diversifying materials and technical possibilities, as well as the difficulties in accessing technological and digital tools, the picture becomes even more pessimistic. In short, for an artist today, making art requires a combination of time, space, materials and spiritual security, and financial resources. Of course, exceptions are possible, and most artists in Türkiye continue to produce exceptionally, deprived of minimum opportunities but with determination and commitment. Indeed, artists in Türkiye do not have the luxury of not producing. On the contrary, the structure of the neo-capitalist system embodied by art constantly demands new production aimed at consumption – that is, exhibitions or sales – and provides support for art and visibility to the artist only through brand-new productions.

We live in a fast-paced world where the artist's efforts to leave their research to ferment from time to time, to spread it out over time to let it sprout, or to retreat to refresh and deepen their thoughts, seem inappropriate. In this environment, while trying to present their creative ideas and multilayered research topics, they have to make do with modest productions that are almost small enough to be carried by hand, produced in a hurry and in a short time, irregularly with guerrilla tactics or by asking for help and generosity

from friends. From this perspective, we rarely see large-scale or technically/technologically ambitious works in Türkiye entrusted to large and specialised teams that can invest in long research and development processes. Of course, some artists think 'big', but they do not have the means for conducting extensive research, the space to realise a 'big' production, a 'big' team and the budget required. It is also quite challenging to talk about institutions in Türkiye that have the means to exhibit these large-scale productions, a qualified infrastructure to store and preserve the works, or a vision to include them in their collections. At this point, the question 'Why have there been no great (women) artists?' becomes 'Why have there been no "large-scale" works of art in Türkiye?'

Presenting large-scale and ambitious works is still considered a luxury in Türkiye. Being trained as an artist within the rapidly disintegrating educational system, then working professionally as a young artist in the existing ecosystem, and finally preserving the independence of style and content while enjoying commercial and financial autonomy, are challenging enough. Institutions as well as funding and scholarship programmes, including postgraduate learning and development programmes, become meaningful at this point. In Türkiye, the need for

more adequate and transparently administered public funding, and the insufficiency of cultural policies have been discussed for years. Developing policies and raising awareness are being carried out mostly under non-governmental organisations' leadership. The third sector has been working towards achieving the goal of an independent, autonomous and sustainable ecosystem in the arts, with the support of the private sector, international funding programmes and solution partners, primarily from the European Union (EU). Funding programmes could be a source of encouragement and motivation, especially for young and emerging artists. The consultancy they provide to artists throughout the process, the regular and positive communication model they maintain with the artists and other stakeholders, and the multidimensional support structure they have created, generate a driving force, even a multiplier effect, beyond allocating financial resources to the production of a project. In this context, it is evident that, especially in countries such as Türkiye, organisations that provide funds and run programmes, such as CultureCIVIC, have injected new life to the projects of many young artists in terms of artistic production. These programmes drive not only the artistic production of young and

independent artists in Türkiye, but also the communication of the works produced to the right audience through proper channels. Even so, a few issues related to these funds are still being discussed. The first is the governance approach of associations, foundations and civil society organisations working in this field, as well as the quality and transparency of the criteria for granting and implementing funds. The second is the continuity of the support structures for the arts, including grants and funds, and their adaptation to the multidimensional nature of artistic production and their flexibility towards the changing demands shaped by the particular needs. In both areas of discussion, the experience and legitimacy brought by the multidisciplinary and multicultural structure of the EU provide assurance and reliability regarding the structure of the funds. It is understood that CultureCIVIC funds are structured comprehensively in this respect, from the open call phase to the jury processes, from mentoring during production to post-funding reports and communication models. In addition, the funds' capacity building, structural support, and networking activities to encourage young artists and local production, which go beyond providing financial support only for artistic production, namely

the production of their projects, have largely met expectations.

There are different ways to create resources for artistic production, including funding and support programmes such as CultureCIVIC, and they are becoming more and more diverse. Nevertheless, the artists' resources and the sale of their works are still at the forefront. If the artist has the means, they or their family can invest in their artistic production by selling a past work or taking on debt in anticipation of future sales. They can try to cover their research, art materials, studio rent, technical costs related to space and production, transportation, travel, and the cost of spending time making art. Class differences, commercial concerns, trends in institutions, and expectations of the art market determine the production of artists at this point. We know that the output of artists living in big cities, located in the centre, or coming from privileged classes and circles, can easily stand out with their productions' scale, diversity and visibility. We often see that variations of whichever style of work, medium or content is in greater demand in the field; in other words, what is sold, exhibited or visible is produced more, and the artist begins to mass produce or repeat themselves, following the path of the works in greater demand.

Even artists in the middle and advanced stages of their careers are still unable to produce without the support of their galleries, or have to try to finance their new productions as they wait for their works to sell, while young and emerging artists remain trapped in a vicious circle. If these young and emerging artists do not have a gallery, collector, patron or agent, if their works have limited visibility, if they have not yet found response in art circles, they need competitions and award applications, grant and fund portfolios, invitations and commissions from art institutions, to encourage them on the path of production.

The way to develop research, mobility, network and capacity, which can be considered an inseparable part and prerequisite of artistic production, is to follow the open calls of artist residency programmes and research scholarships. But such competitions and scholarships almost always target 'young' artists, so artists over a certain age are pressured even more between doing extra work and the market paradigm, or their artistic production is disrupted. The responsibility of giving life to the ecosystem, where there is no autonomous arts council and where we cannot talk about the transparency of public funds, falls on the private sector and civil society,

along with cultural producers. The content independence and freedom of expression, indispensable for the system's healthy operation and the quality of artistic production, are entrusted to the public accountability, ethical attitude, and vision of the institutions that support art. However, as Kyung An and Jessica Cerasi state in their bestselling book *Who's Afraid of Contemporary Art?*, 'Support inevitably comes with strings attached and even government funding has its restrictions. Nonetheless, in whatever shape or form it comes, what really makes these sources of funding so important is that they represent a faith in the value of creativity and enable artists to continue to make work that has the power to inspire. Fund fresh arts, not old farts!'²

It is essential to examine in which cases market dynamics and art support mechanisms become impositions on the artist, how they standardise production, or how they reduce artistic processes to concrete outputs and visibility, as they contain many clues about the relationship between the rules of creative acts and the material conditions that facilitate artistic production. However, if we look at it

in the context of the art principles proposed by Collingwood, artistic production does not submit to rules and impositions. Indeed, it becomes freer and more original as it avoids meeting the expectations of the market or the selection quotas and reporting criteria of art institutions: '[I]t should be clear that when we speak of an artist as making a poem, or a play, or a painting, or a piece of music, the kind of making to which we refer is the kind we call creating. For, as we already know, these things, in so far as they are works of art proper, are not made as means to an end; they are not made according to any preconceived plan; and they are not made by imposing a new form upon a given matter. Yet they are made deliberately and responsibly, by people who know what they are doing, even though they do not know in advance what is going to come of it.'³

It is crucial to discuss the content depth and freedom of the environment that triggers and enriches creative acts in addition to the material conditions and dynamics for an original and free artistic production. It cannot be a coincidence that artistic production in Türkiye peaked and

2 Kyung An, Jessica Cerasi, *Who's Afraid of Contemporary Art*, Thames & Hudson, 2017, p. 185.

3 R.G. Collingwood, *Principles of Art*, Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 129.

gained international visibility in the 2000s, simultaneously with economic development and EU integration efforts, securing freedom of expression and attempts at democratisation. From the mid-2010s to the present, the legal and justice systems have been shaped in favour of censorship, sanctions and oppression, and the environment of social separation and political oppression has deepened. This has led to constant reservations and concerns about the content of artistic production and even self-censorship on the part both of artists and of the institutions that support artists in various ways or bring artistic works to the public. In Türkiye, the perception that political Islam presents as conservatism manifests itself in the media and society as 'social sensitivity' and 'our shared values'. At the same time, subjects that are already taboo, such as religion, language, race, army, flag, state, bring a deep lynching culture or intolerance, particularly to artworks with content on nudity, sexuality, body, women, LGBTI, queer, etc. This pressure, added to financial impossibilities, has led a significant number of artists and art professionals from Türkiye to leave the country or to abandon art in the past decade – that is, no longer to produce [in Türkiye], or to feel

the need to compromise on their content and discourse to maintain their visibility and sustainability of production. Art is not viable in an environment without critical thought and freedom of expression. Moreover, this environment of censorship and self-censorship has deepened, not only in media and cultural institutions, but also in the curriculum and pedagogical approach of educators in art academies and schools. While we might criticise the education system in Türkiye as standardising, inadequate, and based on rote learning instead of critical discussion in almost every area and field, we can also read it as one of the fundamental impasses of artistic production today, the suppression of art producers while they are still in the education stage and the attempt to force them into certain moulds. When we add to the mix the lack of a culture of criticism and art criticism in society, we arrive at individual artists who cannot receive mentorship and feedback, are not encouraged to express themselves, and do not feel competent and independent to do what they want. It is all too obvious that this is reflected in the output of artists not nourished by a critical and liberating ecosystem. However, being liberated is not easy, especially when alone in impossibilities. This

can only be achieved through joint opposition, shared objections and integration into the ecosystem with a collective critical stance. For this reason, we see that stakeholders who feel safe in the increasingly independent art initiatives, artist collectives and formations that come together around common interests in Türkiye produce more enthusiastic and courageous artworks. This would be in the right place to say that among the ongoing artistic productions in Türkiye, the ones we will continue to discuss in the future, especially those that will be permanent, are these types of works. Indeed, as Jeanette Winterson emphasises in her book *Art Objects*, 'If truth is that which lasts, then art has proved truer than any other human endeavour. What is certain is that pictures and poetry and music are not only marks in time but marks through time, of their own time and ours, not antique or historical, but living as they ever did, exuberantly, untired.'⁴ ●

4 Jeanette Winterson, *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery*, Vintage, 2010, p. 9.



#164

Anthology of Promises
Özgür Demirci, İzmir
Photo: Can Yücel



#178

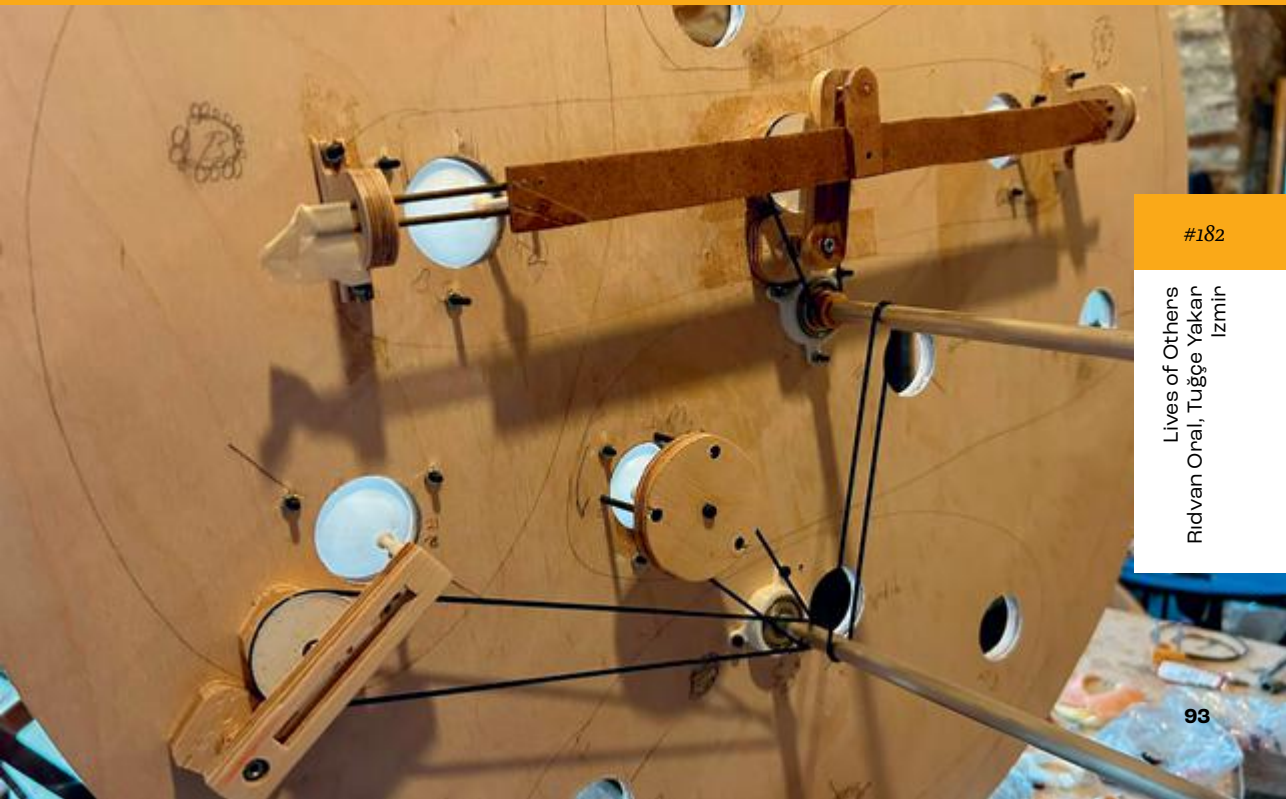
Telltale of the Stone: Beware of the Evil Eye,
Live Happily!, Buncu Güney
Adıyaman, Bolu, Hatay, Şanlıurfa



