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Los Angeles

*Art, Democracy, and the Culture of Dissent in 1950s Turkey*

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Art History

by

Sarah-Neel Smith

2015



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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Art, Democracy, and the Culture of Dissent in 1950s Turkey

by

Sarah-Neel Smith  
Doctor of Philosophy in Art History  
University of California, Los Angeles, 2015  
Professor Saloni Mathur, Chair

*Art, Democracy, and the Culture of Dissent in 1950s Turkey* tracks the emergence of a modern Turkish art world of unprecedented size and dynamism between 1950 and 1960, a period during which Turkey first experimented with multi-party democracy. The scholarship on modern visual culture in the Middle East has often focused on the moment of nation-formation, emphasizing the determining role played by nationalist ideologies in shaping modern lifestyles in the new states that formed across the region in the twentieth century. In contrast, I analyze what postcolonial scholarship has called the “moment of maneuver”: the transitional time when a young nation-state begins to rethink its nationalist past, while articulating a new vision of an international future through subscription to Western forms of liberal democracy. Cold War ideologies of democracy were a key reference for the members of the Turkish art world who inaugurated novel forms of institution-building, exhibition-making, and written critique. Drawing on Turkish, French, and English-language archives and interviews, I examine how artists and writers used exhibitions, painting, and art criticism to promote the democratic principles of popular participation, freedom of expression, and dissent. Throughout, I demonstrate that art was shaped by transnational intellectual currents, global organizations like UNESCO, and international exhibitions. My research troubles existing accounts’ portrayal of the West as a generative center from which modernist artistic currents and democratic political ideals radiated outwards, as if transmitted to a series of passive, “peripheral” receivers after

World War II. Instead, I demonstrate that Western artistic and political ideologies were simply one component within a complex constellation of forces that shaped the development of modern art worlds across the globe. Furthermore, I argue that it is only by engaging with art worlds like Turkey's—simultaneously in dialogue with the West and forged through processes of decolonization and nationalization—that we can fully understand the fundamental transformation that ideologies of modernism underwent in the post-war period.

The dissertation of Sarah-Neel Smith is approved.

Esra Akcan

Miwon Kwon

Saloni Mathur, Committee Chair

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2015

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## NOTES ON TRANSLATIONS

One of this dissertation's overarching arguments is that Turkish debates about art and politics in the early-Cold War period were fundamentally shaped by the fact that the modern Turkish language was, at this historical juncture, highly mutable. In this dissertation, I do not merely turn to Turkish primary source material to ascertain factual information about the period under study. I also use such materials—newspaper articles, art criticism, and private correspondence—to conduct a historical investigation of the changing use of the language itself. For this reason I have included several appendices intended to provide as transparent an account of my own translation practices as possible. All translations from Turkish to English are my own.

Appendices A–F feature translations of primary sources from which I felt the reader would benefit in their entirety rather than in excerpted form. Appendix G reproduces all translations in the dissertation of substantial length (longer than a single sentence or phrase). These appear in both Turkish and English for ease of comparison. Short translations are included in the footnotes.

The intellectuals featured in this dissertation each cultivated their own highly distinct writerly voices while in conversation with one another. In their individual efforts to signal their intellectual and political allegiances, however, all of these thinkers negotiated a common linguistic and political issue: the growing divide between an Ottoman literary tradition and the “new Turkish” that resulted from a comprehensive 1928 language reform. The reform replaced the Ottoman-Arabic alphabet with Latin letters, did away with terms of Arabic and Persian origin (some two-thirds of Ottoman Turkish's vocabulary), and introduced a new corpus of Turkish neologisms. Because there is no equivalent historical rift in the English language, it remains difficult to convey, in translation, the dramatic effects that the reform had (and indeed continues to have) at both the level of vocabulary and grammatical structure. Chapter Three, for example, takes up the proliferation of terms for “art critic” that emerged in the wake of this event as an

example of how individual writers' choice of a single term could signal an entire social and political vision for the role of art and the critic in Turkish society. I have also made no attempt to replicate the historical cadences of their writings by adopting a "1950s English" analogous to the distinctly "1950s Turkish" that they spoke. Rather, in conducting my own translations, I have aimed to capture the general tone of the individual writers—the future prime minister Bülent Ecevit's emphasis on polemic, the gallerist and gossip columnist Adalet Cimcoz's mischievous humor, the painting instructor Cemal Tollu's dry didacticism—in order to reinvigorate the lively debates that galvanized their dynamic conversations.



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## VITA

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### Book and Exhibition Reviews

“*Beyond Anıtkabir: The Funerary Architecture of Atatürk*,” *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* (forthcoming 2015) (book review).

“*Archives, Museums, and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World*,” *Museum Worlds 2* (2014) (book review).

“The Group of Ten,” “The Newcomers Group,” and “The D Group,” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism*, 2014.

“Hassan Khan and the Question of the Retrospective,” *Bidoun*, no. 27 (2013).

“Studio Visit: Brian Bress,” *frieze*, no. 148 (2012).

“Yoshua Okón, Hammer Museum,” *frieze*, no. 143 (2011).

“Untitled (12<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial),” *frieze*, no. 143 (2011).

“Mathaf: The world’s first Arab Museum of Modern Art and Qatar’s cultural future,” *frieze*, no. 137 (2011).

“Decolonizing Architecture, REDCAT,” *Bidoun*, no. 24 (2011).

“‘What Keeps Mankind Alive?’ 11<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial,” *Bidoun*, no. 19 (2009).

“The Isle, MAK Center,” *Bidoun*, no. 19 (2009).

“Street Level, ICA Boston,” *frieze*, no. 119 (2008).

### Papers Presented

“Modern Turkish Art in Dialogue with the Middle East.” April 2015. Invited lecture, University of California, Berkeley

“Art, Democracy, and Turkey’s First Private Art Galleries in the 1950s.” February 2015. College Art Association (CAA) 103<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference, New York, NY

“Art Beyond the State: Bülent Ecevit and the Democratization of the Turkish Art Market in the 1950s.” November 2014. Middle East Studies Association (MESA) 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Washington, DC

“Art, Democracy, and Diplomacy: Bülent Ecevit and the Making of Turkish Modernity.” May 2014. *Turkish Studies from an Interdisciplinary Perspective*, Georgetown University Institute of Turkish Studies, Washington, DC

“From *Galeri* to Gallery: Transitioning from Public Forums to Commercial Spaces.” May 2013. *Regional vis-à-vis Global Discourses: Contemporary Art from the Middle East*, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, United Kingdom

“‘Labor and Productivity:’ The 1954 Yapikredi Painting Contest, Istanbul.” March 2013. *Home Works Forum 2*, Ashkal Alwan Lebanese Association for Plastic Arts, Beirut, Lebanon

“The ‘Pioneers’ Paradigm in Turkish Art History,” December 2010. *Modern Arab Art: Objects, Histories, and Methodologies*, The Arab Museum of Modern Art (Mathaf), Doha, Qatar

“Outside the White Cube: Negotiating Legacies of Modernism at the 11th Istanbul Biennial.” October 2010. Historians of Islamic Art Association (HIAA) 2<sup>nd</sup> Biennial Symposium, Washington, DC

“The Orientalist Photograph Reconsidered: *Les Costumes Populaires de la Turquie en 1873*.” November 2009. Middle East Studies Association (MESA) 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting, Boston, MA

### **Conferences and Panels Convened**

*New Methods in Modern and Contemporary Art of the Middle East*. In planning for April 2016. Conference co-organizer (with Alex Dika Seggerman), Smith College, Northampton, MA

*The Remaking of Modern Turkey: Cultural Transformation and Populist Democracy*. November 2014. Panel co-organizer (with Nicholas Danforth), MESA 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Washington, DC

*Unstable Fields: Research Practices and Political Upheaval in the Middle East*. February 2014. Panel co-organizer (with Alex Dika Seggerman), CAA 102<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference, Chicago, IL

**INTRODUCTION**  
**“Justice, Equality, and Cheap Cigarettes”:**  
**The Promises of Popular Democracy in 1950s Turkey**

In 1923, the Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk led the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Mustafa Kemal would subsequently launch a series of radical modernizing reforms intended to reduce the role of social, political, and legal structures derived from the religious tenets of Islam and replace them with “secularized” institutions in order to underscore the new nation’s alignment with the politics and culture of the Western world. Within five short years, Atatürk and his colleagues abolished the Ottoman sultanate, dissolved the Islamic caliphate and rule of Islamic law, banned the wearing of traditional religious apparel, and instituted a comprehensive language reform. Over the following quarter century, Atatürk’s party, the Republican Peoples’ Party (RPP), remained at the nation’s helm, and Turkey functioned as a single-party democracy under an authoritarian regime whose guiding maxim was “for the people, in spite of the people” (*halk için halka rağmen*). The paradoxical—and indeed, anti-democratic—nature of this approach, which gave no value to the popular vote even while its leaders claimed to represent the citizens’ interests, is captured by historian Erik J. Zürcher’s evocative description of a Turkish “tutelary democracy.”<sup>1</sup> This form of “democracy” was excused by Turkey’s reformers as a required first step towards a more inclusive democratic order, an initial phase necessitated by the ignorance of Turkey’s largely illiterate rural majority. It was not until twenty years later, in 1946, that Turkey’s citizens were able to renegotiate these recent experiences of top-down reform and state-driven policy. In this year, Turkey adopted a multi-party system of government, allowing for the possibility of a political opposition for the first time. The surprise victory of the newly-formed Democrat Party

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<sup>1</sup> Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: British Academic Press, 1995), 176–206.

in the national elections of 1950 marked the definitive end of Atatürk's regime and the close of what would come to be known as the Republican Period. Radical social and political change seemed within Turkey's reach once again.

The year 1950 was hailed by many in Turkey as a major historical break. As one witness, the journalist Sadun Tanju, evocatively described it, as the Turkish people eagerly anticipated a new era of justice, equality, and cheap cigarettes. "The Turkish intelligentsia had the romantic notion that they would finally attain democracy and all its benefits. As for the masses—amidst of all the clangor about justice and equality, they began imagining the days when sugar would be cheap and the price of cigarettes would drop to five *kuruş*."<sup>2</sup> Tanju's comment reflects the widespread public optimism regarding the new political and economic benefits that populist democracy was expected to bring to Turkey. As the country transitioned from a nation designed "for the people, in spite of the people" to one where those very people were promised a vote, the year 1950 came to embody the promise of democratic representation, increased material well-being, and, for Turkey at large, a new level of international relevance amongst a democracy-loving league of nations after World War II.

And yet, as this dissertation demonstrates, such visions of the year 1950 as a radical break in Turkey's national history were, in many ways, mere projections. The historical moment of 1950 was characterized as much by its continuities with what had come before as it was by its differences. In fact, the very notion that the transition from single- to multi-party democracy represented an important rupture with great consequences for Turkey's national future was an idea that directly emanated from the Kemalist political ideology of the preceding decades.

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<sup>2</sup> Sadun Tanju, "Türk Basını" [The Turkish Press], *Vatan*, December 19, 1959. This article is reprinted in part in Hıfzı Topuz, *Türk Basın Tarihi: II. Mahmut'tan Holding'lere* [A History of the Turkish Press: From Mahmud II to the Era of Big Business], 2nd ed. (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2003), 192.

According to the political teleology of Kemalism, Turkey was to proceed along a path of increasingly democratic practice in accordance with a series of guiding principles known as the “Six Arrows” (republicanism, populism, nationalism, secularism, statism, and revolutionism). Within this framework, the move from the tutelary democracy of the single-party era to the popular democracy of the multi-party system was considered as the successful realization of the next progressive “stage” of the Kemalist project itself.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the Democrat Party, whose founders Celâl Bayar (1883–1986), Refik Koraltan (1889–1974), Fuat Köprülü (1890–1966), and Adnan Menderes (1899–1961) had already pursued government careers under the single-party system, was itself in many ways an offshoot of the fractured RPP. The seeds of the Democrat Party lay in a memorandum that the four men, then deputies, had submitted to the parliament in 1945 demanding a fuller implementation of the existing constitution. Although the memorandum’s original intention was to reform the RPP, explains Zürcher, it “marked the beginning of organized political opposition after the war” and indexed the political alliance that would subsequently take on the shape of a formal political party.<sup>4</sup> In short, although in 1950 Turkey moved towards a new form of democratic governance, the ruling political elite remained the same and there was a strong element of ideological continuity even as some segments of the population, hungry for change, wishfully declared it a new era.

The political changes of 1950 had direct consequences for the assumed role of art in Turkish society, changes aptly captured in two sets of photographs dating from immediately

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<sup>3</sup> Atatürk’s own encouragement of the creation of opposition parties is one of the clearest demonstrations of the view that multi-party governance was a progression and perfection of Kemalist ideas. As early as 1930, Atatürk himself encouraged the establishment of an opposition party. While the first one to be founded was rapidly shut down, such experiments continued throughout the 1940s; by the time the Democrats came to power in 1950, three other opposition parties had already come into existence, although they did not manage to gain traction. See Bernard Lewis’ *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford University Press, 1961) for an example of an historical account that presents the events of 1950 as a triumph of Kemalist ideology.

<sup>4</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 189.

before and after the inauguration of the multi-party system. The first are official publicity images from 1941, just a few years before the end of the single-party era. In these photographs, President İsmet İnönü, Atatürk's loyal colleague and former "National Chief" (*Milli Şef*), the enduring leader of Atatürk's original political party, and figurehead of the modern Turkish state, solemnly models the proper way to view art in a monumental exhibition hall full of state-approved paintings. Clad in overcoat and hat, İnönü stages a moment of individual contemplation for the accompanying camera as his official entourage retains a respectful distance. (Figures 0.1–0.2) Contrast this to two photographs from 1952, showing İnönü, recently unseated by the Democrat Party, on a visit to Turkey's first independently-run art gallery, Galeri Maya. Here, hat and jacket off, İnönü squeezes into the cramped confines of a former apartment-turned-gallery, whose walls are covered in woven mats upon which a series of cartoons are hung. In lieu of his official entourage, the political leader stands shoulder to shoulder with a young newspaper cartoonist, Semih Balçıoğlu, who explains his satirical cartoons while his friends gather around, grinning. (Figures 0.3–0.4)

Formally, the images differ very little. And yet, when viewed in light of the political changes that Turkey had undergone during the eleven years separating them, the photographs can be read as marking two radically different moments in the history of the relationship between politics and art in Turkey. If the first pair of images reflect the presence of an earlier, authoritarian approach to the cultural realm that subjected art to state approval, the second represents a viewing experience that, by the 1950s, came to be seen as representing a more authentically democratic order in the context of the transition to multi-party democracy. In the first photographs, İnönü represents the concentrated center of single-party power who observes and approves the artworks in an art world overshadowed by the authoritarian state. Hundreds of

officially-selected painting submissions stretch out behind him, many of them innocuous landscapes. The setting is the Ankara Exhibition Palace (*Ankara Sergi Sarayı*) (1933–34), “one of the most important public spaces symbolizing the progressive ideals of Kemalism,” recently designed by the architect Şevki Balmumcu and one of the primary spaces within which exhibitions related to the Turkish state’s secular modernization project appeared in the nation’s capital.<sup>5</sup> Art, here, is given a home in the heart of Turkey’s civic infrastructure, in a sterile, cordoned-off space designed for citizens to file through. By the time of the second pair of photographs, the statesman has been deposed. In lieu of the imposing civic space, İnönü now occupies the single small room of a pioneering independent gallery in the bohemian Istanbul neighborhood of Beyoğlu. Rather than endorsing a state-approved ideological program, the aging former leader engages approvingly with a new, independent sphere of artistic activity that has formed outside the state’s purview. The long lines of landscape paintings have been replaced by satirical cartoons, of which İnönü might very well be the subject, and which he views in the company of artists and gallerists rather than bureaucrats. On top of it all, the former president is laughing. Here, in 1952, is a scene of unregulated artistic production and the collective enjoyment of an irreverent medium of political critique. The images thus demonstrate the principles of freedom of expression and popular participation in civic life that were the guiding political ideals of the multi-party era.

This dissertation, *Art, Democracy, and the Culture of Dissent in 1950s Turkey*, tracks the emergence of a modern art world of unprecedented scale and dynamism in Istanbul and Ankara in the 1950s. I argue that art galleries, painting practices, and art criticism of the 1950s served as

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<sup>5</sup> Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*, 134. See also: Sibel Bozdoğan and Esra Akcan. *Turkey: Modern Architectures in History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 67–68. Exhibitions did not only feature paintings, but also the earliest photography exhibition, as well as thematic shows on hygiene, agriculture, and economy.

crucial sites of negotiation where Turkey’s political hopes about populist democracy played out in the realm of culture. Members of the Turkish art world seized upon the transitional moment of 1950 as an opportunity for change. They quickly began experimenting with novel institutional forms, aesthetic approaches, and modes of writing that, together, they saw as making up an “art world” (*sanat dünyası*) suited to Turkey’s first democratic era. This involved inquiring into which specific formal approaches would align Turkey with what the prominent artist and critic Cemal Tollu (1899–1968) dubbed “the free world’s understanding of art.”<sup>6</sup>

While focusing on Turkey, this dissertation also foregrounds a number of larger global discourses of the early Cold War, including the formation of aesthetic discourses in relation to concepts of democracy and totalitarianism; the development of political, economic, and cultural internationalisms; and shifting concepts of modernity that, in the immediate post-war period, laid the ground for the contemporary in art. Its title, *Art, Democracy, and the Culture of Dissent in 1950s Turkey*, is intended to convey the idea that it was precisely *through* debates about art and democracy that a distinct “culture of dissent” took shape. Here I use *culture* to refer to specific artworks—visual, literary, and otherwise—that represented, sometimes unpredictably, new modes of oppositional practice within the Turkish art world. But I also use *culture* in the broader sense of the word, to indicate a shared, collective impulse and set of practices that coalesced around the larger principle of dissent. By 1960, in the context of a worsening political situation, the lively artistic community that centered on the galleries and publications featured in this dissertation dispersed to new locales. As I demonstrate in the Epilogue, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Turkish artists and curators began to take increasing advantage of exhibition opportunities abroad. Newly founded international contemporary art biennials in Brazil, France,

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<sup>6</sup> Cemal Tollu, “Zamanın İçinde Bulunmak” [To Be of One’s Time], *Yeni Sabah*, August 1, 1956, 3.



and Italy provided sites within which to conduct new artistic experiments, while the “culture of dissent” whose seeds I uncover in the 1950s blossomed into new forms of protest and political action in the arts.

## 1. POST-COLONIAL GENEALOGIES

This dissertation emerges out of and builds upon four distinct, yet overlapping, bodies of literature: recent art historical writing on modernism in Turkey; scholarship in architecture and Ottoman history since the 1990s that has brought together questions of postcolonial theory, architecture, and (Ottoman) Turkish history; the unfolding debates about the “global” in the humanities; and histories of the Turkish left, as they have been narrated since the 1960s. In what follows, I discuss the value of art historians Wendy Shaw, Mary Roberts, and Nilüfer Öndin’s foundational texts upon modernism in the visual arts and modes of display in late Ottoman and republican Turkey. While I continue Shaw and Öndin’s investigation of the conjuncture of art, changing institutional frameworks, and the Turkish state, I depart from their more territorially-bounded studies to emphasize the transnational dynamics shaping such histories, a methodological approach that aligns more closely with Roberts’ writings on transcultural exchange. I then outline the historical methodologies that structure the work of architectural historians Mark Crinson, Esra Akcan and Sibel Bozdoğan, as well as postcolonial scholarship by Ottoman historians Ussama Makdisi and Selim Deringil, to which this dissertation is indebted. In the third section, I discuss how this dissertation also engages in dialogue with recent cross-disciplinary scholarship on the question of “the global.” Literature scholar Emily Apter and historian Andreas Huyssen, for example, have explored the larger implications of new “global” frameworks that shape the humanities today. I view *Art, Democracy, and The Culture of Dissent*

as constituting an experiment in precisely such a “global” field of investigation, one that privileges the case of Turkey. Finally, this dissertation responds to recent histories of the Turkish left, in order to argue, alongside historian Kemal Karpat, for the importance of accounting for the role of the cultural sphere as a space within which left-leaning Turkish intellectuals were active in the 1950s.

Art historians Wendy Shaw and Nilüfer Öndin offer an in-depth investigation of the domineering presence of the imperial court and, subsequently, the republican state, within the cultural realm. Shaw’s pioneering monographs on Ottoman painting and museological practices were the first substantial English-language accounts of Ottoman visual art and exhibitionary culture. *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (2003) focused on the emergence of Ottoman museums in the late nineteenth century, while *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art From the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (2011) traced the appearance and institutionalization of painting practices between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to giving exposure to this previously unstudied historical material, Shaw aims to theorize a uniquely Ottoman way of seeing, in both painting and museological practice.<sup>7</sup> Also working in Art History but writing in Turkish, Nilüfer Öndin has provided a crucial account of the cultural politics of the republican state between 1923 and 1950.<sup>8</sup> Öndin’s history of the government’s activity is primarily rooted in official state archives and those of the (state-run) Istanbul Fine Arts Academy, and maps out the ways in which the state retained its powerful grip over the

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<sup>7</sup> For example, in *Ottoman Painting* she suggests that scholars might turn to the concept of *girih* (decorative surface patterning used in Islamic architecture) as a tool for analyzing the construction of space in Ottoman landscapes, still-lives, and imperial portraits, rather than evaluating Ottoman painting according to the standard of Renaissance perspective as it developed within the West.

<sup>8</sup> Nilüfer Öndin, *Art and Cultural Politics of the Turkish Republic [Cumhuriyet’in Kültür Politikası ve Sanat] 1923–1950*. (Istanbul: İnsancıl Yayınları, 2003).

republican-era art world. Öndin’s study provides another important historical precedent for this dissertation: the state-driven artistic and intellectual frameworks that she elucidates are precisely those that Turkish intellectuals would question and seek to change in the following decades of the 1950s and 60s.

Picking up chronologically where Shaw and Öndin’s art histories leave off, this dissertation investigates the enduring tensions between art, institutional framing, and the state that these scholars show to be constitutive to the development of the modern art world in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century (Ottoman) Turkey. At the same time, my study moves away from Öndin’s state-centric approach to provide a social and intellectual history of how one cadre of Turkey’s citizens—the Istanbul- and Ankara-based cultural elites—negotiated their own relationship to the historical dominance of Turkish officialdom. Similarly, Shaw’s concern to identify a uniquely (Ottoman) Turkish way of seeing *in contrast to* Europe, is de-valued in favor of a model that charts the multi-directional and transnational intellectual currents that shaped the production and exhibition of work during the period under study. In this, the project is closer in spirit to the writings of art historian Mary Roberts, in particular, her 2007 volume *Intimate Outsiders: The Harem in Orientalist Art and Travel Literature*.<sup>9</sup> By focusing on European portrayals of, and interactions with, members of the Ottoman harem, *Intimate Outsiders* placed emphasis on the shifting relationships of power endemic to any cross-cultural exchange—a framework that is particularly important to my account in Chapter Two.

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<sup>9</sup> Mary Roberts, *Intimate Outsiders: The Harem in Ottoman and Orientalist Art and Travel Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). Roberts’ newly published book also promises to use the framework of “cross-cultural networks” to think through . See *Istanbul Exchanges: Ottomans, Orientalists, and Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015).

I am equally indebted to a body of scholarship that has helped to undo East-West binaries, and that has explored the usefulness of postcolonial theories to conceptualize histories of (Ottoman) Turkish modernity. In the 1980s and 1990s, scholars across the humanities and social sciences such as Arjun Appadurai, Homi Bhabha, James Clifford, and Paul Gilroy began to abandon nationally anchored analyses of cultures in favor of wider-ranging studies that followed the relay of various cultural phenomena—people, media, ideas—across the surface of the globe.<sup>10</sup> These postcolonial theorists argued that modernity was not the purview of the West alone, but had always already been “global” in nature. As Timothy Mitchell has stated: “the emergence of [the modern] was from the beginning a worldwide phenomenon and . . . the modern was not produced from within Europe alone.”<sup>11</sup> In this view, modernity is not something to be attained, but a shared, if uneven, condition based in the increased world-wide travel of people, media, and ideas from the eighteenth century onwards. Such assertions resonated deeply with scholars working on (Ottoman) Turkey. In History, for example, several thinkers began to bring postcolonial frameworks to bear on the subject of late Ottoman political policy. Through their reinterpretations of key postcolonial constructs, such as Orientalism and subalterity, thinkers like Ussama Makdisi and Selim Deringil provided an overarching conceptual framework that helps explain Ottoman cultural and political dynamics that had already been identified but whose larger historical significance had not yet been fully elucidated.<sup>12</sup> Makdisi

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<sup>10</sup> Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. (London: Verso, 2006); Arjun Appadurai. *Modernity At Large* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1993); Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Johannes Fabian. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> Timothy Mitchell. *Questions of Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000): xii.

<sup>12</sup> For example, Makdisi and Deringil emphasized the importance of the visual and literary regimes (particularly photography and literature) through which such political approaches were cemented, giving a new context to earlier analyses of these cultural objects. Eugene Rogan, “*Aşiret Mektebi*: Abdülhamid II’s School for Tribes (1892–

used Edward Said's classic model of Orientalism to develop the concept of "Ottoman Orientalism" in his seminal article of the same name.<sup>13</sup> In his own article on Ottoman history and postcolonial theory which swiftly followed Makdisi's, Deringil reiterated Makdisi's view, writing that "it could be said that as an empire and a great power, the Ottomans rejected the subaltern role the West seemed intent on making them adopt, but they could only do this by inviting their own subalterns into history."<sup>14</sup> Like Makdisi and Deringil's work, this dissertation, too, adapts several larger conceptual structures from postcolonial scholarship as a historical armature. In Chapter One, for example, I investigate the ways in which an urban cultural elite struggled with the question of how to represent—both politically and aesthetically—the rural masses (*halk*), a citizenry that, Esra Akcan has shown, occupy the status of the subaltern within the Turkish nation.<sup>15</sup> *Art, Democracy, and the Culture of Dissent* also uses the notion of what Partha Chatterjee has called the "moment of maneuver" in order to analyze the immediate post-war period in Turkey. Chatterjee describes the "moment of maneuver" as the transition from a young nation-state's first stage of formation, to the following period when it begins to critically rethink its early nationalist past.<sup>16</sup> I use the concept of "maneuver" to analyze the ways that Turkish intellectuals of the 1950s turned to Western forms of liberal democracy as a key

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1907)." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28, no. 1 (February 1996): 83–107; and Christoph Herzog and Raoul Motika, "Orientalism 'Alla Turca': Late 19th / Early 20th Century Ottoman Voyages into the Muslim 'Outback.'" *Die Welt Des Islams* 40, no. 2 (July 2000): 139–195.

<sup>13</sup> Arguing that the late-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire hoped to present itself as "a state and civilization technologically equal to and temporally coeval with the West but culturally distinct from and politically independent of it," he demonstrated that the Istanbul-centered imperial state treated the residents of its "peripheral" provinces as subaltern inferiors in order to gain the approbation of Western powers. Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism." *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (June 2002): 770.

<sup>14</sup> Selim Deringil, "'They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, no. 2 (April 2003): 342.

<sup>15</sup> Akcan, "Siedlung in Subaltern Exile" in *Architecture in Translation*, 145–195.

<sup>16</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

reference for a Turkish art world inaugurating new forms of institution-building, exhibition-making, and written critique while questioning the continuing validity of Kemalist political ideology.

Makdisi and Deringil were not primarily concerned with using the Ottoman case to critique postcolonial theory itself. However, debates about the critical potential of (Ottoman) Turkish history for postcolonial theory were particularly rich in the fields of architecture and urbanism. While Shaw and Roberts' writing on Ottoman visual culture certainly comes out of a postcolonial genealogy, the fact that there are simply fewer individuals at work within this field means the debates have not gained as much momentum as in architectural history. Building on Gayatri Spivak's seminal question "can the subaltern speak?", one of the most important arguments of the critical scholarship that emerged at the intersection of architecture, Turkish studies, and postcolonial thought in the 1990s was the necessity to move on from postcolonial criticism's early focus on the Western gaze in order to "proceed from speaking about the 'other' to speaking from the realm of the 'other.'"<sup>17</sup> Crinson was early to formulate and enact this argument in his 1996 book *Empire Building*. Focusing on the topic of British architecture in the eastern Mediterranean (Turkey, Palestine, Egypt) under the Ottoman Empire, Crinson conducted his own historical and theoretical investigations from the locus of the "other."<sup>18</sup> The importance

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<sup>17</sup> Akcan, "Critical Practice in the Global Era," 51. Mark Crinson made this argument in two steps: first, he argued that "wantonly" identifying cultural or political dynamics as Orientalist without sufficiently investigating their historical specificities risked simply perpetuating a new form of essentialism rather than offering a legitimate critique. Second, in order to escape such essentialisms, Crinson advocated not just more attentive forms of historical and theoretical investigation, but a reinterpretation of Orientalism that did not solely take the West as its determining horizon. Mark Crinson, *Empire Building: Orientalism and Victorian Architecture*. (Psychology Press, 1996), 5, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Esra Akcan and Sibel Bozdoğan have provided important analyses of the "postcolonial turn" in architecture, which help typologize the different strains (poststructuralist and humanist) that postcolonial criticism has taken in the context of the discipline. See Esra Akcan, "Critical Practice In The Global Era: The Question Concerning 'Other' Geographies." *Architectural Theory Review* 7 (2009): 37–57 and Sibel Bozdoğan, "Architectural History in Professional Education: Reflections on Postcolonial Challenges to the Modern Survey." *Journal of Architectural Education (1984-)* 52, no. 4 (May 1, 1999): 207–215. As Akcan and Bozdoğan note, this body of literature also includes the edited volumes *Forms of Dominance: On the Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise*

of Crinson's book was its suggestion that precisely *because* (Ottoman) Turkish modernity was not "colonial" in the paradigmatic sense, yet shared many similar features in its trajectory from imperial order to authoritarian nation-state, it could serve as a productive testing ground for the usefulness of postcolonial analytical paradigms.<sup>19</sup> By exploring the political and cultural history of 1950s Istanbul and Ankara through the postcolonial framework of the "moment of maneuver," this dissertation follows Crinson's directives regarding the importance of engaging objects of study outside the West, while demonstrating both the limits and potential for postcolonial analytical paradigms within areas of study that are not themselves strictly colonial in nature.