#163

Tempo Primo
Yağmur Uyanık
Antalya





ENDOPHASIA
Gökçe Uygun; Edirne, İstanbul
Design: Can Memişoğulları



Close to the View, In the Distance
Seniha Üney, Düzce
Photo: Mehmet Öns

İNİN BAĞIMSIZLIĞINI, BİREYSEL HAK VE ÖZGÜRLÜKLER RESİM SEVİNCİ

GENETİĞİ DEĞİŞTİRİLMİŞ ORGANİZMALARINI PROTESTO ETTİ



U. 'HUKUKUN ÖZGÜRLÜĞÜNÜ' RESİM SEVİNCİ

12:42 N ANKARA'YA GELİYOR. GÜNDEMDE EKONOMİK İLİŞKİLERİN GELİŞTİRİL RESİM SEVİNCİ

'E DE KENTSEL DÖNÜŞÜMÜN BAŞLAYACAĞINI SÖY

13:26 ÜN BAŞLAYACAĞINI SÖYLEDİ • ANKARA KOP



12:39 İSİZLİĞİNİ, BİREYSEL HAK VE ÖZGÜRLÜKLERİ SAVUNAN BİR CUMHURB RESİM SEVİNCİ





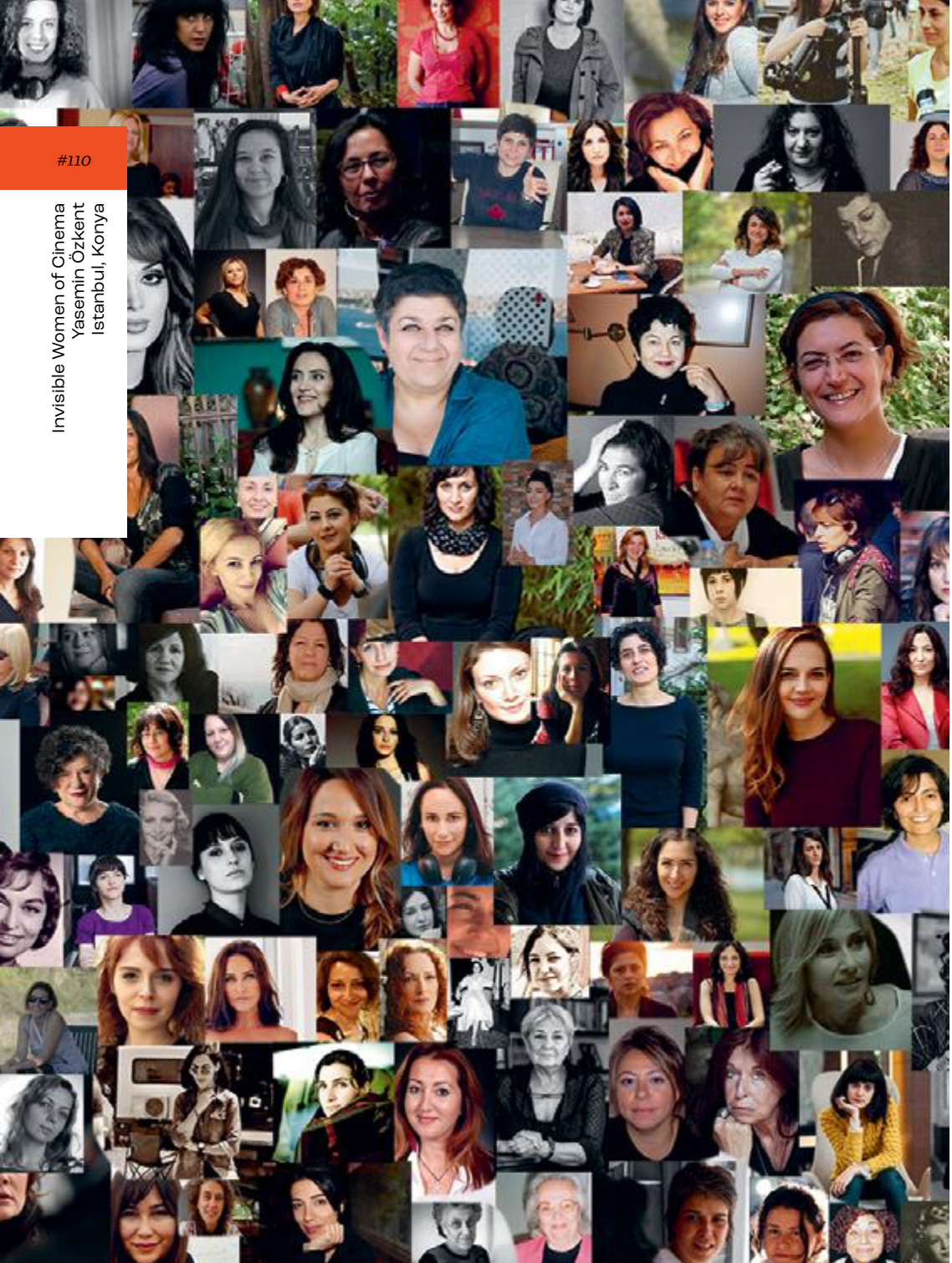
Great Dream, Can Akgülmüş
 Photo: Cemil Batur Gökgeer
 Courtesy Kainos Galeri | Istanbul



Thin Air
 Cemil Batur Gökgeer
 Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir

#110

Invisible Women of Cinema
Yasemin Özkent
Istanbul, Konya



Against the Patriarchy: Women and LGBTIQ+

‘A man would never set out to write a book on the peculiar situation of the human male. But if I wish to define myself, I must first of all say: “I am a woman”; on this truth must be based all further discussion. A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex; it goes without a saying that he is a man,’ writes Simone de Beauvoir as she begins *The Second Sex*. She summarises the discrimination against women based on gender: ‘One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilisation as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine. Only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as *Other*.’⁷

Being excluded from the public sphere in daily life; being subjected to physical, psychological, economic and sexual violence; being deprived of the right to education by getting forced into marriage at an early age; being subjected to different types of discrimination; hitting the glass ceiling through harassment, depending on the nature of the workplace if they have the opportunity to work, are the first-hand problems that come to mind for women in Türkiye. The expressions used by women working in the arts and culture sector to describe their own experiences reveal that this issue is not limited to geography, class or cultural level: ‘being excluded’, ‘being segregated’, ‘being subjected to male language, dominance, and tyranny’, ‘not being able to walk comfortably on the street’, ‘not being taken seriously’, ‘having to work harder than men’, ‘being silenced’, ‘feeling pressure to hide one’s sexual life’ and ‘being in a state of constant struggle’ are the phrases used in the women’s testimonies.⁸

Among the projects supported by CultureCIVIC are a considerable number of those that set out with the aim of making women visible in the face of gender-based discrimination, having their voices heard and recorded, discussing their place in the public sphere, providing access to arts and culture activities, and

7 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley. London: Jonathan Cape, 1956, p. 14–15.

8 *Kültür-Sanat Dünyasında Toplumsal Cinsiyet* [Gender in the World of Arts and Culture], Istanbul: İKSV, 2022, p. 15.

seeking ways to express themselves. The projects, which span a vast geography across Mardin, Istanbul, Diyarbakır, Trabzon, Sinop, Konya and Batman, reflect similar diversity in terms of methodologies. These include creating a feminist art archive, identifying elements where women are disregarded in urban planning and home interior design, delivering films by female directors telling women’s stories to women with limited access to cinema, workshops aimed at enabling young women to exist in the fields of music and technology, and providing site-specific artistic interventions in the public sphere by female artists from different art disciplines with different experiences...

Again, mentioning some projects to make this diversity tangible would be helpful. For example, within the scope of the ‘Mapping Women’s Cultural Labour in Diyarbakır’ project, routes were prepared with a printed illustrative map where traces of women’s labour were made visible, and women’s experiences were exhibited through oral histories and testimonies in public conversations.

The ‘KızBaşına Feminist Art History’ project aimed to bring to light the history of women artists in unseen and hidden archives and to convey feminist art history to broader society. The play *Fat Woman*, which discusses perceptions of the female body and is included in Dario Fo’s *Let’s Talk About Women*, was staged in Kurdish in Batman, Diyarbakır, İstanbul, Mardin, Urfa and Van.

The ‘Woman’s Touch’ project consisted of site-specific artistic interventions produced by nine women artists from different art disciplines and with a range of experiences in Mardin’s ‘broken’ public spaces. Within the project’s scope, permanent or temporary artistic interventions were implemented in problematic public spaces before and after the government appointment of the trustee mayor. In addition to supporting the productions of women artists living in Mardin, the project opened discussions on socially and historically established gender roles. It contributed to the visibility of women artists in Mardin and their presence on art platforms.

Within the scope of the ‘Hear My Voice’ project, music workshops were held with women from different age groups, from Istanbul, Adana and Gaziantep. The project aimed to allow women whose ‘voices were suppressed and silenced’ to express themselves through music, to increase their self-confidence, to realise their potential, and to voice their shared problems.



#14

WOMAN'S TOUCH

being resolved, with the creation of a collective space that gives room for abstract thought, imagination, subjectivity and interpretation, where people will get to know the material, where they will be encouraged to take initiative in translating their own testimony into artistic expression, where artistic research processes based on curiosity can be carried out... To our neighbours and friends who supported the production and installation of the works in “Woman’s Touch”, who helped to create an environment of cooperation and to produce alternative solutions, we’d like to give our thanks.’

*

Evrin Kavcar (Project Consultant), ‘Woman’s Touch’, *Kadın Eli/Woman’s Touch*, Mardin: Mardin Ses Matbaası, 2022, p. 4.

‘It was announced that the “Woman’s Touch” project, backed by the CultureCIVIC, would focus on site-specific artistic interventions in Mardin’s “dysfunctional” public spaces by female artists from different art disciplines and different backgrounds... Even as the invitation envisioned the identification of urban dysfunction, we found that a different dysfunction was

The songs produced were turned into an album under the sponsorship of KALAN Music. The income obtained from digital platforms was transferred to Mor Dayanışma, aiming to support and ensure the continuity of women’s work.

The ‘Listening to the Texture’ project, which was conducted in Istanbul, focused on the daily lives of women garment workers between the ages of 17 and 34, who face many problems caused by cheap, precarious and unorganised labour, as well as gender inequality, and the sound environment they find themselves in while working. While the women interviewed within the project scope were encouraged to express themselves and vocalise their thoughts, their relationship with the sounds surrounding them in their

Mapping Women's Cultural Labor in Diyarbakır
Palimpsest Mekan ve Hafıza Çalışmaları Kolektifi
Photo: Zeynep Fırat



Hear My Voice
Asena Akan
Adana, Gaziantep, İstanbul





#35

KızBaşına Feminist Art History
KızBaşına
Ankara, Istanbul, online



#58

Jina Qelew (Fat Woman)
Batman Yenisahne; Batman, Diyarbakır,
İstanbul, Mandin, Şanlıurfa, Van



#155

Pistachio Time
Özlem Köse
Gaziantep





#170

User Manual
Özge Akdeniz, Ayşegül Oğuz; Istanbul
Photo: Bilal İmren





#102

Laş ü Cih (Body and Place)
Nalin Acar, Adar Taş, Batman, Bitlis
Photo: Hevidar Taş, Ferit Bingöl





#177

A Flâneuse in Sinope
Azize Reva Boynyukalın
Sinop



#195

Sound of the Earth
Betül Katıgöz
Çanakakale



Nevra Anslantür



Ilgın Hanrioğlu



#153

Listening to the Texture
Çisel Karacaba
Istanbul



work environments throughout the day was also brought in as a soundscape.

Another Istanbul-based project, ‘User Manual’, was based on the findings of research focusing on questions such as the extent to which women’s experiences and needs are taken into consideration when planning cities, and whether using developing technologies in domestic labour offers women a leisure opportunity. These findings were presented through videos, podcasts, and social media.

One of the women-focused projects supported by CultureCIVIC is ‘Pistachio Time’. The idea for this project comes from the life of 15-year-old Ayşe, who lived in the Keklik village of Gaziantep in the 1970s and whose relatives tried to kill her because she ran away with the man she loved. Inspired by this story, Özlem Köse created works that defend life against male oppression and violence against women.

The documentary film *Laş ü Cih* (Body and Place), which talks about



Gamze Tanrıvermiş explains her film project *Birds* as follows: ‘To work with women who had never done theatre before, who had never been on the stage, or even seen a play, and to do it all in prison – that was an experience unlike any other. When these women were released one by one, it became possible to make the documentary outside the prison confines. I asked them to describe their experiences in a letter and they all obliged. One sentence in particular was a great source of inspiration: “In this age where we are

suffering from a lack of justice, it is a humane gesture to not fight, but to stand up for what is right.” That’s how she defined theatre. From this definition, I wrote a performative play consisting of fragmented monologues, voices and gestures about the common history of women, without mentioning any personal story, and we performed it with professional actors and the participation of one of the recently released women at the Hüseyin Kazaz Cultural Centre. This place was actually important for us, because it was an old penitentiary. The play addresses not only the inmates, but also those who feel imprisoned in their lives outside; it aspires to look at prisoners from an unbiased perspective. It brought together people from very different walks of life. And thanks to CultureCIVIC, we were able to make our voices heard by a wider audience, which is very precious to me.’

#36

BIRDS
Photo: Okan İkinci

the experiences of marriage, sexuality and pregnancy with women of different age groups in Batman and Bitlis, aims to bring gender roles into the public sphere by revealing the similarities and differences between the stories of women in the two cities and opening them up for discussion.

The 'Music for All' project set out to ensure that music is widely disseminated in the Vezirköprü, Havza, Ladik, Asarcık and Kavak districts of Samsun. The project aimed to reach young people and women who wanted to receive music education in the Vezirköprü district centre and rural neighbourhoods, to organise polyphonic concerts for the local population, and to reach more women and young people by spreading the Vezirköprü Women's Orchestra initiative that started in the Vezirköprü district centre to the villages and rural neighbourhoods of Samsun. The 'A Flâneuse in Sinope' project, named after the mythological female founder of the city of Sinop, focused on male violence and femicide in Sinop's Boyabat district. The interviews conducted with women in the district aimed to enable them to express their expectations of equal rights and freedoms, to recall the forgotten matriarchal order, and to reveal collective consciousness. In the artistic productions based on the interviews, Sinope was depicted as a *flâneuse*.

Within the scope of the 'Sound of the Earth' project carried out with the support of CultureCIVIC in Çanakkale, workshops were organised with women who had children, and clay pots were produced. These pots representing women were designed to be transformed into vocal instruments in the instrument-making seminar, and a final public performance would be recorded.

Speaking of gender, we know that LGBTQIA+ individuals comprise one of the groups that are subject to discrimination and rights violations in many areas in Türkiye. Starting with discrimination in the family, being excluded by teachers and friends in education, not receiving sufficient and fair service from health workers when it comes to health services, being deprived of protective laws in the field of law, and not being taken into consideration in any struggle to seek rights, not being able to find a job or having to hide one's identity in the job one finds, are the first rights violations that come to mind. Of course, the psychological and physical violence of being singled out at home, on the street, and in almost every environment one can think of, should also be mentioned here.

Among the projects that respond to gender equality, which CultureCIVIC prioritises during evaluation, many aim to bring the voices and experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals to the public sphere. For example, actor/director

Nadir Sönmez wrote and staged a play addressing the LGBTQIA+ struggle in Diyarbakır, based on interviews with activists, academics, artists and other people he met. The documentary *Living Positive: WE* brought incomplete/incorrect information and prejudices about HIV and opened up the politics on this issue to discussion. Pink Life QueerFest, organised since 2011, held its 11th edition in Aydın, Denizli, Diyarbakır and Izmir with CultureCIVIC’s support. ‘Amed Underground’ prioritised LGBTQIA+ individuals and women living in Diyarbakır and surrounding provinces, and provided professional DJ training; the project aimed to ensure the active participation of these disadvantaged groups in the workforce in the region.

Some of the projects in this field have also taken shape through literature and writing. The ‘The Voice of LGBTQIA+ in Literature’, ‘Queerification by Writing’ projects, the Feminist/Queer Biography Workshop, and the Non-Fiction Creative Writing Workshop, which aims to bring the voices of women and LGBTQIA+ people to the public sphere more effectively, have opened up space for the expression of shared experiences, encounters and testimonies.



‘Our journey began with the idea of how much LGBTQIA+ voices in Turkish literature have been pushed behind, and how dormant the topic has remained, apart from the diligent work of a few scholars. We came across the misogynistic subtexts of well-known writers commonly recognised as pro-equality. As time passed and the subjects began to narrate their own stories, we saw how the perspective shifted. Although we found some trace of inclusiveness in unexpected times by unexpected authors, these examples,

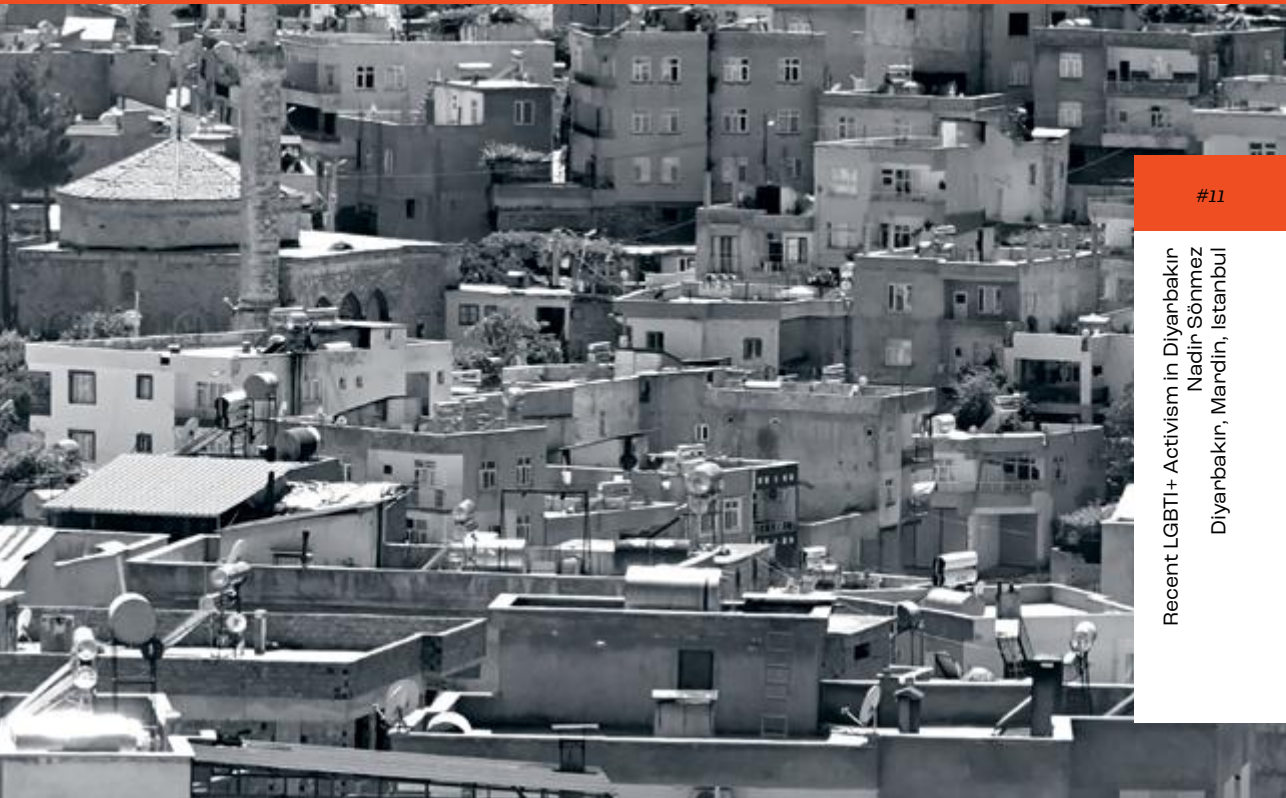
most of which are highly problematic, allowed us to trace the history of implicit homophobia/transphobia in Turkish literature, rather than establishing a chronology of LGBTQIA+ representatives. Afterwards, our participants focused on their own stories. We all read, interpreted and critiqued their stories together. We were surprised at how we destabilised and overturned the literary pyramid, where the author is an esteemed figure at the top, purely by opening and sharing our stories. You will see how the stories grew and reached unforeseen places when they were shared in a safe and secure space where they would not be censored.*

* Sevcan Tiftik, ‘Kaç lubunya karakter öldü minnoş kalplerimizde?’ (Turkish), *Kaos GL*, 31 July 2024. <https://kaosgl.org/gokkusagi-forumu-kose-yazisi/kac-lubunya-karakter-oldu-minnos-kalplerimizde>, accessed 5 October 2024.



#20

Living Positive: WE
Ebubekir Çetinkaya
Nevşehir



#11

Recent LGBTI+ Activism in Diyarbakir
Nadir Sönmez
Diyarbakir, Mandin, Istanbul

#16

Non-Fiction Creative Writing Workshop
5Hanfiller
Ankara, Diyanbakir, Mensin, online



#69

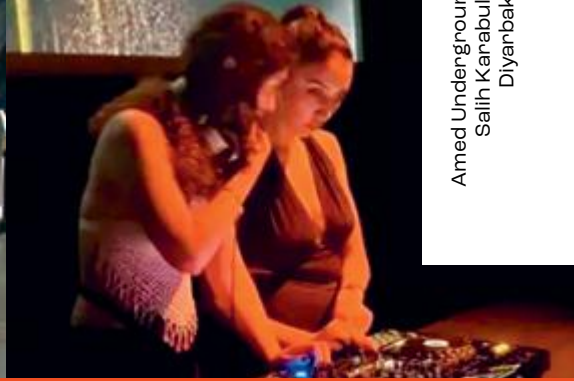
Queenification by Writing
Ecem Arslanay
Izmir, online





#45

Amed Underground
Salih Karabulut
Diyarbakır



#146

Feminist/Queer Biography Workshop
ADA Eğitim Kooperatifi
Ankara, Diyarbakır, Van

Social Harmony and Solidarity

*How can I convey to you, my friend,
How horrible is a night of loneliness?
In this land of unknown people,
We have been ordained to spend our days and nights.
O Heart! Pass this time by talking to this or that fellow.⁹*

When the first group of Syrian refugees crossed into Türkiye from Hatay's Yayladağ border on 29 April 2011, neither side could foresee what the future would bring. It is impossible to say that this uncertainty has been entirely resolved in the past decade. The majority of Syrian refugees are still deprived of a secure legal status – their sheer existence is turned into an object of political debate and put on negotiation tables. Although public reaction exhibits significant differences according to factors such as gender, age, income status, education level and ideological/political orientation – considerably influenced by the media, which are among the main actors in shaping this attitude – we know that negative, stigmatising, exclusionary language and destructive actions are rampant on the streets.

It is increasingly important to support refugees, who have been robbed of their rights to exist as individuals with various qualifications and who are now lumped together as 'Syrians', and to preserve their individual and collective identities to strengthen the possibility of social integration. While there is desperation regarding the fragmented cultural heritage of the country left behind, it is critical to open ways to remember, record and represent at least the intangible cultural heritage. When we keep in mind that there are

9 With gratitude to Waseem Ahmad Siddiqui, who introduced me to this poem, and whose sincerity in conversation has helped me to understand what is hidden in the heart of someone who is away from home. Faiz Ahmed Faiz's (Beirut, 1979) lines have been relayed by Siddiqui through Mustansir Dalvin's translation, 'Evinizde Kalabilir miyim?: Biz... Yolcuyuz' [Could we stay at yours? We are ... travellers]... <https://manifold.press/biz-yolcuyuz>, accessed July 2024.



#12

STORIES BETWEEN
THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

‘...I asked myself, “How could you leave the place you were born, the fields of your childhood and youth? How can I forget the homeland of my memories, the warm nights in the village during wheat season? How can I forget the laughter as we walked around the pot, waiting for the food to cook? How could I forget the stories they told us, how the children would watch their elders doing their work with joy? How could I forget those four fig trees – those years, the land where I lived for more than 50 years?” Yes, there is nothing left, except memories. I gathered my courage and my wounded strength – there is no point in staying in this land that has become a military barracks. No point in staying in a place where people are killed just for thinking about justice and freedom. God did not bless us with freedom just so that we could bow down. God has a vast world and there is a place where people can take refuge from oppression. I told this to myself many times, trying to console my heart...’

* Mervan Sadık, “Kefen”, *Birlikte Hikâyeler* [Together Stories], Mersin, 2022, p. 25.

also art and culture producers among those displaced, we see that joint projects contribute to creating ways of living together by enabling mutual learning and getting to know each other better.

The projects that CultureCIVIC supports in this field focus on strengthening the harmony between Syrian refugees living and working in various cities in Türkiye, their place and the local people they live with.

In this context, the Maya Association operating in Mersin carried out a project in which four Syrian and two Turkish writers living in the city explored the cultural heritage areas around them together, participated in workshops, and published a book of the stories by these writers ‘to carry the excitement of creating



#119

NEFES
MUSIC SCHOOL

commiserate. Seven hundred students have benefitted from our work from 2017 to 2023; 350 have performed on stage within the scope of this project. With the support of CultureCIVIC, our numbers have grown even more, and we launched a very special project in 2022. With the slogan “Two Languages, One Breath”, we created a repertoire of Turkish and Arabic, and we worked on it both on instruments and choir, and we prepared well. We gave a concert to an audience of 1,600 people. We say this with pride, because I think this is the first time in Türkiye that the same melodies and songs were sung in two languages, Turkish and Arabic, for an hour and a half, with such a large repertoire. Two people, two cultures, two languages create beauty; if we can smell two roses in a garden, that only brings goodness.’

İbrahim Müslimani, President of Nefes Foundation for Arts and Culture, describes his work thus: ‘We have a neat project within our association – Nefes Music and Art School. We are here with Syrian and Turkish teachers, artists, and students from age six and above. We teach guitar, piano, violin, oud, qanun and vocals, and we use our work as a tool for social cohesion. We also organise sessions on music culture. It’s like we’re one big family here; the families join us, we play music together, we learn, we teach, we





stories together into future stories',¹⁰ with the support it received from CultureCIVIC. 'Stories in Unison' included the stories of Abdulhamid Al Said, Mervan Sadık, Mohammed Habib, Özgür Yılmaz, Omer Haj Yahy and Özge Göncü, bringing together the details of the similar cultural heritage of the two countries.

Another project was 'Heterotopia', implemented in Gaziantep, a city with a sizeable Syrian immigrant population. The screening of a documentary focusing on social harmony through a coffeehouse where people from two different cultures meet and relate, brought together locals, Syrian immigrants, NGO representatives, academic stakeholders and the relevant public for a roundtable dialogue to eliminate violence, tension and xenophobia through the call 'Let's meet at the coffeehouse.'

Nefes Foundation for Arts and Culture, founded in Gaziantep by young people from Syria and Türkiye and operating since 2017, set out with the belief that artistic and cultural production is significant for individuals subjected to psychological trauma, isolation and loss of identity. Within the 'Hope' project developed by the association after the earthquake of 6th February and supported by CultureCIVIC, the educational expenses of 40 children and young people between the ages of ten and 24 who attend the Nefes Music and Art School were covered. In addition to the theatre, calligraphy, painting and music training provided at the school, weekly workshops contribute to social harmony and solidarity.

The Women's Works Library and Information Centre Foundation, one of the critical memory centres in Istanbul, brought together five immigrant women artists who were forced to leave their country and continued their work in Türkiye in the 'Memory of the Other' project with the support of CultureCIVIC. The works of Farah Trabsie, Maryam Mazrooei, Sara Shahzadeh, and Sinur and Walaa Tarkaji were exhibited in the *Women's Migration Memory* exhibition at Depo Istanbul.

10 Prologue, *Birlikte Hikâyeler* [Stories in Unison], Mersin, 2022, p. 1.

...ç yıllara küçük bir valiz
birkaç parça eşya ve duy
You embark on the migra
confines, a handful of bel

...nuz.
In a small suitcase. Within its
the weight of your emotions...



#88

Memory of the Other; Women's
Works Library and Information
Centre Foundation, Istanbul



#34

Heterotopia
Neo-Zosimos Kültür Sanat Kolektifi
Gaziantep

Accessibility

In Japanese director Naomi Kawase's film *Hikari*, Ayama Misaki has the job of describing the visual details of the silent scenes in films for blind people. The texts that she writes are voiced in the corresponding scenes. The young woman tries to describe with words the colours, people, costumes, the actors' gestures and mimics, the surrounding objects, the sky and the flowers in precise detail for a blind audience. When she writes the texts, ten blind individuals sit around a table to test the material; the text is read and critiqued. Masaya Nakamori, a famous photographer who had lost the ability to see, attends one of these meetings, and intimacy develops between them. The film prompts the question: how could I relay what I see or hear to someone unable to see or hear?



Özgül Kahraman, the coordinator of 'Beyond Seeing: Art Meetings', describes the development of the project thus: 'I can say that the project is based on my PhD work. In 2020, I contacted the Altı Nokta Association for the Blind and told them I wanted to spend time there, and to get acquainted with a field with which I was not familiar. They opened their doors to me and I spent a long time there. It was for me a time full of experiences. I joined Batman University in 2022. These issues were always in my mind. I thought about

what I could do in Batman. I visited schools and looked into whether or not children were receiving arts education; when I realised that they did not have the means, I thought of this project. In an arts workshop, I wanted to create an environment where children could both release their energy and develop their creativity, so I applied to CultureCIVIC. Our first collaboration was a creative drama workshop, because it was an ideal activity to get to know and understand one another and to create a safe environment. Then we went on a museum visit and taught the kids about the artefacts in the museum, because one cannot make demands about a field one knows little of. We started out with 15 volunteers, then our numbers went up to 25. One of my students took up this issue and is working on this subject in their graduation project. I think this is something to be proud of.'

#95

BEYOND SEEING
Photo: Sinan Acar

When accessibility to arts and culture events is brought up, we first consider physical circumstances, whether the space is appropriate for someone blind or if they have limited mobility, and whether or not there is a ramp or a lift. However, details that are far beyond these elementary facilities need to be taken into consideration.

CultureCIVIC projects pay attention to this subject. For example, the Accessible Films Festival that was realised in Ankara and Eskişehir, supported by CultureCIVIC, brought together high-quality examples of contemporary independent films that met the criteria for accessibility to blind and deaf individuals. Audible descriptions for blind people and detailed captions for deaf people were made available for the screenings at the festival; all the spaces were accessible.

The 'From Bergama to Ephesus Accessible Documentary' project facilitated the production of documentaries in which disabled individuals and their relatives visited the antique cities of Efes, Bergama and Kemeraltı. The 'Long Live Art, Resist the Pandemic' project established a choir and a theatre troupe to restart the musical and theatrical activities for Alzheimer patients, which had stalled during the pandemic. Mersin ZİÇEV Art Centre facilitated the training of mentally disabled adults, in music, dance, visual arts and crafts workshops through the 'A Story of Improvement' project. The 'Beyond Seeing: Art Meetings' project went beyond making the Batman Museum accessible to blind people and included drama events and three-dimensional application workshops.

One of the projects developed for people with disabilities and supported by CultureCIVIC was 'Çanakkale Accessible Cultural Ecosystem'. Through the project, cultural actors active in Çanakkale were trained in perception and awareness of disability and received training in applications of fundamental accessibility to culture. The Çanakkale Accessible Culture Platform established at the end of the training helped institutions to share their experiences while encouraging each institution to make at least one arts and culture event accessible.





#103

A Journey of Learning the Laz Language
from Plants; Ceren Kazanci Oruç, Artvin
Photo: Duygu Bostancı



#111

Symposia Dadia
Deniz Kırmısoy Denge
Muğla



CultureCIVIC for A New Type of *Hemşeri**

ULAŞ BAYRAKTAR and EZGİ BAKÇAY

The launch of CultureCIVIC's programming coincided with a time when the important role played by arts and culture in the promotion of democracy and public engagement was increasingly better understood. At a time when we noticed with growing concern that our ability and tendency to live together was weakening, and that public space and relationships were becoming more limited, we were excited to see arts and culture initiatives being addressed in the context of citizenship. This was explicitly the purpose of Karşı Sanat, which has been a cultural oasis in the heart of Istanbul since 2000, and of Kültürhane, which we founded when we were expelled from one 'public' to serve another in 2017. We have been trying to show that we can meet

again through artistic and cultural activities, and come together even if we don't always agree, despite the dynamics that separate us from each other, alienating and marginalising us. We think that the word 'civic' in the program's title indicates precisely this. This text will discuss how arts and culture can serve a 'civic' function.