Two additional works of scholarship that have emerged out of the cross-fertilization of architectural history and postcolonial scholarship are particularly important to the study at hand. These are Sibel Bozdoğan's 2001 volume *Modernism and Nation Building: Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* and Esra Akcan's 2012 book *Architecture in Translation: Germany, Turkey, and the Modern House*, both of which center upon what Bozdoğan calls the

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(ed. Nezar AlSayyad, 1992) and *Postcolonial Space(s)* (ed. Gülsüm Baydar Nalbantoğlu and Chong Thai Wong, 1997). Since the 1990s, Zeynep Çelik has used postcolonial approaches to architectural history across her body of work. For a representative example, see Çelik's article "Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism." *Assemblage*, no. 17 (April 1, 1992): 59–77. In Art History, Wendy Shaw was an early figure to engage with postcolonial questions in *Possessors and Possessed*, while Mary Roberts took up the subject in *Intimate Outsiders* (2007). Finally, Crinson has continued his critical project in the book *Modern Architecture and the End of Empire* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

<sup>19</sup> Crinson, *Empire Building*, 231. For example, by selecting an object of study where "there was little fit between its [architectural] form and the development of informal imperialism," Crinson positioned the historical circumstances of British cultural work in the late-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire as a sharp critical foil to postcolonial paradigms. In his very choice of topic for *Empire Building*—British architecture in the Ottoman "Near East"—Crinson selected an object of study that defied straightforward Orientalist analytical paradigms and provided an early example of how one might counter such tendencies. Since Britain was not a formal colonial power in the areas under Crinson's investigation, there was no "all-commanding colonial discourse" that could be used to explain everything, but rather a stealthier strain of "informal imperialism" at work in the economic and political relationship between Britain and the Ottoman Empire, noted Crinson. Additionally, since there was "no definable form of colonial architecture that was specific to the British in this location," there was also "no simple target" of a presumed Western audience, "no even notionally unified public." Crinson, *Empire Building*, 228, 2, 227.

“long 1930s.”<sup>20</sup> Bozdoğan takes a revisionist look at traditional narratives of the Turkish architectural styles that sequentially followed one another during the early years of the republic. She argues that the alleged breaks between styles were in fact subtended by “common political and ideological” strains of nationalism “underlying the stylistic opposition” that was apparent on the surface.<sup>21</sup> As she puts it, “the continuity of the nationalist framework [was] the defining feature of early republican architectural culture, regardless of stylistic shifts.”<sup>22</sup> Bozdoğan’s account is not merely testimony to the immensely powerful ideological sway of nationalism in modern Turkey. Even more importantly, she demonstrates that nationalism was far from a monolithic force, and maintained its strong hold precisely because of its ability to adopt many cultural guises.<sup>23</sup> This dissertation espouses Bozdoğan’s seminal, and foundational, proposition that cultural production—art, literature, architecture—plays an important role in *representing* or *projecting* desired social, cultural, and political changes while masking deeper ideological continuities. In an endeavor to apply Bozdoğan’s insights to the period of the 1950s, I work to occupy the mindset of artists, gallerists, and writers who were invested in a notion of historical

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<sup>20</sup> Bozdoğan and Akan have also collaborated on a history of modern Turkish architecture from the early twentieth century to the present day. *Turkey: Modern Architectures in History* (2012) draws on both scholars’ formidable original research to provide a rich account of the political, economic, and social dimensions of architecture and urbanism in modern Turkey. As in their monographs, their joint work aims to “underscore the inadequacy of bounded national categories, highlighting instead numerous trans-national exchanges, encounters and ‘translations’ between modernist Turkish architects and their European and North American interlocutors, as well as their counterparts in onther ‘non-Western’ contexts” (9). They also work to move away from an understanding of architecture that focuses solely on monumental or official and canonical edifices, something they achieve in several different ways, perhaps most significatnly through multiple chapters on the question of housing, mass housing, and informal or illegal settlement.

<sup>21</sup> Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*, 40.

<sup>22</sup> Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*, 13.

<sup>23</sup> For a further investigation of this theme, see: Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, eds. *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).



break in the the 1950s, while also bringing a critical eye to bear on their claims and activities in the cultural realm.

Throughout this dissertation, I place significant emphasis on the study of language itself. In this, I build and expand upon one of the key methodologies at work within Akcan's book *Turkey, Germany, and the Modern House*. Akcan investigates the role of German and Austrian architects in designing the built environment of republican Turkey. The author does not limit her historical picture of domestic architecture in Turkey to the national context, but rather plots the movement of people, intellectual currents, and architectural designs between sites as far-flung as Paris, Boston, Stuttgart, Istanbul, and Kyoto. As evidenced by the title, *Architecture in Translation* also involves a sustained investigation of theories of translation. Departing from poststructuralist literary theories of translation including those of Jacques Derrida and Gayatri Spivak, Akcan inquires into what it might mean to explore translational cultural processes through a new "medium": that of architecture, a form of expression with visual, experiential, and linguistic dimensions. As she notes, it is precisely *through* poststructuralist criticism that translation has become "a site of resistance and subversion for postcolonial studies," since the question of linguistic origins and translational exchange provides a fruitful way to discuss the inequalities of power and control at work in many colonial relationships.<sup>24</sup> It is thus by taking what might loosely be termed a "postcolonial" approach to translation—one whose emphasis is on the geopolitical dimensions and the unequal distribution of power inherent in acts of translation—that Akcan inscribes herself in the trajectory of Crinson's earlier critique. If Crinson demonstrated that British architecture in the Near East demanded new theorizations of Orientalism, then Akcan shows how modern Turkish domestic architecture exerts pressure upon

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<sup>24</sup> Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 20.

a set of standard concepts associated with postcolonial theory, such as the subaltern, hybridity, and cosmopolitanism, by returning to such concepts from the angle of “architectural translation.”

Akcan’s *Architecture in Translation* demonstrates that studying intellectual traditions in their original languages, with attentiveness to questions of translation, mistranslation, and other linguistic processes such as vernacularization, reveals the interpenetration of ideologies and cultural production both within Turkey and beyond its physical borders. Using translation as a “conceptual metaphor,” as Akcan does, is doubly relevant for a study of Turkish modernity.<sup>25</sup> Under Atatürk, translation and language reform were one of the primary means through which Kemalist modernization policies were enacted. Thus, in Akcan’s study, the theoretical paradigm of translation is not merely “applied” to an object of study, but has a close bond to the very historical dynamics under study: the interconnections of language, identity, cultural expression, and exchange within Turkish modernity. This dissertation seeks to build on Akcan’s innovative work on translation and take it in new directions. Specifically, throughout the dissertation I have sought to bring the question of linguistic morphology—the synchronic and diachronic shifts in meaning that characterized the development of modern Turkish in the 1950s—to the forefront of the discussion, in order to show its connections to changing conceptions of the self, of politics, and of art in Turkish society. In pursuit of this goal, I have also included several Appendices to the dissertation that include my translations of important primary sources, such as the statements of intent that Adalet Cimcoz and Bülent Ecevit published upon opening the first Turkish art galleries, as well as a comprehensive collection, in both English and Turkish, of all the excerpts from the Turkish press (newspapers and magazines) that are included in my study. Throughout the 1950s, Bülent Ecevit, one of Turkey’s first art gallerists and later national prime minister,

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<sup>25</sup> Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 9.

wrote a daily newspaper column alternating between art criticism and political commentary. I demonstrate that Ecevit's early promotion of the Turkish term "contemporary art" (*çağdaş sanat* or *çağdaş resim*) as distinct from "modern art" (*modern sanat*) was a prime example of the Turkish intelligentsia's use of language and the mass media to claim a kind of national kinship with the Western democracies, such as the US and the UK, that were considered to be the embodiment of the "contemporary" in culture at the time.<sup>26</sup> This single Turkish term provides entry into a far larger political world view and mode of cultural evaluation that Ecevit shared with an entire generation of progressive thinkers who saw the arts as a means through which to agitate for political change.

My final methodological strategy, intended to trouble the existing accounts' portrayal of the West as a generative center from which modernist artistic currents and democratic political ideals radiated outwards to a series of passive, "peripheral" receivers, is to highlight the ways that transnational intellectual currents and global organizations like UNESCO helped to shape the production of art. This approach builds upon Bozdoğan, and Akcan's inquiries into how to think through constructions of nation-hood while not remaining solely within the bounds of the nation-state. By emphasizing the emergence of post-war ideologies of liberal democracy in Turkey and internationally, I circumvent questions of belatedness that often color histories of non-Western art. What results is a slow rewriting of the historical links between transnational modernisms of the post-war period and dynamics of globalization in contemporary art: we can see not only that the West was not the sole locus of the modern, but that the modern itself was never quite so clear-cut as subsequent narratives might have it. Furthermore, I argue that it is

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<sup>26</sup> It is almost certain that Ecevit, who had spent a significant amount of time in the UK, saw *çağdaş* as a direct analogue for the English term "contemporary," then prevalent at several major Anglo-American institutions such as London's Institute for Contemporary Art (founded 1946) or Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art (so named in 1948).

only by engaging with art worlds like Turkey's, simultaneously in dialogue with the West and forged through processes of decolonization and nationalization, that we can fully understand the fundamental transformation that ideologies of modernism underwent in the post-war period.

The third important set of intellectual debates in which this dissertation intervenes are those about the question of the “global humanities.” Postcolonial scholarship argued that the conditions of modernity itself—with its claims to universality and its changing visions of a holistic, interconnected, and hierarchical world—demand attention to “the global” as a category of analysis.<sup>27</sup> Over roughly the last ten to fifteen years, and building on this earlier postcolonial scholarship with its roots in the 1990s, the concept of “the global” has gained increased traction within the discipline of Art History, as have its various conceptual cousins across the humanities.<sup>28</sup> Its early advance was heralded by the ever-prolific James Elkins, who posed the question “is Art History global?” to a group of panelists in 2006.<sup>29</sup> By 2011, the Clark Institute-sponsored conference *Art History in the Wake of the Global Turn* marked a significant moment of evaluation.<sup>30</sup> In the words of conference co-organizer Aruna d'Souza, art historians now

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<sup>27</sup> Andreas Huyssen, “Geographies of Modernism in a Globalizing World.” *New German Critique* 34, no. 100 (Winter 2007): 189–207. A growing art historical literature that attempts to theorize non-western modernisms includes, among others: Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Geeta Kapur, *When Was Modernism: Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practice in India* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2000); Kobena Mercer, ed. *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005); Kobena Mercer, ed. *Discrepant Abstraction* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006); Kobena Mercer, ed. *Exiles, Diasporas and Strangers* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008); Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor, and Nancy Condee, eds., *Antinomies of Art and Culture* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008). Recent efforts to approach contemporary art on a global scale include: Terry Smith, *Contemporary Art: World Currents* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson, 2011); and Jonathan Harris, ed. *Globalization and Contemporary Art*. (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

<sup>28</sup> Comparative Literature has provided especially rich ground for debates about notions of *Weltliteratur* (world literature), planetarity, and cosmopolitanism, which are summarized and critiqued in Emily Apter's volume *Against World Literature* (London: Verso, 2013).

<sup>29</sup> James Elkins. *Is Art History Global?* (New York: Routledge, 2006); and *Stories of Art* (New York: Routledge, 2002)

<sup>30</sup> Aruna D'Souza and Jill Cassid, eds. *Art History in the Wake of the Global Turn* (Yale University Press, 2014).

sought “a reoriented practice of the global, one that reckons with radical difference, unevenness, and even the untranslatable.”<sup>31</sup> The promise of the global was its very expansiveness. Perhaps the ongoing battles for inclusion in the traditional Euro-American canon, long fought individually—against the biases of gender, religion, nationality, or ethnicity, for example—could now happen on an even greater scale thanks to this model of an “exploded art history without borders,” in the words of d’Souza and her collaborator Jill Casid.

Still, plenty of thinkers continued to raise concerns that such world-scale models of analysis are not only “somewhat unfriendly to the humanities,” but “entail a fatal disrespect for culture.”<sup>32</sup> Historian Andreas Huyssen warned that disciplines enamored of “the global” run the risk of losing “their coherence as a field of investigation,” becoming “bogged down in ever more local case studies, or becoming superficial, neglecting the need to maintain a methodological and theoretical project.”<sup>33</sup> Literature scholar Emily Apter minced no words condemning the market-driven, “entrepreneurial, bulimic drive to anthologize and curricularize the world’s cultural resources.”<sup>34</sup> Indeed, many of the recent art historical works that have taken up the question of the global struggled with precisely these challenges. Jonathan Harris’ *Contemporary Art and Globalization*, which proves to include very little art, seemed to justify concerns about the inability for world-scale analyses to engage meaningfully with individual works of art. Textbook experiments by art historians such as David Carrier and David Summers introduced new

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<sup>31</sup> Aruna D’Souza, “Review Article: In the Wake of ‘In the Wake of the Global Turn.’” *Art Margins* 1, no. 2, February 2012: 176–177.

<sup>32</sup> David Palumbo-Lui et. al, *Immanuel Wallerstein and the Problem of the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011): 4.

<sup>33</sup> Huyssen (2007): 199.

<sup>34</sup> Apter (2013), 3.

chronological and thematic structures to narrate the history of art, yet in so doing seemed to relinquish the very sense of disciplinary specificity that Huysen warned of.<sup>35</sup>

Written at the very moment of the emergence of the “global,” this dissertation asks what we might substantially take away from these debates. During the three-year period during which I researched and wrote this dissertation, several major American universities issued Art History job advertisements seeking a “Global Specialist.” The internal contradictions of this oxymoronic term speak eloquently to the opposing imperatives of scope and specificity that collide in the discipline’s growing efforts to address artistic traditions on a world scale. During the same period, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Guggenheim Museum created their first curatorial positions in Modern and Contemporary Art of the Middle East, while two other major American museums, the New Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), hosted large-scale exhibitions on the same subject (*Here and Elsewhere*, 2014, and *Islamic Art Now*, 2015, respectively). Such developments are, of course, intimately bound up with market demands placed upon the university and the museum to “go global,” leading, at their worst, to what Apter forcefully describes as a “humanities lite” approach, one that is “politically *appauvri* in its amenability to soft diplomacy and its default to models of oneworldedness freighted with the psychopolitical burden of delusional democracy.”<sup>36</sup> At its best, however, the category of the “global” presses us to radically reconfigure familiar canons, to take new account of the disruptive dynamics of modernity that have been excessively flattened out by smooth narratives of modernity—issues ranging from imperialism, to the prolific circulation of objects, to the

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<sup>35</sup> Summers, for example, organized his textbook around the themes of “facture, places, centres, three-dimensional and planar images, and virtuality and perspective.” David Carrier. *A World Art History and Its Objects*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2008; David Summers. *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism*. London: Phaidon Press, 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Apter (2013), 8.

conflicting hierarchies of value through which art is understood in alternate times and places. As an art historical study, *Art, Democracy, and the Culture of Dissent in 1950s Turkey* responds to the larger question that such discussions of “the global” continue to press upon us today: how might we re-work existing theories of modern and contemporary art, based in Western-derived histories and ideas, in order to integrate previously neglected non-Western traditions into its disciplinary purview?

## 2. HISTORIES OF THE TURKISH LEFT

Finally, as a study that is rooted in a postcolonial commitment to engaging with the interconnections of cultural and political histories, this dissertation contributes to revisionist accounts of the history of the Turkish left in the post-war period. Such histories typically sideline the period of the 1950s, arguing instead that the subsequent decade of the 1960s marks the moment of the left’s emergence as a significant political force in Turkey. It is certainly true that during the 1950s, the Democrat Party was “equally as resistant to socialist politics” as its predecessors had been to the communist and socialist movements that clandestinely formed against the Kemalist state immediately after WWI and were largely forced to remain underground.<sup>37</sup> It is also true that the new constitution that followed the 1960 coup explicitly allowed for the creation of leftist parties, and made possible the emergence of the openly socialist TİP (*Türk İşçi Partisi*, or the Turkish Workers’ Party, established in 1961). Historians thus attribute such importance to the 1960s because leftist debates then became an integral part

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<sup>37</sup> As political historian Mehmet Döşemeci explains, “The history of the Turkish left preceding the 1960 coup is a long and bitter story of bans, ostracism, and government repression.” Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, multiple laws “forced left-leaning groups and parties in Turkey to either embrace apolitical, anti-class, and pro-regime attitudes or to operate underground and in secret,” while in the 1950s “the Marxist-oriented Fatherland Party (*Vatan Partisi*) . . . underwent constant government harassment until it was forcibly dissolved in 1957.” Mehmet Döşemeci, *Debating Turkish Modernity: Civilization, Nationalism, and the EEC*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013, 69–70.

of public discourse, gaining further momentum in the wake of the global student movements of May 1968. Still, the tendency to focus on roughly two chapters of the history of the Turkish left—the origins and activities of the Turkish Communist Party in the 1920s and the evolution of it and related leftist movements in the 1930s and 40s, and the public emergence of communist and socialist parties after 1960—often obscures the importance of the intervening period of the 1950s. This tendency is emblemized by one recent article where, after a detailed discussion of the history of the Turkish Communist Party until 1935, the author declares that “left-wing politics did not witness any more significant development until 1960s.”<sup>38</sup> Additional instances abound: for example, in an otherwise nuanced and comprehensive discussion, the scholar Murat Belge asserts that there was almost no substantial “native tradition” of leftist thought upon which 1960s militants could build, since the Turkish left was “frozen” and “completely marginalized” in the 1950s.<sup>39</sup>

Contrary to this view of the 1950s as a negligible moment in the history of the Turkish left, I show that this decade in fact represented a vital period when a democratic left began to stir. Furthermore, I argue that such stirrings are detectible not merely in the form of parties, solidarity groups, or public declarations of political allegiance, but rather in the realm of *culture*, where the Turkish intelligentsia’s left-leaning inclinations manifested themselves in more subtle ways, such as the art they chose to advocate, or the terms through which they issued critique. After all, in the highly fractious atmosphere of the early Cold War Turkey, open declaration of leftist sympathies was considered as equivalent to being a communist, and carried high risks.

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<sup>38</sup> Şenol Durgun, “Left-Wing Politics in Turkey: Its Development and Problems.” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (2015): 16.

<sup>39</sup> Samim [Belge], “The Tragedy of the Turkish Left,” 4, 15.



The importance of the cultural realm for the emergence of a democratic left in 1950s Turkey was noted as early as 1966 by the now-eminent historian Kemal Karpat. In an article titled simply “The Turkish Left,” Karpat argued that the literary realm was *the* primary space in which the Turkish left was able to be active during the years of the 1950s.<sup>40</sup> As he put it, “The really significant leftist activity after 1925 was to be found in literature,” and “the rise of leftism in Turkey was intimately associated with literature. . . . Literary works were often used to convey political ideas . . . and to propose practical methods of political action.”<sup>41</sup> Only later did “the intellectual [move] from literature to social doctrine and finally [begin] to search for the political means to fulfill his social dream.”<sup>42</sup> At several different junctures in the Democrat Party’s tenure, shifts in the ruling administration’s policies alternately allowed left movements to briefly act with more freedom, or forced such movements to conceal themselves. This dissertation thus seeks a deeper investigation of the historical dynamics described by Karpat, as well as an exploration of how the visual arts in particular, and the institutional and critical infrastructure that was built up around them, served as a crucial realm within which a Turkish democratic left experimented with new political ideologies. Might it be that one of the reasons that political scientists and historians have not previously identified the 1950s as a moment of any significance for the Turkish left is that they do not turn, like Karpat, to the realm of culture—that they are, in short, looking in the wrong place? What can a study of the modern Turkish art world of the 1950s, a cultural arena shaped by some of Turkey’s most important left-leaning intellectuals, tell us about this neglected chapter in the history of the Turkish left?

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<sup>40</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, “The Turkish Left.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 1, no. 2 (1966): 169–186.

<sup>41</sup> Karpat, “The Turkish Left,” 175, 172.

<sup>42</sup> Karpat, “The Turkish Left,” 172.

The leftist experience of the 1950s was largely defined by the need to keep one's beliefs quiet in order to avoid government persecution. The clandestine nature of the Turkish left is at once one of the historical subjects of this dissertation, and one of its greatest methodological challenges: a study of the interpenetration of art and politics in this period can hardly be a straightforward process of identifying individuals' personal politics as a way of elucidating their actions. Of the intellectuals featured in this dissertation, the gallerist and journalist Bülent Ecevit is unusual in that he did write an immense volume of political commentary that can loosely serve as a guide to his personal cultural politics. However, the other major voices in my study—the artist-critics Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu and Cemal Tollu, for example—offer far less in the way of explicit political statements, while others, such as Turkey's first gallerist Adalet Cimcoz, invested significant energies in publicly claiming an *apolitical* stance. It is possible, nevertheless, to identify these intellectuals as adhering to a common set of priorities that would later explicitly serve as the basis for a self-identifying “democratic left” or “center left” (*ortanın solu*) movement in the 1960s. The emergent democratic left of the 1950s differed from preceding strains of Turkish leftism in that it was not strictly Marxist.<sup>43</sup> This nascent democratic left was, however, similar to the far-left Marxist and (sometimes interchangeably) “communist” or “socialist” thinkers who were its contemporaries in its attempt to break away from Kemalism's corporatist model of society, which categorically denied the notion of class conflict and argued

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<sup>43</sup> It is important to note that even while figures such as the revolutionary poet Nazım Hikmet occupied the far left of the political spectrum and were (and continue to be) identified as communist or socialist, they were often far less stridently involved in promoting a specific party-based political ideology than they were in grappling with how they might advocate for social and political change through formal artistic experimentation. Noting that Hikmet never explicitly “engage[d] in communist activity or propaganda,” Hikmet's primary English-language biographer and translator Mutlu Konuk Blasing offers a nuanced investigation of this tension between art and politics within the poet's oeuvre. As she notes: “Nazım's poetic movement was necessarily politicized, but not only because he was a communist. He attacked the establishment, speaking as a modern poet voicing the social realities of the new Turkish Republic. But in return, he was cast as a betrayer of the nation.” Mutlu Konuk Blasing, “Nazım Hikmet and Ezra Pound: ‘To Confess Wrong Without Losing Rightness,’” *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 33, no. 2 (Winter 2010), 4, 6.

instead that society was divided into occupational groups whose interests were harmoniously compatible.<sup>44</sup> In the intelligentsia's deep concern with the impoverished conditions of rural Anatolia, for example, or in Cimcoz and Ecevit's interrogations of which publics their newly opened galleries might serve, it is possible to detect an attempt to rethink this Kemalist model of populism even while remaining loyal to the basic premises of the Six Arrows. Karpat explains:

The dissatisfaction aroused [by the rule of the Democrat Party throughout the 1950s] provided the foundations of a new leftist movement not associated directly with Marxist, as was the case for most earlier leftist endeavors. . . . Kemalism had built the political framework of modernism but neglected its social and economic content. The rising social currents eventually sought legitimation in the unfulfilled social promises of Kemalism, through an expanded interpretation of its populist, statist, and reformist principles.<sup>45</sup>

These very principles would characterize the ideology of the democratic left as it took form publicly and entered into party politics in the subsequent two decades. In the early 1960s, this framework—departing from Kemalism by conceding the existence of social classes and their antagonisms, but retaining its commitment to progressive modernization—took its most explicit public form in the political platform that Ecevit helped develop for the RPP, first as Minister of Labor between 1961–65 and then as Prime Minister in the 1970s, when Atatürk's original party surged back to public prominence following the Democrat Party's demise (see Chapter One).<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> On Kemalist corporatism, see Taha Parla and Andrew Davison. *Corporatist Ideology In Kemalist Turkey: Progress Or Order?* (Syracuse University Press, 2004).

<sup>45</sup> Karpat, "The Turkish Left," 179.

<sup>46</sup> By the 1970s, under Ecevit's leadership the RPP explicitly identified its program as democratic left (*demokratik sol*), while in the 1980s Ecevit and his wife Raĥan would go on to establish the Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Partisi*). According to political scientist Necmi Erdoĥan, Ecevit's RPP "openly came out of a Kemalist tradition and had the goal of reworking this tradition, in the Western sense of social democracy," and called itself a democratic left in order to mark itself against the Marxist approaches that would take more militant forms, first with the emergence of TİP in the 1960s and then the stridently Marxist-Leninist Devrimci Yol in the 1970s. Rather than the slogan *halka raĥmen halk iin* ("for the people, in spite of the people"), the party took as its guiding ideology the phrase "*halk iin halkla birlikte*" ("for the people, with the people"). Necmi Erdoĥan, "Demokratik Soldan Devrimci Yol'a: 1970'lerde sol poplizm zerine notlar" [From Democratic Left to Revolutionary Path: Notes on left populism in the 1970s], *Toplum ve Bilim* no 73 (1998), 23, 27. Belge argues that *no* Turkish left movement—from the most extreme far left to the "left of center" RPP under Ecevit—ever managed to transcend this "pernicious

While figures such as Cimcoz, Ecevit, Eyüboğlu, and Tollu did not all explicitly identify themselves as articulating the tenets of a new political ideology, collectively their cultural activities constituted an attempt to work through the knotty dilemmas that, it would become clear in the 1960s, lay at the heart of the democratic left. Such dynamics are detectible in the cultural debates that this dissertation uncovers: at Turkey's first galleries, the question of how an elite, urban intelligentsia should relate to the rural masses; or, in collaborative cultural events between Turkish and Western cultural entities, the issue of whether or not Turkey was "democratic" enough to merit entry into an international community.<sup>47</sup> Thus, throughout the dissertation, I use the phrase "left-leaning" to describing these figures as a group, in order to capture their shared inclinations and investments while using case studies to elucidate the variations amongst them.

Finally, a note regarding the term "liberal" as it relates to the politics of the emergent democratic left in the 1950s. In the 1980s, Turkey fully transitioned to a free market economy in a decisive and dramatic fashion, and the terms "liberal" and "liberalization" have come to have a close association with the post-1980s period.<sup>48</sup> However, the terms were already in circulation during the early experimental phase of liberal economic policies under the Democrats, though the categories of "liberal" and "liberalism" were—like "leftist," "communist," and "socialist"—far from settled.

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legacy" of Kemalism, and that they all "alienated the masses in the name of the masses." It is precisely this inability "to integrate itself into the daily life of the oppressed" that he diagnoses as the "tragedy of the Turkish left." Samim [Belge], "The Tragedy of the Turkish Left," 2.

<sup>47</sup> Durgun, "Left-Wing Politics in Turkey," 16.

<sup>48</sup> First under Turgut Özal, who became president when parliamentary democracy was reestablished after a period of military rule from 1980–1983, and then under his predecessors, Turkey underwent "a spectacular transformation . . . along the economically neo-liberal and culturally conservative paths set by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the West. . . . This period saw the dismantling of statist and protectionist economic policies in favor of full integration with global market. . . . It reoriented the country unequivocally towards the free market, global capitalism, and export-oriented production." Bozdoğan and Akcan, *Turkey*, 203.

One of the most significant factors shaping the political, social, and economic life of 1950s Turkey was the Democrat Party's unprecedented pursuit of economic liberalization, a policy which was an integral part of Turkey's post-WWII rapprochement with the United States. Guided by an interventionist America, which supported Turkey under the Marshall Plan, the Democrat Party opened up the previously nationalized economy to private and foreign investment.<sup>49</sup> Although Turkey's citizens rapidly felt the financial benefits of this economic policy shift, the amount of investments nonetheless fell short of hopeful expectations. By the mid-1950s, Turkey had begun to spiral into economic crisis, further fueling the popular discontentment with the Democrats that would ultimately lead to the party's violent ouster in 1960.<sup>50</sup>

Even those intellectuals and politicians who articulated their own positions in explicit opposition to the Democrat Party, such as Ecevit, made appeals to what they explicitly identified as "liberal" principles. For example, as I delineate in Chapter One, in his writings about his own art gallery and the sale of artworks on the capitalist free market, Ecevit simultaneously positioned the gallery as a space of independent activity that resisted the involvement of the state, and suggested that societal change would come about through the distribution of artworks *enabled by* the new liberal economic policies that the Democrat Party had enacted.

An illustrative example of the seemingly paradoxical use of what political scientist Burak Özçetin calls a "liberal vocabulary" by the opponents of the Democrat Party is found in the important political journal *Forum*, of which Ecevit was a co-founder. Özçetin turns to the case of *Forum* in order to mark a difference between the "liberalism of the Democrat Party" and the

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<sup>49</sup> Çağlar Keyder, "The Political Economy of Turkish Democracy," *New Left Review*, no. 115 (June 1979): 11–16, 40.

<sup>50</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 224–229.