The word 'civic' is derived from the Latin word *civicus*, meaning citizenship. 'Civic', in contrast to 'civil', derived from the same root, is used to describe relationships with other citizens within an urban context. 'Civil' describes relationships formed by citizens, independent of the state and politics but in relation to the state and politics. In Turkish we use the notion of 'civil' quite bluntly and transform it into an empty signifier,

* Translator's note: *Hemşeri* is derived from the Persian *hamşahrī*, meaning persons from the same homeland as *şahr* means city, homeland, country. While compatriot is most often the translation used for *hemşeri*, as the text discusses sharing urban space, the original Turkish word was used throughout. Similarly, *hemşerilik* is preferred for the status of being a *hemşeri*.

whereas ‘civil status’ and ‘civil code’ have been translated respectively and far more appositely as *medeni hal* and *medeni durum*, as the word ‘*medeni*’ has roots in the city of Medina. Medina indirectly describes the city as an inhabited space where communities of different identities are brought together. If the city’s heterogeneity comprises civil society, we can define the relationships among people from various cultural backgrounds as ‘civic’.

Great, but how would we describe this? The Municipality Law has had a response to this question since 1930 actually: the *Hemşeri* Law. The law that ascribes the status of being a *hemşeri* to where one lives is a valuable notion for us, as it describes the relationship between the urban dwellers to whom ‘civic’ points. However, domestic migration from villages to cities since the 1950s, made possible by networks of solidarity, has charged the concept with a completely different meaning, and this should be borne in mind. *Hemşeri* now refers not to the place of inhabitancy but rather to the place from which one has migrated. Over the years, it has become more comprehensive to refer to more than survival and the reflex to start a new life. *Hemşerilik* constitutes the ground on which all political relationships are dominated, ranging from nominating a candidate, to asymmetrical relationships of

approach. In short, *hemşerilik* has taken on a meaning that contradicts civic sense. When the circumstances are as such, will we give up on it and seek a new concept to describe urban dwellers’ equal and horizontal relationships, or should we try to revert this concept to its origins?

We feel closer to the second possibility, and it is exactly for this reason that we find the Culture-CIVIC project to be very valuable. At the root of this belief is that the urban dwellers in Türkiye should establish their democratic relationship with public space through and primarily by artistic and cultural initiatives and activities. We will dedicate the rest of the text to ground this idea in four arguments.

Arts and culture as public space dwindles

At a time when the dynamics of centralism and standardisation are becoming increasingly dominant, the areas and opportunities where citizens can come together freely, express themselves and come into contact with other city residents are becoming increasingly limited. In a period when prejudices about others are entrenched and social reservations are growing, the tendency is for everyone to consort with those in their neighbourhood who are similar to themselves. As a result of the central government approaching different voices with suspicion and even in a reactionary

manner, public spaces, which are essential components of democratic life, are losing lifeblood and becoming monotonous. Public spaces are disappearing, transformed into concrete deserts, or they are commercialised. Naturally, then, our chances of being in contact with each other, hearing, listening to and getting to know each other are dwindling.

Within the context of this public desertification, arts and culture spaces have begun to carry a much more significant potential than before, for urban dwellers to come together. While the tendency grows to stay away from uninhabited spaces or those stigmatised with specific identities and threats, the function of artistic and cultural activities to serve as a meeting space for citizens of different backgrounds continues. An amateur theatre troupe, a polyphonic choir and a photography or dance workshop provide valuable reasons and possibilities for urban dwellers to meet, to act in concert, and for people who would not otherwise have met to have contact.

People who meet for arts and culture are not satisfied with rehearsing, singing and dancing together. They get to know each other and come into contact with diverse views, beliefs, identities and personalities. Despite differences, the experience of producing art together also contains crucial

clues and seeds about the possibilities of a life of common interests and endeavour.

The cultural field is more than just a meeting opportunity for those people to create or produce. The viewers, listeners and followers of the work collectively created by cultural workers constitute another community. In a concert, exhibition or conversation, art enthusiasts interested in the same artistic and cultural field or work encounter each other and become public with and through them.

In short, artistic and cultural activities bring a critical breath to the processes of becoming a public and of socialisation, which we increasingly feel are missing. In our opinion, CultureCIVIC supports exactly such experiences, allowing the re-emergence of *hemşeris* in a free and equal manner open to differences.

Arts and culture as an occasion for democratic self-organisation

The next step of becoming public is the self-organisation experiences that urban dwellers bring with them on a sustained and institutional level. While there are cultural labourers who sustain cultural activities individually, most experiences are collective in nature. Activities that are sustained collectively require a certain self-organisation and institutionalisation. Spaces where rehearsals and performances will

take place, workshops that will host productions, and galleries where works will be exhibited need to be found, managed and sustained, and all will require self-organisation. The development and sustaining of resources, the administration of spaces, the allocation of responsibilities, and public relations require an official or improvised organisation over time. Thus, cultural labourers who want only to produce their artworks also become part of the organisation.

The word *örgüt* (organisation), unfortunately, raises a fearful spectre in the political history of Türkiye. Most frequently, illegal and/or separatist adjectives accompany the word 'organisation'. The military coup of 12 September (1980) marked the beginning of an era in which the historical reflexes of the time were bulldozed by those who deemed organisation a dangerous endeavour. In the state of emergency declared after 15 July (2016), even memberships of associations and foundations that were legally founded were considered illegal, once again impeding the habits of self-organisation in Türkiye.

When organising is so stigmatised, the communities formed around arts and culture have a particular importance beyond the hypothetical. We witnessed the vital role such formations could play in the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes. Many of us have observed and come

to understand the roles played by those equipped with the skills and experience to act as a community in all processes, ranging from collecting aid to dispatching and distributing it, from rehabilitation work to disseminating vital information. While a cultural centre can be a gathering and shelter area in the face of disaster, music groups can play critical roles in the distribution of emergency aid, and artists can contribute vastly to the post-disaster rehabilitation of children; the importance of organised communities focused on arts and culture cannot be underestimated.

This being the case, while the importance of organisation in current and extraordinary situations beyond bringing people together is obvious, the value of cultural and artistic formations in our social life has a meaning beyond just the areas in which they are active. The Culture-CIVIC programme is of democratic importance as it breathes life into these organisational efforts with the structural support it provides.

Arts and culture as an aesthetic channel of communication

In Türkiye's socio-political conjuncture outlined above, it is not just publicness and organisation that lose blood. We are going through a period when language and words lose meaning and function. We cannot meet enough; we cannot establish connections

and networks, but when we do meet and talk, we have difficulty communicating because we have lost the power of words and communication. We use the same words but do not hear the same thing, or we give different meanings to what we hear. Beyond coming together physically and organising, we cannot share our interests or give each other news and information.

Post-truth is not a phenomenon specific to Türkiye, of course. Communication habits, especially those that have become dependent on social media, make accessing the truth problematic worldwide, but the problem is more than that now. Traditional media outlets, educational institutions and political processes have also lost conventional communication functions. In disembodied communication processes, the voice of the other becomes increasingly inaudible in digital echo chambers where people hear only their own voice. Under these conditions, arts and culture gain another importance. They open new affective channels that increase the possibilities of hearing, listening and understanding. They can amplify the meaning of a theme and an aesthetic that breathes life into the different, the new and the unexpected. Aesthetics, which we can define via Schaeffer as a kind of sensory experience of the human being, a sort of sensory encounter between the world

and the body, the subject and the society, offers the opportunity for contact and unity in times in which we are disconnected from each other and have lost our languages.

For this very reason, current socio-political agenda concerns such as the climate crisis, peace culture, anti-immigrant sentiment or the search for justice find expression in artistic works, and political organisations begin to evaluate the methods or approach of art as a stance and course of action. This being the case, arts and culture open the windows for citizens to feel each other's and the world's pain. By supporting art practices, spaces created for this purpose, and emerging communities, CultureCIVIC weaves new bonds between fellow *hemşeris* through channels of affect relatively free from post-truth ills.

Arts and culture for local democracy

As we began to discuss the word *civic* by considering cities, let's return there in conclusion. Arts and culture can transform individuals into subjects who can take active political roles by bringing them together, organising them and opening channels between them. The scale of urban politics should be considered as a context in which this potential becomes evident. We are talking about a potential that can be realised by the *hemşeri* rather than the nation-state citizens.

When the size and the distance of the national scale are considered, the representational mechanisms that become unavoidable are countered by the city, a context in which individuals and communities they form can directly interact with communities and organisations. In contrast to the complicated problems and intricate relationships of national politics, urban politics can be seen as a more straightforward, more concrete, and more open-to-interaction field of struggle. Urban dwellers who can form their communities, self-organise, and seek alternative methods of interaction and affect can become more easily involved in activities and decision-making processes about their living environment, and thus more effectively become subjects.

Now, let's return to the *hemşeri* law of the Municipality Law. It is difficult to talk about a community consisting of the residents of the city we live in, under the pressure of our segregation, disorganisation, and lack of communication, as discussed above. The field of arts and culture has the key to loosening this grip. With the potential we have underlined, the field of arts and culture can provide collective identity and action opportunities to individuals who have become isolated and passive owing to the pressures of the time, enabling them to become effective agents, especially in urban management. Individuals who have

not previously been involved with the city's problems and management, first undertake advocacy activities for their businesses and events. The experience and skills arising from this can gradually create a basis for interest and action that expands to all problem areas of the city.

By thus summarising the potential role that arts and culture play in the transition from individual passivity to active citizenship, we hope we have situated the word 'civic' in relation to being a *hemşeri*. We think that it is necessary to make the cities we live in as much our home as much as the places we migrated from, to develop a sense of belonging, and to experience urban space and time physically and collectively. This is a transformation that cannot be achieved by law or coercion. However, artistic and cultural initiatives and activities may foster it. The CultureCIVIC program has substantially supported this cultural transformation by supporting hundreds of initiatives from all over Türkiye.

In short, we claim that CultureCIVIC is the *hemşeri* culture expressed in Turkish language. The eponymous arts and culture support programme, in essence, contributes valuably and meaningfully to the reconstitution of an equitable and democratic *hemşeri* in Türkiye. ●





Ecology in the Anthropocene¹¹

As the human-caused destruction on the Earth has been rampant in this new geological era that we call the Anthropocene, nature, similar to all the human groups we have thus far mentioned, must be recalled, recorded and represented within our individual and collective memories. Humans, who share the Earth with other living creatures, need to remember that every species we destroy or drive to extinction will open up a hole in the collective memory of humanity. Our hubris will bring about our demise. As such, works and projects that address this concern in the arts and culture are of utmost importance.

Among the projects supported by CultureCIVIC, those that are concerned with ecocide and the destruction of non-human organisms are numerous. We can mention a few here to represent this concern. These works include exhibitions, spatial transformation designs that utilise upcycling, meetings that refresh relations between nature and the human body, videos that focus on nature and the city, mother-tongue teaching works using plants, and documenting natural elements on the verge of destruction.

The fires/arson attacks that engulf mostly the touristic regions of Türkiye threaten the endemic ecosystems with increasing gravity. One of these areas, on the Datça Peninsula, is the subject of 'Red-Headed Bunting', supported by CultureCIVIC. Realised over a year with 40 children between the ages of nine and 13, Forest Fire Awareness Art Workshops in Datça have been accompanied by nature walks and bird observations. The children created their instrument, a 'forest trumpet', in the sound workshop. In the literature workshops, they wrote stories, each empathising with a specific forest animal. In the puppet workshop, they produced puppets from the garbage that they recycled and also old newspapers. The 'A Forest Dream' project, which was realised in a nearby area, was shaped around the conversations and shared quotidian activities with the inhabitants of the Hisarönü, Bayır and Osmaniye villages in Marmaris, where there were grave losses after the forest

11 Instead of the Anthropocene (the age of humans), political scientist Daniel Hartley suggests the Capitalocene (the age of capital), while media theorist Jussi Parikka suggests the Anthrobscene (the age of immortality). Please see Fatma Aykanat, 'Antroposenik Amnezya' [Anthropocentric Amnesia], *DOĞU BATI Düşünce Dergisi: 'Flora'ya Ağıt: Doğa' özel sayısı* (November, December, January 2017–2018): 44–45.

fire in 2021. Artist Arzu Yayıntaş’s goal was to find ways to heal the trauma the villagers experienced, as they lost a memory space to the fires, through art.

A selection of documentaries from the section ‘There is No Other World’, of Documentarist’s 13th ‘Which Human Rights?’ film festival, travelled to Diyarbakır, Hatay, Adana, Rize, Çanakkale, Muğla and Artvin with the support of CultureCIVIC in 2024. In addition to the Documentarist Travelling Ecological Documentary Screenings, events were organised to address the practices that threaten the birds in the Milleyha Wetlands in Hatay, the stone mines planned for Hatay, the concrete plant and plastic factory plans in Samandağ, the ecological construction against the destruction in Diyarbakır, the seaside road project and the shoreline and sea pollution in Rize.

Dilşad Aladağ, within the context of the project ‘Yield’, which she developed through the support of CultureCIVIC, conducted a literature review of the applications of industrial agriculture in Çukurova, accumulating materials through interviews, archival research and fieldwork, and bringing these together under the heading ‘Reclamation Landscapes’. She provided an alternative narrative on the drying of the swamps, the domestication of the dunes, and the cultivation of the mountains as the land was transformed into vineyards.

Some of the nature- and environment-based projects supported by CultureCIVIC are also based on recording and documenting existing memories. Artist Ekin Çekiç began a series of photographs titled ‘Valley’ with the prediction that, as the final stages of the construction of the Yusufeli Dam on the Çoruh River in Artvin were reached, the river would flood residential, agricultural and cemetery areas. ‘When I first came to Yusufeli, I understood that I would never be able to set foot on this land again in a few years and never be able to see again what I had seen,’¹² says Çekiç. Ali Kanal, with his project called ‘Tissue_Lab’, collected tissue samples from soil and plants damaged by a fire in the Manavgat region of Antalya in 2021, and then collected new textures from the revived nature, and used artificial intelligence to produce new tissue samples.

12 <https://www.ekincekic.com/vadi>, accessed 5 October 2024.

The 'From Resistance to Cooperation' project was designed as an oral history study on cultural transformation, to record the culture's living spaces that started to disappear with the thermal power plant in Yırca Village of Manisa. The area's vegetation was recorded with photographs and videos within the scope of the Düzce-based 'There' project. This project also asked how people establish/could establish contact with nature while growing plants in their homes.

#63

YIELD

'*Mahsul* [yield in English] is a Turkish word of Arabic origin. It is derived from the Arabic *hasul* and means "harvested, produced, product or result". The "Yield" project focuses on Çukurova, a delta plain on the southern coast of Türkiye that has undergone drastic change over the past century. "Yield" aims to analyse this agricultural progress via the different meanings and networks of crops in the Cilician Plain. The main impetus for the region's agricultural transformation is associated with reformation efforts involving the Ottoman Empire, colonial ambitions and the modernisation ideals of the current nation-state, the Republic of Türkiye. Various interventions such as drained swamps, land laws, resettlement projects, cotton colonies, new railway lines, factories, dams and power plants have transformed

Çukurova into a landscape of crops. The "Yield" project focuses on tracing the origins of these interventions, their reflections on the landscape, and the trace they have left on people's relations with the environment.*

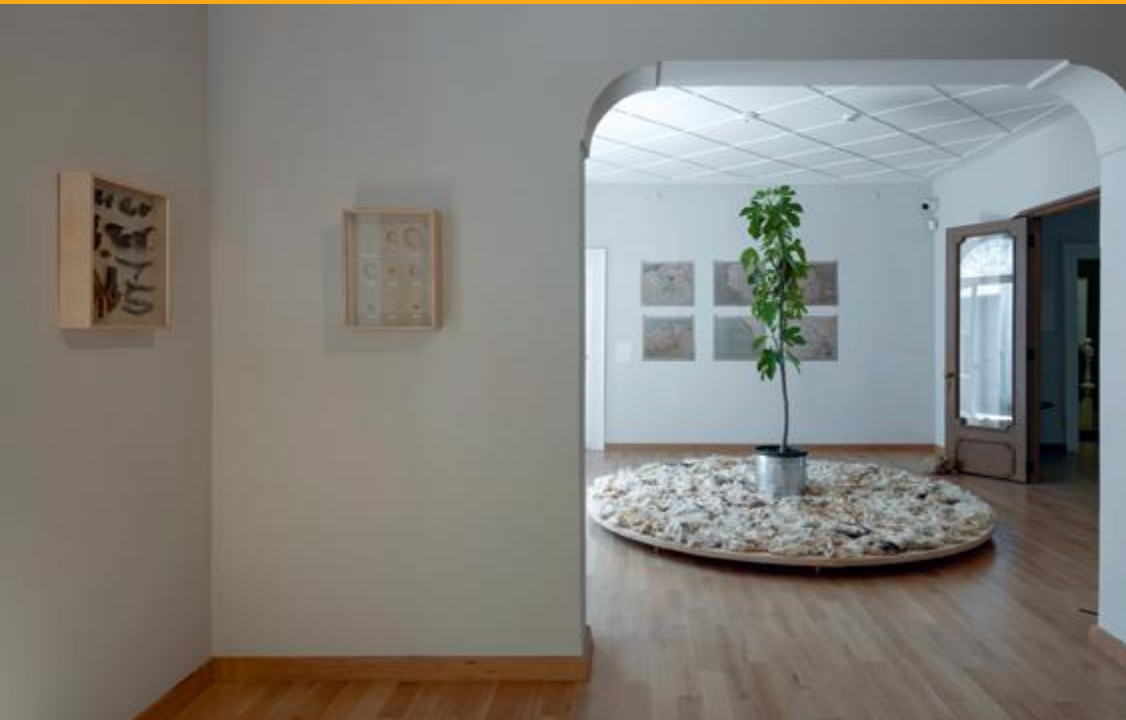
*
<https://mahsul.info/hakkinda>,
accessed 5 October, 2024.







There is No Other World: Documentarist Travelling Ecological Documentary Screenings; mAvrasya Sanat Kolektifi Denneği, Adana, Artvin, Çanakkale, Diyarbakır, Hatay, İstanbul, Muğla, Rize



Reclamation Landscapes; Dilşad Aladağ Adana, İstanbul, İzmir, Mersin Photo: Kayhan Kaygusuz





#160

A Forest Dream
Arzu Yayıntaş
Muğla



#172

Theme
Zeynep Günlü
Düzce, İstanbul





#196

Valley
Ekin Çekici
Artvin

Archive, memory, mother tongue

Collective memory, remembering and forgetting are not free of social and political influences. Considering the sovereign and the powerful's impact on individual and social history, denial and misdirection policies are crucial to alternative readings, viewings and documentation practices. Meanwhile, the speed of technology presents the ability to construct and record memories and to delete and vandalise them more quickly. Multi-dimensional thinking methods must be adapted in archive and documentation works to discuss and develop them further.

One of the fundamental elements of memory and identity is, of course, the mother tongue. In places where different ethnic identities co-exist, the homogenising policies of the nation-state bring about pressure on cultural identities and languages, which has led to field pressures and bans in Türkiye of languages other than Turkish, with a particular focus on Kurdish.

Some of the projects supported under the grant programmes of CultureCIVIC focus on preserving collective memory, archives and documentation. 'Searching for the Cosmopolitan City in a Building: A Publication Project through the Archives of the Old British Post Office' is one. The building that served as the British post office until 1895 in Galata was then used as the British Boys' School and changed uses further over the years, to be restored and to function as a culture centre under the name 'Postane'. The project began to record the memory of the Galata neighbourhood, and the documents that emerged during the restoration process were organised alongside the rest of the archival materials to be published.

'The Memory of the Windy City' in Çanakkale has been recording the stories of people and spaces linked to the city since 2019. The project has included the recording of quotidian practices over time. The conversations around how the place was shaped by people living, working and producing there became a series of podcasts. The support from CultureCIVIC aimed to create a rich interactive archive that could later become a resource, and this long-term research was also published as an urban study.

Kaynak: *St. Martin's Le-Grand*, ed. Beckley,
F. J. General Printers, Old Bailey, vol. 5. pp. 129–136.



OLD BRITISH POST OFFICE, GALATA.

#7

Searching for the Cosmopolitan City
in a Building
Center for Spatial Justice, Istanbul

Illustration:
Şeyda Şeker Sönmez



#108

The Memory of the
Windy City
Özge Donuk, Çanakkale

#26

Digitally Recording and Publishing the
Folkloric Elements of Batfê Village
Veyseî Veseî; Mardin, Şîrnak



#86

Zarbêj and Dengbêj Women Whose Voices
Resonate with Music in Mesopotamia
Zeyneb Yaş Salam; Diyarbakır, Mardin, Tunceli



One of the mother-tongue-focused archive projects, 'Digitally Recording and Publishing the Folkloric Elements of Bafê Village', set out to record and publish the folkloric tradition of Sulak (Bafê) village in the İdil district of Şırnak. Within the scope of the project, the village's oral and visual culture, which is under threat of extinction, is being digitally recorded, and the recorded stories, memories, games, songs and riddles are being broadcast on a YouTube channel. With the 'Compilation and Dissemination of Traditional Children's Games' project, children's games that exist only in the memories of older people in Aykut (Dêrgûz), Kışlak (Şivistan) and Birik (Bîrikê) villages of Mardin were recorded. With the 'Archiving of Oral Children's Literature Works That Tend to Disappear' project, tales told by storytellers in central Şırnak and the towns of Balveren, Şenoba and Kumçatı were recorded. The project 'Zarbêj and Dengbêj Women Whose Voices Resonate with Music in Mesopotamia' aimed to compile collections of *zarbêj* and *dengbêj* women from archives and to record them under the title *Women's Voices in Mesopotamian Music*, and to write biographies of these women and turn them into publications.

Kurdish artists supported by CultureCIVIC have contributed to the use of Kurdish in the public sphere, primarily through theatrical performances. With the support it received for the 'Mem û Zîn Yollarda' project, Şermola Performance went on tour with the play *Mem û Zîn*, offering the audience the opportunity to watch a play performed in their mother tongue and to learn about the production and creation processes of the play through conversations in Batman, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Siirt, Van, Tatvan, Hakkâri, Doğubeyazıt and Viranşehir. Online theatre workshops were also held for a month with young people encountered during the tour. With the project called *Dek û Dolabên Scapen*, Molière's play *Scapin The Schemer* was translated into Kurdish and staged by Amed City Theatre in Diyarbakır, Van, Istanbul, Izmir, Batman and Şanlıurfa. Other plays staged in Kurdish with the support of CultureCIVIC were Dario Fo's *Fat Woman (Jina Qelew)*, as mentioned above, which criticises the ideal body perception imposed by capitalism, John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men (Mişk û Mirov)*, and Ghotbeddin Sadeghi's *Çînur*.



#73

ÇİNUR

Actor Nazmi Karaman talks about *Çinur*, translated into Kurdish from Ghotbeddin Sadeghi's play of the same name: 'The author of the play, Ghotbeddin Sadeghi, is a professor at Tehran University in Iran; he studied in France, has almost 70 plays to his name, has made films, and is very well educated. He wrote this play in Farsi. I asked him why and he replied, "Just as you receive education in Turkish, our education is in Farsi and I can express myself better in this language, so I used it to write my play." So we translated it. Naturally, the rehearsals were a bit painful because the play has such a poetic language. I initially thought I would be comfortable since it was a one-person play, and I have been in this business for 25 years. But towards the end it became a struggle; it was challenging to make a one-man performance. With this support, I established my own theatre. My aim is to apply for funds in the future and to go to Hakkâri, for example, to gather young people for three months, to hold workshops with them and to produce a play; in other words, to go to cities where there is no Kurdish theatre, work as a tutor and attempt to establish Kurdish theatre there. I believe that, after realising this project with the support of CultureCIVIC and the European Union, I will be able to achieve these things faster.'



#19

Mem ü Zin on the Road; Şenmola Performans
Ağrı, Batman, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Hakkâri,
Mardin, Siirt, Urfa, Van, online



#9

Dek ü Dolabên Scapen (*Scapin the Schemer*)
Amed City Theater; Batman, Diyarbakır,
Istanbul, Izmir, Şanlıurfa, Van



#104

Mişk ü Mirov (*Of Mice and Men*)
Şaneşin Performans; Batman,
Diyarbakır, Mardin, Van





#79

Compilation and Dissemination of
Traditional Children's Games
Mehmet Yay; Diyarbakır, Mardin



Unerasable

SEMA KAYGUSUZ

When the inimitable hero of Egyptian mythology Osiris is massacred by his brother Set, his wife, Isis, brings back together the lifeless parts of his body and returns him to life. This myth revolves around themes of rebirth and also narrates the life force of memory and remembering. The only way to revive Osiris after restoring his body is through revitalising his memories and making his memory whole. This way of thinking that combines the ideal life force of being with a whole and absolute memory must have precluded constructing any living being without memory. It is obvious that only the living can remember. In other words, memory, which is a unique 'interior', is a prerequisite for being a living entity. St Augustine of Hippo defines the soul as memory in his book *Confessions*, which considers memory and the soul an integrated entity. This soul that moves towards remembering

God is also a conundrum of the self. The primary quality of the forgetting person is an ability to remember. Augustine asks, 'Who remembers what?' and responds, 'What remembers is not me; it is my mind,' thus forming a divine allegiance between memory, mind and agency, and father, son and the holy ghost. Osiris's disintegrated body could be interpreted to correspond to the self that goes beyond itself when it is disintegrated, returning to itself when integrated, a self that can circle the past with every forgetting in Augustine's universe of ideas.

'*Hafiza*' (memory) is rooted in Arabic and derives from the word *hafiz*, meaning 'one who protects/ keeps'. Even those who are forgotten are inherent to memory, a limitless depository in which we remember what we do not know. Memory is reminiscent of an infinite cycle revived and burgeoning, with each

memory that includes those who could not be erased, even when silenced. On the other hand, in Turkish, *bellek* (memory) is derived from the root *-bil* (to know), holding together pieces of life that have been learned or experienced self-consciously in the mind. With *bellek*, remembering is a voluntary act. Furthermore, *belletmek* (to instil memory) from the same root refers to lines of information memorised through repetition. For this reason, *bellek* and *hafıza* do not have the same meaning, and *bellek* is part of *hafıza*. To give an example of *bellek* and *bellemek* (to remember), Homer's epic poems are crucial for relaying to and preserving the knowledge of the past in the *bellek*. Homer's poems, which are essential examples of oral history, are organised by themes that repeat typical scenes, and these repetitions ease the load on the minstrel's memory. In other words, *hafıza* carries the rhythm, harmonious music and pulse that constantly trigger the heart. Homer presents his poems in a rhythmic and rhyming form, which makes it easier for community wisdom and information to be passed on. This relay of information is linked to the connection that the minstrel establishes with the Muses and with access to divine knowledge. Homer's installing of legends through traditional memory techniques is

combined with his creative intelligence and extraordinary memory.

While, in Ancient Greece, the memory goddess Mnemosyne symbolises the importance of memory, in Latin *memoria* expresses the same function. These roots emphasise that memory is an individual skill and a cultural and social concept. To understand the historical roots of the culture of memory, we can say that Ancient Greece and Rome are critical turning points. In the mythology of Ancient Greece, spirits descending to Hades drink from one of two essential rivers: Lethe and Mnemosyne. The spirits leaving the world drink from the river of forgetting, Lethe, erasing their lives in the world. Lethe's water is a magical serum that sustains the cycle of rebirth. A mandatory forgetting takes place for the spirit to begin a new life. Mnemosyne is the river of remembering. Spirits who drink water from this river, astronomers, poets, musicians, and sages, re-remember their past lives and, consequently, their accumulated knowledge. Mnemosyne is a source of truths for those in pursuit of wisdom. Mnemosyne being the goddess of art and wisdom in Ancient Greece is not a coincidence. Remembering is a moment of inspiration that makes an individual creative. The unparalleled composer Bach, when asked 'How do you

create such extraordinary compositions?’ responds with a striking statement that must be derived metaphorically from a worshipping of the goddess Mnemosyne: ‘I do not create my music, I just remember it.’

In Ancient Rome, thinkers such as Cicero and Quintilian always considered memory a critical component of the art of rhetoric. In *De Oratore*, Cicero states that orators must have a solid memory to deliver impactful speeches. In *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian analyses memory techniques in detail and presents essential information on memory training.

In the Middle Ages, memory was essential to monastic training, and the mnemonic systems at the time played a crucial role in retaining religious texts and information. Monks of this age developed various memory techniques to transmit holy texts from one mind to another, inventing devices such as ‘memory palaces’. These methods are founded on the retention of information in spaces constructed in the mind.

The Renaissance is considered a golden age for the rediscovery and development of memory. People living through the Renaissance revived the memory techniques of the classical era and founded new methods. Giulio Camillo’s *Theatre of Memory* is an important work that illustrates the innovative use

of memory techniques at the time. Camillo presented a theatrical system to preserve and remember knowledge. In short, people’s tendency to keep alive memory is so strong that memory, which is the prerequisite of culture, created many different schools of thinking.

The 20th century is truly a turning point for studying memory. At this time, vast tragedies such as the Holocaust were at the centre of memory studies. Not forgetting the genocide of the Jews, passing history on to future generations, revealed the importance of a culture of memory. The testimonies of Holocaust survivors kept this tragedy alive in people’s minds. Memorialising events, films, documentaries, written narratives, and museums have become essential tools for emphasising the collective aspect of memory. For example, the World Holocaust Memorial Centre Yad Vashem, and Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, were established to commemorate the horror of the genocide and the memories of the victims, and these memory spaces have transformed into repositories of sorrow that keep social memory alive. However, whether the devastating experiences of the Holocaust have created a functional whole of values for humanity is doubtful. Today, the Dersim *Tentele* [genocide], the Great Catastrophe

that Armenians suffered, the Bosnian Genocide, and the Indonesian Massacre where more than five hundred thousand people were killed by machetes in a year, are not associated with substantial memory spaces. In contrast, the experiences in Rwanda, Yemen and China, and the decimation that the Palestinian people are enduring before the eyes of the world, are being erased before the pain has even been processed.