“new liberalism” of the *Forum* intellectuals.<sup>51</sup> Taking British and American liberal democracies as their ideal, the *Forum* thinkers associated several specific principles with liberalism, including tolerance and freedom of thought and the importance of the free press. Thus, in the 1950s, when American liberalism was closely associated with the capitalist but still left-wing policies of the American Democratic Party, individuals such as Ecevit approvingly identified with such “liberal” principles in order to indicate that they were pro-democracy and pro-freedom (and, sometimes, anti-communist). Similarly, although *Forum* condemned the Democrat Party’s specific approach to liberalizing the Turkish economy as fundamentally misdirected because it vacillated between interventionist and non-interventionist approaches, the journal actually advocated for a relatively similar combination of interventionist and non-interventionist approaches to the national market, as long as it was correctly and consistently directed. As Özçetin summarizes: “*Forum* is liberal for giving importance to [the] individual and her freedoms; and for affirming the free market mechanism,” but “*Forum* is [also] ‘liberal- socialist,’ because while giving importance to social justice, it believed that the state’s existence in economic affairs must be limited with actions which are exclusively aimed at consolidating free market mechanisms.”<sup>52</sup> Throughout this project, I approach the term “liberal” much the same way I do the notion of the democratic left, electing not to describe individual intellectuals as *liberals*, but rather to point to the junctures at which their activity within the cultural and political realm reveals an approbation of what were at the time widely identified as “liberal” values. In this way, I hope to contribute to a more nuanced picture of the ways in which notions of

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<sup>51</sup> Burak Özçetin, “‘New Liberalism’ of Forum Journal in the 1950s.” *İletişim: Galatasaray Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Yayını* [Communication: A Publication of the Communications Department of Galatasaray University], no. 12 (2010): 7–29.

<sup>52</sup> Özçetin, “‘New Liberalism,’” 21.

“liberalism” hazily began to take form in 1950s Turkey, alongside the tenets of the democratic left.

### **3. CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

The dissertation’s three chapters are organized chronologically. They also each map out a different component of an emergent arts infrastructure by focusing on practices of institution-building (Chapter One), aesthetic debates about painting (Chapter Two), and the emergence of art criticism as a mainstream literary form (Chapter Three). In Chapter One, I offer a comparative study of Turkey’s first two private art galleries, Galeri Maya (est. 1950, Istanbul) and Helikon Galerisi (est. 1952, Ankara). Founded in a spirit of immense optimism about Turkey’s democratic future, these pioneering independent spaces quickly became important centers in an art world historically dominated by the state. I demonstrate that two different generations of a secular, cosmopolitan intelligentsia used these art galleries as forums where they attempted to reconcile Turkey’s recent political past—characterized by art’s subservience to an authoritarian single-party state—with the ideals of popular democracy that were newly prevalent under the multi-party system. Alternately arguing for a return to vernacular traditions and for cutting-edge art forms like abstraction, the gallery founders were united in the utopian belief that encouraging popular participation in political life was the best way to ensure Turkey’s future as a democracy within a post-war global order. This chapter charts the ways these art institutions were designed in order to serve as a training ground where a national citizenry could cultivate a set of skills which would enable them to practice new forms of citizenship. I also emphasize the risks inherent in explicit declarations of left-leaning sentiments, and explore the ways that

Turkish intellectuals used the discourses of “art” and “humanism” to protect themselves by emphasizing the “apolitical” nature of their cultural activities.

Chapter Two examines the ways that the Turkish discourse about culture and democracy analyzed in Chapter One dovetailed with international concerns about a global battle between communism and democracy. It centers on two highly publicized encounters between Turkish and Western artists and critics that took place in Istanbul in 1954: *Developing Turkey*, a painting competition judged by a Western jury, and a meeting of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) attended by nearly two hundred thinkers from around the world. At both events, the main topic of discussion was how the current state of Turkish art reflected upon the young country’s place as a strategic battleground between the encroaching totalitarianism of nearby Soviet Russia and its Western democratic opponents. When a French newspaper reported that the Turkish government had rejected several Argentinian art critics’ visa applications to attend the Istanbul AICA Congress, the reporter jokingly wagered that Turkish authorities had “assumed, no doubt, that art critic[ism] displays a subversive spirit and that aesthetics is synonymous with espionage.”<sup>53</sup> Sarcasm aside, the French equation of aesthetics and espionage was not far off in its analysis of the reigning view of international artistic alliances as one of the front lines of the international Cold War. Examining the French AICA archive and Turkish accounts together for the first time, I show that aesthetic debates became the expression of collective anxieties about the potential incompatibility of Turkish democracy and Western models. Such anxieties were rooted in both classic Orientalist structures of thought and in the rapidly declining political situation in Turkey itself: by 1954, the ruling party had begun to restrict the free press and the

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<sup>53</sup> “Le Congrès des Critiques d’art n’a pas été un congrès libre” [The Art Critics’ Congress Was Not a Free Congress], *Les Lettres Françaises*, October 7, 1954, AICA Folio 1, “5ème Congrès, 6ème Assemblée Générale, Istamboule, 1954,” subfolder “Articles de Presse” [Press Coverage], Fonds AICA Internationale, 1948–2003, Les Archives de la Critique d’Art, Rennes, France.



cultural sphere, shaking public confidence in their claims to bring “true” democracy to Turkey. Chapter Two thus explores the complex set of concerns that coalesced in projects of international “cultural diplomacy” in the early Cold War, including domestic political concerns, changing foreign policy, and local and international art historical traditions.

Chapter Three is the first scholarly study to identify and analyze a new literary genre, that of Turkish newspaper art criticism, which flourished in the 1950s. I trace the cross-pollination of discourses of artistic expression and political freedom within the Turkish daily papers, and demonstrate that this form of writing was fundamentally shaped by its position at the center of bitter struggles for freedom of expression in the worsening political climate of the late 1950s. I argue that art criticism flourished at this juncture because a Turkish intelligentsia considered it to exemplify a larger democratic principle: that of dissent, or the ability to freely express opposing views without repercussions. This was seen as both an index of Turkey’s “level” of democracy (*demokrasi seviyesi*) and a means to enact the social changes necessary to the security of Turkish democracy in the long term. It was at this historical juncture, notes Karpaz, that “gradually the press attracted some of the left-wing litterateurs,” going on to “became one of the strongholds of socialism after the revolution of 1960.”<sup>54</sup> Thus, I suggest that the activities of Turkey’s 1950s art critics should be seen in the context of the changing role of the press as an important site for the expression of leftist sentiment in Turkish public life. The chapter also gestures to the ways that discourses of artistic and political freedom extended across the Middle East as countries like Egypt and Syria also began to articulate new notions of nationhood and civic participation. In so doing, it lays the ground for future research defined by comparative approaches. While the majority of recent studies on modernism in the Middle East seek to gesture beyond the national

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<sup>54</sup> Karpaz, “The Turkish Left,” 178–179.

frame from *within* the national frame, my dissertation, which takes a first step towards identifying the shared linguistic heritage of regional discourses (such as the Turkish *hürriyet*, a derivative of the Arabic *hurriyya*, meaning “freedom”), might enable scholarship to proceed towards more sophisticated accounts of both the region and the broader global picture.<sup>55</sup> Finally, the case of art criticism in post-war Turkey sits at a key juncture between post-colonial scholarship on criticism, such as the work of Edward Said and Aamir Mufti, and recent art historical debates about the modern history and current circumstances of art criticism.<sup>56</sup> This recent flurry of publications about art criticism have almost entirely neglected the question of criticism written in non-Western languages. Thus, as a detailed study of the linguistic politics of Turkish art criticism, Chapter Three also offers a larger provocation: how might sustained, in-depth investigation of such understudied critical traditions in their original languages alter existing accounts of modern criticism’s history and forms?

Finally, the dissertation’s Epilogue tracks the activities of several key Turkish artists who increasingly turned to distant exhibition opportunities and took on the role of curators at biennials in São Paulo, Paris, and Venice. This final section argues that the new hybrid figure of the traveling artist-curator was born out of necessity as existing configurations of people, institutions, and publications broke apart and re-formed as Turkey’s political structure underwent

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<sup>55</sup> Recent dissertations on Tunisia, Syria, Egypt, and Lebanon include: Clare Davies, “Figure and Ground: Producing National Subjects in Egyptian Painting and Photography, 1919–1936,” (doctoral dissertation, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU, 2014); Jessica Gerschultz, “Weaving the National Identity: The Tapestries of Safia Farhat, 1967–1978,” (doctoral dissertation, Emory University, 2012); Anneka Lennsen, “The Shape of the Support: Painting and Politics in Syria’s Twentieth Century,” (doctoral dissertation, MIT, 2014); Alex Dika Seggerman, “Revolution and Renaissance in Modern Egyptian Art, 1880–1960,” (doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 2013); and Sarah Rogers, “Postwar Art and the Historical Roots of Beirut’s Cosmopolitanism,” (doctoral dissertation, MIT, 2008).

<sup>56</sup> See, for example: George Baker, Rosalind Krauss, Benjamin Buchloh, Andrea Fraser, David Joselit, James Meyer, Robert Storr, Hal Foster, John Miller, and Helen Molesworth, “Round Table: The Present Conditions of Art Criticism,” *October* 100 (Spring 2002), 201–228; James Elkins, ed., *The State of Art Criticism* (New York: Routledge, 2007); James Elkins, ed., *What Happened to Art Criticism?* (Chicago, IL: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003); Hal Foster, “Post-Critical,” *October* 139 (Winter 2012), 3–8; and Edward W. Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

its own dramatic changes. Maya and Helikon shut down by 1956; art criticism in newspaper columns increasingly disappeared; and many Turkish artists dispersed to find new sites to create and display their work. The 1960 coup that unseated the Democrat Party soon led to a new constitution enabling the free expression of a proliferation of political views, but would also mark the beginning of some two decades of violence and political upheaval. It was in this atmosphere that Ecevit, for example, abandoned the cultural realm and pursued the political career that would lead to his position as prime minister. The stirrings of the “culture of dissent” that I identify in the art world of the 1950s would soon burst into full-fledge protest. By the end of the 1950s, the moment of the modern in Turkey had come to a definitive end, making way for formations of the contemporary that would soon supplant it. This dissertation’s investigation of the transitional moment of the 1950s—the threshold of the modern and contemporary in art—is thus not merely a study of one art world’s rethinking of the legacy of modernity, but is also a first step towards a longer-term project of constituting a more global genealogy of contemporary art since World War II.

## CHAPTER 1

### **The Opening: Utopian Visions at Galeri Maya and Helikon Derneği, 1950–1956**

The title of this chapter refers to the opening up of the field of political possibilities inaugurated by Turkey's experiment with multi-party democracy in the 1950s. It also gestures to the phenomenon of the exhibition opening. Turkey's first two private art galleries opened their doors almost immediately after the Democrat Party arrived to power in 1950 and quickly became significant centers of activity in an art world previously dominated by the state. In Istanbul, Adalet Cimcoz (1910–1973)—an outsized personality equally famous for her voiceover acting in popular Turkish films, her prize-winning translations of Kafka, and her weekly arts and society columns in several major papers—opened Galeri Maya, a tiny exhibition space in the heart of the city's bohemian neighborhood of Beyoğlu. (Figure 1.1) Some three hundred miles east, in the new capital of Ankara, news of Galeri Maya's opening inspired a group of intellectuals made up of young journalists, musicians, and professors at local universities to establish their own space in 1953. They named it the Helikon Association (*Helikon Derneği*) after the mountaintop where the muses of Greek myth made their home to indicate that it would serve as a site of creative inspiration for multiple art forms. Before entering politics in 1957, and eventually serving four terms as prime minister, the young journalist Bülent Ecevit (1925–2006) was one of the gallery's most active founders, using his daily column at one of Turkey's top newspapers as a promotional platform. (Figure 1.2)

This chapter argues that these pioneering independent art spaces were important sites in which Turkey's intelligentsia radically rethought the relationship between art and politics within the context of Turkish democracy. Cimcoz's and Ecevit's efforts at Galeri Maya and the Helikon Association provide a portrait of an intelligentsia navigating a rapidly shifting ideological

landscape, using their galleries as forums to reconcile a Kemalist legacy of top-down control of society and culture—a tradition to which they were both deeply loyal—with the newly prevalent imperatives of popular democracy in the 1950s. As bilingual, highly educated members of Turkey’s bourgeoisie, both gallerists adhered to Atatürk’s goal of shaping the Turkish Republic into a modern nation-state that would be politically, culturally, and economically on par with the nations of Western Europe and America. At the same time, these two public intellectuals opened their art spaces at precisely the moment when the established top-down approaches associated with Turkey’s recent past were up for reevaluation and when new political alternatives to single-party rule were only just becoming mainstream. Maya and Helikon provided a means for members of the country’s left-leaning intelligentsia to experiment with replacements for preexisting models of cultural production in this time of social and political change. What kinds of art should be made? How should it be shown? And through which criteria should it be evaluated?

At Galeri Maya, a gathering place for Turkey’s most eminent thinkers in the centuries-old cultural capital of Istanbul, Cimcoz and her collaborators advocated for a recovery of the Turkish vernacular arts and looked to local models of arts education, the Republican-era Village Institutes, as an institutional precedent. At the Helikon Association, a hub for young avant-gardists in the bureaucratic capital of Ankara, Ecevit and his peers promoted abstraction and emulated the institutional format of private arts societies they associated with the West. In the early 1950s Ankara and Istanbul were in direct competition for the title of Turkey’s top cultural center: Maya and Helikon were thus not only driven by their shared aim to establish art spaces for a new political era but also by a dynamic of metropolitan competition.<sup>1</sup> Despite the galleries’

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<sup>1</sup> When, in the 1920s, Atatürk had moved the national capital to Ankara, transforming it from a sleepy Anatolian town to the heart of the new republic, Istanbul fell into physical decay, its top thinkers and politicians migrated to the

marked differences, many artists from the small community that made up the Turkish art world showed at both spaces. The two galleries represented competing yet complementary visions for Turkish modernity at a historical moment that postcolonial scholar Partha Chatterjee has dubbed the “moment of maneuver”: the crucial juncture when the first chapter of the national project was widely understood to have reached its culmination and came up for critical reevaluation.<sup>2</sup>

Cimcoz and Ecevit simultaneously positioned their galleries as enclaves for the continuation of Turkey’s Republican legacy, and as sites for its critique, reinterpretation, and reinvigoration.

## 1. A LEGACY OF NATIONALISM IN THE TURKISH VISUAL ARTS, 1923–1950

Scholars have described Atatürk’s political legacy as two-part, with a contradiction at its heart: a Jacobin tradition of elite, top-down ministration that nevertheless generated very real social change and, up to a point, the legitimate empowerment of previously disenfranchised peasants, workers, and bourgeoisie collectively known as the Turkish *halk* (people, or masses).<sup>3</sup> Under Ottoman rule, power had centered upon the Istanbul-based court, the heart of an empire which, at its peak, stretched Eastwards through present-day Egypt and Iraq and as far West as today’s Austrian border. With the collapse of the empire, the new Republic sloughed off these

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younger city, and the formerly great metropolis was widely understood through a discourse of ruin. But in the 1950s, with large-scale urban renewal projects and migration, Istanbul began to regain its stature. See, for example, Esra Akcan, “Modernism from Above” and “Melancholy in Translation,” in *Architecture in Translation: Germany, Turkey, and the Modern House* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012): 27–144; Nur Altınyıldız, “The Architectural Heritage of Istanbul and the Ideology of Preservation,” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 281–303; Sibel Bozdoğan and Esra Akcan, *Turkey: Modern Architectures in History* (London: Routledge, 2012): 26–35 and 106–113; and Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001): 67–79.

<sup>2</sup> Begun in 1923, Turkey’s own transition from its early period of nation-building roughly aligns with Chatterjee’s notion of the “moment of departure,” while its renegotiation of the idea of the nation in the context of multi-party democracy parallels that of the “moment of maneuver.” Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

<sup>3</sup> Ahmet Samim [pseudonym used by Murat Belge], “The Tragedy of the Turkish Left,” *New Left Review* 126 (April 1981): 64.

former peripheries and its geographic contours shrank to a core landmass of contiguous territory centering on Anatolia. This region was now declared the “Turkish heartland,” and a newly articulated concept of a national population, the Turkish *halk*, came into being. As architectural historian Sibel Bozdoğan explains,

The romantic populism of the republic was nurtured by this myth of Anatolia—the locus of patriotism, idealism, and purity separate from and contrasting with cosmopolitan and imperial Istanbul . . . [T]he birth of the nation was set upon the barren land, battlegrounds, and poverty-stricken villages of this heartland. It was in the peasant life, vernacular language, and folk culture of Anatolia, therefore, that the source of an authentic, uncontaminated, and timeless Turkish identity could be located. At the same time that Western civilization, science, and progress were presented as pillars of the Kemalist revolution, it was also postulated that these had to be carried into Anatolia to be nationalized and authenticated there.<sup>4</sup>

With a population over 80% rural, Atatürk’s Republican People’s Party (RPP) focused much of its energies on educating this rural citizenry. Literacy rates soared as the administration established nation-wide networks of schools and community centers such as the Peoples’ Houses (*Halk Evleri*) and Village Institutes (*Köy Enstitüleri*), a state Translation Agency (*Tercüme Bürosü*) for the translation of Western literary classics into Turkish, and a Turkish Language Association (*Türk Dil Kurumu*) for the standardization of the language.<sup>5</sup>

The valorization of Turkey’s folk culture also had significant effects in the cultural realm. Republican-period literary debates frequently saw conservative advocates of Ottoman literary conventions pitted against supporters of the new genre of “Village Literature” (*Köy Edebiyatı*) which prioritized the language and motifs of rural life. In architecture, proponents of “Interior Colonization,” who wished to impose strict architectural plans on future villages, were in conflict

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<sup>4</sup> Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 251.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

with advocates of vernacular-derived building approaches.<sup>6</sup> In art, Ottoman landscapes and still-lives, now branded as out of date, were supplanted by monumental images of the Turkish peasantry in line with Soviet Realism, their bulky bodies pushing the nation forward into the future. Two of this period's most iconic paintings—Zeki Faik İzer's *On the Road to Revolution* (1933) and an untitled 1935 canvas by Şeref Akdik—encapsulate the ideological and formal programs of the republic's early years. (Figures 1.3–1.4) İzer's painting purposefully mirrors Eugène Delacroix's famous canvas *Liberty Leading the People* (1830), which commemorates the founding of the French Republic and is weighted with the symbolism of the French *tricolore* and the female embodiment of the French nation, Marianne. In İzer's version, it is Atatürk, on the left, who directs the revolutionary Turkish “Marianne” onwards. Her Phrygian cap (in the French context, a symbol of liberty) now transformed into a flowing headscarf and her limbs more modestly clothed, the guiding figure here takes on the characteristics of a Turkish peasant woman. Akdik's canvas, on the other hand, shifts from the realm of timeless national allegory figured by İzer into the contemporary moment of Turkish education reform in the country's rural reaches. In his painting, a group of Turkish villagers—women in loose pants and headscarves, a bearded man in a cap—line up to register their children for school with a young male teacher. Duly clad in Western apparel, he represents one of those zealous reformers who came to be known as “village missionaries” (*köy misyonerleri*) sent from the cities in order to form the Turkish nation through education. As Bozdoğan sums it up, “what gives [the Republican] period its coherence, its ‘deep structure’ under the surface of visible stylistic shifts, is the strong

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 101–103.



political and ideological charge of architecture [and, we might add, art] in the service of nation building.”<sup>7</sup>

During these early decades of the Turkish republic, artists typically passed their entire professional lives in the orbit of state-run institutions, beholden to the state’s ideological standards.<sup>8</sup> The yearly State Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions (*Devlet Resim ve Heykel Sergileri*) were one of the few exhibition opportunities available. There, biased juries rewarded bland aesthetic choices, while more daring submissions were refused entry altogether; and the government usually paid a pre-set price for any works that took first place. “The majority of artists pandered to the juries and true art was forgotten,” later complained the Ankara artist İsmail Altınok (1920–2002), a painter from a modest background who spent most of his career teaching middle school in Ankara.<sup>9</sup> Altınok’s acerbic memoir, from which the above description is drawn, narrates his personal “war” against the hierarchies of the Turkish art world over forty years. It gives a close view of the tensions between those members of the artworld who affiliated themselves with the state cultural apparatus and those who felt themselves to be neglected or penalized for not creating work that matched the state’s artistic priorities:

Even as the exhibitions’ overseers worked to articulate common standards of evaluation, the jury members who supported figurative painting started scheming so that there would be a predominance of figurative paintings. For example, they would achieve this by

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 295.

<sup>8</sup> The majority of artists studied at the state-run Fine Arts Academy (*Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi*), founded in Istanbul in the late nineteenth century, or at a teaching college near Ankara intended to train high school art instructors, the Gazi Institute for Education (*Gazi Eğitim Enstitüsü*). Most finished their careers in government-funded teaching jobs at the same art schools they had attended or in high schools across the country. Since all of these institutions operated under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, the artists who taught at them had the official status of civil servants. See, for example: Nilüfer Öndin, *Cumhuriyet’in Kültür Politikası Ve Sanat 1923–1950* [Art and Cultural Politics of the Turkish Republic, 1923–1950] (Istanbul: İncancıl Yayınları, 2003); and Wendy M.K. Shaw, *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from The Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> İsmail Altınok, *Bir Ressamın Notları: Türk Resminin Sorunları* [Notes of A Painter: Problems in Turkish Painting] (Ankara: DMS Doruk Matbaacılık, 1980), 40.

including bad figurative paintings in the exhibition, and even have the state purchase them. This led the State Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions to be dominated by amateurs. In short, with their passion for profit and self-promotion, the dominant painters on the juries used the state exhibitions as they pleased, reduced them to the status of amateur exhibitions . . . [and] retained a complete monopoly over the evaluation of painting.<sup>10</sup>

Altınok's autobiography provides an insider's view of the practical frustrations and creative dead-ends perpetuated by the state's domination of an enclosed and self-referential art world, where, in Altınok and many others' view, art-making was corrupted by individual self-interest.

On the one hand, under the RPP Turkish artists lived proudly by the adage that “a nation without art and artists is like a person with a lame foot and a twisted arm, broken and unable to walk,” a view that gave art pride of place in the country's ongoing modernization project.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, as Altınok attests, the state-organized system in which they functioned limited many artists' ability to freely express themselves, sell their work, and even subsist. Since the end of the nineteenth century Turkish artists had banded together and established groups in order to host their own informal exhibitions in hat shops and apartments and covered passages. Still, without a significant buying public outside the community of artists themselves, these exhibitions did not generate substantial income, and the notion of sustaining oneself on revenue made by selling one's art to individual consumers was almost unthinkable. In other words, during the early years of the republic Turkish artists' horizons of creative possibility were overwhelmingly determined by the state-dominated institutional circuit in which they typically studied, taught, and finished out their lives.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, as quoted in Öndin, 70.

## 2. TURKEY'S FIRST ART GALLERIES: ELITE FOUNDERS, POPULIST IDEOLOGY

As high profile members of Turkey's cultural elite, both Cimcoz and Ecevit were widely engaged in a range of cultural activities in literature, film, and radio, and they inherited from the Kemalist past a strong sense of public service (*kamu hizmeti*), the driving imperative to contribute to the public life of the nation through their cultural work. For example, Cimcoz, the famously homely woman with the voice so gorgeous that it earned her the title of Turkey's "Dubbing Queen" (*Dublaj Kraliçesi*) was known for correcting the grammar of the film scripts she dubbed. Her replacement of lingering Ottoman terms with modern Turkish vocabulary in order to expose mass audiences to reformed Turkish, was one of the primary means through which Cimcoz perpetuated the Kemalist state's political project of consolidating a national consciousness through language. She and Ecevit also perpetuated the Kemalist state project to forge a modern literary language for the nation through translations.<sup>12</sup> The half-German Cimcoz as a German-language translator of Bertolt Brecht, Franz Kafka, and Bernard Traven, Ecevit as an English-language translator of Rabindranath Tagore, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Philip Larkin, David Mallet, and Rudyard Kipling. Cimcoz, one of Turkey's first society and arts columnists, meanwhile used the freedom of an anonymous pen name and the snarky tone of a society writer to critique the very same intellectual circles that she helped foster in the salon-like atmosphere of her gallery, providing the average newspaper reader access to the exclusive world of high culture. Ecevit wrote as a published poet as well as an art critic and political commentator with a daily column at the Ankara paper *Ulus*. As I discuss in Chapter Three, Cimcoz and Ecevit's newspaper columns participated in a new "culture of dissent" that was, at least at the beginning of the 1950s, encouraged by the Democrat Party—in general terms, the increasing popular idea

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<sup>12</sup> See Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar, *The Politics and Poetics of Translation in Turkey, 1923–1960* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008).

that one of the signs of democracy's success was a healthy sphere of public debate. Thus, if their allegiance to the paradigms of translation and language reform signaled the two figures' continuing belief in Kemalist models of social and cultural reform, their newspaper columns participated in a dynamic that was new to the Democrat Party era. Cimcoz and Ecevit embodied a model of the hybrid intellectual that scholars have observed at moments of transition in decolonizing nation-states elsewhere, where the imperatives of avant-garde critique collide with those of institution-building and demand a versatile engagement across multiple fields.<sup>13</sup> These two public intellectuals were at once invested in the ideological and political legacy of the Kemalist past and, eagerly looking ahead to the future, seized upon new opportunities available under the Democrat Party in the 1950s. The two gallerists stand as paradigmatic figures for this transitional time.

The new atmosphere of popular empowerment with which the 1950s began was not an entirely comfortable reality for the urban politicians and intellectuals who had spent the past few decades ministering the rural masses. The fact that the more than four million citizens who voted for the Democrat Party in 1950—a majority of them drawn from the country's rural regions—chose to unseat the very leaders who had educated them in the ways of democracy was seen as a potent symbol of the nation's abandonment of its authoritarian past, the arrival of “true” democracy in Turkey, and the will of the *halk* fully at work. Suddenly the *halk* took on a new dimension: no longer merely ignorant masses needing to be schooled in the ways of modern social and political life, they now appeared as active political citizens who knew quite well how

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<sup>13</sup> Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

to use their votes in pursuit of the “justice, equality, and cheap cigarettes” they so desired.<sup>14</sup> A local intelligentsia were thus powerfully aware that Kemalist top-down approaches to encouraging cultural production and ministering the *halk* threatened the principles of democracy itself. They believed deeply that Turkey’s future lay in its ability to function as a democratic, egalitarian country, and they craved the legitimacy this offered internationally. Yet they also feared that if they did not properly direct the cultural education of an unenlightened majority, they might stand in the way of Turkey’s success.

Such were the concerns that framed Cimcoz and Ecevit’s decision to open their galleries, concerns which Ecevit himself powerfully captured in his 1956 article “The Burden of the Intellectual.” The newspaper column took the form of an imaginary encounter on a public bus between a hostile member of the elite and an impoverished member of the *halk*, vividly channeling the sense of anxiety that gripped many of Turkey’s intelligentsia at the prospect of letting go of the reins and putting the nation’s future in the hands of the *halk*. In it Ecevit used the imagined scenario of a conversation between strangers to retroactively evaluate the past few years of interactions between the Turkish *halk* and *aydınlar* (intelligentsia) during the early years of the country’s experiment with multi-party democracy:

He’s either a professor in a department, a rich businessman, or a high-ranking bureaucrat. With his clothes, the way he walks and talks, he’s a complete “Westerner.” He is one of this country’s “illuminating” lights, of what you might call “selective” breeding. On the bus, after surveying from head to toe a dirty, ragged man with a patched shirt who sits across from him, he will turn to the man next to him. “There you have it,” he’ll say, “That man sitting across from us is our future. If democracy is brought to a country where 80% of the population are illiterate, that’s exactly what our country will look like!”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Historian Çağlar Keyder puts it succinctly: “In 1950, Turkey’s first real elections confirmed the hopes of the opposition with a participation rate of 90 per cent even in the remotest provinces. Undoubtedly, the peasantry had been successfully politicized.” Çağlar Keyder, “The Political Economy of Turkish Democracy,” *New Left Review*, no. 115 (June 1979): 18.

<sup>15</sup> Bülent Ecevit, “Aydının Derdi” [The Burden of the Intellectual], *Ulus*, October 10, 1956, 3.

In his final lines, Ecevit offered a searing condemnation of such individuals, suggesting that it was in fact *they*, the members of the intelligentsia unable to tolerate the democratic participation of all members of Turkish society, who should be held responsible for misdirecting the country's future. "It's wrong for [the haughty bus-rider] to predict that this is what will happen. In fact, with his clothing, the way he sits and carries himself, and by this means alone, the "Westerner" in fact indicated to his "selective" neighbor: "If democracy is brought to a country where 80% of the intelligentsia are either haughty and spineless, lazy and dyspeptic, or fearful and lacking in belief, *this* is what its future will look like!"<sup>16</sup> Galeri Maya and Helikon were driven by the same spirit that animated Ecevit's final rallying cry, as Cimcoz, Ecevit, and their circles decided not to take the path of those who were "lazy and dyspeptic, fearful and lacking in belief" but instead to actively intervene in the changing social and political order of their country—in this case, by creating spaces for public encounter with art.

Ecevit's conviction that "it is necessary for us to give up claiming that only intellectuals know what is best, and to accept that the people know perfectly well where their interests lie" would remain a driving force in his subsequent political career in the 1960s and 70s. After officially entering politics as a member of parliament in 1957, Ecevit rose rapidly through the ranks of the RPP.<sup>17</sup> By the time he made the preceding statement, in 1969, Ecevit had become the second most important figure in the party next to "national chief" İsmet İnönü; by 1972, Ecevit had replaced the aging leader and would serve as prime minister three times during the 1970s. A tumultuous time in Turkish history, the moment in which Ecevit launched his political career saw the proliferation of competing political factions whose public emergence was made

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ecevit quoted in Frank Tachau, "Bülent Ecevit: From Idealist to Pragmatist," in *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Metin Heper and Sabri Sayari (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002), 117.

possible by the constitutional changes that followed the coup of 1960, allowing for a far wider range of political and civic associations to act freely.<sup>18</sup> Even as it became possible for a socialist left to function openly for the first time (most prominently in the form of the socialist Turkish Worker's Party, or *Türk İşçi Partisi*), the proliferation of competing political factions led to a repeated cycle of governmental paralysis and military intervention that lasted through the 1970s.