Today, memory seems to have been transformed into a constructed machine, a political propaganda tool that can be deconstructed and reconstructed, open to contortions of meaning, denied as fiction. Today, post-truth comes before the testimony, the memory. As the form of looking changes, memory is reshaped again. And inevitably, in the postmodern era, memory and identity are becoming more convoluted. Even though efforts of different cultural groups and communities to form their narratives of memory present the dynamic and multi-dimensional structure of memory studies, they suffocate under the weight of relationships of identity, gender and power. On the other hand, it is particularly worth noting that feminist and post-colonial critiques expand and deepen to dissipate the clouds of fog that are constantly being reproduced.

Perhaps we might need to revisit Plato's notion of 'remembering' (anamnesis) in the future. His 'remembering' is a fundamental philosophical principle that explains the process by which the soul attains knowledge. This concept is based on the immortality of the soul and its ability to remember the information it acquired in its past lives. According to Plato, learning is simply remembering; the soul reaches actual knowledge by remembering the information it acquired in its previous lives. Remembering is a mental act that can go beyond sensory experiences and express the process of the soul accessing inner knowledge. Remembering is not limited to these, but it also encompasses all the information belonging to the world of ideas, independent of the material world. Plato's philosophical approach emphasises that memory is an individual process and a means of accessing universal knowledge owing to the soul's immortal nature.

Although Plato's notion of anamnesis may seem like a poetic wish to some, it should not be forgotten that this wish is one of the essential functions of literature, and that writing derives its soul-stimulating power from wishful thinking and hope to remember. Literature is a memory capsule. Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* is an essential

example of how memory can function in literature. The author delves into the depths of individual memory and follows the traces of the past on a literary journey. Memory is central to the concepts of time and identity in Proust's work. The evocative elements of memory reveal the characters' inner worlds and past experiences.

Leylâ Erbil's novel *What Remains* also revolves around the theme of memory. The novel examines the characters' reckoning with their pasts and the traces in memory, showing how individual and social memory are intertwined. *What Remains* reveals personal memories and how collective traumas and historical events find a place in individuals' minds. While Erbil elaborates on her characters' inner worlds and their processes of remembering, she shows how memory can be constructed within a literary narrative. In literature and cinema, narrative techniques such as flashbacks, stream of consciousness and multiple perspectives explore the workings of memory. Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and James Joyce's *Ulysses* use the stream-of-consciousness technique to bring the thoughts and memories circulating in the characters' minds to the reader. These techniques allow the reader/audience to penetrate the characters' inner worlds deeply.

At the end of this inventory, stating that memory is a live, in-flux machine that functions with methods constantly developing within the universe of culture cannot easily be denied. Some painful truths that the sovereign suffocates by silencing in forgetfulness, cultural textures that it tries to thin out, identities that it criminalises by criminalisation, withstand the onslaught, to become cultural beings by reproducing their own generator through memory. In this sense, memory is cultural in the word's true meaning. Individuals and communities' remembering, reminiscing, and reproduction processes within cultural and social contexts carry vital forces to form individual and collective identities, because it is how social events, cultural practices and personal experiences are remembered and narrated that form social identity. Thus, they need to be listened to, to the very end. Collecting photographs, opening doors to oral history projects and exhibitions, composing the music of memory by saying things over and over again, passing on information gained from experiences from generation to generation, broadcasting, documenting, supporting alternative history methodologies to break through formal narrative frameworks, heroically defending forbidden

documentaries, watching out for artists who are witnesses to their times, giving legal and psychological support to artists who are facing punishment for defending memory, and standing up for them when their right to life is under threat, assuaging the feeling of loneliness by which all memory warriors are plagued, insistently remembering the power of remembering are not only political gestures but ethical responsibilities that protect the integrity of the self. This authentic memory that remains outside of marches, official anniversaries and state ideologies is reminiscent of forests that grow thicker as they are defended. They are the lungs of life.

Setting aside the categories of memory briefly outlined in this text, institutional work that focuses on how, without memory, we can be oppressed, is, thus, significant. As long as the subaltern, including activists, artists and cultural defenders, are protected, the social contract is renewed, since the strongest person is the one who bears the burden of historical truths. They are neither the sole owner of their emotions nor the master of their memory. Actually, we might all be the property of a larger memory. We all live as secret oracles with the ghosts of languages that cannot be erased, civilisations that cannot be destroyed, tribes that cannot be eradicated — trying to forget with sorrow, maybe. However,

the forgetting of those that cannot be erased must be waiting for us in absentminded and unexpected coincidences that trigger mysterious neural networks. Every memory that catches us off guard thus transforms us. No matter what we remember when the 'I' that we used to be fades, a new 'I' is revived, as we remember without a doubt that this most potent pain of life stems from our roots.

And, finally, there is a Zen story: as a Zen master works in the garden, a young pupil approaches and asks him about the importance of memory. The master shows the student his garden, points to various plants, and says: 'I plant different plants in this garden every year, so the garden always has a new look. Every time a new plant is planted, the roots of the old plants remain in the depths of the soil. Over time, the roots nourish the soil and help the new plants grow.' The pupil struggles to get the meaning of these words; he can't relate them to memory. The master plucks a flower and gives it to him. 'In this flower's sap is the essence of other flowers. Those flowers have withered; they might even appear to have been destroyed, but they nourish this flower and make it what it currently is. Memory carries everything. This determines who we are. The impossibility of forgetting is thanks to the roots always being there.' ●



#134

Without a Space but Everywhere; Amıdart Culture and Arts Community; Batman, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Van
Photo: Murad Aygün

#24

-29 Youth Camp: Memory
Young Peacebuilders of Turkey
Mardin



#117

Channel Tuning
Kutsal Motor
Istanbul, online



Collective Mentorship

Some projects supported under different grant programmes are structurally perfectly aligned with CultureCIVIC's concern for creating networks and dialogue. For example, 'Platform by GAPO' keeps a communication network alive to connect emerging photographers from Türkiye with curators, festival organisers, editors, and other cultural professionals from abroad. This enterprise, implemented by Geniş Açık Project Office, provides consultancy to photographers to apply for open calls and communication between various cultural professionals through regular newsletters. The '-29 Youth Camp', organised and planned to be sustained in the long-term by the Young Peacebuilders of Türkiye, aims to create a free space where young people from different socioeconomic, political and cultural backgrounds can come together, meet their 'others', establish dialogue and express themselves freely. The theme of the second youth camp, organised in Mardin in 2022, was 'memory and confrontation'.

The explosion of mucilage seen in the Sea of Marmara in 2021, once again, underlined the fact that environmental pollution fueled by urbanisation and industry had reached dangerous levels. Network for the Cultures of Marmara with its Islands and Straits, which brought together the Adalar Foundation from Istanbul and civil society organisations from Balıkesir and Çanakkale, had also set out with the aim of informing the public about the environmental crisis facing the natural and cultural values of the Marmara Sea through cultural and artistic activities. While the expansion of the network to the coastal settlements of Marmara and its association with all specialised institutions, universities and cultural and artistic actors working on Marmara were considered essential, care was taken to open a non-hierarchical communication and cooperation area between individuals and institutions that could contribute to the work. Documentation, communication and information activities initiated with the support of CultureCIVIC are continuing, and events that emphasise the importance of identifying and protecting the natural and cultural values of the region are being held.

The 'The Other Artist: Being an Artist in the East' project aimed to identify the problems of artists who continue their artistic production

despite all the adverse circumstances in Van, Hakkâri and Şırnak, which are way outside the centre of the art scene in Türkiye and lack the necessary infrastructure in this field, and to create a shared agenda with the relevant parties for solutions. Project manager Uğurcan Kaçmaz made face-to-face interviews in these three provinces and sent the survey he prepared to arts and culture producers and artists/academics in the fine arts faculties of universities in different provinces online.

The changing environment after the government appointment of a trustee mayor in Diyarbakır (as mentioned in ‘Against the Patriarchy’, above) also impacted upon the production of arts and culture, and the Amîdart community, which aimed to organise events based on multilingualism and multiculturalism, came together as a result of this process. The group’s slogan, ‘Without a Space but Everywhere’, was developed as a CultureCIVIC



The ‘IDEA ‘23’ project was implemented with the participation of 18 artists and cultural managers on 9–12 September 2023, at Çamtepe Ecological Life Centre in Adatepe village of the Ayvacık (Küçükkuşu) district of Çanakkale. Sarp Keskiner summarises the project as follows: ‘We can think of “IDEA ‘23” as an open laboratory. The working principles and ideals of this laboratory were actually determined collectively. In 2022 and 2023, as the result of a series of investigative meetings we’d held – attended by a

wide range of artists, curators, urban planners, activists, agricultural experts– a set of principles emerged, and we implemented a laboratory study on how a non-collective, calm, quiet, renewable-energy-based event model can be implemented, where decisions are made in a participatory manner and the daily production is ensured by collective effort. The four-day programme includes talks, workshops and performance activities. There is an open table for two meals. All 19 participants come from different disciplines but they produce joint work in collaboration. This was not something we had foreseen and it was very exciting. CultureCIVIC’s support was actually an extraordinary opportunity for us to take the model into the field; it helped us diversify the participation, and made it possible to test our framework in the field.’

#56

IDEA ‘23
Photo: Samp Keskiner

project to include 11 civil society organisations from Diyarbakır, Batman, Mardin and Van. The technical equipment provided within the project's scope was aimed to enable Amîdart to organise more events and to strengthen arts and culture production in neighbouring provinces.

Conclusion

When CultureCIVIC was launched four years ago, the programme director, Ayşe Erarşlan, stated in the press conference on 23 June 2021, to promote the project: 'With CultureCIVIC, we maintain that it is possible to consider culture as a tool of basic rights. We aim to make the relationship between culture and basic rights more visible. We will try out how projects and events that are part of the programme will trigger and activate social change through arts and culture. We will aim to add another dimension to the discussions on human rights through the field of arts and culture, and by the end of these four years, we will make sure the gains in arts and culture of this long-term programme spanning four years will become visible.'

Considering the past four years, one can readily see that CultureCIVIC's programme team and the project facilitators have made long-term and lasting transformations in the cities and people the projects touched. As the conversations that the project facilitators participated in in Diyarbakır and Ankara reveal, the gains include better acquaintance with all constituents in the cities where the projects took place, raised awareness of their true potential among disadvantaged groups who were included in the activities, and the comprehension that collaborative production and passing on of experiences are crucial, that self-organising is within reach, that those who are typically outside of the artistic output can be included in the production processes, that breaking through prejudices on local levels is possible, and that rights-driven collaborative productions can be realised not only by not-for-profit organisations but also by artists with individual practices.





Public Theatre Experiences and Opportunities from Turkey
Mustafa Kara; Balıkesir, Diyarbakır, Edirne, Hatay, İstanbul, İzmir
Photo: Ayşeğül Algan



Our Love Memory with "Sevgi"; Kenan Özcan
Ankara, Berlin, Bursa, Çanakkale,
Hamburg, İstanbul, Kocaeli, Konya





#40

Cinema Unites
Izmir Film and Television Producers Association
Izmir



#50

Diyanbakır Ecological Film Days
Diyanbakır Ecology Association
Diyanbakır

#105

Montag Residency-Gönen
Eda Emirdağ
Baillkesir



#57

Istanbul Living: Urban Experience
Through the Eyes of Tarlaabaşı Women
Tarlaabaşı Community Center, Istanbul





#68

And Other Objects
Soner Akalin
Bitlis, Muş



#3

Altyazı Fasikülü: From Below
Altyazı Sinema Denneği
İstanbul, online





#99

Whisper of the Lost Stone
Mustafa Orman
Kars



#165

In the Middle
Melt
Ankara

CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMME

#1

Culture: Whose? How? With What?

29, 30 January, 5 February 2022 • Online

Presentations: Merve Bedir, Ayfer Bartu Candan,

Levent Soysal, Aylin Vartanyan

Designed and facilitated by: Ayça İnce

#2

Monitoring and Evaluation

5, 6 March 2022 • Online

Designed and facilitated by: Musa Çopur, Başak Tuğsavul

#3

Culture: How Does Culture Work? How to Work on Culture?

19, 20, 26 March 2022 • Online

Presentations: Bager Akbay, Ayça İnce, Bülent Somay, Aylin Vartanyan

Designed and facilitated by: Ayça İnce

#4

Applied Artistic and Cultural Studies with Children Affected by the Earthquake

6–7 July 2023 • Istanbul

Designed and facilitated by: Udo Bär

In collaboration with Goethe-Institut Istanbul Library

#5

Together at the Threshold I: Artists, Curators

17–23 July 2023 • Izmir

Presentations: Çelenk Bafra, Evrim Kavcar, Elif Öner,

Bige Örer, Öykü Özsoy Sağnak

Designed and facilitated by: Nesin Sanat Köyü, Işın Önel,

İstasyon: Nesin Köyleri Derneği

In cooperation with İstasyon: Nesin Köyleri Derneği, İKSV and SAHA

#6-7

Open-end Meetings for a Habitable World

2-3 March 2024 • Mardin

Presentations: Deniz Başar, Canan Budak, Esra Dicle, Eylem Ejder,
Nejbir Erkol, Ceyda Özdemir Ertan

Designed and facilitated by: Eylem Ejder

#8

Copywriting in Arts and Culture Communication: What, How, To Whom?