Adhering to his earlier statements regarding the necessity for the intellectual elite to abandon a top-down approach, Ecevit's most significant accomplishment during this period was to propel the RPP away from its historically elitist approach to ministering the masses and towards a program intended to enable more popular participation, effectively transforming the RPP from what political historian Mehmet Döşemeci calls a "state party" to a "people's party."<sup>19</sup> As Döşemeci explains, "The notion that 'a government not beholden to the people' was incapable of securing the national interest (and therefore illegitimate) was a central theme in Ecevit's thought. . . . Ecevit underscored . . . the constituent role of the nation-people (as opposed to the state apparatus)."<sup>20</sup> Ecevit and the RPP branded the party's new stance as "left of center" (*ortanın solu*), and under this banner pursued a program involving "land reform, tax reform,

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<sup>18</sup> Tachau 110.

<sup>19</sup> While I do not have room to go into it here, it is important to note that in formulating his political program in the 1960s, Ecevit seized upon the emergent labor movement, which had exploded in the wake of constitutional changes of 1961, as the "new social and political force" that would ensure the future of Turkish democracy. Ecevit demonstrated his commitment to the labor movement during his tenure as Minister of Labor between 1961 and 1965, when he legalized strikes for the first time in Turkish history. As he put it: "The healthy development in the labor movement made possible by the democratization of Turkey, has contributed, in turn, to the strengthening of democracy in Turkey." Ecevit's other major political legacy from the 1970s was his authorization of a 1974 military intervention in Cyprus after a Greek coup sought to annex the island. Ecevit's action resulted in the current political situation—an island split in two with a Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus that only Turkey recognizes. Ecevit quoted in Brian Mello, *Evaluating Social Movement Impacts: Comparative Lessons from the Labor Movement in Turkey*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2013, 98. See also Bülent Ecevit, "Labor in Turkey as a New Social and Political Force," in *Social Change and Politics in Turkey: A Structural-Historical Analysis*, ed. Kemal Karpat (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973); and Mehmet Döşemeci, *Debating Turkish Modernity: Civilization, Nationalism, and the EEC*. Cambridge University Press, 2013, 105.

<sup>20</sup> Döşemeci, 106.

advocacy for democratic rights for workers, and laws against the exploitation of labor.”<sup>21</sup> As was already evident in his *Ulus* writings of the 1950s, where Ecevit argued against the controlling role of the state or “officialdom” (*resmî*) in favor of the individual’s agency within the Turkish political, cultural, and social order, this was a stance that opposed the Kemalist model of the the state-directed creation of Turkish citizens to emphasize instead the agency of the people and their ability to self-govern.<sup>22</sup> After a period during the 1980s when he was banned from politics, Ecevit served once again as prime minister (1999–2002), this time as the leader of the Democratic Left Party (*Demokrat Sol Partisi*), which he had co-founded with his wife Rahşan in 1985. By the 1990s, Ecevit had abandoned his center-left stance, and pursued a less clearly defined set of political goals while supporting development of a free-market economy in Turkey.<sup>23</sup> Throughout five decades as a public figure, an enduring part of the Ecevit myth remained the notion that he was a man of letters whose true calling was literature and arts rather than politics. Already in the 1950s Adalet Cimcoz had noted that “some people think this sensitive poet friend should drop politics and get back to art.”<sup>24</sup> Simultaneously a critique and an instance of praise, this defining tension continued to be an integral part of Ecevit’s public profile until his death.

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<sup>21</sup> Tachau, “Bülent Ecevit,” 117.

<sup>22</sup> Döşemeci, 105. The titles of the political writings that Ecevit produced during this period, which was the most prolific of his life, reflect the young politician’s major ideological tenets: *Left of Center (Ortanın solu)* (1966); *The System Must Change (Bu düzen değişmelidir)* (1968); *Atatürk and Revolution (Atatürk ve devrimcilik)* (1970); *Democratic Left (Demokratik sol)* (1974); *Workers and Peasants Together (İşçi-köylü elele)* (1976).

<sup>23</sup> Many argue that the DLP was more “a vehicle for Ecevit’s leadership . . . than a grouping with a distinct ideology,” and several of the political decisions he made toward the end of his career, including his role stymying Turkey’s entrance to the EU, remain the source of much criticism.

Brian Mello, 98.

<sup>24</sup> Fitne Fücür [Adalet Cimcoz], “İstanbul Dedikoduları” [Istanbul Gossip], *Halkçı*, September 19, 1954.



European art galleries, and the Parisian examples in particular, to which Turkey’s Western-educated elite had gained exposure since the 1930s through study abroad programs funded by the government, provided the basic model for what in Turkish would come to be called a *galeri* (plural *galeriler*).<sup>25</sup> The mere presence of an art gallery was widely seen as a legible marker of modernity without which a local art world felt “embarrassed,” in the words of Cemal Tollu, a prominent artist, Istanbul Fine Arts Academy professor, and art critic.<sup>26</sup> (Figure 1.5) Alongside Galeri Maya and the Helikon Association, some of the most active exhibition venues in 1950s Istanbul and Ankara were those funded by foreign governments in the name of cultural diplomacy. These were located at the French Consulate, the offices of the United States Information Service (*Amerikan Haberler Merkezi*), and the German Cultural Center (*Alman Kültür Merkezi*, later the Goethe Institute). The presence of such foreign institutions was frequently cited as evidence of Turkey’s own shortcomings in the cultural realm: Tollu echoed a common complaint when he noted that it felt “strange” for a “person to thank his foreign friends for their hospitality in his own country.”<sup>27</sup> The artist’s statements reflect the common view of galleries and exhibitions as a critical means for Turkey to align itself internationally and suggests that the cultural realm was a key index of a nation’s political and social sophistication.

The literal translation of *maya*—“yeast” or “leavening”—provided ample opportunity for reporters to play on the idea of Galeri Maya acting as a stimulating injection of fresh life into the

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<sup>25</sup> Kansu Şarman, *Türk Promethe’ler: Cumhuriyet’in Öğrencileri Avrupa’da, 1925–1945* [The Prometheus of Turkey: Students of the Republic in Europe, 1925–1945] (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> Cemal Tollu, “Yeni Bir San’at Galerisi ‘Maya’” [A New Art Gallery, Maya], *Yeni Sabah*, January 31, 1951, reprinted in Kaptana, 30. Many of the basic details about Helikon and the issues surrounding the opening of independent exhibition spaces in the 1950s are plotted out in: Başak Önsal, “Emergence of Art Galleries in Ankara: A Case Study of Three Pioneering Galleries in the 1950s” (master’s thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2006), <http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12608100/index.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Cemal Tollu, “Yarının üstadları” [Tomorrow’s Masters], *Yeni Sabah*, June 3, 1953, 2. I have been unable to find archival records about these institutions’ art programs, many of which disbanded in the 1960s.

Turkish art world plagued by state neglect, institutional closure, and dashed hopes. Countless reports excitedly announced that the Beyoğlu gallery would fill a void (*yokluluk*), rectify an embarrassing lack (*eksiklik*), and offer a solution to what one reporter called “the placelessness problem” (*versizlik meselesi*).<sup>28</sup> “We have felt the absence of this type of place so acutely . . . it’s because we all felt this need that I decided to undertake this project,” explained Cimcoz to one interviewer at Galeri Maya’s opening.<sup>29</sup> “There’s not a single gallery or exhibition hall for exhibiting or selling fine arts products in our country or the arts capital of İstanbul,” added an anonymous Istanbulite in an open letter to the newspaper *Yeni İstanbul*. “How felicitous it would be if this gallery is able to realize a significant portion of the work that the Municipality has promised for years but been unable to deliver.”<sup>30</sup> An earlier attempt to found a gallery in İstanbul in the 1940s had failed.<sup>31</sup> The Peoples’ Houses (*Halk Evleri*), Atatürk’s nation-wide network of nearly 4,000 urban community centers for popular education which had featured significant arts curricula, were shut down by the Democrats not even a year into their administration in 1950; the Village Institutes (*Köy Enstitüleri*), likewise, which were similar to the Peoples’ Houses but located in Turkey’s more rural areas, were closed down by 1954. Finally, the fact that the the İstanbul Fine Arts Academy and its entire library had burned down in 1948 further contributed to

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<sup>28</sup> Bir İstanbullu [An Istanbulite], “Maya,” *Yeni İstanbul*, December 26, 1950, reprinted in Kaptana, 20.

<sup>29</sup> “Böyle bir yerin yokluğunu o kadar çok hissettik ki? Bu ihtiyacı hissettiğimiz içindir ki bu işi yapmaya karar verdim.” S.S., “Mütevazi bir Sanat Köşesi: Şark Sediri ve Orijinal Perdeler, Galerinin en Muvaffak Olmuş Dekorlarını Teşkil Ediyor,” reprinted in Kaptana, 21–22.

<sup>30</sup> “Memleketimizde ve sanat merkezi olan İstanbul’da güzel sanatların mahsullerini teşhir ve satışa arz için ne bir sergi salonu ne de bir galeri vardır. . . . Senelerdir Belediyenin vadettiği fakat yapamadığı bir işin büyük bir parçasını bu galeri tahakkuk ettirebilirse ne mutlu.” Bir İstanbullu [An Istanbulite], “Maya,” *Yeni İstanbul*, December 26, 1950, reprinted in Kaptana, 20.

<sup>31</sup> Mehmet Üstünipek, “Türkiye’de Özel Galericiğin Tarihsel Örnekleri: Galeri İsmail Oygur” [Historical Examples of Private Galleries in Turkey: Galeri İsmail Oygur], *Türkiye’de Sanat*, no. 50 (2001): 46–52.

this vision of the post-war Turkish art world as an empty landscape.<sup>32</sup> Tollu recounted the years of false starts that surrounded the much-awaited arrival of Galeri Maya on the Turkish art scene:

In those days [the 1940s], when [ceramicist İsmail Hakkı Oygar's] first gallery in Taksim had to close, at the very least we hoped that the Peoples' Houses would take up its task. In fact, we even went to work for the Peoples' Houses in hopes of this. We wanted to succeed at something, to be of use to the *halk* with frequent exhibitions and painting classes. Our dreams were crushed. When we asked the municipality officials of the time for a small gallery, to open an exhibition space, they said: "Be patient a little longer. The new City Theater building which will go up in Taksim in two years will have plenty of rooms that will meet this need." Several years later, the city of Istanbul still had not managed to grant these two promises. We were embarrassed when foreigners came to visit. Because it was impossible to conceive of a capital city without a gallery or exhibitions.<sup>33</sup>

Although Cimcoz and Ecevit's galleries had particularly high public profiles, their spaces were part of a shared impulse towards self-organization that emerged in response to these circumstances. The early 1950s saw a significant upsurge in independent initiatives that also included small-scale private art societies and artists' groups.<sup>34</sup> Thus these early *galeri* initiatives were some of the most successful manifestations of a broader movement across Turkey's cultural sphere to challenge existing paradigms of "publicness" and the state's assumed dominance of the public sphere, which provided a set of alternative enclaves where a Turkish citizenry might

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<sup>32</sup> Tollu described the early 1950s as "a new era after the fire," ready for developments like the revitalization of the State Painting and Sculpture Museum, which reopened in 1951 after ten years of closure. See, for example: Cemal Tollu, "Yangından Sonra" [After the Fire], *Yeni Sabah*, Oct 14, 1953, 2; and "Resim ve Heykel Müzesi" [The Painting and Sculpture Museum], *Yeni Sabah*, September 5, 1951, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Cemal Tollu, "Yeni Bir San'at Galerisi 'Maya'" [A New Art Gallery, Maya], *Yeni Sabah*, January 31, 1951, reprinted in Kaptana, 30.

<sup>34</sup> Cimcoz herself was closely involved in the Friends of Art Society (*Sanat Dostlar Cemiyeti*), a group established by journalist Fikret Adil in Istanbul in 1948, which, she reports, provided an exhibition space in a *lokal* (neighborhood haunt of some sort). Cimcoz reported extensively on the Society's activities in her society and arts columns in *Salon* between 1948–49. Other emerging initiatives of the early 1950s included the Art Lovers' Society (*Sanat Severler Cemiyeti*) established in Ankara in 1950; the University Student Music Association (*Üniversiteliler Müzik Derneği*) and the Association of Voice and Strings (*Ses ve Tel Birliği*) in Ankara; and the Attic Painters (*Tavanarası Ressamlar*), an Istanbul group founded in 1951 which promoted itself as a formally-organized alternative to a traditional academic artistic education. Finally, in Ankara, the architect and furniture designer Selçuk Milar founded Milar Galerisi in June 1957, where he intermittently showed art alongside his original furniture designs but did not possess as sustained or regular an exhibition program as Maya and Helikon. Emin Nedret İşli, "Eser Dergisi ve Selçuk Milar" [*Eser Magazine and Selçuk Milar*], *Sanat Dünyamız* 74 (1999): 243–45.

shape their future in line with new ideologies of popular participation. Thus, even as Cimcoz and Ecevit continue to perpetuate the cultural modernization program of the Kemalist state through their activities in translation and language reform, the opening of their galleries was a gesture that was resolutely of the Democrat Party moment.

### 3. GALERİ MAYA, 1950–1955

In August 1950 Cimcoz wrote an excited letter to her friend, the artist Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu (1911–1975), a prolific painter, poet, and professor at the Fine Arts Academy who was in Paris at the time with his wife, the painter Eren Eyüboğlu (1907–1988). (Figures 1.6–1.8) “If everything goes smoothly I’m going to rent a space and start selling,” Cimcoz announced to him. “But this isn’t sales as we know it. I want to rent a room across from Galatasaray High School on İstiklal Avenue in Beyoğlu, one floor above an old shop. I’m going to open a permanent exhibition in this space (!) I am only going to exhibit modern works of art.”<sup>35</sup> (Appendix C) Bedri Rahmi’s older brother, Sabahattin, soon joined the correspondence about the future gallery. Sabahattin had studied in France and taught at Istanbul University in the 1930s, where he was assistant to émigré scholars Erich Auerbach and Leo Spitzer and deployed their methods of literary analysis, rooted in a philological European tradition, to examine Turkish folk tales and poetry.<sup>36</sup> (Figure 1.9) In private letters exchanged in the months leading up to Galeri Maya’s opening, Cimcoz, Bedri Rahmi, and Sabahattin made a pact to work “cooperatively, with mutual

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<sup>35</sup> Adalet Cimcoz to Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, August 25, 1950, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu Archive, Istanbul.

<sup>36</sup> Emily Apter, “Global *Translatio*: The ‘Invention’ of Comparative Literature, Istanbul, 1933,” *Critical Inquiry* 29, no. 2 (January 1, 2003): 253–81.

understanding and trust” to share the labor and expenses for the gallery.<sup>37</sup> When he returned to Istanbul in 1950 after his own extended stay in Paris, Sabahattin became Cimcoz’s most active collaborator, occasionally writing anonymous reviews of the gallery under the pen name Cim-Dal while cementing his status as one of Turkey’s most important cultural critics. Galeri Maya, which opened a new exhibition every two weeks, quickly became a key gathering spot for Turkey’s intellectual elite, including figures like the novelists Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901–1962) and Sait Faik Abasıyanık (1906–1954), the journalist and art collector Fikret Adil (1901–1973), as well as countless artists and art students from the nearby Istanbul Fine Arts Academy.

To establish a gallery as an independent sphere of public activity within a social and political landscape historically dominated by the authoritarian state was to a challenge to the hegemonic authority of the Turkish state.<sup>38</sup> Although in the 1950s the Democrat Party no longer pursued the highly programmatic arts program of its predecessors, the administration continued to come down forcefully on artists and thinkers of whose socialist and communist leanings it did not approve. Since 1946, any political activity conceived of as left had been “declared illegal and identified with extremism,” and one of Democrat prime minister Adnan Menderes’ first actions upon taking up his post was to strengthen anti-left laws.<sup>39</sup> The difficulty of this situation was that, as Karpat explains, “this indiscriminate condemnation made it impossible to separate

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<sup>37</sup> Other important collaborators included Mehmet Ali Cimcoz, Cimcoz’s husband, who provided much of the capital necessary, and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, who helped find a space for the gallery. Bedri Rahmi and Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, *Kardeş Mektupları* [Letters Between Brothers] (Istanbul: İşbankası Kültür Yayınları, 2003), 309.

<sup>38</sup> Several scholars have argued that the so-called “public sphere” in modern Turkey was historically understood as belonging to the state. In sociologist Meltem Ahıska’s gloss, “*public* only signifies belonging to the state, and only statues [or other artworks] that are deemed sacred to the state are made visible in and for the public.” Uğur Tanyeli, “Statues in the Public Sphere,” talk given at Istanbul Modern Museum, April 25, 2006, and summarized in Meltem Ahıska. “Monsters That Remember: Tracing the Story of the Workers’ Monument in Tophane, İstanbul,” *Red Thread*, no. 3 (2011), 17–18, [http://www.red-thread.org/dosyalar/site\\_resim/dergi/pdf/English3.pdf](http://www.red-thread.org/dosyalar/site_resim/dergi/pdf/English3.pdf). See also: Alev Çınar. *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey: Bodies, Places, Times* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

<sup>39</sup> Karpat, “The Turkish Left,” 176.

communists from socialists.”<sup>40</sup> Cimcoz’s close friend, the poet Nazım Hikmet (1902–63), with whom she maintained a rich and devoted correspondence throughout his life, was one of the most high profile cases in a large community of socialist writers and artists under persecution throughout the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>41</sup> Thus the question of whether Galeri Maya constituted a politically *partizan* (partisan) endeavor—the dominant term used to indicate political parties’ efforts to promote their own ideologies through propaganda and other means—was at once inevitable and carried an immense element of risk for the gallery’s founders and supporters.<sup>42</sup>

Cimcoz and her left-leaning circle would respond to this precarious political situation by claiming that their overarching commitment to the cause of human cultural production transcended any political loyalties. For example, Cimcoz used this defense when, in 1952, a prominent member of the Democrat Party took issue with an upcoming exhibition of satirical cartoons to be held at Galeri Maya.<sup>43</sup> Under the politician’s pressure, the gallerist cancelled the exhibition before it even opened, only to find herself challenged in turn by the cartoonist’s

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Imprisoned for his communist sympathies between 1938 and 1951, Hikmet subsequently entered permanent exile in Moscow. Visual artists seemed to have largely escaped the full force of the attentions the state directed at writers and poets, but anecdotes about minor repressions abound. See, for example: Clifford Endres. “Edouard Roditi and the Istanbul Avant-Garde.” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 54, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 471–93; and Şükran Kurdakul, ed., *Nazımın Bilinmeyen Mektupları: Adalet Cimcoz’a Mektuplar 1945–1950* [Nazım’s Unknown Letters: Letters to Adalet Cimcoz 1945–1950] (Istanbul: Broy Yayınları, 1986).

<sup>42</sup> Under the new multi-party system, the term *partizanlık* (partisanship) pejoratively referred to political parties’ promotion of their own ideologies. *Partizanlık* was used equally by the administration and its opponents, and served as a means for opposing camps to police one another while summoning a vision of a national populace vulnerable to ideological exposure at home, via the media, and in their workplace. See, for example: “Radyodaki Partizan yayın protesto edildi” [Partisan radio broadcasts protested], *Dünya* November 19, 1952, 1; “Her çalışma sahasında partizan idarenin tesiri hissolunmaktadır” [Influence of partisan administration felt in all types of work places], *Dünya*, May 29, 1952, 1.

<sup>43</sup> The artist in question was Semih Balcıoğlu, a young cartoonist at the newspaper *Dünya* who was known for lampooning the Democrat administration and whose cartoons had so amused the former president İsmet İnönü when they first appeared at Galeri Maya in May 1952. Based on this earlier exhibition’s success, Cimcoz had begun planning a follow-up show in November of that year. However, according to the cartoonist’s biography, Cimcoz cancelled the exhibition before it opened when Samet Ağaoğlu, the Democrat Minister of Labor, strongly suggested that Cimcoz not “get the gallery involved in politics” (*galeriyi politikaya sokmak*). Semih Balcıoğlu, *Önce Çizdim, Sonra Yazdım: Yaşantı* [First I Drew, Then I Wrote: A Life] (Istanbul: Yapıkredi Yayınları, 2001), 210.

employer, the newspaper *Dünya*, who condemned the cancellation of the exhibition in an accusatory article titled “Partisanship Everywhere!” The paper’s editors bitterly denounced what they saw as Cimcoz’s capitulation to the ruling party’s demands, arguing that her cancellation of the exhibition represented a “clear-cut expression of the fact that a partisan mentality has also permeated the art world.”<sup>44</sup> The vitriolic response that the gallerist sent back is emblematic of the way that the Galeri Maya circle used the discourse of art to publicly claim an “apolitical” stance within this tumultuous political atmosphere. “I opened Maya Art Gallery solely, and one hundred percent, in the interest of art,” declared Cimcoz in her opening sentence, announcing the Beyoğlu gallery as a haven of aesthetic appreciation free from the influence of political ideology.<sup>45</sup> She went on to claim that Galeri Maya was the collective property of a Turkish citizenry, transcending political divisions and exempting it from petty partisan debates: “The Gallery is not mine but is part of our national arts heritage. I do not believe that either the government, the opposition party, or any individual has legitimate reason to look negatively upon it.”<sup>46</sup> Cimcoz suggested that her Beyoğlu gallery had, until then, functioned as a haven of aesthetic appreciation alone and that it might have happily continued on this course had not the Democrat politician and the editors of *Dünya* interfered with their accusations of *partizanlık*: “I subsequently found my gallery described in a rather dim light by someone with a three-star signature, who announced his own busy involvement in politics. . . . I told the artist that I would be unable to open his exhibition because of the political side of the cartoons that I personally

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<sup>44</sup> “Her Yerde Partizanlık! Semih Balcıoğlu Sergiyi Açamıyor” [Partisanship Everywhere! Semih Balcıoğlu Unable to Open Exhibition], *Dünya*, November 21, 1952, 3.

<sup>45</sup> Adalet Cimcoz, “Adalet Cimcoz’un Gönderdiği Mektup” [Letter from Adalet Cimcoz], *Dünya*, November 24, 1952, 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

valued as art, and I hoped he would understand.”<sup>47</sup> When, at the end of the article, she complained bitterly that the space had been “instrumentalized for political purposes in a manner that [she] never intended,” Cimcoz articulated her larger vision for Galeri Maya’s place within the risky political terrain of 1950s Turkey: an allegedly politically neutral space devoted to the universally important phenomenon of art, constantly at risk of being corrupted by external political forces from which she would vehemently continue to protect it.<sup>48</sup>

For the gallery’s new logo, Bedri Rahmi designed a silhouette of a flying stag drawn from Anatolian rug motifs. (Figures 1.10–1.12) The appropriation of this image was a legible reference to Anatolia, the Turkish heartland, which made a clear appeal to a generic idea of “Turkish folk culture” as the source of an essential Turkish national identity. At the same time, the logo trafficked in the aesthetics of European modernism, bearing a particular affinity to Matisse’s cut-outs of the 1940s. (Figure 1.13) Enthusiastic reviewers of Galeri Maya’s first exhibition, which opened four months later, cited the presence of a Matisse copy, lampshades, plaster replicas of famous death masks, and canvases by the Turkish impressionist İbrahim Çallı (1882–1960), the academic cubist Cemal Tollu (1899–1968), the self-taught *naif* İbrahim Balaban (b. 1921), and the social realist Agop Arad (1913–1990). Photographs also reveal the presence of a range of vernacular arts, including a *kilim* (woven carpet), earthenware vases that the Eyüboğlu’s had repainted, and puppets used in *Karagöz* folk tale plays. (Figures 1.14–1.15) Over roughly four years and in more than seventy exhibitions, an eclectic array of objects would appear at Galeri Maya, including metalwork, political cartoons, photographs of ancient Turkish art, Renaissance reproductions, ceramics, lithographs, poetry, wood carving, children’s drawings,

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.



and painting and sculpture by the country's most famous modernist artists. (Figures 1.16–1.18)  
(Appendix A)

How to explain the seeming disjuncture between Cimcoz's declaration, in her letter to Bedri Rahmi, that she would exhibit "only modern works of art" and the eclectic mix of objects that appeared at the gallery? To pursue this inquiry I would like to turn back to this generation's participation in the literary and pedagogical projects of the Kemalist state in the preceding decade. Sabahattin's close involvement with Galeri Maya places the art gallery at the center of a strain of thought known as Anatolian Humanism at the very moment when the Turkish *littérateur* began formulating this nascent philosophy's main ideas in close dialogue with the Classicist Azra Erhat and the novelist Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı, yet just before Anatolian Humanism emerged as a public discourse via the journal *Yeni Ufuklar*.<sup>49</sup> The Anatolian Humanists promoted a utopian vision of sweeping societal change, buttressed by a specific view of art history. As historian Can Bilisel explains, the Anatolian Humanists positioned Turkish vernacular arts as both a "historiographic category and an aesthetic ideal," "a unifying principle that would overcome the discrepancy of taste in cosmopolitan mass society" to unite the Turkish citizenry into a holistic national body transcending all social divisions.<sup>50</sup> While the Anatolian Humanism debates were closely bound to local institutional histories and invested in a territorial vision of nationhood, their larger motivation was to retroactively project Turkey into a world history of

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<sup>49</sup> Azra Erhat, "Maya ve Cim-Dal, ölümünün 10. yılında Adalet Cimcoz'u anıyor" [Maya and Cim-Dal, in memory of Adalet Cimcoz on the tenth anniversary of her death], *Milliyet Sanat Dergisi*, no. 3 (1980): 15–16.

<sup>50</sup> S.M. Can Bilisel, "'Our Anatolia': Organicism and the Making of Humanist Culture in Turkey," *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 238.

civilization that prioritized the beginnings of humanism in ancient Greece and saw its modern legacy as located in the West.<sup>51</sup>

The ideology of Anatolian Humanism developed directly out of this generation's experiences with the Village Institutes (*Köy Enstitüleri*), the Republican Peoples' Party's network of popular cultural centers, which played a crucial role in disseminating programs in music, arts, and crafts nation-wide in the 1940s. Established in 1940 as a means to extend the activities of the urban Peoples' Houses (*Halk Evleri*) to Turkey's rural reaches, the Village Institutes were located in small, out-of-the-way sites; their main goal was to increase literacy rates and create a self-sustaining educational system (they trained nearly 20,000 teachers during their fourteen-year tenure).<sup>52</sup> They constituted the most important point of contact between a Turkish population at large and an intelligentsia that otherwise tended to cluster in the cities. Sabahattin, for example, was a close friend of the Village Institutes' director, İsmail Hakkı Tonguç, and held a position teaching Western Literature at the Hasanoğlan Village Institute outside of Ankara; his sister Mualla Eyüboğlu (1919–2009), an architect, designed several Village Institute buildings.<sup>53</sup> (Figure 1.19) But the Institutes came under increasing attack throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, from both opponents of the RPP, who saw them as outlets for the promotion of the party's ideology, and members of the right, who argued that they were hotbeds of Communism in a Cold War atmosphere of growing paranoia about the left. The

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<sup>51</sup> One of the primary ways the Anatolian Humanists did so was to emphasize Turkey's Classical inheritance. The fact that ancient Troy was located in southwest Turkey was a key component of this argument. Ibid., 233.

<sup>52</sup> Ekrem Işın, *Mindful Seed Speaking Soil: Village Institutes of the Republic 1940–1954* (Istanbul: İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2012); Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*, 93–97.

<sup>53</sup> On the Eyüboğlu family's involvement with the Village Institutes, see Mehmet Başaran, *Sabahattin Eyüboğlu ve Köy Enstitüleri: Tonguç'a ve Yakınlara Mektuplarıyla* [Sabahattin Eyüboğlu and the Village Institutes: Letters to Tonguç and His Circle] (Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1990); Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, *Mavi ve Kara* [The Blue and The Black] (Istanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1961); Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, *Sanat Üzerine Denemeler ve Eleştiriler (Bütün Yazıları: Görsel Sanatlar)* [Essays and Criticism of Art (Collected Writings: Visual Arts)] (Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, n.d.).

Institutes were closed permanently by the Democrat Party in 1954—an event that, as I explain in Chapter Two, would become a flashpoint for critique of the ruling Democrat Party, which, as the decade wore on, was increasingly accused of recklessly abandoning the core values of democracy it claimed to uphold.

The Village Institutes had an immense impact upon Cimcoz’s generation, and their dissolution during the early 1950s was felt as a major loss. Born under the Ottoman Empire around 1910, Cimcoz, the Eyüboğlus, and their peers had felt the full impact of these institutions. On the eve of their closure in 1954, for example, Bedri Rahmi explained that “we were children when we adopted [new Western-style] hats and accepted Latin Letters [under Atatürk’s reforms of the 1920s]. But by the time the Village Institutes were founded, we were old enough to understand and support the significance, the beauty, of the work being done.”<sup>54</sup> In later years Eyüboğlu and his peers romantically portrayed the Institutes as a utopian arena where a Turkish intelligentsia had read Shakespeare with villagers while learning their folk songs in a harmonious scene of exchange.<sup>55</sup> Bedri Rahmi would go on to devote his life’s work to the recovery of Turkish vernacular traditions, incorporating popular speech and excerpts from folk songs into his poetry, and decorative motifs from Anatolian textiles and ceramics into his paintings. The 1954 painting *İğdeli Bride with Red Legs*, for example, summoned a rural village wedding as its subject matter and emulated *kilim* (woven rug) motifs in its all-over patterning of the painting’s rectangular field. (Figure 1.20) In it a row of five large figures are identifiable as such only

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<sup>54</sup> “Şapka giydiğimiz, Latin harflerini kabul ettiğimiz günler çocuktuk. Ama köy enstitüleri kurulurken yapılan işin büyüklüğünü, güzelliğini görecek, anlayacak, sevecek yaşa gelmiştik.” Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, “Köy Enstitülere Selam” [A Salute to the Village Institutes] *Cumhuriyet*, February 1, 1954, reprinted in *Toplu Eserleri 1953–1954* [Collected Writings 1953–1954] (Istanbul: İşbankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008), 74.

<sup>55</sup> Şakir Eczacıbaşı, *Çağrışımlar Tanıklıklar Dostluklar* [Associations, Acquaintances, Friendships] (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2010), 566–68, 570–571. Azra Erhat, “Bir Yolun Yolcusu” [Traveler of a Road], *Sevgi Yöntemi* [Methods of Love] (Istanbul: Can Yayınları, 1978), 289–90.

through their lowermost portions, where it is possible to discern five sets of feet, and the upper regions of the body, where here a face, there a hand appear; on the left, a pair of hands giving a child a breast from which to nurse are visible. Below them, a smaller register of shrunken, half-sized figures suggest a larger surrounding crowd at this celebratory event. Bedri Rahmi’s use of a reduced color palette—bright reds, yellows, turquoises, and greens—and a quick-drying, water-based gouache, which, unlike oils, cannot be mixed to provide the same illusion of depth, purposefully invokes the vernacular tradition of block printing on fabric. In subject matter and medium alike, the artist signals an alliance with Turkish “folk” culture writ large that characterized the Anatolian Humanists’ thought.

In direct continuation of the pedagogical role of the Village Institutes, Cimcoz and her supporters frequently described the gallery as a “school” or a “bridge” that would unite different segments of Turkish society through instruction in a shared artistic tradition. As Cimcoz told one interviewer at the exhibition’s opening, “I believe in Turkish artists. If this endeavor succeeds, if I am able to build a bridge between the *halk* and the artist, it would give me the greatest pleasure of my life.”<sup>56</sup> In fact, Cimcoz would suggest that it was precisely this “bridging” of disparate social strata that was Maya’s most significant contribution. When, in 1954, it appeared that Galeri Maya would have to shut down, Cimcoz, ever the savvy promoter, portrayed the last four years of the gallery’s activity as a productive encounter between a Turkish general public and the artists who had shown their work there: “The unending efforts of the last four years have yielded wonderful success. The *halk* have embraced new art and young artists and begun to love them. . . . At least 400 people came to the gallery each month. . . . Maya and modern Turkish art saw

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<sup>56</sup> “Ben Türk sanatkârına inanıyorum. Eğer giriştiğim teşebbüste muvaffak olur halkla sanatkâr arasında bir köprü kurabilirsem hayatımın en büyük zevkini duyacağım.” S.S., “Mütevazi bir Sanat Köşesi: Şark Sediri ve Orijinal Perdeler, Galerinin en Muvaffak Olmuş Dekorlarını Teşkil Ediyor,” reprinted in Kaptana, 21–22.

interest in Anatolia and internationally in Vienna, Germany, Paris, America and the Near East. It was reported on in Europe. These are not insignificant events.”<sup>57</sup> It is thus necessary to keep the case of the Village Institutes in mind in order to fully understand how Cimcoz and her collaborators articulated Galeri Maya’s larger social role as that of a public institution that might bring together *halk* and *aydınlar* in a shared space. If not literally to once again swap Shakespeare for folksong, the gallery functioned symbolically through an eclectic array of material objects that allowed these self-identified humanists to project their vision of Turkish society united through shared artistic traditions.

The seeming disjuncture between Cimcoz’s declaration that she would exhibit “only modern works of art” and the wide array of objects that appeared at the gallery can be attributed to what Bilsel calls the Anatolian Humanists’ “survivalist” view, where categories such as old and new, ancient and modern, collapsed into one another, and where the only determinant of an object’s “modernity” was its perceived relevance to the contemporary moment. The Anatolian Humanists saw a contemporary rural peasantry’s present-day traditions and material culture as remnants that provided a physical connection to Turkey’s past. They argued that the many civilizations that had made the Turkish heartland their home throughout history—the Hittites of 1600–1100 BC, the cultures of ancient Troy and Ionia—were interlinked through their shared experience of the environment and that the resulting artistic traditions underwrote contemporary Turkish cultural production in the mid-twentieth century. In fact, the Anatolianists inaugurated a series of yearly sailing trips along Turkey’s coast, called the *Mavi Yolculuk* (Blue Tour), where they would study traditions such as Turkish folk dances of the Black Sea region, linking them with Classical precedents such as Dionysian celebrations described in Euripides. Simultaneously,

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<sup>57</sup> Adalet Cimcoz quoted in Kaptana, 71–72.

an unprecedented number of migrants moved to Istanbul and Ankara, and a looming rural majority now confronted the “city intellectuals” (*şehir aydınları*) at home even as urban artists and writers made pilgrimages to rural Turkey in search of folkloric sources of cultural authenticity.<sup>58</sup> It is no accident that Sabahattin was also an early practitioner of documentary film, with its ethnographic tradition of capturing exotic local traditions on the brink of extinction.<sup>59</sup> These intellectuals’ approach simultaneously positioned the living *halk* of rural Turkey as a source for contemporary aesthetic production and as the object of a preservationist impulse on the part of the urban intelligentsia, now cast in the role of discoverers and recoverers. A photograph of Cimcoz at Galeri Maya, where she sits atop a *kilim*-covered sofa and in front of a monumental canvas of Turkish villagers by the artist Fikret Otyam (b. 1926), embodies the intelligentsia’s confident possession of national “folk culture” in its many iterations, from material objects to representational themes available for use. (Figure 1.21) Galeri Maya embodied one of the signature marks of the modern: the recuperation of rural culture—a concept often collapsed with that of the past—by a metropolitan elite in an effort to formulate social and political visions for the present.<sup>60</sup>

Still, the Anatolian Humanists’ mission to use culture to bridge divides between *halk* and *aydınlar* was often a contradictory endeavor. Bilsel has pointed out that Sabahattin’s many articles on the subject of Turkish art and the *halk* are written from the position of a “split subject

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<sup>58</sup> Gülsüm Baydar Nabantoğlu, “Silent Interruptions: Urban Encounters with Rural Turkey,” in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, ed. Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997): 192–210.

<sup>59</sup> Working in collaboration with the Islamic art historian Mazhar Şevket İpşiroğlu (1908–85), Sabahattin produced over a dozen documentaries about Turkey and its cultural history, including the award-winning 1957 film *Under the Hittite Sun [Hitit Güneşi]*.

<sup>60</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

of enunciation:” at one moment, the author speaks as “we,” a member of “a communal self which transcends history,” identifying with the *halk* he claims to address. At another moment, Eyüboğlu splinters off into the role of an outside observer, addressing the *halk* as “you,” an “idealized other.”<sup>61</sup> It is a mode of address that gestures towards a shared social and historical space but also reinforces the secure standing of the élite speaker. We see this same fraught positionality playing out at Galeri Maya. On the one hand, Cimcoz and her collaborators promote Anatolian handicrafts in such a way as to identify with them as a contemporary expression of “we, the *halk*”—such is the case when *kilim* rugs appear, or when artists like Bedri Rahmi and Eren Eyüboğlu make use of motifs such as the flying stag. But, at the same time, the authoritative intelligentsia adopt a distanced, didactic tone of address to lecture “you, the *halk*” about a universal art history embodied in reproductions of artifacts for educational study. Such is the case with a sequence of sculptural reproductions that Sabahattin brought back from the Louvre, which represents the Western art museum’s paradigms for the universal art historical survey. (Figure 1.18) At this moment, Galeri Maya became a place of instruction, driven by a pedagogical impulse to cultivate an appreciation of art in society. Cimcoz and her circle’s engagement with the popular material culture of the *halk* and the ideology of Anatolian Humanism thus served as a means to explore the possibilities of popular participation in a democratic Turkey, to grapple with the “burden of the intellectual” so evocatively described by Ecevit.

Anatolian Humanism exerted a strong and appreciable presence at Galeri Maya for several reasons. First, Sabahattin and Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu were already high-profile public figures, whose emergent theories took form in their frequent newspaper and magazine writings

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<sup>61</sup> S.M. Can Bilsel, “‘Our Anatolia’: Organicism and the Making of Humanist Culture in Turkey,” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 236.

with large readerships; second, because the Anatolian Humanists made the visual arts a central part of their cultural theories, it was easily apparent the way the activity of an art gallery meshed easily with their own ideologies; and finally, as well-traveled and voracious collectors, figures such as Sabahattin and Bedri Rahmi provided an important source for objects to display at the gallery. And yet, even as Cimcoz adamantly echoed the Anatolian Humanists' claims about the "apolitical" or "non-ideological" nature of Galeri Maya's activities, the exhibition space also channeled an additional strain of thought with a strong leftist pedigree and a corresponding aesthetic program.

Between the 1930s and 1950s, a cadre of openly leftist Turkish writers "resisted [the] type of idealization" that fueled the romanticism of the Anatolian Humanists.<sup>62</sup> Using a range of aesthetic approaches, such writers were united in their commitment to portraying the grim conditions of life in rural Turkey in order to make an argument for political change. As historian Kemal Karpat notes, "the vast output of stories and novels with 'social content' after 1950, best reflects the trends of thought which eventually became the foundation of a new leftism."<sup>63</sup> Perhaps most important among these writers were Nazım Hikmet (1902–1963) and Sabahattin Ali (1907–1948), both close personal friends of Adalet Cimcoz and her husband Mehmet Ali Cimcoz. Hikmet, who looked to the Soviet revolutionary poet Mayakovsky as one of his major inspirations, spent time in jail for his communist beliefs.<sup>64</sup> In his writings, he emphasized the "physical destitution of [Turkish] villages" in order to critique the "political deprivation and

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<sup>62</sup> Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 208.

<sup>63</sup> Karpat, "The Turkish Left," 175. Prevalent between the 1930s and 1950s, such literature came to be known as *toplumcu gerçekçilik* (social realism). 1950 saw the appearance of two key works criticizing the abject conditions of rural Turkey: Mahmut Makal's *Our Village (Bizim Köy)* and Fazıl Hüsni Dağlarca's *Mother Earth (Toprak Ana)*, followed by Yaşar Kemal's 1954 serialized novel *Mehmed, My Hawk (İnce Mehmed)*.

<sup>64</sup> On Nazım Hikmet's biography, see: Mutlu Konuk Blasing, *Nâzım Hikmet: The Life and Times of Turkey's World Poet* (New York: Persea, 2013).



ignorance of the countryside.”<sup>65</sup> Sabahattin Ali, a dissident novelist and poet who was jailed multiple times in the 1930s and 1940s for anti-nationalist sentiment, took a similar approach to *littérature engagée* and the conundrum of the Turkish *halk*. In addition, photographs and a cache of Galeri Maya invitations bearing the address of the novelist Sait Faik Abasıyanık (1906–1954) indicate that this important author was also a significant presence in the Maya circles. (Fig. 1.10) Known for his portrayals of scenes from the daily life of Istanbul’s working poor, Karpat suggests that Sait Faik’s “total production presents an almost complete picture of city life and its human problems:” in contrast to those writers focusing on Anatolia, Sait Faik engaged with the social ills of Turkey’s lower classes as they unfolded in the urban intellectuals’ own immediate environment.<sup>66</sup>

During the 1930s and 1940s, when Hikmet languished in jail for his leftist sympathies, Cimcoz would mail his poems to Sabahattin Eyüboğlu in Paris. Sabahattin, in turn, would translate them into French and distribute them to local journals while an original Turkish copy remained locked in Cimcoz’s Istanbul bankbox.<sup>67</sup> Unlike Hikmet, who ultimately fled to Soviet Russia where he lived out the final years of his life, Sabahattin Ali did not live long enough to see the opening of Galeri Maya. The night before he attempted to flee, but was assassinated by a member of the state security service, Ali stayed at the Cimcoz’s house.<sup>68</sup> Cimcoz’s close association with prominent members of the socialist intelligentsia suggest that even as she was anxious to declare her own political “neutrality,” the gallerist’s efforts to open a public

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<sup>65</sup> Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 209.

<sup>66</sup> Karpat, “Social Themes in Contemporary Turkish Literature: Part II.” *Middle East Journal* 14, no. 2 (1960): 163.

<sup>67</sup> Mehmet Fuat. *Gölgede Kalan Yıllar [The Shadow Years]*. Istanbul: Adam Yayıncılık, 1998, 234.

<sup>68</sup> Filiz Ali, “*Filiz, Don’t be Sad*”: *A Biography of Sabahattin Ali Through the Eyes of His Daughter Filiz* [“Filiz Hiç Üzülmesin”: Sabahattin Ali’nin Objektifinden, Kızı Filiz’in Gözünden Bir Yaşam Öyküsü]. Istanbul: Sel Yayıncılık, 1995.

exhibition space were not driven solely by Anatolian romanticism but also by a deep awareness of leftist inquiries into how to represent the Turkish *halk*. As Karpaz explains, these writers suggested that the very “task of literature” was to use the art form itself to bring the urban intellectual elite and the Turkish *halk* together.<sup>69</sup> It is not difficult to see how Cimcoz and her companions, who were immersed in this literary and political scene, might have made an analogous argument regarding the task of the art gallery. An alternative account of the gallery might thus describe Galeri Maya as in fact drawn between two very different political legacies of the debates about popular representation in Turkey: on the one hand, the overt, highly public strain of Anatolian Humanism with its claims to “apolitical” humanism, and, on the other, a more covert legacy of socialist intellectual thought that remained less in the public eye during a political moment when, in the words of historian Murat Belge, the left was “frozen” due to the “McCarthyite” anti-left campaigns of the ruling administration.<sup>70</sup>

The categories of “art” and “humanism” allowed the Galeri Maya circle to make the case that their own actions were free of ideological motivation. Such a stance can be understood as a pragmatic response to a time of political transition when the Turkish intelligentsia were still working out their own willingness to publicly declare specific political or ideological stances in the context of multi-party democracy and at a time when any vaguely left sentiment was viewed with deep suspicion: the forcefulness of Cimcoz’s response to accusations of *partizanlık* conveys the aspect of self-preservation at work.<sup>71</sup> The knowledge of the risk carried by explicitly

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<sup>69</sup> Karpaz, “The Turkish Left,” 158. See also Kemal H. Karpaz, “Social Themes in Contemporary Turkish Literature: Part I.” *Middle East Journal* 14, no. 1 (1960): 29–44.

<sup>70</sup> Ahmet Samim [Murat Belge]. “The Tragedy of the Turkish Left.” *New Left Review* 126 (April 1981): 64.

<sup>71</sup> Hughette Eyüboğlu, Sabahattin and Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu’s daughter-in-law, lived with the Eyüboğlu family from the early 1960s onwards. She attributes their “apolitical” stance to a deeply ingrained sense of risk coming from a long history of state persecution of intellectuals going back to Ottoman times. Hughette Eyüboğlu, interview with the author, June 19, 2014, Kalamış, Istanbul.

affiliating the gallery with party politics is one that would fundamentally shape the Helikon gallery as well.

#### 4. THE HELIKON ASSOCIATION (*HELİKON DERNEĞİ*), 1953–1956

A promotional brochure printed some three years into the Helikon Association’s tenure established the gallery’s origin story. Gone is Cimcoz’s notion that any artistic production relevant to the current moment merits categorization as “modern” art. Instead the Helikon group emphasized their commitment to introducing Turkish audiences to radically new forms of “contemporary art” [*günün sanatı*]. Also evidenced in the brochure is the view that the “West” was a defining point of reference in how Helikon’s founders defined this emergent category.

They were a handful of friends. Every time they got together on weekends or for holidays they would discuss art, music, theater, art films, and literature. . . . They’d try and explain to each other what was going on in these areas of the arts in the West. At some point they said, we can’t keep on this way, let’s be more systematic—there may be other people who could benefit from knowledge in these areas, and afterwards perhaps they’d find others, like themselves, who wanted to know more about specific areas of contemporary art [*günün sanatı*]. . . They put money down for the first three months’ rent on a space they found, and they used the remaining 150 lira as their budget: they whitewashed the walls, bought a table and four or five chairs, and Helikon opened in January 1953.<sup>72</sup> (Appendix D)

While the collaborative nature of Helikon’s activities makes it difficult to assign specific roles to its participants, a core group of supporters included Selma Arel and Bülent Arel (later a founding figure in electronic music, who worked at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center in the early 1960s); Zerrin Arsebük (biographical details unknown) and Rasin Arsebük (b. 1927), who spent his life as a painter; and Raşan and Bülent Ecevit, both of whom remained active in Turkish politics until the early 2000s.<sup>73</sup> (Figure 1.22) As a daily columnist for *Ulus*, one of the

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<sup>72</sup> “Nasıl Doğdu” [“How it was Born”], reprinted in Bülent Ecevit, “Helikon,” *Gergedan* 17 (July 1988): 150–153.

<sup>73</sup> Filiz Ali has discussed the ways in which Helikon provided a forum for avant-garde musical activity, driven by the composers like İlhan Usmanbaş (b. 1921) and Bülent Arel (1919–1990), who would both go on to have long

country's top papers and the primary outlet for opponents of the new administration, Ecevit was an adamant critic of the Democrat Party. The bulk of these writings consisted of political critique: in the years immediately preceding his formal entrance into politics as a member of parliament in 1957 the young journalist used his column as an arena within which to develop his own theories about how best to establish and sustain democracy in Turkey. But Ecevit, who opened a personal essay from the period with the assertion that "since childhood, my main field of interest has been literature and arts," also devoted a large number of his columns to the topic of art.<sup>74</sup> Between 1950 and 1956, he wrote more than one hundred articles about the Turkish art world. Prominent among these were several columns about Helikon in which Ecevit explained the gallery's mission and printed publicity photographs. These constitute the most substantial source for information about Helikon's aims and activities.

While Cimcoz never positioned Galeri Maya in relationship to the state, Helikon's founders avidly marked it off as an independent initiative free from the imperatives of state institutions and officialdom at large. By designating it as a *dernek* (association), the Helikon organizers represented a belief that a healthy democracy depended upon the existence of independently organized activities as a crucial complement to state activity. As a modern legal concept, the *dernek*, whose Turkish root *derinmek* means to convene or gather together, emerged with the Turkish adoption of the Swiss Civil Code in 1926. It marked an explicit break with

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careers as composers of experimental music, and who Ecevit would credit with introducing twelve-tone music Turkey. Filiz Ali, *Elektronik Müziğin Öncüsü Bülent Arel* [Bülent Arel, Pioneer of Electronic Music] (Istanbul: İşbankası Kültür Yayınları, 2002). Raşan Ecevit lists Cavit Erginsoy, İlhan Uzmanbaş and Asuman Usmanbaş, İlhan Mimaroglu, Orhan Öztürk, Bilge Karasu, Suna Kan, Faruk Güvenç, Aydın and Nilüfer Yalçın, and Orhan Burian as key members of the Helikon group. Raşan Ecevit, "Bülent ve Ben" [Bülent and I] (unpublished book manuscript, March 2013), 40–49.

<sup>74</sup> Bülent Ecevit, unpublished personal statement, Personal File and Application, 1956, RG 10.2, Series 805E, The Rockefeller Foundation. Ecevit also wrote for *Dünya*, *Pazar Postası*, and *Turkish-American News*, a USIS-funded English-language newspaper.

existing forms of self-organization under the rubric of *cemiyet* (society), whose Ottoman-Arabic roots lie in the notion of the Islamic *camia*, or religious community.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, Ecevit would make the contrast explicit when he wrote that “What Helikon attempts to do for Ankara residents as an association (*dernek*) in the name of painting and sculpture is what Ms. Adalet Cimcoz took on alone in Istanbul.”<sup>76</sup> The designation of a *dernek* was a crucial gesture marking a break with the étatism that was the signature of the Kemalist state. At the same time, it could be seen as a gesture driven by the logic that I referenced in the introduction: the idea that even such “breaks” in and of themselves could also represent the next “stage” of the progressive Kemalist model for Turkish democracy. In this way, the Helikon Derneği embodied the idea of allegiance to Kemalism through change.

Ecevit wrote his political columns in the strident and polemic language of polarized Turkish party politics. However, in his writings about art, he abandoned this rhetoric to suggest that art and his own gallery would affect Turkey’s future not by having recourse to ideologies of right and left but rather precisely by providing a means to *transcend* partisan political debates. Later in life, Ecevit would describe the primary aim that drove his and his collaborators’ efforts of the early 1950s: a belief in the necessity to define a new spaces that would accommodate competing political affiliations and views, and which might serve as incubators for a larger democratic order. By claiming this as their primary task, Ecevit and his collaborators positioned themselves at the forefront of the nation’s progressive advance towards an ever more advanced stage of democracy: an ideal example of the way that art galleries functioned as sites of

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<sup>75</sup> Turkish artists and writers had been using this particular term since the time of the late nineteenth-century Ottoman Painters’ Society, or *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti*.

<sup>76</sup> “Helikon’un, bir dernek olarak, resim ve heykel sahasında Ankaralıları yapmıya çalıştığı hizmeti, Bn. Adalet Cimcoz, İstanbul’da bir başına üstüne almıştır.” Bülent Ecevit. “Maya Yaşamalıdır!” [Maya Must Live!], *Ulus*, May 25, 1954, 3.

negotiation between preceding and subsequent political models during the transition from a single- to multi-party order. “Some among us possessed different political thoughts, different political and economic views. But we were united in the belief in democracy,” he noted. “What is more, we knew that in order to be able to freely share and debate our views, democracy and its rules were important above all else.”<sup>77</sup> Ecevit made the above statement with reference to *Forum*, a bi-weekly political journal that he and a group of collaborators co-founded in 1954. However, his comments can be brought to bear upon Helikon as well.<sup>78</sup> Both British and the American democracies were key touchstones in how Ecevit and his fellow members of the “Return Generation” thought about the new directions that Turkish democracy might take.<sup>79</sup> The return of this generation from studies abroad marked the arrival of a new strain of thinkers who critiqued the legacy of Kemalism, often from a leftist perspective. As Karpat explains:

The number of convinced leftists in Turkey in the nineteen-forties probably never exceeded a thousand. Isolated from society, they appeared unable to affect the course of events. But a new generation of intellectuals was being educated in the West. Some of them, already committed to socialism or communism, assembled in Paris and organized the Progressive Young Turks; but the majority of socially-minded students in the West preferred not to compromise themselves by overt adherence to a leftist ideology and waited a suitable chance upon their return home.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> “İçimizden bazıları, birbirlerin ayrı siyasal düşünceler, ayrı ekonomik ve siyasal görüşler taşıyan kimselerdi. Ama hepimiz demokrasi inancında birleşiyorduk. . . . Ayrıca hepimiz, ayrı görüşlerimizi serbestçe açıklayabilmek ve tartışabilmek için herşeyden önce demokrasinin bütün kuralları ile yerleşmesi gerektiğini biliyorduk.” Bülent Ecevit, quoted in Rahşan Ecevit, 49.

<sup>78</sup> Ecevit explicitly identified *Forum*, *Helikon*, and *Ulus* as a “tripod” that constituted the most important components of his intellectual life during this period. Bülent Ecevit, unpublished personal statement, Personal File and Application, The Rockefeller Foundation.

<sup>79</sup> Many of his Ankara collaborators had, like Ecevit, been living abroad during the late 1940s and returned to Turkey when the 1950 regime change took place. Ecevit, for example, spent the late 1940s working as a press attaché at the Turkish Embassy in London and auditing classes at the School of Oriental and African Studies. Diren Çakmak identifies these thinkers as the “Return Generation.” Diren Çakmak. *Forum Dergisi: 1954–1960* [Forum Magazine: 1954–1960] (Istanbul: Libra Kitapçılık ve Yayıncılık, 2010), 96.

<sup>80</sup> Karpat, “The Turkish Left,” 177.

Above all else, these thinkers saw Britain and the U.S. as exemplifying a key principle: that “ideas [must be] openly shared and debated” (*fikirlerin serbestçe söylenmesi ve tartışılması*) in order to “establish a stable armature for freedom in our country” (*memleketimizde kararlıklı bir hürriyet düzeni kurulabilmesi için*).<sup>81</sup> The main way in which *Forum* sought to enact this was to publish a range of articles from thinkers of different political leanings: what resulted was, in Karpat’s words, “probably the best systematic analysis of Turkey’s problems.” Even as *Forum* provided an outlet for some leftist thinkers, it “occupied a moderate middle-of-the-road position in order to be able to discuss “social problems without incurring the danger of being indicted for leftist propaganda.”<sup>82</sup>

One of the key markers of the shift from the Kemalist era to that of the 1950s was a larger conceptual shift towards the individual and away from the collective. For example, Ecevit and his co-editors would declare that “*Forum* believes that it is possible that a truly democratic way of life is possible in Turkey. . . . and above all else in the necessity of valuing personal dignity [*insan haysiyeti*].”<sup>83</sup> Indeed, Ecevit’s articles on political and cultural topics alike were cleaved by this stark division: on the one side stood a host of terms associated with notions of individuality (*bireylik, ferdiyet, kişilik, İnsanlık, and şahsiyet*), an interior life, or individual consciousness (in formulations as *psikolojik alemi* and *ruh derinliği*); on the other, a series of opposing concepts that referenced “officialdom” (*resmî*) in its broadest sense or specific entities such as *resmi makamlar* (official authorities), *devlet adamları* (statesmen), and *devlet*

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<sup>81</sup> The journal’s title, *Forum*, simultaneously invoked the origins of democracy in the Classical ancient world, while also aligning with the Western contemporary free press. “Forumun Davası” [The Purpose of Forum], *Forum*, no. 1 (April 1, 1954), 1, reprinted in Çakmak, 153.

<sup>82</sup> Karpat, “The Turkish Left,” 179.

<sup>83</sup> “*Forum*, Türkiye’de gerçekten demokratik bir hayat tarzının mümkün olduğuna inanmaktadır . . . ve nihayet *Forum* insan haysiyetinin her şeyden üstün tutulması gerektiğine inanmaktadır.” “Forumsuzluk Korkusu” [The Fear of Forumlessness], *Forum*, no. 97 (April 1, 1958), 1, reprinted in Çakmak, 161.

*korucuyuları* (wardens of the state).<sup>84</sup> Thus, the principles of collective debate and individual participation in society, which were increasingly understood to be the very cornerstones of democratic practice, extended to the way in which Ecevit articulated Helikon's larger social role: as a microcosmic experiment that would both serve as a model for and stimulate the development of a national public sphere as a space of agonistic debate as Turkey abandoned its Republican past for multi-party democracy in the 1950s.

Rather than the material eclecticism espoused by Galeri Maya, Helikon primarily showcased abstraction in painting. For example, a painter named Nail Paza (biographical details unknown), made use of dark contours and flat fields of pigment to produce a flattened portrait of a musical group in full swing in a painting that appeared at Helikon in 1953. (Figure 1.23) The painter Ferruh Başağa's (1914–2010) signature style would, later in the artist's life, involve fracturing partially recognizable images—a harbor scene, a bird, a figure—into delicately graded chromatic shards whose lay-out often traced a semi-circular path like that of a swinging pendulum. In a 1953 installation view from an exhibition at Helikon, Başağa's interest in fragmentation is already in place, but, in lieu of the delicately graded slices of color that he would land upon in his subsequent painting, darkly contoured outlines are here filled in by solid fields of pigment. (Figure 1.24) Helikon would also display the early work of Füreya Koral (1910–1997). Frequently dubbed Turkey's first female ceramicist, Füreya, as she was known, first tried her hand at art-making while living in Paris in the early 1950s and brought a brushy, gestural abstraction to bear on ceramic tiles as well as lithographs when she returned to Turkey

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<sup>84</sup> Zeynep Yasa Yaman, "1950'li Yılların Sanatsal Ortamı ve 'Temsil' Sorunu" [The 1950s Art World and the Problem of "Representation"], *Toplum ve Bilim* 79 (Winter 1998): 99.



soon thereafter.<sup>85</sup> All of these artists were publicized in *Ulus* thanks to Ecevit’s presence there. For a short while, abstract painting was front-page news in Ankara. (Figures 1.25–1.28)

(Appendix B)

The presence of *soyut sanat* or “abstract art” at Helikon enabled Ecevit to position the gallery as the crucible of the contemporary in Turkish art. *Soyut sanat*—a loose set of practices based in the shared formal impulse to break away, to varying extents, from painting’s allegiance to portraying a recognizable referent—only gained prevalence in Turkey in the late 1940s. It quickly became the defining artistic debate of the 1950s, inspiring reams of writing whose proliferation of terms for “abstract art” reflected the rapidly shifting conceptual and artistic terrain encompassed by this term.<sup>86</sup> The French borrowings *abstraksiyon* and *non-figüratif*, for example, carried a proud affiliation with European art history and the patois of a francophone Turkish élite; rich layers of meaning adhered to the Ottoman-Arabic term *mücerret*, whose grammatical status as an adjective derived from a verbal root captured the active process of a derivative process of abstracting *from* a concrete object; while use of the Turkish neologism *soyut* signaled a loyal affiliation to the reformist impulse of the Kemalist language reform and a willingness to transform one’s own language and daily practice in its service.<sup>87</sup> An incident from 1953 provides a powerful example of the challenges the Helikon organizers faced in introducing this new art form for the first time. In the winter of that year, *Ulus* featured a short article about a

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<sup>85</sup> Ayşe Külin, *Füreya* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi 2000), 244–314.

<sup>86</sup> *Soyut sanat* gained traction after several painters and sculptors who had recently returned from Paris, including some prominent instructors at the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy, began to promote the new idiom. Relevant terms included the French derivations *abstraksiyon*, *abstre sanat*, *non-figüratif sanat*, and *non-objektif resim*; the Ottoman term *mücerret sanat*; and the Turkish neologisms *soyut sanat*.

<sup>87</sup> *Mücerret*’s echoes of the Arabic root, *tecrit etmek*, would not thus have totally died out and the notion of abstracting something *from* reality would remain there, that is to say first something was *non-abstract* and then it was *made abstract*. The verbal form can also mean to move to one side or one location to another.