20-21 April 2024 • Online

Designed and facilitated by: Mümkün

#9-10

Together at the Threshold II: Artists, Curators

24-30 June 2024 • Izmir

Presentations: Çelenk Bafra, Ezgi Bakçay, Bengisu

Çağlayan, Kevser Güler, Işın Önel

Designed and facilitated by: Nesin Sanat Köyü, Işın Önel,

İstasyon: Nesin Köyleri Derneği

In cooperation with İstasyon: Nesin Köyleri Derneği, İKSV and SAHA

#11-12

Opening up the Memory: Image, Record and Archive

20-23 September 2024 • Ankara

Presentations: Senem Aytaç, Gizem Bayıksel, Sidar Bayram, Ayça Çiftçi,
Enis Köstepen, Sevgi Ortaç, Aslı Özgen, Damla Sandal, Hale Tenger

Designed and facilitated by: Senem Aytaç

#198

Craft Tapes
Ertuğrul Berhan Yıldız
İstanbul



#121

REINCARNATE darabağaç
Darabağaç Kolektifi
İzmir



172



#185

Missing Bricks
Levent Genç, Onur Tatar
Çanakkale



#71

When I Was Little
Sinem Kanat
Istanbul

Galata's Everyday
Acoustic Palimpsests
Sena Karahan, Istanbul



Travelling Cinema Dialogues:
Kurdish Women's Images
Nimet Gatar; Diyanbakir, Tunceli; Van





#53

A Learning Experience
Towards Future Cities
Aks, Ankara



#80

Güneşane Summer Camp
Güneşane Foundation
Çanakkale

#91

Grande Zarfı Apartments
İlyas Özçakır, İstanbul
Photo: Salih Üstündağ



#32

Çanax
Sevim Kaplan Akan
Mardin





Akhisar Women's Film Days
Akhisar Sinema Derneği
Manisa



Rojbaş
Özkan Küçük
Diyarbakır, İstanbul

GRASSROOTS PROJECTS

OPEN CALL NO.1

#1

The Banishment

Yılmaz Özdil

2022

Bitlis, Mardin, Van

#2

Akhisar Women's Film Days

Akhisar Sinema Derneği

2022

Manisa

#3

Altyazı Fasikül: From Below

Altyazı Sinema Derneği

2022

Istanbul, online

#4

The Lost Saint of Anatolia: A Compilation of the Khidr Legend

Hacı Bektaş Veli Anatolian
Cultural Foundation

2022

Çorum, Kırıkkale,
Nevşehir, Sivas

#5

Beats By Girlz Turkey Festival

Beril Saraltun

2022

Istanbul

#6

Maybe a Movie Comes to Town

Sidar İnan

2021–2022

Bitlis

#7

Searching for the Cosmopolitan City in a Building: A Publication Project through the Archives of the Old British Post Office

Center for Spatial Justice

2022

Istanbul

#8

Çanakkale Accessible Cultural Ecosystem

Erişilebilir Her Şey

2021–2022

Çanakkale

#9

Dek û Dolabên Scapen (Scapin the Schemer)

Amed City Theatre

2022

Batman, Diyarbakır,
Istanbul, İzmir,
Şanlıurfa, Van

#10

Mapping Women's Cultural Labor in Diyarbakır

Palimpsest Mekân ve

Hafıza Çalışmaları Kolektifi

2021–2022

Diyarbakır, online

#11

Recent LGBTI+ Activism in Diyarbakır

Nadir Sönmez

2022

Diyarbakır, Mardin, Istanbul

#12

Stories Between the Past and the Future

Maya Derneği

2021–2022

Mersin

#13

Graffiti Art in Sakarya (GAiS)

Sivil Aktivite ve

Girişimcilik Ağı

2021–2022

Adapazarı, Sakarya

#14

Woman's Touch

Canan Budak

2022

Mardin

#15

**Red Noses: Social Circus
Project for Civil Society
Organizations in Istanbul**

BoMoVu/Sports and
Body Movement
Association for Social
Empowerment
2021–2022
Istanbul

#16

**Non-Fiction Creative
Writing Workshop**

5Harfliler
2022
Ankara, Diyarbakır,
Mersin, online

#17

Symphony of Cultures

Hatay Symphony
Orchestra Culture and
Arts Association
2021–2022
Hatay

#18

**On-site Construction
of Laz Literature**

İrfan Çağatay Aleksiva
2021–2022
Artvin, Istanbul, Rize

#19

Mem û Zîn on the Road

Şermola Performans
2022
Ağrı, Batman, Bitlis,
Diyarbakır, Hakkâri,
Mardin, Siirt, Urfa,
Van, online

#20

Living Positive: WE

Ebubekir Çetinkaya
2022
Nevşehir

#21

**The Other Artist: Being
an Artist in the East**

Uğurcan Kaçmaz
2022
Hakkâri, Şırnak, Van

#22

Dry Summer

Eldem Sanat Alanı
2022
Eskişehir

#23

The Antaios of Despair

Monitor
2022
Izmir

OPEN CALL NO.2

#24

-29 Youth Camp: Memory

Young Peacebuilders
of Türkiye
2022
Mardin

#25

**Journey into the World
of Animation**

Children First Association
2022–2023
Diyarbakır

#26

**Digitally Recording
and Publishing the
Folkloric Elements of
Bafê Village**

Veysel Vesek
2022–2023
Mardin, Şırnak

#27

My Life

Tahsin Özmen
2022–2023
Şırnak

#28

Berban

Nursel Doğan
2022–2023
Diyarbakır

<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#29</p> <p>From Bergama to Ephesus Accessible Documentary Tourism for All Association 2022–2023 Izmir</p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#34</p> <p>Heterotopia Neo-Zosimos Kültür Sanat Kolektifi 2022–2023 Gaziantep</p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#40</p> <p>Cinema Unites Izmir Film and Television Producers Association 2022–2023 Izmir</p>
<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#30</p> <p>Silver Screen in Village Squares Yeni Sinema Kolektifi 2022 Batman</p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#35</p> <p>KızBaşına Feminist Art History KızBaşına 2022–2023 Ankara, Istanbul, online</p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#41</p> <p>Istanbul, in Pursuit of Water City Detective Initiative 2022–2023 Istanbul</p>
<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#31</p> <p>Designing a Nation of Nomads OPUS XI 2022–2023 Eskişehir</p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#36</p> <p>Birds Gamze Tanrıvermiş 2022–2023 Trabzon</p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#42</p> <p>The City and the Messiah Aylin Kuryel, Raşel Meseri 2022–2023 Izmir</p>
<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#32</p> <p>Çanax Sevim Kaplan Akan 2022–2023 Mardin</p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#37</p> <p>NFTs for ART Disyon 2022 Istanbul, online</p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#43</p> <p>Viticulture from Tenedos to Bozcaada Mustafa Dermanlı 2022–2023 Çanakkale</p>
<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#33</p> <p>Music for All Vezirköprü Women's Orchestra 2022–2023 Samsun</p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#38</p> <p>Long Live Art, Resist the Pandemic Alzheimer's Society of Elderly Living Centre 2022–2023 Mersin</p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#44</p> <p>Cinema Earth Roof Coliving 2022–2023 Adana</p>
	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#39</p> <p>Sunday Cinema Rojin Aslan Vesek 2022 Mardin</p>	

OPEN CALL NO.3

Amed Underground

Salih Karabulut

2023

Diyarbakır

#45

Concrete, Animal, Sea

Kıyı Project

2023

Antalya

#46

Boğaziçi Ayvalık School

2022–2023 Semester

Boğaziçi Ayvalık Schools

2023

Balıkesir

#47

chalaKINO

Cinema Events

Chalak Events

Van Platform

2022–2023

Van

#48

**Culinary Memory of
Multicultural Istanbul**

Narod Avcı

2022–2023

Istanbul

#49

**Diyarbakır Ecological
Film Days**Diyarbakır Ecology
Association

2023

Diyarbakır

#50

Hear My Voice

Asena Akan

2022–2023

Adana, Hatay, Istanbul

Affiliates:

Kalan Müzik, Mor

Dayanışma

#51

**Children's Rights and Art
Workshops in Erzincan**

Sine Boran Art

2023

Erzincan

Affiliate: Sulukule

Volunteers Association

#52

**A Learning Experience
Towards Future Cities**

Aks

2022–2023

Ankara

#53

**Travelling Cinema
Dialogues: Kurdish
Women's Images**

Nimet Gatar

2023–2024

Diyarbakır, Tunceli, Van

Affiliate: Women Culture

Art Literature Association

#54

Giulio's Dream

UR Collective

2023

Izmir

#55

IDEA '23

Caz Kedisi

2023

Balıkesir, Çanakkale,

Izmir, Muğla

Affiliates: Amsterdam:

Bone Union Records

Balıkesir: Nedircik

Publications

Çanakkale: Bir Tohum

Vakfı, Küçükkuşu

Bellek İnisyatifi

Izmir: Açık Stüdyo,

KARANTİNA,

Kendine Ait Bir Oda,

Kronovox Archives,

Teos Culture Art

Association

#56

#57

**Istanbul Living:
Urban Experience
Through the Eyes of
Tarlabaşı Women**

Tarlabaşı Community Center

2022–2023

Istanbul

#58

Jina Qelew (Fat Woman)

Batman Yenisahne

2023

Batman, Diyarbakır,

Istanbul, Mardin,

Şanlıurfa, Van

#82

Kindness for the Love of It
Çetin Azer Aras
Adiyaman, Adana, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, online



#107

For Restorative Justice: Dargeçit; Memory Center
Ankara, Diyanbakır, İstanbul, İzmir, Mardin, Şırnak
Photo: IHD Batman Şubesi





Red Noses: Social Circus Project for Civil Society Organizations in Istanbul; BoMoYu/BoMoYu/Sports and Body Movement Association for Social Empowerment, Istanbul



Graffiti Art in Sakarya (GAIS)
Sivil Aktivite ve Gönüşümlük Ağı
Sakarya

#59

**Red-Headed Bunting:
Forest Fire Awareness
Art Workshops
in Datça**
Özge Çiğdem Denizci
2022–2023
Muğla

#60

**From Village Evacuations
to Village Money**
Cemal İşnas
2023
Van

#61

Müzikist in the Village
Müzikist
2023
Bursa

#62

Li Dêrê (In the Church)
Çetoyê Zêdo
2022–2023
Batman, Diyarbakır,
Mardin, Van

#63

Yield
Dilşad Aladağ
2022–2023
Adana, Mersin, online
Affiliate: Nöbetçi Kütüphane

#64

Rojbash
Özkan Küçük
2022–2023
Diyarbakır, İstanbul

#65

**Urban Transformation
like a Roma**
Mediterranean Roma
Associations Federation
2022–2023
Mersin

#66

**Developing Art
Journalism and Criticism
from the Local**
Argonotlar
2022–2023
Online

#67

Third Absence from Home
Mediha Güzelgün
2022–2023
Kahramanmaraş, Mersin

#68

And Other Objects
Soner Akalın
2023
Bitlis, Muş

#69

Queerification by Writing
Ecem Arslanay
2023–2024
İzmir, online

OPEN CALL NO.4

#70

**4th Antep Short
Film Festival**
big bang ve berisi
2023
Gaziantep

#71

When I Was Little
Sinem Kanat
2024
İstanbul

#72

Hope
Nefes Foundation for
Arts and Culture
2023
Gaziantep

#73

Çınur
Nazmi Karaman
2023–2024
Ankara, Batman, Diyarbakır,
İstanbul, İzmir, Van

#74

**From Resistance to
Cooperation:
Transformation of Yırca
Village Culture and
Cultural Memory**
Yırca Köyü Derneği
2023–2024
Manisa

#75

**Literature Island Marmara:
Marmara Island****Literature Days**

Gündoğdu Köyünü
Güzelleştirme İmar
ve Kalkındırma
Sosyal Dayanışmayı
Sağlama Derneği

2023

Balıkesir

Affiliates:

Galimi Çınarlı Kırsal
Kalkınma ve Turizm
Derneği, Marmara Adası
Dostları Derneği (Balıkesir)

#76

**The Voice of LGBTIQ+
in Literature**

Mertcan Karakuş

2023–2024

Online

#77

Accessible Films Festival

Puruli Culture Art

2023–2024

Ankara, Eskişehir

#78

Ethnos

Ruken Tekeş

2023–2024

Çanakkale, Hatay, İstanbul

#79

**Compilation and
Dissemination of
Traditional Children's Games**

Mehmet Yay

2023–2024

Diyarbakır, Mardin

#80

Güneşane Summer Camp

Güneşane Foundation

2023

Çanakkale

#81

Tell Your Story

Mordem Sanat

2023

Adıyaman

#82

Kindness for the Love of It

Çetin Azer Aras

2023–2024

Adıyaman, Adana, Hatay,
Kahramanmaraş, online

#83

**Archiving of Oral
Children's Literature Works
That Tend to Disappear**

Diyar Bayram

2023

Şırnak

#84

**Mavi Kuş Solidarity Group
Children's Workshops**

Mavi Kuş Dayanışması

2023

Hatay

#85

**Mek Mezi Culture
and Art Meetings**

Şafak Murat Şahin

2023

Artvin

#86

**Zarbêj and Dengbêj Women
Whose Voices Resonate
with Music in Mesopotamia**

Zeyneb Yaş Salam

2023–2024

Diyarbakır, Mardin, Tunceli

#87

**Purple Violets: A
Women's Football Team's
Story in Van's Forgotten
Neighbourhood**

Ömer Ferhat Özmen

2023–2024

Van

#88

Memory of the OtherWomen's Works Library
and Information
Centre Foundation

2023–2024

İstanbul

#89

Chicken Broth Soup

Deniz Büyükkırlı

2023

Kırklareli

#90

**In Pursuit of
Theatre People**

Nadir Sönmez

2023–2024

Erzurum, Kars, Tunceli, Van

OPEN CALL NO.5

#91

Grande Zarifi Apartments
İlyas Özçakır
2023–2024
Istanbul

#92

**Rethinking and Creating
Theater's Facilities
for Children:
Performing the *Cloud*
Play in Ankara and the
Earthquake Region**

Derya Ağaoğlu
2023–2024
Adıyaman, Ankara,
Gaziantep, Hatay,
Kahramanmaraş, Malatya

#93

Impactors

Pırıl Gündüz
2023–2024
Izmir, online

#94

**Gêncö
The Hero of
Ordinary Things**

Ali Kemal Çınar
2023–2024
Diyarbakır, Istanbul

#95

**Beyond Seeing:
Art Meetings**

Özgül Kahraman
2023–2024
Batman
Affiliate: Ayşe Sezer

#96

In the Shadow of Memories

Emek Yıldırım Şahin
2023–2024
Ardahan, Artvin

#97

Harvest of Light

Esin Özalp Öztürk
2023–2024
Ankara

#98

There is Art in Me

Mahir Elvan
2023–2024
Trabzon

#99

Whisper of the Lost Stone

Mustafa Orman
2023–2024
Kars

#100

Kızıltoprak

Zeynep Ekmekçi
2023–2024
Bursa, Istanbul, Izmir

#101

BuildConductShare

Yiğit Can Eyüboğlu
2023–2024
Trabzon

#102

Laş û Cih (Body and Place)

Nalin Acar, Adar Taş
2023–2024
Batman, Bitlis

#103

**A Journey of Learning the
Laz Language from Plants**

Ceren Kazancı Oruç
2023–2024
Artvin

#104

**Mişk û Mirov
(Of Mice and Men)**

Şaneşin Performans
(Mardin Tiyatro
Sanatçıları Derneği)
2023–2024
Batman, Diyarbakır,
Mardin, Van

#105

Montag Residency-Gönen

Eda Emirdağ
2023–2024
Balıkesir

#106

Almost Certainly False
Cansu Baydar
2023–2024
Diyarbakır, Gaziantep,
Istanbul, İzmir

#107

**For Restorative Justice:
Dargeçit**
Memory Center
2023–2024
Ankara, Diyarbakır,
Istanbul, İzmir,
Mardin, Şırnak

#108

**The Memory of
the Windy City**
Özge Doruk
2023–2024
Çanakkale

#109

Salman Wants to Go
Ozan Takış
2023–2024
Artvin, Edirne,
Istanbul, Muğla

#110

Invisible Women of Cinema
Yasemin Özkent
2023–2024
Istanbul, Konya

#111

Symposia Dadia
Deniz Kırımsoy Denge
2023–2024
Muğla

#112

**Public Theatre Experiences
and Opportunities
from Turkey**
Mustafa Kara
2023–2024
Balıkesir, Diyarbakır, Edirne,
Hatay, Istanbul, İzmir

#113

**Veng Bidi, Vinî Mebi:
Vewremerdim
(Speak up, Don't Get
Lost: Snowman)**
Çocuk Sanat Merkezi
2023–2024
Diyarbakır, Istanbul, Tunceli