Helikon exhibition by the artist Cemal Bingöl (1912–1993), whose paintings used fields of solid color to replicate the effect of boxy paper cut-outs laid carefully atop and alongside one another. (Figure 1.29) The article’s author made special note of Bingöl’s adherence to the painting style of an unknown artist named Nafi Guratif: “The painter Cemal Bingöl has opened an exhibition on Mithat Paşa Avenue full of paintings in the style of Nafi Güratif, an emergent style that has existed since 1946 . . . [and] uses as its means the balance of lines and color.”<sup>88</sup> “Nafi Guratif,” it transpired, was not an artist at all but a distortion of the Turkish word *non-figüratif*, itself borrowed from French and referring to abstract painting. In an era when newspaper articles were frequently type-set from handwritten manuscripts or dictated over the telephone, such errors were not uncommon. Yet this seemingly minor typographic error in fact speaks eloquently to the difficulties of translating concepts of “abstract art” into a Turkish vernacular language and new social context. In fact, the sheer newness of *soyut sanat* compelled Ecevit to develop an entirely new lexicon of terms in order to aptly explain it. Relegating the widely used phrase *modern sanat* (modern art) to the past, he instead formulated a series of Turkish equivalents for the English and French terms “contemporary art” and “avant-garde art.”<sup>89</sup> In his effort to articulate a sense of radical contemporaneity, Ecevit forged a vocabulary that was, in fact, *ahead* of its time: *çağdaş sanat* (contemporary art) and its cousins did not gain widespread usage for at least another decade. When Ecevit wrote of the gallery that “in other Western countries, it is this type

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<sup>88</sup> *Ulus*, December 11, 1953, 1.

<sup>89</sup> In Nurullah Berk’s seminal primer *Modern San’at* (1934) the concept encompassed a standard history of European art movements including Impressionism, Cubism, and Surrealism, and an analagous history of art in Turkey. As seen at Galeri Maya, *modern sanat* was a flexible concept that could also easily be employed by the Anatolian Humanists to signal objects’ relevance to the contemporary moment rather than the historic instance of their creation. Richard Meyer’s recent analysis of the ways in which the “story of modern art was still up for grabs” in the United States between the 1920s and 1940s, as “multiple versions were unfolding, jockeying, sometimes contradicting” one another, is a relevant parallel. Richard Meyer, *What Was Contemporary Art?* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 115.

of association that enables the possibility of advanced (avant-garde) art movements [*öncü (avant-garde) sanat hareketleri*],” his doubled use of the terms “advanced (avant-garde)” reflected the Helikon group’s larger struggle to seize hold and make use of the shifting and elusive Turkish discourses around abstraction and contemporaneity through which they articulated the significance of their space.<sup>90</sup>

Beyond its status as an expression of cutting-edge contemporaneity in art, *soyut sanat*’s advocates widely considered it to be the next artistic “stage” marking the ongoing progression of Turkey’s determined march towards becoming a peer of Western democracies.<sup>91</sup> This notion certainly underpinned Ecevit’s writings on the subject, where he positioned abstract art as the culmination of a teleological progression following a common pattern in all democracies. Thus, the Kemalist logic of progressive “perfecting” of Turkish democracy was fully at work, even as the artwork (*soyut sanat*) that was prioritized was of a style very different than that supported previously by the Kemalist state: much as Bozdoğan argued that the stylistic shifts in national architectural styles masked a consistently nationalist ideological substratum, here the stylistic shift within the visual arts similarly concealed a continuous belief in the progressive teleology of Kemalism. For example, the young journalist made a direct link between the Turkish transition to multi-party democracy in 1946 and the fact that *soyut sanat* allegedly first appeared in the

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<sup>90</sup> Bülent Ecevit, “Ankara’da Sanat Uyanışı,” [Ankara’s Artistic Awakening] *Dünya*, April 2, 1953, 2. The writer’s regular use of doubled and parenthetical explanations, as in this quotation, speaks to the challenges of innovating a new register of language through the medium of the mainstream press. Recurring iterations included “*ileri bir sanat anlayışı*,” a forward-thinking or cutting-edge understanding of art; “contemporary art” (*çağdaş sanat anlayışı* and *çağdaş resim*); “today’s art” (*günümüzün sanat* and *bugünkü sanat*), and “avant-garde art” (*öncü sanat* and *ileri sanat*).

<sup>91</sup> The definitive article on this subject is: Zeynep Yasa Yaman, “1950’li Yılların Sanatsal Ortamı ve ‘Temsil Sorunu,” cited previously. Conservative advocates of abstraction, on the other hand, argued that the idiom’s significance lay in its continuation of an Ottoman-Islamic decorative tradition. This argument—advanced by figures such as the writer, editor, and educator İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu (1886–1978) and the Gazi Eğitim Institute instructor, painter, and writer Malik Aksel (1901–1987)—retained a conservative focus on Turkey’s religious past while also enabling them to advocate for primacy of Islamic decorative abstraction as anticipating European modernism.

country in that same year.<sup>92</sup> In this linear historical narrative, where art and politics each drive the other forward as the mutual catalysts of history, Ecevit's primary point of reference was the example of the United States. In a 1953 exhibition review, for example, he underlined the commonalities between the two nations' quests for democracy in the wake of their imperial pasts while positioning the U.S. as the ideal model for Turkey to emulate. Significantly, Ecevit argued that one of the most effective means through which the U.S. had forwarded its own development as a "homogenous nation" was precisely by engineering the collapse of formal standards of abstraction with a national folk art tradition. Noting excitedly that contemporary American folk arts moved away from "the overcrowded patterns of the folk arts of most countries," he explained that "the objects and animals that had been developed, through centuries, into stylized symbols, have become abstract forms."<sup>93</sup> In Turkey, *soyut sanat* was considered by many as a form of creative expression that successfully evaded traditional state control because its absence of identifiable "content" allowed it to evade criticism on the basis of its representational program. Its proponents seized upon it as an alternative to preexisting painting idioms associated with the Kemalist ideology of the preceding decades.<sup>94</sup> It also posed a direct challenge to the enduring conservative paradigm of *klasik resim* (classic painting), the innocuous form of realism consisting largely of landscapes and still-lives which was promoted at the yearly State Painting

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<sup>92</sup> Marjorie Hunter, "Ottoman Empire's End Freed Turkish Artists," *Winston-Salem Journal Sentinel*, November 1, 1954. The claim that abstract art first appeared in Turkey in 1946 appears in the "Nafi Guratif" blurb.

<sup>93</sup> Bülent Ecevit, "American Handcrafts," *Turkish-American News*, February 15, 1953. Ecevit published both an English- and Turkish-language version of this article. All quotations are drawn from the English article. See also Bülent Ecevit, "Amerikan Elişleri Sergisi" [Exhibition of American Handcrafts], *Ulus*, February 5, 1953.

<sup>94</sup> *Soyut sanat* represented a rejection of both the so-called *kübizm* which Republican ideologues had promoted as expressive of a modern sensibility, and the social realism that had served the state's propagandistic needs. Among its chief proponents in the 1950s were the painters Hakkı Anlı (1906–1991), Sabri Berkel (1907–1993), Cemal Bingöl (1912–1993), Adnan Çoker (b. 1927), Arif Kaptan (1906–1979) and Salih Urallı (1927–2001) and the sculptors Hadi Bara (1906–1971) and Zühtü Müridoğlu (1906–1992), several of whom showed at both Helikon and Maya. Emre Kongar, Zeynep Yasa Yaman, and Haldun Dostoğlu, "İş ve İstihsal'e Bugün Bakmak" ["Looking at 'Labor and Production' Today"], unpublished transcript of a roundtable, Sermet Çifter Salonu, Yapı Kredi Kazım Taşkent Galerisi, Istanbul, December 10, 2004.

and Sculpture Exhibitions.<sup>95</sup> As explained in Chapter Two, the association of formal abstraction with advanced forms of democracy was a global discourse in the immediate post-war period, which hinged upon the idea that abstraction's emphasis on individual consciousness promoted important principles of democratic civic participation. Such was the artistic and political path upon which Ecevit considered Turkey to be advancing, as it, like the U.S., progressively moved towards an art "characterized by a search for the simplest formulas of proportion between colors, lines, and forms" and towards an increasingly democratic social ideal.<sup>96</sup>

In "Artistic Awakening in Ankara," which Ecevit wrote the year of Helikon's founding, the future politician argued that a healthy democracy depended upon the existence of independently organized activities—Helikon Derneği was the primary example featured—as a crucial complement to state activity. (Appendix E) Here the object of Ecevit's critique is officialdom at large (*resmî*). The lively article surveyed recent developments in the Ankara art world and portrays an art world divided in two, where, on the one hand, agents of the state advocate conservative aesthetic modes, exhibition formats, and patterns of consumption; and, on the other, an upstart generation of young art-lovers engage in unprecedented forms of self-organization and consumption. "Perhaps the best aspect of the new artistic awakening in Ankara is that it is an awakening unconnected to state support," he wrote. "No longer overshadowed, the intellectual community in Ankara has blossomed to the extent that it has no further need of other sources of benefaction."<sup>97</sup> The article can be seen as an informal manifesto for the gallery, where Ecevit

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<sup>95</sup> *Soyut sanat* would remain a flashpoint for conflict between artists and the state throughout the 1950s: Cemal Bingöl and Arif Kaptan first entered abstract canvases in the State Painting and Sculpture Museum in 1954, and throughout the decade artists, including the Eyüboğlus, boycotted the exhibition in protest against its juries' preference for representational painting. Cemal Töllu, "Bir Konuşma," *Yeni Sabah*, April 22, 1954, 3.

<sup>96</sup> Bülent Ecevit. "American Handcrafts," *Turkish-American News*, February 15, 1953.

<sup>97</sup> Bülent Ecevit, "Ankara'da Sanat Uyanışı" [Artistic Awakening in Ankara], *Dünya*, April 2, 1953, 2.

credited Helikon with actively beginning to realize the ideal democratic social order he projected for 1950s Turkey by exemplifying and encouraging others to enact their individual liberties within the realm of culture.

In “Artistic Awakening,” Ecevit also incorporates an additional dimension—the economic—into his larger argument that the nation’s future as a democracy is directly reliant upon a shift from overweening state control to a participatory model of society. Here he re-frames the dichotomy of the individual versus the state as a question of patronage, of who is purchasing artworks, and of the effects that the source of patronage has. By the time of the 1953 article, independent initiatives and popular interest in art had reached such a level that Ecevit announced confidently that “it used to be that the state was the most reliable patron of art exhibitions,” but that “now, individuals’ gradually increasing interest fills in the void left by state support.” Crucial here is Ecevit’s argument that one of the ways Turkey’s citizens are asserting their “individuality and personhood” in the art world is by *buying things*. This, he argues, is the healthiest way for the nation’s cultural sphere to flourish because it evades the pressures of a state ideological program: “Now, with the emergence of buyers from amongst young intellectual circles, painting has attained the patron it craves the most in all countries. In this way, modern art receives support in the most salubrious way.”

It is here that, even as Ecevit articulated his own cultural politics *in opposition* to the Democrat Party, . In “Artistic Awakening,” the capitalist market appears as a free democratic zone of consumption, where the previously disenfranchised Turkish masses can use their purchasing power to shape the future of the nation—voting with their wallets, so to speak. It is important to note the utopianism of Ecevit’s early Cold War claims for capitalism’s role in securing Turkish democracy, and that such claims are above all else a consequence of his effort

to articulate political alternatives to totalitarianism. Ecevit is writing in the context of dramatically changed economic conditions engineered by the Democrats in 1950, when they stimulated a seemingly miraculous (although short-lived) turnaround in the failing, state-controlled national economy by opening it up to private and foreign investment. Historian Çağlar Keyder has gone so far as to describe 1950 as “a decisive shift in Turkey's history from élite rule to full class rule, and from one pattern of capitalist development to another,” a new political order which “featured an independent peasantry defending its aspiration to a market society against the redistributive policies of a bureaucratic élite.”<sup>98</sup> This vision of a liberalized national economy was also a crucial way that Turkey gained entry to an international community of capitalist democracies in the immediate post-war moment, as it entered its own “American decade” shaped by the notion that an open economy and capitalist consumption were means to secure democracy’s hold. In “Artistic Awakening,” Ecevit, who routinely described his gallery as “the site of painting’s best sales” or “record-breaking sales,” positioned Helikon as a successful microcosm of this newly open and privatized national economy, where Turkish citizens could enact social change by exerting their individual purchasing power. Thus, art sales were auspicious sign of an “awakening unconnected to state support,” and an upswing in consumption could stand as a symbol of popular empowerment. In short, Ecevit positioned Helikon as, simultaneously, a space of free activity that resisted the involvement of the state, even as he seemed to express a willingness, even an approbation of, the new liberal economic policies that the Democrat Party enacted.<sup>99</sup> Helikon embodied a deep continuity with the progressive teleological political model of Kemalism, but paired it with two key concepts new to the 1950s: that of the individual, and the liberal market.

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<sup>98</sup> Keyder, Çağlar. “The Political Economy of Turkish Democracy.” *New Left Review* no. 115 (June 1979): 19.

<sup>99</sup> Bozdoğan and Akcan note that in the 1950s, . Bozdoğan and Akcan, *Turkey*, 131.

## CONCLUSION

Since the very inception of her gallery, Cimcoz had spoken publicly about the financial strain of running Galeri Maya. Things reached a breaking point by the spring of 1954, when she announced the space's imminent closure due to lack of funds. In Ankara, Ecevit joined other journalists in issuing a call for aid for the Istanbul gallery, while presciently noting that its closure "cast a shadow over the carefully cultivated security of Helikon's future."<sup>100</sup> It was only after the organization of a Recovery Exhibition (*Kurtarıcı Sergi*), to which artists donated works to be sold for the gallery's benefit, that the Beyoğlu space was able to stay open for a little longer. However, Galeri Maya closed its doors permanently just a year later, in the spring of 1955. Within months, "The Events of 6–7 September" (*6–7 Eylül Olaylar*)—two days of organized, state-sanctioned anti-minority violence inflicted upon the sizable Greek, Armenian, and Jewish communities of Istanbul—took place in the streets surrounding the now-defunct gallery space, including looting, vandalism, and the destruction of shops, schools, cemeteries, and homes. In Ankara, students organized large demonstrations in support of the pogroms, which led to the declaration of martial law, heavy press censorship, and ultimately the exodus of much of Turkey's minority populations.<sup>101</sup> During this tumultuous period, police came to the Ecevit's Ankara home in the middle of the night and shut down the Helikon Association, the fact that its

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<sup>100</sup> Bülent Ecevit, "Maya Yaşamalıdır!" [Maya Must Live!], *Ulus*, May 25, 1954, 3.

<sup>101</sup> The events remain a sensitive topic, whose effects continue to be felt in Turkey today. The government claimed that the pogroms were a spontaneous, unplanned reaction to the recent bombing of Atatürk's childhood home in Thessaloniki (Greece). However, historian Dilek Güven has shown the government's involvement in the attacks' organization, which she interprets as a continuation of discriminatory minority policies that can be traced back through the Republican period. While Istanbul's population was 26% non-Muslim in 1935, in 1960, it was only 10% non-Muslim. See Dilek Güven, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Azınlık Politikaları Ve Stratejileri Bağlamında 6-7 Eylül Olayları* [The Events of 6-7 September in Light of the Minority Politics of the Republican Period] (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2005) and Bozdoğan and Akcan, *Turkey: Modern Architectures in History*, 114.



name referenced Greek mythology being justification enough. Like its Istanbul counterpart, Helikon briefly recommenced its activities but never regained its original momentum. Its founders dispersed by 1956. The very murkiness of the circumstances under which the galleries closed signals the vagueness of what it meant to be “political” at the juncture during which they were functioning. Cimcoz and Ecevit provide a portrait of a Turkish intelligentsia in the process of radically rethinking preexisting models of political participation, while forging a new politics of culture through their galleries.<sup>102</sup> This entailed deciding just what the Kemalist mandate of the “progression” of Turkish democracy actually meant. At Maya, this was rooted in existing aesthetic debates about social realism and the representation of the *halk*. At Helikon, it unfolded through an investigation of the capacity of art to function as a catalyst within a political and social field of the nation. If the two gallerists’ endeavors have served, in this chapter, as a means to focus on the history of early twentieth-century domestic politics, the next chapter opens up to demonstrate how such debates dovetailed with international political discourses of the early Cold War period.

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<sup>102</sup> See Gavin Brockett, *Towards a Social History of Modern Turkey: Essays in Theory and Practice* (Istanbul: Libra Kitapçılık ve Yayıncılık, 2011), 125.

## CHAPTER 2

### **The Contest: Negotiating Global Identities at the *Developing Turkey* Painting Competition and the AICA Congress, 1954**

In September 1954, three prominent European art critics—the British critic Herbert Read, the Italian art historian Lionello Venturi, and the Belgian writer Paul Fierens—provoked a scandal in the Istanbul art world. The visiting intellectuals, who were in Istanbul for the annual meeting of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA, *Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art*), had also been invited to serve as jury members for a painting competition staged by an Istanbul-based bank, Yapı ve Kredi Bankası, and made open to the public as an exhibition titled *Developing Turkey* (*Kalkınan Türkiye*). The fact that the jury did not award a prize to any of the venerated Istanbul Fine Arts Academy professors who participated, but rather favored Aliye Berger (1903–1974), an aristocratic woman who had never attended the esteemed institution, made the event a divisive one. “The first coup in the Turkish art world” was how one observer described the outcome of the contest, signaling the historical momentousness the event was seen to possess: the scandal, which played out over several weeks and across countless articles in the Turkish press, retains legendary status to this day.<sup>1</sup> But the controversy went far beyond debates about Berger’s gender, class, and education. At its heart, it centered on a philosophical and political rift between those who saw painting’s value as located, first and foremost, in its ability to index an individual’s authentic self-expression (a view espoused by Berger and the approving European jury) and those who considered painting’s significance to lie with its straightforward communication of a pre-determined civic message (a view espoused by the contest’s organizers). What made this public art debate so powerful was the sense of acute

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<sup>1</sup> Muzaffer Ramazanoğlu, “İtirazlara İtiraz” [Objection to the Objections], *Vatan*, October 24, 1954.

political urgency that invigorated it. Because these competing aesthetic models were closely associated with the polarized political alternatives of the early Cold War, the topic of art became a premise for debates about Turkey's own position in a world split between democracy and totalitarianism, at a time when the young nation was aggressively working to join the ranks of Western liberal democracies after World War II.

The title of this chapter, "The Contest," both refers to this contentious historical event and invokes the increased contestation in Turkish public life that characterized the mid-1950s. As demonstrated in Chapter One, Turkey's citizens entered the 1950s in a spirit of immense optimism as a newly-formed opposition group, the Democrat Party, came to power bearing promises of comprehensive political reform and economic prosperity. By the middle of the decade, however, public confidence in the Democrat Party's claims to bring "true" democracy to Turkey had begun to waver. The opposition reached a fever pitch in early 1954, when the administration shut down the national network of Village Institutes (cultural centers designed for popular education), triggering accusations that the Democrats aimed to keep the Turkish masses in a state of ignorance in order to retain their hold on the country's leadership. Within a month, the administration had immobilized the free press by revising recent press laws and announcing that radio and newspaper reports would now be punishable as a criminal offense, a move which international and Turkish observers alike took as a sign of democracy derailed. 1954 represented a peak moment in the public experience of the decade, when the fate of Turkish democracy, now increasingly perceived to be under threat from its alleged protectors, was thought to hang in the balance again. One of the most significant results of the political sea-change of 1954 was the "large-scale conversion fo the bureaucracy and the intelligentsia to the left." As Karpat narrates, "The dissatisfaction aroused [by the events of 1954] provided the foundations of a new leftist

movement not associated directly with Marxism, as was the case for most earlier leftist endeavors,” but one which increasingly “sought legitimation in the unfulfilled social promises of Kemalism, through an expanded interpretation of its populist, statist, and reformist principles.”<sup>2</sup> When the Democrats won a second term in the national elections in May of that year, the heady atmosphere of opening up that had dominated the early 1950s dissolved into a sense of unease about what lay ahead. Raḥşan Ecevit, who, along with her husband, the future prime minister Bülent Ecevit, was highly active in the Turkish art world, described it to me in this way: “Things got shaken up in 1954”—“1954’te bir kıpırdanma oldu.”<sup>3</sup>

The right to dissent, to contest, to critique—the ability to freely express opposing views without repercussions—*this* was the larger principle that members of the Turkish art world saw coming under threat from the Democrat Party’s increasingly oppressive tactics. The issue was not merely whether or not to speak out against specific wrongdoings of the administration. The stakes were much higher: contestation and a plurality of voices, rather than consensus, thinkers such as Bülent Ecevit argued, was what separated democracies from non-democratic forms of governance. Thus, in limiting freedom of expression, a vulnerable Turkey might lose its already shaky hold on democracy. In what came to be known as Turkey’s “American Decade,” this line of thinking was directly linked to large-scale political and economic changes—which, in addition to the introduction of the multi-party system, included the opening up of the previously nationalized economy to foreign and private investment—designed to align Turkey with Western liberal democracies, America chief among them.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Karpat, “The Turkish Left,” 179.

<sup>3</sup> Raḥşan Ecevit, conversation with the author, March 8, 2013, Ankara.

<sup>4</sup> Çağlar Keyder, “The Political Economy of Turkish Democracy,” *New Left Review*, no. 115 (June 1979): 11–16, 40.

This chapter examines the *Developing Turkey* exhibition and the AICA Congress that took place the same week in order to uncover the changing relationship between art and politics in mid-1950s Turkey. In the extensive public controversy surrounding both events, political concerns about national governance and Turkey's international standing were interwoven with the intellectual preoccupations of the local art world. Both members of the Turkish art world and the visiting Europeans saw art as a measure for the success of Turkish democracy after WWII. At the painting contest, for example, the jury placed special value on Berger's work because they saw it as embodying the standards of individual expression and non-conformism associated with liberal democracy and the collective fight against the global spread of totalitarianism during the early Cold War. At the AICA Congress, speakers further argued that art could contribute to a Turkish citizenry's continued progression towards a higher "level of democracy" (*demokrasi seviyesi*), begun with the single-party republic in the 1920s and thought to have reached its progressive next phase in the multi-party era. Furthermore, the participants in these public debates agreed that the status of Turkish modern art possessed a direct relationship to the country's international standing within a global community. By advocating particular aesthetic idioms, local and international participants argued for a range of competing ways that Turkish citizens might create art forms and establish viewing experiences that would directly contribute to developing a Turkish analogue to the liberal Western democracies that the fledgling nation so emulated at this juncture. The controversies that played out at the painting competition and the art critics' congress were at their heart debates about whether or not to remain affiliated with the political order and visual languages of Turkey's nationalist past, or to adopt those thought to better ensure its international future.

## 1. THE *DEVELOPING TURKEY* PAINTING CONTEST, ISTANBUL, 1954

*Developing Turkey (Kalkınan Türkiye)* was just one of several art, music, and literature competitions that a local bank, Yapı ve Kredi Bankası (now Yapı kredi Bankası), hosted on its tenth anniversary in September 1954 to highlight its institutional history of arts philanthropy. In the context of the “Yapı ve Kredi Bankası 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Art and Culture Awards,” the bank disbursed an immense amount of award money in several different categories: 16,000 Lira went to ten prize-winning painters, while lesser awards were given out in the categories of Poster Design, Music (whose subcategories included Ballet, Melody, and Youth March), Theatrical Scripts, and Books on the theme of “Good Man, Good Citizen” (*İyi İnsan, İyi Vatandaş*). (Figure 2.1) In a separate series of events that took place the same week, the bank also staged an ambitious and immensely well-attended series of Folk Dancing Awards (*Halk Oyunları Müsabakaları*) where regional dance troupes from across the country performed folk dances in costume, as living testimony to the enduring legacy of Turkey’s popular traditions as a source of national identity. (Figures 2.2-2.4) The notion that offering prize money would jump-start national cultural production, the painting contest’s stringent entry requirements, and the stipulation that the bank automatically gained ownership of the top five prize-winning paintings were approaches inherited from the well-established system of juried State Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions.<sup>5</sup> (Figures 2.5–2.7) Yapı ve Kredi Bankası, whose own history was intimately bound up with the history of the modern Turkish Republic, thus took on the role of an unofficial proxy for the state, adopting the strict regulatory role typically played by the state

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<sup>5</sup> On a history of the State Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions, see Wendy M. K. Shaw, *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 98–102.

under the single-party system.<sup>6</sup> The exhibition title itself, *Kalkınan Türkiye*, explicitly participated in a Republican discourse of national development through its use of the term *kalkınan*, a derivative of the verb *kalkınmak*, meaning to make progress or develop.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the requirement that paintings address the theme of “Labor and Production” (*İş ve İstihsal*) and “show the modes of production (*istihsal faaliyetleri*) in Turkey’s economic life” was closely aligned with a Republican glorification the nation’s agrarian industries and the peasantry as the source of economic prosperity and cultural richness alike, as analyzed in Chapter One.

Just as important was the rule that all paintings be two by three meters in size. This demand for monumentality was intended to create a cache of artworks that could be used to combat what one reporter called “the empty walls problem.”<sup>8</sup> After the contest, it was hoped that the large-scale paintings would take up residence in major public buildings with the aim of instructing the Turkish public in key civic principles.<sup>9</sup> As one journalist explained this aspect of the contest, “In democracies, the fine arts have left behind palaces, mansions, and their aristocratic status. . . . Finally the fine arts have found a way to bring the arts and the masses together: rather than the palaces and mansions of old times, they now occupy post offices, state buildings, banks, the

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<sup>6</sup> Established in 1944, Yapı ve Kredi Bankası was the first private bank to open in Turkey. Adopting the slogan “*hizmette sınır yoktur*” (there are no limits to service), its founder Kâzım Taşkent declared its commitment to supporting the nation’s economic development. It also inherited a Republican approach to instrumentalizing art and literature in order to instill a sense of national identity: among other things, the bank had its own publishing house, which put out important magazines including *Hayat*, the Turkish version of *Life*.

<sup>7</sup> Their shared verbal root, *kalkmak* (to stand up or raise oneself up) and its variations—including *kalkındırmak*, to develop a country or to rehabilitate something—were the rhetorical linchpins of the discourse of national development fueled through Turkey’s participation in the Marshall Plan.

<sup>8</sup> “Sanat Aleminde” [The Art World], *Cumhuriyet*, September 3, 1954.

<sup>9</sup> The “empty walls problem” was a pressing topic in 1950s Turkey. During the building boom of the 1950s, when much of Istanbul’s urban fabric was razed to make room for public buildings, painters urged local officials to write a law by creating a “percent for art program” such as those established in France and the US beginning in the 1930s.

streets, and public squares.”<sup>10</sup> Such debates about the integration of plastic arts into architectural spaces were not limited to public or civic buildings such as those cited by the journalist, but also were a significant issue within new architectural commissions for large building types such as hotels and shopping centers. As Turkey welcomed a wave of new buildings constructed in the sleek, minimalist International Style, the inclusion of works by artists such as Bedri Rahmi served as a way to integrate a kind of “cultural specificity,” negotiating the tension between the two.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, the range of contexts within which large-scale paintings, mosaics, and murals appeared reflects an equally diverse range of models of “publicness” for art: a signal of the Turkish state’s democratizing approach to art in public civic buildings, a nod to the specificity of local cultural traditions enclosed within the International Style shell of the newly built Hilton Hotel, a reflection of emergent ideas of capitalism’s own democratizing role in the context of the shopping centers. The contest was, in short, bound up with complex and enduring questions of what role art should serve in the democratic public sphere.<sup>12</sup> In response, the bank received submissions by artists like Salih Acar (1927–2001), who used a reduced, three-color palette to create a stylized portrait of labor in the form of male and female nudes plucking fruits in an edenic garden, their harvest soon en route, no doubt, to the factory whose smokestacks were visible in the background on the far left. (Figure 2.8) Nurullah Berk (1906–1982), who

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<sup>10</sup> “Demokrasilerde güzel sanatlar aristokratik olmaktan, saraylar ve konaklar inhisarından bulunmaktan çıkmıştır. . . . Artık güzel sanatlar halk ile kaynaşma yolunu tutmuştur: Eski zaman saray ve konaklarındaki yerlerini, postahanelerde, devlet dairelerinde, bankalarda, cadde ve meydanlardaki yerleri ile değiştirmektedirler.” Fatay, “Gidişat” [Goings On], *Dünya*, September 24, 1954, 3.

<sup>11</sup> Bozdoğan and Akcan, *Turkey*, 130–137.

<sup>12</sup> It is beyond the scope of this chapter to take up the question of the public sphere in twentieth-century Turkey. Many scholars have argued that the Turkish public sphere is historically seen as belonging to the state because of the inaugural presence of a domineering authoritarian state at the outset of Turkey’s history as a nation. As Meltem Ahıska explains, “*public* only signifies belonging to the state, and only statues [or other artworks] that are deemed sacred to the state are made visible in and for the public.” Meltem Ahıska, “Monsters That Remember: Tracing the Story of the Workers’ Monument in Tophane, İstanbul - Part III,” *Red Thread*, no 3 (2011): 1–23, [http://www.red-thread.org/dosyalar/site\\_resim/dergi/pdf/English3.pdf](http://www.red-thread.org/dosyalar/site_resim/dergi/pdf/English3.pdf).



advocated a painting practice that melded textile motifs and Turkish decorative arts with geometric abstraction, transposed the theme of labor into a specifically feminine space, showing several generations—from the elderly woman with bent back on the right, to the faceless child held in a young girl’s arms on the left—of women at work, their hands busy at the loom. (Figure 2.9) Remzi Türemen (biographical details unknown), showed bulky bodies collecting harvests in an olive grove, while Zeki Faik İzer (1905–1988) contributed a Madonna-like Anatolian *ana* (mother) surrounded by peasants bearing armfuls of wheat, fruit, and other pastoral bounty, while, as in Acar’s canvas, an urban factory functioned busily in the background. (Figures 2.10–2.11) Despite their relative stylistic variation, what united thirty-eight of the thirty-nine large-scale canvases was their resolutely figurative focus on workers tilling the land, sowing crops, and herding flocks. In each it was the human body—and, notably, the peasant body—that symbolized the “labor” component of the assigned theme, while the factory frequently stood as an icon of production. (Figures 2.12–2.13) Berger’s interpretation of the theme stood apart: in her painting, three blurred, nearly unrecognizable figures who, she would attest, were seaside sponge-gatherers such as those she had seen on Turkey’s southern coast, melded with sun, sea, and fields in a rolling stream of color.<sup>13</sup> (Figure 2.14)

If the eleven painting contest rules were intended to elicit artworks that would play a straightforwardly propagandistic role in society, the real source of the controversy lay with a twelfth, unwritten rule that had circulated privately beforehand regarding the question of painterly “legibility.” After the announcement that Berger had won first prize, several artists complained that they had been advised to submit paintings that were “legible” to a Turkish

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<sup>13</sup> Cemal Tollu, “Sanat Tenkitçileri ve Bir Netice” [Art Critics and a Verdict], *Yeni Sabah*, September 15, 1954, 2.

general public, or, in other words, were primarily figurative rather than abstract.<sup>14</sup> Despite the vehement public denials issued by the director of Yapı ve Kredi's cultural program, Vedat Nedim Tör, it seems that it was this implicit pressure to adhere to a figurative idiom that was the source of the thirty-eight paintings' uniformity. One anonymous letter-writer complained: "The writer Vedat Nedim Tör hates modern art and 'illegible' (*anlaşılmayan*) art. In fact, he insinuated to the painters who were going to participate in the contest that their overly modern paintings would not be received favorably, and that even their bunches of cotton and sheaths of wheat should look lively and legible (*anlayışlı*), 'as if you could hold them in your hand.'"<sup>15</sup> The letter-writer went on to explain that the artists had gone so far as to compromise their individual artistic interests: "All the participating painters, who did not want to lose a chance to win the sizable prize, did everything they could to make cotton look like cotton, wheat look like wheat, fish look like fish, and men look like men—even those artists otherwise inclined towards abstraction."<sup>16</sup> The European jury, on the other hand, declared that "the quality of an artist can be measured in the way that he works to move outside of a specific framework he is given, to think and work freely," and explained that, in direct opposition to this stance, they had given first prize to the painting that was the most *distant* from a straightforward illustration of the assigned topic.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Anlaşılan*, a term which reappears throughout the debates, literally translates to "understandable," while *anlaşılmayan* translates to "not understandable." Rather than using these terms, I have chosen to render *anlaşılan* as "legible" and *anlaşılmayan* as "illegible" because the textual metaphors of reading and legibility dominated Turkish discourse following the 1928 language reform. In short, language was not only the medium through which positions were staked out, but served as a reigning metaphor for debates about self-expression in general. See Nergis Ertürk, "Surrealism and the Turkish Script Arts," *Modernism/modernity* 17, no. 1 (2010): 47–60.

<sup>15</sup> "Resim: Spor ve Sergi Sarayında Patlayan Bomba" [Art: The Bomb that went off at the Exhibition and Sports Arena], *Akis*, September 18, 1954.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> "Bir ressamın değeri kendisine verilen belli bir vazifenin çerçeveleri dışına çıkması, serbest düşünmesi ve çalışması ile ölçülebilir." Ayşe Nur, "Üç Sanat Tenkitçisinin Türk Sanatına Dair Görüşü" [Three Art Critics' View of Turkish Art], *Yeni İstanbul*, September 16, 1954.

Designated by the Western critics as the sole authentic example of individual expression, Berger's painting became an emblem of a politics of dissent essentially at odds with the modes of "reading" artworks promoted by official ideology. Thus, many of the losing artists felt they had been doubly wronged: first induced by the bank to compromise their artistic integrity, then wrongly punished by the jury for adhering to the list of formal and thematic requirements. Berger, it seemed to her critics, had blithely slipped through the gap between the two authorities' contradictory standards, disregarding the local authority and managing to satisfy the visiting "foreign experts" (*ecnebi hâkimler*) the first time she ever put brush to canvas. (Figures 2.15–2.18)

If the European jury saw Berger's work in the rosy light of non-conformist originality, her detractors argued that her disregard for the unspoken rule signaled exceptionalism of a negative sort—that her success was either a happy accident or due to her time spent studying print-making as an aristocratic amateur in London and Paris. Those who condemned Berger entirely contended that her painting showed her to be fundamentally incapable of representing the Turkish people to themselves because of her aristocratic status as a member of an elite Istanbul Ottoman family. By the time of the painting contest, Berger was already something of a celebrity due to a series of scandalous events that had hardened into an established reputation, including her years-long relationship with the family's Hungarian violin teacher, Charles Berger, his untimely death in 1947 just a few months after their much-delayed marriage, and her subsequent flight to London where she lived with her older sister and sought solace in print-making. (Figures 2.19–2.21)

Berger's critics argued that the artist was an aristocrat who could not even envision *what labor looked like*, and whose submission should not qualify for a prize because it did not meet the basic

requirement of showing Turkish production in a comprehensible fashion.<sup>18</sup> They suggested that the lack of clear figures and the disproportionately large sun in her painting made it appear as though the sun was “the primary factor in production simply because it warms the earth,” thereby discrediting the hard-working citizens of Turkey who were the real source of the country’s progress.<sup>19</sup> “This is the world view of a person from a privileged class,” observed one. “To leave the factor of Turkish labor so much in the shadows in a painting of labor—now *that* is worthy of criticism.”<sup>20</sup> The press coverage around Berger’s participation in the painting contest reinforced the dual exceptionalism of her gender and her aristocratic background. One (female) journalist, for example, dubbed her the “woman painter” who had won the “first large-scale painting and poster contest held in our country,” an announcement that was accompanied by a reproduction of one of Berger’s own self-portraits, with large, heavily-lashed eyes, a demure smile, and a riot of blonde hair. (Figure 2.22) Another article juxtaposed an image of the male European critics who made up the painting contest jury, shown speaking authoritatively from a raised dias, with a snapshot of Berger, smiling and clad in furs, as at an elite society event. (Figure 2.23) Thus, many of the critiques hinged on the notion that Berger’s choice not to represent the experience of the laboring classes of Turkey’s national citizenry in a “legible” manner was rooted in, and merely reinforced, the exceptionalism of her own elite status.

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<sup>18</sup> Known for what one reporter called the “Şakir Paşa Family Miracle” (*Şakir Paşa Ailesi mucizesi*), Berger’s family’s unusual combination of substantial wealth and bohemian outlook produced several of Turkey’s most famous modernist artists immediately after World War II. The Şakir Paşa family generated not just a male creative talent (Berger’s older brother, the Oxford-educated Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı, was a poet and novelist who wrote with the pen name of the “Fisherman of Helicarnassus”) but also three of Turkey’s most significant women artists: Berger’s older sister, the painter Fahrünissa Zeid (1901–1991); her cousin, the ceramicist Füreya Kılıç (1910–1997); and Berger herself, who was a print-maker. They have since generated a spate of familial biographies including the following: Ayşe Kulin. *Füreya*. (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2000); Emel Koç. *Alyoşa: Aliye Berger Biğrafisi* [Alyoşa: Biography of Aliye Berger]. (Istanbul: Can Yayınları, 2004); and Şirin Devrim. *Şakir Paşa Ailesi* [The Şakir Paşa Family] (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 1998).

<sup>19</sup> Cemal Tollu, “Hür ve Orijinal Olmak” [To Be Free and Original], *Yeni Sabah*, September 22, 1954.

<sup>20</sup> Va-Nu, “Münekkidlerin Tenkidi” [The Critics’ Critique], *Cumhuriyet*, September 16, 1954.

Berger, on the other hand, argued that the very indistinctness of the forms on her canvas was a tribute to the Turkish masses that did not rely upon a realist equivalence of aesthetic and political representation, and whose respect for Turkish citizens lay in the room it left for their interpretation of her work. As the artist asserted to one sympathetic interviewer, “I wasn’t going to do something like put in giant rams as a symbol of production!”<sup>21</sup> She went on to explain that she had intentionally obfuscated standard symbols of labor in an effort to elide her personal viewpoint, in order that the painting might be more “public” (*umumi*) and less constricted by the perspective of a single individual: “I don’t care for forms that jump off the canvas and assault the eye too much. I believe it is necessary to work to move away from representations of a room, a ram, a city, or a person that are shaped by a fixed point of view. I want to see life in its entirety, excluding myself, in its capacity as something public.”<sup>22</sup> Berger made the case that a painting might best serve a Turkish general public not by conveying a particular message in “legible” form, but by serving as a partially empty vessel for meaning, into which a viewing public might deposit its own diverse experiences and interpretations.<sup>23</sup> In short, Berger’s approach was one that channeled ideas of popular participation privileged by the period of multi-party democracy by advocating for the agency of the masses in the interpretation of the painting, a stance which the “foreign experts” recognized as more “advanced” in its politics of democratic participation.

Even as the painting contest organizers offered modern Turkish art up for evaluation by eminent European arbiters of taste, they simultaneously reigned the Turkish artists in by

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<sup>21</sup> “İstihsal sembolü diye büyük büyük koyunlar koyamazdım ya!” Tunç Yalman, “Aliye Berger Anlatıyor” [Aliye Berger Speaks], *Vatan*, September 19, 1954.

<sup>22</sup> “Göze fazla çarpan, tabloda dışarı fırlayan şekillerden hoşlanmam. Bir odanın, bir köyün, bir şehrin veya bir insanın muayyen bir zaviyeden görünüşünü canlandırmaktan kaçınmağa çalışmak gerektiğine inanıyorum. Kendi hesabıma hayatı bütünü ile, umumi olarak görmek istiyorum.” Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Umberto Eco distinguishes this as the marker of an “open” artwork rather than a “closed” one. Umberto Eco, *The Open Work* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

decreeing that participants could only utilize certain forms of representation. The contradictory impulses that played out within the painting contest—the vascillation between bold self-confidence and controlling cautiousness—touched a chord with a wider public because they represented one of the most important psychic structures underlying the Turkish modernization project itself. As architectural historian Esra Akcan has theorized, the non-Western subject of modernity is a melancholic one. Melancholy, in the psychoanalytic sense, is defined by the longing for the lost object, and is psychically characterized by the introjection of that object into the psyche. Whereas in the psychic experience of nostalgia the loss of the object is located in the past, in melancholia the loss is continuously reiterated in the present. As Akcan demonstrates, in Turkey and in the modern non-Western context at large, melancholy was predicated on the loss of “the natural right to be part of modernism and, by extension, of universality—since modernism was promoted as a placeless and transnational pursuit.”<sup>24</sup>

Akcan’s key argument is that melancholy in the Turkish context was directly caused by the Kemalist elites’ top-down westernization policies. As she argues, the very dynamics of Eurocentrism and Orientalism that structurally exclude the non-Western subject from a universal modernity were “translated” into the Turkish context through such top-down westernization policies, resulting in the Turkish subject’s overwhelming sense of “fragility” or “inferiority.”<sup>25</sup> Painfully aware of his or own secondary status, the modern Turkish subject swings between “audaciousness” and “timidity,” as one Turkish writer described it in the 1940s, continuously

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<sup>24</sup> Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 141. See also Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 101–143, 247–281 and Akcan, “The Melancholies of Istanbul,” *World Literature Today* 80, no. 6 (2006), 39–43.

<sup>25</sup> Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 102. As noted in the Introduction, Akcan uses the theoretical framework of translation to analyze the migration and transmutation of such Eurocentric and Orientalist frameworks both within and outside of Turkey.

locked into the cycle of melancholic vacillation.<sup>26</sup> The exhibition *Developing Turkey* functioned as a reiteration of the Turkish subject's inability (loss of the ability) to become a part of modernity. Providing an acute, public manifestation of the painful experience of melancholy as it had unfolded within Kemalist modernization, the exhibition itself came to represent "the two faces of melancholy in which the non-Western individual swings between fascination and resistance towards the West—a West from which the individual is excluded by definition, a West that is lost to the individual who is defined as the West's other, or non-Western."<sup>27</sup> Thus, the bitter tone of many artists' commentary reflected not merely petty vexation with not having won a prize, but a far more acute frustration with finding themselves participating in an event dominated, as was the case with so many projects of Turkish modernization, by the dynamic of melancholic vacillation. Rather than providing the triumphant result it promised, the Yapı ve Kredi painting contest stood as yet another painful demonstration of the putative futility of the Turkish attempt to attain the status of the universal subject.

## **2. LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AND COLD WAR POLITICS OF CULTURE**

The troubled atmosphere of the AICA Congress only grew more acute when the European critics condemned the Turkish paintings on view at *Developing Turkey*. Fierens, the most generous of the three, hazarded that "the fact that a topic was imposed on the artists probably impeded them from freely using their imaginations," while Read provided the harsher indictment that "the majority of the participating artists adhered to preexisting molds and clichés."<sup>28</sup> The

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<sup>26</sup> Tahsin Banguoğlu cited in Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 141–142.

<sup>27</sup> Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 142.

<sup>28</sup> "Konkura katılan ressamilar arasında çoğunun konuyu ele alırken, kalıplara ve klişelere uydukları ve bu konuda önceden çizilmiş belli çerçevelerin dışına çıkamadıkları klişelere saplandıkları intibamı edindim." Ayşe Nur, "Üç

European jury explained that they had sought an artist who “expressed an individual sensibility free from academic imperatives or other influences,” since the primary standard by which the free world (as they represented it) evaluated art was through the question of artistic conformism versus individual expression.<sup>29</sup> Certainly Berger’s canvas embodied the principles of non-conformism in the most obvious of ways. Her recognizably neo-impressionist palette and brushwork was, by this point, a common cipher for innovation, rooted in the narrative of European modernism’s march from the impressionist experiments of the late nineteenth-century to the gestural abstraction of the post-war period. One of the more acrimonious losing artists, for example, sneered that it was little more than “a small corner of a Van Gogh painting enlarged.”<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Berger’s treatment of the human figure was easily understood as a subversion of the contest’s unspoken requirement of figuration: on her canvas, three seaside sponge-gatherers are hardly comprehensible as such, becoming near-transparent shades that meld into the glowing landscape. The jury’s selection of Berger further solidified the uncomfortable hierarchy of perspectives already at work at the AICA Congress, where the foreign experts’ authority superseded the bank’s, while passing sweeping judgment over the Turkish art scene, whose most prominent figures, it now seemed, were little more than unthinking promoters of the status quo. As I demonstrate in this section, the conflict between the two aesthetic standards—one based in obedience to official doctrine and the other in its subversion—gained additional potency from its association with a complex configuration of discourses about democratic political alternatives and freedom of expression that circulated globally.

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Sanat Tenkitçisinin Türk Sanatına Dair Görüşü” [Three Art Critics’ View of Turkish Art], *Yeni İstanbul*, September 16, 1954.

<sup>29</sup> Zahir Güvemli, “Kalkınan Türkiye” [Developing Turkey], *Vatan*, September 16, 1954.

<sup>30</sup> Cemal Tollu, “Sanat Tenkitçileri ve Bir Netice” [Art Critics and a Verdict], *Yeni Sabah*, September 15, 1954, 2.



During what would become known as Turkey’s “American Decade,” many members of the Turkish art world, including an up-and-coming generation of thinkers shaped by study in the UK and the US in the 1940s, sought to integrate the ideals of Western liberal democracy into the Turkish cultural sphere. As the dominant mainstream political ideology of the late 1940s and early 1950s, American new liberalism hinged on an idea of freedom equated with individualism. Its proponents promoted the individual as the primary means to fight against the global spread of totalitarianism: only as individual citizens made use of their democratic right to contestation and dissent, went the logic, would democracy firmly root itself and continue to thrive across the world. Acutely aware of the international currency of these Western political ideals, a local Turkish intelligentsia was also sensitive to the fact that major powers like the US saw their country as a key battleground in a struggle between democracy and totalitarianism, vividly represented by the Stalinist regime in neighboring Soviet Russia. The mainstream press was full of maps demonstrating Turkey’s perilous position abutting the Soviet “red threat” (*kırmızı tehlikesi*), typically figured as a bright crimson swathe that threatened to bleed over into Turkey’s geographic territory at any moment. (Figures 2.24–2.27) Fully conversant in an international discourse that portrayed the world as split in half between free nations and oppressive regimes, Turkish artists and critics were also aware of the implications of espousing aesthetic approaches that might link them to such unsavory political entities. In a newspaper column titled “Art, Slave to Authority,” for example, prominent Istanbul Fine Arts Academy professor and critic Cemal Tollu described the post-WWII world order as one where each competing ideological realm possessed its own affiliated art forms—the Soviets their state-controlled Social Realism, the Westerners their free-wheeling abstraction.<sup>31</sup> Tollu warned his Turkish readers that one might be

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<sup>31</sup> “After the Second World War, humanity divided into two. On one side are the free nations that have accepted democratic governance, and on the other side are those nations that remain behind the iron curtain, and represent a

susceptible to promoting totalitarian ideals even while espousing as innocuous a visual idiom as the Turkish picturesque genre of *klasik* painting, a realist tradition of landscapes and still-lives that typically represented the majority of the work at the state painting and sculpture exhibitions. This startling proposition captured the sense of urgency animating Turkish artists, viewers, and critics' efforts to match their cultural practice with the democratic imperatives of this international post-war moment.<sup>32</sup>

As Serge Guilbaut has famously shown, in the U.S. the principles of new liberalism converged propitiously with the “ideology of the individual, risk, and the frontier” espoused by the New York-based Abstract Expressionists, lending gestural abstraction immense success as a market commodity and tool for the U.S. government’s international propaganda programs after WWII.<sup>33</sup> Subsequent scholarship has demonstrated that interlinked notions of individual agency, non-conformism, and painterly abstraction also played out in Latin America, Japan, and Europe, sometimes independently of and sometimes in direct conversation with the New York avant-garde.<sup>34</sup> The debates at *Developing Turkey* were part of these linked and overlapping

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totalitarian system. . . . Parallel to these political movements, art also divided into two, and the free world showed itself to be susceptible to an approach to art which, against [the principle of] artistic freedom, placed art at the disposition of official powers.” Cemal Tollu, “Emir kulu San’at” [Art, Slave to Authority], *Yeni Sabah*, July 2, 1952, 2.

<sup>32</sup> As Bozdoğan and Akcan demonstrate, similar concerns animated debates around architectural internationalism in 1950s Turkey: “Expressing Turkishness through architecture was replaced by the desire to adopt the supranational language of modern technological progress as visual testimonies to the success of Turkish national modernization in an international context.” See Bozdoğan and Akcan, *Turkey*, 114–121; and Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*: 154–157.

<sup>33</sup> Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). For an investigation of the intersection of the ideology of liberal democracy and media, see Fred Turner, *The Democratic Surround: Multimedia and American Liberalism from World War II to the Psychedelic Sixties* (Chicago, London: University Of Chicago Press, 2013).

<sup>34</sup> See, for example: David Craven, “Abstract Expressionism and Third World Art: A Post-Colonial Approach to ‘American’ Art,” *Oxford Art Journal* 14, no. 1 (January 1, 1991): 44–66; Joan Marter and David Anfam, *Abstract Expressionism: The International Context* (Piscataway, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2007); and Kobena Mercer, *Discrepant Abstraction* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006).

international discourses that traveled swiftly through popular media outlets such as radio and magazines. But the particular uniqueness of the Turkish case lay in the fecund convergence of such international discourses with the high-stakes experiments of Turkish multi-party democracy after 1946.<sup>35</sup> When, for example, Ecevit wrote a three-installment review of the *Developing Turkey* exhibition, arguing that the participating artists should have been able to sustain their individuality in the face of the bank's authority, he also was making an argument for more extensive popular participation in Turkey's public life, which had been so celebrated during the 1950 election when local voters turned out in such staggering numbers.<sup>36</sup>

Written just a few months before he spoke at the AICA Congress, Ecevit's 1954 article "The Artist and Politics" is a representative expression of how notions of individual political agency converged with theories of art-making in Turkey at this juncture.<sup>37</sup> In it Ecevit argued that members of Turkish society and artists above all else had to demand the government's recognition of their individuality as free-thinking citizens, as "psychological singularities, entire and singular worlds unto themselves," rather than unthinkingly adhering to a nationalist ideology handed down by a ministering élite. Ecevit went on to suggest that democracy would only be able to thrive in Turkey if its "local citizens" (*yer yer vatandaşlar*) continued the trajectory begun with the granting of a vote to all individuals under the multi-party system by demanding acknowledgment of their "individuality and personhood."

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<sup>35</sup> Another aspect of the Turkish case which remains to be investigated is the way that these discourses overlapped regionally across the Middle East, linked through shared linguistic histories and common terms of debate. For example, in Arabic-speaking countries like Egypt and Syria, such discussions hinged on the concepts of *hurriya* (freedom) and *al-shakhsiyya* (individuality), notions that reverberated in Turkey via their Arabic-derived Turkish variations, *hürriyet* and *şahsiyet*. See, for example: Clare Davies, "Arts Writing in 20th-Century Egypt," *Art Margins* 2, no. 2 (2013): 26; and Anneka Lenssen, "The Shape of the Support: Painting and Politics in Syria's Twentieth Century," (doctoral dissertation, MIT, June 2014), 39.

<sup>36</sup> Çağlar Keyder, "The Political Economy of Turkish Democracy," *New Left Review*, no. 115 (June 1979): 18.

<sup>37</sup> Bülent Ecevit, "The Artist and Politics" [Sanatçı ve Politika], *Ulus*, January 11, 1954, 3.

Ecevit assigned the work of demanding due recognition of the individual to the country's creative class because, he argued, it was "writers, and in the broadest sense artists" who conducted the deepest investigations of individual consciousness in their own work. Such was the importance of the artist's role from this perspective that, in his conclusion, Ecevit went so far as to make the claim that "there can be no democracy in countries where the artist is not actively involved in politics." In contrast, the young journalist argued, to succumb to a view of society as an "undifferentiated mass" would represent a regression to a "lingering mindset of thousands of years of dictatorship" with which he saw Turkey continuing to struggle. What is more, contended the young writer, it was precisely the ability to understand "Humanity in the abstract sense"—to see individuals as "psychological singularities"—that marked off the free democracies that Turkey emulated during the early Cold War from opposing totalitarian regimes such as Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.

### **3. THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ART CRITICS (AICA) CONGRESS, ISTANBUL, 1954**

The same September week that Berger's painting set off such a controversy, Fierens, Read, and Venturi convened along with nearly two hundred other international art critics at the annual meeting of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA, *Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art*), held at Yıldız Sarayı and Dolmabahçe Sarayı, two former Ottoman palaces. These were provided by the Istanbul municipality with the intention of impressing upon visitors the glories of Istanbul, particularly, in the case of Dolmabahçe Sarayı, through its legendary views of the Bosphorus. (Figure 2.28-2.30) Whereas, at *Developing Turkey*, the question of Turkey's "level" of democracy (*demokrasi seviyesi*) was evaluated with reference to

contemporary artistic production, at the AICA Congress the testing ground became the history of art itself. The multi-day conference was structured as a collective attempt to craft an art historical narrative that accounted for East-West interactions from the ancient period through the contemporary moment. Its Western convenors took the stance of courteously welcoming Turkey into an international league of democratic and art-loving nations through a gesture of art historical inclusion. In his opening speech, for example, AICA president Paul Fierens presented the Congress as a magnanimous gesture, on the part of the Western historians and critics, to open the gates of a traditionally Western history of art to include its historical other: “It is no longer a question of conducting an inquest on the diverse expressions of one and the same culture but of placing face to face two sets of culture, two worlds.”<sup>38</sup> In a sequence of talks across four thematic categories—Criticism of Art and Philosophy, Quality and Style in Plastic Arts, Art and Education, and Orient and Occident—presenters duly pieced together a fragmented art historical sequence that encapsulated East-West interactions spanning Irish miniatures of the sixth and seventh centuries; Sultan Mehmed II’s hosting of Gentile Bellini at the Ottoman court during the Renaissance; Rembrandt’s exoticism; the work of Delacroix, Picasso, Matisse, Kandinsky, and Klee; and the influences of calligraphy in the contemporary European and American painting.<sup>39</sup> (Figure 2.31) The familiar progression of European “master artists” that formed the subject of the talks marked off the canonical chapters in a standard Eurocentric history of art, indicating

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<sup>38</sup> Paul Fierens, unpublished manuscript of opening speech, September 8, 1954, AICA Folio I, “5ème Congrès, 6ème Assemblée Générale, Istamboule, 1954,” subfolder “Assemblée Generale: Rapports Moral, Financier, Discours,” Fonds AICA Internationale, 1948–2003, Les Archives de la Critique d’Art, Rennes, France.

<sup>39</sup> The AICA Congress was held between September 8–17, 1954. AICA had 240 members at the time. The daytime program of talks was followed in the evenings by cocktail parties, exhibitions of modern Turkish art, and visits to the city’s historic Sultanahmet district. The Turkish participants were few, consisting of Nurullah Berk, Suut Kemal Yetkin, Celal Esad Arseven, Burhan Toprak, Haluk Şehsuvaroğlu, Halil Dikmen, Bülent Ecevit, Zahir Güvemli and Cemal Tollu. Simone Gilles-Delafon, *Rapport Moral, Oxford, 1955*, AICA Folio I, “6ème Congrès, 7ème Assemblée Générale, Oxford, 1955,” subfolder “Assemblée Generale: Rapports Moral, Financier, Discours,” Fonds AICA Internationale.

that this was the historical backbone presumed by the conference participants. Yet the second historical strand with which these familiar chapters were routinely paired—subjects such as the Ottoman court, exoticism, and calligraphy—represented an attempt to make unprecedented room for “the Orient” within this established art historical account.

This post-war endeavor to craft a more expansive narrative of human cultural production had recent precedents in 1930s Istanbul. Literature scholar Emily Apter has offered a nuanced account of the “volatile crossing” of European intellectual traditions and Turkish cultural reform projects that took place in Istanbul immediately before WWII, a moment when an influx of prominent émigré scholars including Erich Auerbach and Leo Spitzer found refuge at Istanbul University while fleeing the rise of National Socialism.<sup>40</sup> As Apter shows, by taking the Turkish language as an object of philological inquiry on equal footing with the Romantic languages that were historically seen as superior, Spitzer and his Turkish collaborators (among them his teaching assistant Sabahattin Eyüboğlu) created a “worldly paradigm” for humanistic study: a transnational model of humanism that hinged upon multilingualism and “a policy of nontranslation adopted without apology.”<sup>41</sup> The eminent architect Bruno Taut (1880–1938) was another member of the influx of German and Austrian intellectuals who found refuge from National Socialism in Istanbul. He spent the last years of his life between Japan, Germany, and Turkey, where he was intimately involved in the architecture and architectural education programs of the Turkish state. As Akcan shows in her study of Taut’s work and writings during this period, Taut represented a powerful example of one thinker’s endeavor to overcome the

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<sup>40</sup> Emily Apter, “Global *Translatio*: The ‘Invention’ of Comparative Literature, Istanbul, 1933,” *Critical Inquiry* 29, no. 2 (January 1, 2003): 253–81. On the large community of German-speaking exiles who taught at Istanbul University, which was sometimes called the Emigré Universität, see Esra Akcan, *Architecture in Translation: Germany, Turkey, and the Modern House* (Duke University Press Books, 2012): 145–148, 277.

<sup>41</sup> Apter, 280.

melancholic experience of the non-Western subject. The architect cultivated a “cosmopolitan ethics” based in the acknowledgment of “the non-Western individual’s perceived distance from the ego ideal” and attempted to design suitable architectural environments that took this fact into account.<sup>42</sup> What is more—and what is particularly relevant for my discussion of the AICA Congress—Taut worked to develop a global architectural theory structured around “four universal principles of architecture” so as to “integrate geographical and cultural differences.”<sup>43</sup> The examples of Auerbach and Spitzer’s worldly philological experiments and Taut’s cosmopolitan ethics raise the optimistic possibility of a way out of the double bind of the experience of Turkish melancholy. Like Taut’s cosmopolitan ethics in architecture, Auerbach and Spitzer’s acknowledgment and validation of the non-Western subject through the history of language begin to reconfigure the relationship between the non-Western subject and universal modernity. As another negotiation of Turkey’s relationship to universal modernity, would the AICA Congress be able to overcome the melancholic dynamic that provoked such frustration among Turkish participants and observers at the *Developing Turkey* painting contest?

The AICA Congress was an experimental and collaborative intellectual endeavor in much the same spirit as Spitzer’s philological project, where the discipline of Art History served as the common ground upon which Western and Turkish thinkers convened to formulate a “worldly paradigm” of humanistic knowledge for the post-war period. While Apter laudably includes scholarship and interviews of Spitzer’s Turkish collaborators, absent from her account and other recent post-war histories of transnational humanism is a consideration of the specific stakes that

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<sup>42</sup> For example, while in Japan Taut conducted ergonomic studies based around the idea that physical differences between Japanese and Western individuals demanded a more varied approach to architectural standardization. Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 255–258.

<sup>43</sup> Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 265. The four principles were proportion, technique, construction, and function, outlined in his 1938 book *Mimarî Bilgisi*, which first appeared in Turkish and is normally translated into English as *Lectures on Architecture*. See Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 263–277.

such endeavors carried for the very “minority” collaborators who contributed.<sup>44</sup> The question of collaboration—the nature of joint work, the alternate positions of authority from which participants contribute, the vulnerabilities and investments of “minority” participants—demands to be more fully accounted for. The AICA Congress presents an opportunity to do precisely this, and in the remainder of this chapter my study of the conference will be guided by this primary question: What did this particular post-war experiment in transnational humanism represent for the Turkish participants who were enlisted as collaborators?