#114

Domestic Goods
Rojda Ezgi Oral
2023–2024
Mardin

#115

Among the Ruins
Servet Kaplan
2023–2024
Istanbul

STRUCTURAL SUPPORT

OPEN CALL NO.1

#116

**From Ali Rıza Bey
Mansion to an Art Space**
Sevilay Refika Kadioğlu,
Tamer and Caner Karataş
2022–2023
Artvin

#117

Channel Tuning
Kutsal Motor
2022–2023
Istanbul, online

#118

Kolektif Mekân
Merkezkaç Art Collective
2022–2023
Diyarbakır

#119

Nefes Music School
Nefes Foundation for
Arts and Culture
2022
Gaziantep

PLATFORM by GAPO
Geniş Açı Project Office, Istanbul, online
Photo: Monika Balu



The Theatre Foundation of Turkey Infrastructure
Reinforcement Project, The Theatre Foundation
of Turkey, Istanbul; Photo: Emre Mollaoğlu





KONSERVE: Intercity Guest Artist and Exchange Programme Network; Teos Culture Art Association Bursa, Çanakkale, Izmir; Photo: Esna Okyay



Cinema on a Bird's Wing Izmir Film & Television Producers Association Gaziantep, Izmir

#120

PLATFORM by GAPO

Geniş Açı Project
Office (GAPO)

2022–2023
Istanbul, online

#121

REINCARNATE darağaç

Darağaç Kolektifi

2022–2023
Izmir

#122

Habitat for the Arts

Çanakkale Biennial
Initiative (CABININ)

2022
Çanakkale

#123

Set Kültürhane

Kültürhane

2022
Mersin

#124

The Theatre Foundation of Turkey Infrastructure Reinforcement Project

The Theatre Foundation
of Türkiye

2022–2023
Istanbul

OPEN CALL NO.2

#125

Ayvalık International Film Festival at Küçük Han

Seyir Association

2023–2024
Balıkesir

#126

Improving the Physical Conditions of Çıplak Ayaklar Dance Company

Çıplak Ayaklar
Dance Company

2023–2024
Istanbul

#127

DÎWAN: International Theatre Academy (DÎWAN: Akademîya Navneteweyî ya Şanoyê)

Şermola Performance

2023–2024
Batman

#128

Action/Experience/Contact

Yermekân

2023–2024
Ankara

#129

Transformation of Kırkayak Art Centre into an Open Space

Kırkayak Kültür

2023–2024
Gaziantep

#130

Cultural Labour Platform Renovation and Technical Infrastructure Project

Özge Çiğdem Denizci,
Selda Dudu, Murat Köylü

2023
Online

#131

Cultureshack

Kültürhane

2023–2024
Mersin

#132

Structural Improvement of Nesin Foundation Theatre and Performance Stage

Nesin Foundation

2023
Istanbul

OPEN CALL NO.3

#133

**Istanbul Gender Museum
Digital Capacity
Building and
Sustainability Project**

Istanbul Gender
Museum

2023–2024

Istanbul, online

#134

**Without a Space
but Everywhere**

Amıdart Culture and
Arts Community

2023–2024

Batman, Diyarbakır,
Mardin, Van

Affiliates: Diyarbakır: Amed
City Theatre, Cultural
Studies Center for Peace
(BAKAD), Children Studies
Association (ÇocukÇA),
Women's Culture and
Literature Association,
Keskesor LGBTI+ Platform,
Mordem Sanat, Colorful
Hopes Association,
Salih Karabulut-Amed
Underground
Batman: Batman Culture
and Arts Association,
Yeni Sahne
Van: Anka Culture and
Arts Centre

#135

**Pink Life QueerFest
Capacity Building**

Pembe Hayat LGBTI+
Solidarity Association

2023–2024

Ankara

#136

**CineShack: An
Independent Space**

Mersin Cinephile
Cinema Association

2023–2024

Mersin

#137

Reverse

Odeon Pergamon
Kültür Sanat Alanı

2023–2024

Izmir

#138

**Yesayan Culture and
Literature Archive**

Cultural Preservation
and Interaction
Yesayan Culture and
Literature Association

2023–2024

Istanbul

#139

**ZAROK Ma
Open-air Stage**

MA Music Center

2024

Diyarbakır

#140

**ZİÇEV Art Center:
A Story of Improvement**

The Foundation for the
Education and Protection of
Mentally Handicapped
Children (ZİÇEV)
Mersin Branch

2023–2024

Mersin

**INTERCITY
NETWORKING**

OPEN CALL NO.1

#141

**Network for the Cultures
of Marmara with its
Islands and Straits**

Foundation of the Islands

2022

Istanbul

Affiliates:

Balıkesir: Avşa Otel,
Motel, Apart ve
Pansiyoncular Derneği,
Galimi Çınarlı Kırsal
Kalkınma ve
Turizm Derneği,
Gündoğdu Köyünü
Güzelleştirme İmar ve
Kalkındırma Sosyal
Dayanışmayı Sağlama
Derneği,

Marmara Adaları Kültür
ve Dayanışma Derneği,
Topağaç Güzelleştirme
ve Dayanışma Derneği
Çanakkale:
Troy Environmental
Association
Istanbul: Gündoğdu Köyü
Güzelleştirme Derneği

#142

KONSERVE
Intercity Guest
Artist and Exchange
Programme Network
 Teos Culture Art
 Association
 2022
 Bursa, Çanakkale, İzmir
Affiliates:
 Bursa:
 Municipality of Nilüfer,
 Directorate of Culture
 and Social Services
 Çanakkale:
 Çamtepe Ecological
 Life Culture Centre,
 Saye Collective
 Diyarbakır:
 Metal Kolektif,
 Amıdart Culture and
 Arts Community
 İzmir:
 Açık Stüdyo,
 KARANTİNA Kolektifi,
 Kendine Ait Bir
 Oda İnisiyatifi,
 Nedircik Yayınları,
 Yellow Submarine
 Art Initiative
 Muğla:
 Carbon Collective,
 Caz Kedisi

#143

11. Pink Life QueerFest
 Pembe Hayat LGBTI+
 Solidarity Association
 2022
 Festival and workshops*:
 Ankara, Aydın, Denizli,
 Diyarbakır, İstanbul, İzmir
 * The Aydın, Denizli,
 Diyarbakır and İzmir legs of
 the festival were supported
 as part of the project.
Affiliates:
 18th June LGBTI+
 Solidarity Association
 (İzmir),
 Aydın LGBTI+
 Solidarity (Aydın),
 Keskesor LGBT+
 Platform (Diyarbakır)

OPEN CALL NO.2

#144

OPENspace.ART
Public Performance
Designed with a
Focus on Ecology
 Genedos Cooperative
 2023
 Antalya, İzmir, Rize
Affiliates:
 Hemşin Yaşam
 Derneği (Rize),
 Kaş Çevre ve Kültür
 Derneği (Antalya),
 Ne Yerde Ne Gökte
 Derneği (İzmir),

#145

Anatolia's Memories
of Music Meetings
 Anadolu Müzik
 Kültürleri Derneği
 2023
 Adana, Diyarbakır,
 Kayseri, Mersin
Affiliates:
 Mehmet Alişan Budak
 (Diyarbakır),
 Uğur Pişmanlık (Mersin),
 Ozan Dertli Polat (Adana),
 Aykut Şahin (Kayseri)

#146

Feminist/Queer
Biography Workshop
 As a Tool for Encounter,
 Dialogue and Participation
 ADA Eğitim Kooperatifi
 2023
 Ankara, Diyarbakır, Van
Affiliates:
 Cultural Studies Centre
 for Peace (Diyarbakır),
 Rosa Women's Association
 (Diyarbakır),
 Star Women's
 Association (Van)

OPEN CALL NO.3

#147

There is No Other World
Documentarist
Travelling Ecological
Documentary Screenings
 Avrasya Sanat
 Kolektifi Derneği

2024

Adana, Artvin, Çanakkale,
 Diyarbakır, Hatay,
 İstanbul, Muğla, Rize
Affiliates:
 Antakya: Cumhuriyet
 Mah. Taziye Evi,
 Doğu Akdeniz Çevre
 Platformu,
 Dursunlu Mah. Muhtarlığı,
 Climate Justice
 Coalition Turkey,
 Hatay Ekoloji Platformu,
 Karaçay Koordinasyon
 Derneği, Samandağ
 Ekoloji Platformu,
 Servas Barış Okulu
 Artvin: Eğitimden
 Balıkesir: Kazdağı Doğal
 ve Kültürel Varlıkları
 Koruma Derneği
 Diyarbakır:
 Amed City Theatre,
 Diyarbakır Metropolitan
 Municipality,
 Diyarbakır Ekoloji Derneği
 Çanakkale:
 Gülpınar Sürdürülebilir
 Yaşam Derneği
 İstanbul: Which Human
 Rights? Film Festival
 Muğla: Datça Çevre Derneği,
 Menteşe Belediyesi,
 Nadi Güler, TAKSAV
 Rize: Yayla (Gola) Kültür
 Sanat ve Ekoloji Derneği

#148

There is Hope in the
Countryside:
A Festival Dream
 Women of Ravanda
 Association
 2023–2024
 Kilis, Mardin

#149

Cinema on a Bird's Wing
 İzmir Film & Television
 Producers Association
 2023–2024
 Gaziantep, İzmir
Affiliate:
 Syrian Film Institute
 (Gaziantep)

#150

OPEN CALL NO.1

Anesthetic Awareness
 Şefik Özcan
 2022–2023
 Diyarbakır, Mardin

#151

Goat on the Mountain,
Moon in the Sky,
Fish in the Water
 Rezzan Gümgüm
 2022–2023
 Tunceli

#152

Tissue_Lab
 Ali Kanal
 2022–2023
 Antalya

#153

Listening to the Texture
 Çisel Karacebe
 2022–2023
 İstanbul

<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#154</p> <p>Fata Morgana Alper Aydın 2023 Ordu</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#159</p> <p>Close to the View, In the Distance Seniha Ünay 2022–2023 Düzce</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#165</p> <p>OPEN CALL NO.2</p> <hr/> <p>In the Middle Melt 2024 Ankara</p> <hr/>
<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#155</p> <p>Pistachio Time Özlem Köse 2022–2023 Gaziantep</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#160</p> <p>A Forest Dream Arzu Yayıntaş 2023 Muğla</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#166</p> <p>Nature Notebooks: Anatolian Folk Calendar from Dionysius Festivals to Hidrellez Erdal Demir 2023–2024 Artvin</p> <hr/>
<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#156</p> <p>Imminent Arrival sub, İlayda Tunca 2022–2023 Çanakkale</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#161</p> <p>Performative Cob Construction Sculpture Onur Fındık 2022 Uşak</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#167</p> <p>Reduplications Ezgi Yakın 2023–2024 İzmir</p> <hr/>
<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#157</p> <p>Great Dream Can Akgümüş 2022 Ankara, İstanbul</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#162</p> <p>That Little Rock Over There is Waiting to Be Found Sevgi Ortaç 2022–2023 Antalya, İstanbul</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#168</p> <p>Thin Air Cemil Batur Gökçeer 2023–2024 Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir</p> <hr/>
<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#158</p> <p>Hive Beyza Durhan, Aslıhan Mumcu 2023 Ankara, İstanbul, Mardin, Şırnak, Tekirdağ</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#163</p> <p>Tempo Primo Yağmur Uyanık 2023 Antalya</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#169</p> <p>“Kısır” Night Özkan Işık 2023–2024 Düzce</p> <hr/>
<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#159</p> <p>Anthology of Promises Özgür Demirci 2022–2023 İzmir</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">#164</p> <p>Anthology of Promises Özgür Demirci 2022–2023 İzmir</p> <hr/>	

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**Negative Space: Rendering
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We Force
Çağlar Uzun, Özge Yalacak
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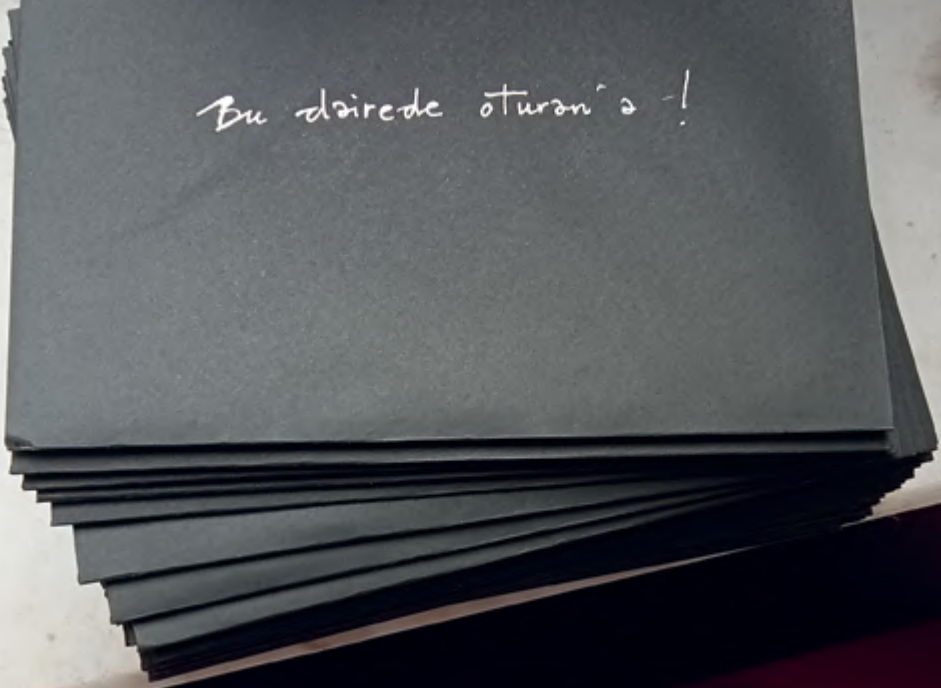
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Negative Space: Rendering Nothingness Visible
Sadık Arslan; Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Hakkâri, Hatay,
İğdir, Kahramanmaraş, Mardin, Şırnak



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We Force
Çağlar Uzun, Özge Yalacak
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Eda Gecikmez
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Less Healing Plants
Hatiye Ganip, İpek Kay
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Solastalgia: Cadastre of Deterioration
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Affiliates: Meral Akkent,
Brett Umlauf

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Concrete, Weed and Others
Zehra Seda Boztunalı; Düzce, Sakarya
Photo: Zehra Seda Boztunalı



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NFTs for ART
Disyon: İstanbul, online
Photo: Berna Yalçın



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Kolektif Mekân
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The City and the Messiah
Aylin Kuryel, Raşel Meseri
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#55

Giulio's Dream
UR Collective
Izmir



We are grateful to our jury members for their invaluable contribution in the evaluation of around 1600 projects that applied to our 14 open calls.

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Evrım Altuğ	Pelin Kuş
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Çiğdem İkışık	Aslı Yurdanur
Elif Kamışlı	Laden Yurttagüler

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Cinema Earth
Roof Coliving
Adana



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Reverse
Odeon Pergamon Kültür Sanat Alanı, İzmir
Photo: Yücel Tunca





#139

ZAROK Ma Open-air Stage
MA Music Centre
Diyarbakır



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Home Exhibition
Na+CTRL
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Beats By Girlz Turkey Festival
Beniil Samaltun, Istanbul
Photo: Eminkan Cönut





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