As a subsidiary of UNESCO founded in 1948, AICA’s activities were an integral part of what literature scholar Andrew Rubin calls a “tectonic shift” in a global intellectual culture after WWII.<sup>45</sup> At this juncture, a range of recently founded governmental and nongovernmental organizations in Britain and the US, including UNESCO, the USIS, the British Council, and the Rockefeller Foundation, aggressively promoted an international cadre of thinkers whose writing served their anti-communist, pro-democracy line. AICA’s stated aim, for example, was to “[coordinate] efforts for the defense of art, for its liberty and that of authors on art.”<sup>46</sup> What made these organizations’ activities unique was their immense geographic reach and the global aspirations that they promoted through the “discourse of cultural freedom,” to use Rubin’s term. For example, AICA, which was based in Paris, accommodated seventeen national “sections” by

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<sup>44</sup> Along with Apter, Edward Said and Aamir Mufti have provided valuable accounts of how towering figures such as Auerbach and Spitzer forged critical models of literary and philological study engaged with the politics of culture on a world scale. Mufti in particular has shown that the problem of “minority culture and existence”—questions of marginality and belonging—forms the very core of such twentieth-century scholars’ modes of critique. Aamir R. Mufti, “Auerbach in Istanbul: Edward Said, Secular Criticism, and the Question of Minority Culture,” *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 1 (October 1, 1998): 95–125.

<sup>45</sup> Andrew N. Rubin, *Archives of Authority: Empire, Culture, and the Cold War* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012), 18.

<sup>46</sup> Simone Gilles-Delafon, *Report on Inaugural Meeting*, AICA Folio I, “5ème Congrès, 6ème Assemblée Générale, Istamboule, 1954,” Fonds AICA Internationale.



1954 as well as hosted individual members from six additional nations.<sup>47</sup> Turkey's hosting of AICA was thus entirely of a piece with the young nation's own endeavors to participate fully in a league of democratic nations, which it simultaneously undertook through economic and foreign policy changes. Between 1950 and 1953 the Democrat Party opened up the nationalized economy to foreign and private investment, integrating Turkey into the global capitalist economy on an unprecedented scale. They also pursued this goal through foreign policy and defense, sending thousands of troops to Korea in a bid to join NATO (succeeding in 1952), and entering into US-encouraged alliances in the Middle East and Balkans, including the Balkan Pact of 1953 and Baghdad Pact of 1955. It was lost on nobody that the impulse to accommodate Turkey in AICA's activities was directly related to the imperative to "make room" for Turkey as its leaders worked for a more prominent role in a post-war international order.

The fact that Turkey successfully hosted some 185 attendees just a year after becoming an AICA member was widely considered to be a reflection of its rapid political ascension through the ranks of such international political alliances that formed in the wake of WWII. Yet one of the most frequent complaints in the local press was that Turkish and European participants approached this particular instance of cultural diplomacy from incommensurate positions and that the Western critics' appearance on Turkish soil did not result in the harmonious meeting of nations hoped for. In short, while Turkey's willingness to participate in an international "discourse of cultural freedom" worked in its favor, the AICA Congress also made it abundantly clear that the country's Islamic past and the relative newness of its secular

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<sup>47</sup> AICA's national member sections were Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Yugoslavia; individual members attended from Argentina, Estonia, Israel, Sweden, Poland, and Portugal.

reforms placed it at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the Western democracies whose ranks it sought to join.

The conference participants, European and Turkish alike, had misgivings about such a collaboration from the outset. In advance of the event, AICA's French general secretary worried privately that "organizing the congress seems to require a significant effort on the part of our Turkish *confrères*."<sup>48</sup> For his part, Fierens expressed concern that, due to the "geographic situation," "the Belgian section doesn't look too enthusiastic about the idea of going to Istanbul."<sup>49</sup> Once the AICA delegates had arrived in Istanbul, Adalet Cimcoz wrote several colorful society and arts columns that reflected this widely shared sense of cultural dissonance. In one, she portrayed the visiting Europeans as stereotyped foreigners who had been displaced into a uniquely Turkish setting. Cimcoz began her passage by using the classic Ottoman literary trope of moonlight on the Bosphorus, a recognizable standard of Ottoman picturesque imagery: "The moonlit peaks, the Bosphorus under a misty gray light; during the day not even a leaf quivered."<sup>50</sup> Then, the ever-irreverent commentator shifted quickly to a cartoonish description of the national character types who occupied this Turkish landscape, figures more at home in front-page political caricatures than in such an idyllic spot:

The German delegates are all fatherly types with round stomachs; headed by Mister Rid [Herbert Read], the English delegation are skinny and tall as a needle; most of the Americans have glasses; the French have already learned the wine brands and have spent a fortune; the Italian delegation doesn't get out much, they don't favor private cocktails of this sort; and the female members of the delegation have apparently memorized the Grand Bazaar.

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<sup>48</sup> Simone Gilles-Delafon to Paul Fierens, March 12, 1954, AICA Folio III, "Courriers de Paul Fierens 1948–1958," Fonds AICA Internationale.

<sup>49</sup> Paul Fierens to Simone Gilles-Delafon, May 3, 1954, AICA Folio III, "Courriers de Paul Fierens 1948–1958," Fonds AICA Internationale.

<sup>50</sup> Fitne Fücür [Adalet Cimcoz], "İstanbul Dedikoduları" [Istanbul Gossip], *Halkçı*, September 19, 1954.

By portraying the visitors through the filter of high Ottoman literary motifs, paired with cartoonish satire, Cimcoz captured what most Turkish observers considered to be the defining dynamic of the Congress: an encounter between unfamiliar emissaries of Western high culture with their Turkish hosts, whose ancient past and recent history of modernization proved difficult for both parties to reconcile with the inclusivist art historical narrative they set out to write jointly.

Fierens and the visiting AICA critics occupied a controversial position—that of the “foreign expert”—with a well-established history in the context of Turkey’s accelerated modernization project. From the German émigrés who reformed the Turkish university system in the 1930s to the French architects who created plans for Istanbul’s infrastructure in the 1950s, *ecnebi hâkimler* or *yabancı mütehassıslar*, as “foreign experts” were entirely unironically referred to in the Turkish press, were often troubling figures within Turkey’s larger struggles as a nation to negotiate its notoriously in-between status with respect to East and West.<sup>51</sup> One anonymous Turkish journalist described the uncomfortable sensation of being informed by a foreigner about his own allegedly inexpert status, noting that “the art critics’ arrival in Istanbul rather shook up our confidence in the level of contemporary Turkish painting, which we had nurtured amongst ourselves.”<sup>52</sup> Another observer saw the *Developing Turkey* painting contest that took place the same week as merely one of many hurried and insubstantial foreign interactions in the history of Turkish modernization, and implied that it was the Turks’ own over-eagerness that was to blame for any failures of communication. “We journalists have a joke

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<sup>51</sup> See, for example: Akcan (2012); Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*, 174–176; and Murat Gül, *The Emergence of Modern Istanbul: Transformation and Modernization of a City* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009).

<sup>52</sup> “Sanat tenkitçilerinin İstanbulla gelişi, çağdaş Türk resminin seviyesi hakkında kendi aramızda beslediğimiz güvenin az çok sarsılmasına sebep oldu.” “Kongre ve Müsabakalar” [The Congress and Contests], *Vatan*, September 19, 1954.

amongst ourselves,” he explained. “As soon as a famous foreign pilot arrives at Yeşilköy airport, we run up to him and ask his impressions of Turkey. We’ve done the same thing this time [by telling the visiting art critics] ‘Choose one of these [paintings]!’”<sup>53</sup> Like this last commentator, the most damning report, titled simply “Why Can’t We Inspire Any Interest,” reflected Turkish concerns that it was something essentially wrong with *themselves* that had prevented members of the Turkish art world from eliciting a satisfactory level of interest from their foreign guests: “Even if it is painful, it must be said: we were unable to contribute anything significant to the AICA conference, the Europeans could not be induced to interest themselves in our problems. Once again we waited for them to make the first move.”<sup>54</sup> An immense number of articles, cartoons, and profiles dedicated to the visiting critics circulated widely during their time in Istanbul. One photograph of the art critics adjudicating from on high provided a particularly powerful image of the latest group of imported thinkers in action, giving a face to these guardians of Western democratic principles and arbiters of their aesthetic expression who so troubled Turkish views of intellectual expertise and authority. (Figures 2.32–2.35)

Nowhere were the discomfiting paradoxes of Turkey’s position within this collaborative project of art historical revision so evident as the first day of the Congress, when seven speakers from Europe and the United States and four Turkish presenters took up the vexed theme of Orient and Occident: Nurullah Berk, Bülent Ecevit, the distinguished scholar of Islamic art Celal

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<sup>53</sup> “Biz gazetecilerin kendi kendimiz’e şaka ettiğimiz bir kusurumuz vardır: Meşhur bir ecnebi tayyareden Yeşilköy’e ayak basar basmaz, hemen karşısına çıkarız, Türkiye hakkındaki düşüncesini sorarız. Bu sefer de öyle yapmışız. . . bu serginin karşısına ecnebi hakemlerini ayaklarının tozile çıkarmışız: ‘Seç bunlardan!’” Va-Nu, “Münekkidlerin Tenkidi” [The Critics’ Critique], *Cumhuriyet*, September 16, 1954.

<sup>54</sup> “Acı da olsa söylemek lazım: 5. Plastik Sanatlar kongresine kendimizden birşey katamadık, Avrupalılar bizim meselelerimizle ilgilendirilemediler, hamleyi yine onlardan bekledik.” A. Yedidağ, “Sanat Tenkidileri Kongresinden Notlar: Neden İlgi Yaratamıyoruz” [Notes from the Critics’ Congress: Why Can’t We Inspire Any Interest], *Dünya*, September 16, 1954.

Esad Arseven, and the Turkish UNESCO representative, Suut Kemal Yetkin.<sup>55</sup> The three other thematics of the Congress (Criticism of Art and Philosophy, Quality and Style in Plastic Arts, Art and Education) would provide European and American authorities a platform to evaluate the current state of art, its history, and criticism in Europe and, to a lesser extent, the United States. The theme of Orient and Occident, in contrast, became the special purview of the Turkish presenters, a move that simultaneously positioned Arseven, Berk, Ecevit, and Yetkin as indispensable experts in this novel subject while segregating them from their fellow “experts.” When Fierens went on in his opening speech to state that “the members of the Congress count on the help of their Turkish confederates for elucidation,” he implied *not* that European and Turkish participants came to this task on equal footing but instead that they had separate areas of expertise, and that the Turkish AICA members were authorities in a limited, particular, and historically “minor” area of knowledge—“the Orient.” In other words, Turkey’s hosting of AICA did not in fact allow the young country to definitively “prove” its readiness to join the ranks of freedom-loving nations in a world torn between democracy and totalitarianism. Rather, it was an occasion for its representatives to argue for their country’s relevance, even as they did so from a position of circumscribed authority, always and already precluded from participating in the Congress in the fullest sense.

Such were the conditions in which the four Turkish presenters gamely attempted to synthesize and explain to their foreign guests a continuous narrative of the Turkish History of Art that accounted for a pre-Islamic past, several centuries of Ottoman rule, and Turkey’s history as a young republic. In the face of this challenge, Arseven, Berk, Ecevit, and Yetkin avoided the recent history of modernization in Turkey and took recourse to the Islamic past to argue for the

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<sup>55</sup> On Arseven’s career and intellectual investments, see Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 221–223 and Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*, 246–247.

contemporary value of Turkish art.<sup>56</sup> Ecevit, for example, directly challenged a frequently cited piece of “evidence” given to demonstrate Eastern cultures’ lack of intellectual sophistication: the question of why “Oriental art” did not historically adhere to Western modes of perspectival representation. In his talk, he appealed to the principle of individual expression with which Read, Venturi, and Fierens had shown themselves to be so concerned in their evaluation of Aliye Berger’s painting. Reversing a traditionally negative argument, Ecevit contended that the absence of perspective in Islamic art in fact demonstrated Eastern artists’ adherence to a far more important principle than perspective itself: that of individual expression. Thus, in Ecevit’s virtuosic argument—made with reference to Paolo Ucello, Surrealism, Rabindranath Tagore, and Berkeleyian philosophy—a regressive habit became a redeeming characteristic and the basis of Turkey’s claim for contemporary relevance on Western art historical terms.<sup>57</sup>

The Turkish discourse surrounding the AICA collaboration reveals the paradoxical demands confronting Turkish participants who were invited to collaborate in this experimental endeavor to include the “Orient” in canonical art historical narrative. To understand the stakes of this intellectual challenge, it is important to recall that it came immediately on the heels of three decades of experience of Atatürk and the Republican People’s Party’s reform projects, where such epistemological experiments were enmeshed with real social change. The Turkish language reform, for example, or the state’s systematic re-writing of (Ottoman) Turkish history, involved

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<sup>56</sup> Arseven and Berk, for example, both chose to instead focus on a Western history of art, making two main arguments: that Western modernist painters had made plentiful use of “Oriental” ornament, and that the abstract nature of Islamic ornament signaled Muslim cultures’ advanced level of thought. Simone Gilles-Delafon, *Report on Inaugural Meeting*, pp. 3–5, AICA Folio I, “5ème Congrès, 6ème Assemblée Générale, Istamboule, 1954,” subfolder “Comptes Rendus,” Fonds AICA Internationale.

<sup>57</sup> Ecevit’s talk finished with the following argument: “To an artist who aims at subjectivity and for whom the process of creation is a personal, or even an intimate act of self-expression, perspective may become a burden. . . . Such conscious distortion of perspective can, therefore, be regarded as some sort of a Berkeleyian tour de force to evade the obstacles before subjectivity in art.” Bülent Ecevit, “Deformation of Perspective in Eastern and Modern Art,” unpublished manuscript, September 8, 1954, AICA Folio I, “5ème Congrès, 6ème Assemblée Générale, Istamboule, 1954,” subfolder “Communications,” Fonds AICA Internationale.

millions of citizens to perpetuate and internalize new modes of thought. The AICA Congress also calls attention to the fluctuating and uneven status of authority and expertise within such collaborative frameworks bringing Western and Turkish scholars together. The rhetorical strategies of humorous critique (that we see in Cimcoz's columns) or polemic reversal (in Ecevit's speech) that emerged out of the conference reflect their deep questioning of the value of "importing" of Western intellectual traditions, while evoking the profound sense of self-doubt that colored the Turkish experience of being called upon as a partial authority.

Arseven, Berk, Ecevit, and Yetkin's AICA speeches paralleled arguments made by other thinkers in Turkey—and indeed across the former Ottoman Empire—who tried to rectify the in-built inequalities of Eurocentric narratives of history by arguing that Islamic art both anticipated and inspired European abstraction, a series of arguments which, despite their diversity, shared their roots in a long history of negotiating decolonization and westernization.<sup>58</sup> In fact, just a short walk away from where the AICA Congress took place, Adalet Cimcoz's Galeri Maya provided another powerful example of the ways that Turkey's cosmopolitan intelligentsia forwarded their own arguments for the primacy of non-Western cultural production within a universal history of art. Cimcoz's original letter to the artist Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, in which she had announced her plans to open Galeri Maya, attests to the worldly gallerist's international horizons. In the letter, which made its way from Istanbul to Paris in the late summer of 1950, Cimcoz used the international argot common to many of the francophone Turkish élite and asserted Galeri Maya's position within a circuit of international exhibition spaces (here, she

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<sup>58</sup> Art historians Clare Davies and Anneka Lenssen have shown that thinkers in Egypt and Syria were also making the argument that "Islamic art paved the way for the establishment of schools of 'modern art' around the world," in Davies' words. See, for example: Clare Davies, "Arts Writing in 20th-Century Egypt: Methodology, Continuity, and Change," *Art Margins* 2, no. 2 (2013): 33–34; and Anneka Lenssen, "The Shape of the Support: Painting and Politics in Syria's Twentieth Century" (doctoral dissertation, MIT, 2014), 43. In Turkey, the conservative thinker İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu made a similar argument. See Nergis Ertürk, "Surrealism and the Turkish Script Arts," *Modernism/modernity* 17, no. 1 (2010): 47–60.

mentions the Louvre), while asking Bedri Rahmi to get to work designing an exhibition that would bring the latest Parisian artistic currents to Istanbul:

Start getting together some little pieces [*piyes*, from the French *pièces*] that can be exhibited and will sell. Pick some of those small sculptural copies that your older brother [Sabahattin] brought back from the Louvre museum, so we can exhibit the ones that are feasible. . . . Be well and let me know your thoughts on this before you come back to Turkey, my dear—will this experiment have a positive effect on Modern and progressive art and its distribution? Tell me openly what you think. I'm leaving the arrangement of the exhibition to you and your wife [Eren Eyüboğlu] as you two see fit. That way I will have seen the fresh fruits of Paris and shared them with Istanbul.<sup>59</sup>

The reproductions that Cimcoz mentioned duly appeared at Maya, including those of ancient Egyptian statues, a Mesopotamian head of Gudea, and a South East Asian Buddha head. Their arrangement into a comparative morphological sequence invited stylistic comparison across cultures and historical periods. The sequence also spoke to the Western universal survey museum's preoccupation with non-Western cultures, while invoking the survey museum's capacious vision of world civilization of which this sequence was but a fragment. (Figure 1.18)

Here Galeri Maya's organizers consciously appealed to what we might call a "Malreauxean" vision of art history. André Malraux's well-known 1951 volume *Les Voix du Silence* (published in English in 1953 as *The Museum Without Walls*), featured art historical essays by the high-profile novelist, cultural critic, and future French Minister of Culture alongside a sequence of black-and-white photographs. These images surveyed artwork from a wide array of periods and places, ranging from Classical Greek sculpture to Dogon masks to Swiss folk art and Tibetan religious objects. Malraux proposed that reproductions of works of art from across the globe would stand as a widely accessible substitute for an encounter with original works of art, in what he dubbed the *musée imaginaire*. Even more importantly, such strategies of isolation and juxtaposition upended traditional art historical hierarchies in the name

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<sup>59</sup> Adalet Cimcoz to Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, August 25, 1950, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu Archive, Istanbul.



of a “post-national, universal, human culture,” to use T.J. Demos’ phrase, with the intention of providing an inclusive historical paradigm that would assuage the world-scale human destruction of World War II.<sup>60</sup>

Anecdotal evidence reveals that Malraux’s book reached Turkish readers quite rapidly in the early 1950s.<sup>61</sup> However, I turn to Malraux’s example here less to trace the life of this specific publication than to suggest that Galeri Maya’s organizers espoused a similarly capacious, transnational brand of humanism designed to accommodate the cultural production of countless other cultures and periods. At Maya, the sequence of sculptural heads performs precisely these tasks of geographic expansion, stylistic isolation, reproduction, and comparison that Malraux’s *musée imaginaire* accomplishes through photographic reproduction.<sup>62</sup> In this paradigm, the original art object is freed “from the constraints of any spatio-temporal specificity” through the use of reproductions, in order to “liberate it instead as pure form through comparison and stylistic association with other objects.”<sup>63</sup> When, in turn, this logic is extended to the subject of Turkish art, it, too, becomes just one “variant” within a global “field of meaning,” to use Rosalind Krauss’ phrasing, where non-Western art is no longer a tradition that is secondary or subordinate to the West’s.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the AICA Congress’ preoccupation with forging a history of art

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<sup>60</sup> T. J. Demos, *The Exiles of Marcel Duchamp* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 37.

<sup>61</sup> In his autobiography, for example, İsmail Altınok recounts that the artist Abidin Elderoğlu, inspired by Malraux’s volume, had aspirations to create a similar “museum without walls” devoted specifically to Turkish art.

<sup>62</sup> Writing on Malraux’s *musée imaginaire*, art historian Hannah Feldman has dubbed this the “decontextualist modernist model.” Hannah Feldman, *From a Nation Torn: Decolonizing Art and Representation in France, 1945–1962* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), 23–24.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Rosalind Krauss, “Postmodernism’s Museum Without Walls,” in *Thinking About Exhibitions*, ed. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (London: Routledge, 1996), 241–245.

that accounted for “Orient and Occident,” as its organizers framed it, was far from an isolated incident. It was, rather, an unusually public and contested manifestation of a larger phenomenon: the international circulation, during the immediate post-war period, of transhistorical, transnational intellectual paradigms and display strategies that sought to grapple with the problem of civilization on a world scale through the disciplinary paradigms of art history.<sup>65</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The sustained public debates centering on art in the fall of 1954 were vehement and long-lasting precisely because of their conjuncture with the driving political concerns of the time. As noted at the outset of this chapter, in 1954, that moment when “things got shaken up,” in Raḥşan Ecevit’s words, an increasing number of critics began to suggest that the ruling Democrat Party was abusing its power and acting in contradiction with its democratic claims. The dominant belief that freedom of expression and a public sphere that tolerated dissent were cornerstones of democracy, and that only through these means could Turkey attain an international position it desired, meant that art—as a mode of creative expression and a vector for critique—became a powerful flashpoint for discussions about Turkish democracy and global political position.

The exhibition and the conference were sites of negotiation for divergent views about visual art’s relationship to state ideology, what it meant to participate as a citizen in Turkish society, and Turkey’s own international standing in the world at large. At the *Developing Turkey* painting contest, Berger’s painting came to represent a dissenting democratic voice in a sea of conformists. The jury also considered her artwork to be fundamentally democratic because of the

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<sup>65</sup> Richard Meyer’s recent work provides an example of American post-war attempts to write a history of modern art with reference to distant periods and cultures. Meyer has shown that in the 1930s and 1940s New York’s Museum of Modern Art, the alleged bastion of high modernism, also played host to its own wildly eclectic array of art objects including prehistoric rock painting, copies of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Persian frescos, Russian icons, Aztec art, and Italian old masters. Richard Meyer, *What Was Contemporary Art?* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 115–190.

way in which it interpellated a viewing public, allowing room for viewers' interpretation rather than projecting a prescriptive message. The debate hinged upon the intersection of notions of individual political agency with theories of art-making. The notion of "authentic" individual expression in art was associated with the principle of dissent. Because dissent was itself understood to be an identifying feature of liberal democracy, art that manifested this principle was thought to provide so-called "developing" or "third-world" countries like Turkey an entry ticket into a global community of Western democracies allied through a shared enmity of totalitarianism. With its narrative of absolute conflict between the visual idioms of abstraction and social realism, this artistic-political discourse gained its strength from the stark binarism of accounts of clashing Cold War superpowers. At the AICA Congress, a prime example of Cold War "cultural diplomacy," the activity of writing newly global iterations of traditional Eurocentric histories of art was inextricably bound up with political and economic realities. Here—as would happen some fifty years later as Turkey made a bid for membership in the European Union—the question of Turkey's historical cultural compatibility with a Western Judeo-Christian cultural tradition became a testing ground for international political alliance. Turkish artists and critics chafed against the limitations placed upon their participation while confronting their own doubts as to whether Turkey's aspirations were fundamentally misplaced. The debates of September 1954 demonstrate the hierarchical structures of authority that enframed such collaborations—ironically enough, not through an ideal system of democratic participation but by keeping Turkey soundly in the minority position of partial expertise and constant self-justification. Both the contest and the conference constituted what Akcan calls "zones of exchange," ripe with potential for a reconfiguration of hierarchical relations between "West" and "non-West." However, the inbuilt inequalities of culture and geopolitical power at

work at *Developing Turkey* and the AICA Congress prevented the enactment of a fully-realized cosmopolitan ethics. Even as they began to produce new configurations for history-writing and transnational dialogue, both events remained overwhelmingly defined by the melancholic paradox of the non-Western subject who strives for the status of universal subjecthood while facing perpetual exclusion. The events were, in a sense, earnest failures, unable to fully enact the very principles they were designed to promote.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> I owe the phrase “earnest failures” to the art historian Anthony Gardner, whose use of this term to describe biennials of the post-war period in casual conversation seemed an equally pertinent way to describe this event.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Language of Protest: Art Criticism and Its Discontents, 1940–1956

In Chapter One I analyzed the emergence of the first modern art galleries in Turkey to demonstrate how left-leaning members of the Turkish intelligentsia used the cultural realm to conceptualize new roles for art in the optimistic early years of the country’s experiment with multi-party democracy. In Chapter Two I showed how the political developments of 1954—among them a worsening economy, legislation making unsanctioned journalistic content punishable by jail sentence, and, in the art world, unsettling encounters with international artistic and ideological currents—began to inspire widespread concern about the Democrat Party’s capacity to guide Turkey’s ongoing democratic experiment. Alarm bells rang even more loudly in 1955 and 1956, a period distinguished by the shift of the Democrats’ politics into one of dictatorial control and cultural oppression. The violent anti-minority pogroms that took place in Istanbul in September 1955, ultimately leading to declaration of martial law, was not only a shocking manifestation of violence in the heart of the country’s cultural capital, it also ushered in a new era of state censorship. In the weeks following, countless newspapers were temporarily shut down for publishing articles that did not meet censors’ requirements, including major dailies such as *Ulus*, where the young Ankara-based gallerist and cultural critic Bülent Ecevit was a columnist, as well as *Dünya*, *Vatan*, *Hürriyet*, and *Tercüman*. Galeri Maya and the Helikon Association both closed their doors by 1956, as Turkey’s intellectuals anxiously began to debate the best means “to more effectively oppose the steps the government had already taken to do away with Turkish intellectual life.”<sup>1</sup> By 1956 it was apparent that many of the promises of the

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<sup>1</sup> “Hükümetin Türk fikri hayatına giriştiği tenkil hareketine daha müessir şekilde karşı koymak için ne yapmaları gerektiğini düşündüler.” “İşte *Forum* Budur” [This is *Forum*], *Forum*, Feb 15, 1956, reprinted in Diren Çakmak,

early 1950s—the “justice, equality, and cheap cigarettes” Turkey’s citizens had so looked forward to—had already begun to dissolve and were perhaps now out of reach entirely.

In this chapter I analyze the emergence of newspaper art criticism that took place at this historical juncture and that occupied the very center of the bitter battles for freedom of expression that unfolded in a worsening political climate. Although Turkish intellectuals had been writing on art since the late nineteenth century, art criticism became truly mainstream—at least for a few years—when several of the country’s major papers began featuring weekly columns on the subject. This development went hand-in-hand with a more general increase in newspaper circulation, “from about half a million in 1950 to a million in 1956, and a million and a half in 1960.”<sup>2</sup> Together, writers like Ecevit at *Ulus* (1950–1956), Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu at *Cumhuriyet* (1952–1957), and Cemal Tollu at *Yeni Sabah* (1950–1956) reached audiences of tens of thousands. Art writing gained new legitimacy as a professional vocation, and the figure of the critic received unprecedented visibility in the public eye.

I argue that newspaper art criticism columns appeared in Turkey’s top daily papers precisely because Turkey’s left-leaning intelligentsia increasingly placed a premium on the act of critique in and of itself. Such criticism was understood as a cornerstone of democratic practice that had to be modeled for a newspaper-reading citizenry in order to shore up the crumbling foundations of democracy in Turkey. Tracing the connection between the rise of the political notion of critique and art criticism brings into view an important instance of the way that the realm of arts and culture became a key ground for intellectual experimentation in the practice of Turkey’s fledgling democracy. It is well-known, for example, that a range of Turkish journals,

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*Forum Dergisi: 1954-1960* (Istanbul: Libra Kitapçılık ve Yayıncılık, 2010), 158. See the conclusion of Chapter One of this dissertation for further details about the closure of the art galleries and the pogroms of September 1955.

<sup>2</sup> Karpat, “The Turkish Left,” 178–179.

magazines, and newspapers—not only the explicitly socialist *Yön* (1961–1967), but also the national newspapers *Ulus*, *Cumhuriyet*, and *Akşam*—became spaces of heated debate about the relationship between art and politics in the leftist debates of the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> But, far from being an unprecedented result of the newly open atmosphere of the 1960s, this chapter’s genealogy of newspaper art criticism columns of the 1950s suggests that such 1960s discussions also drew on a preceding legacy of political dissent in the national press, one that was located at the intersection of art and politics. The concerns writers like Ecevit, Eyüboğlu, and Tollu delineated in their columns will be familiar from the previous chapters of this dissertation: chief among them were the questions of what the culmination of the first stage of the Kemalist project of secular modernization signified for art’s role within Turkish society; how best to negotiate and critique the state’s involvement in the art world; and how Turkey’s cultural politics influenced its standing within an international community. However, the platform of art criticism introduces an additional theme to my discussion of art and politics of 1950s Turkey—namely, the centrality of *language* to the ways in which all factions of Turkey’s intelligentsia, from the left-leaning figures featured here to their ideological opponents, formulated and worked through these knotty theoretical questions.

For many intellectuals concerned with the growing repressions of the Democrat Party, the issue was not merely whether or not to speak out against specific wrongdoings of the administration. The right to dissent, to contest, to critique—the ability to freely express opposing views without repercussions—*this* was the larger principle that figures like Ecevit and Tollu saw coming under threat from the Democrat Party’s increasingly oppressive tactics. These critics argued that freedom of expression was both an index of Turkey’s “level” of democracy

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<sup>3</sup> Gürdaş, “Deneysel, bireysel, cesur çıkışlarla dolu.”

(*demokrasi seviyesi*) and a means to enact the social changes necessary to secure Turkish democracy in the long term. In limiting freedom of expression, they argued, a vulnerable Turkey might lose its already shaky hold on its hard-won democratic order. Some years before, Tollu had drawn a vivid image of what Turkey risked if it did not adequately safeguard its citizens' intellectual liberties using the metaphor of a spider immobilized by its web. It now seemed that this was the very situation the country confronted:

Intellectual freedom (*fikir hürriyeti*) . . . constitutes a critical consciousness in intellectual thought, art, and politics, which directs minds towards the ideal. If not for this critical consciousness, even when occupying the most ideal order, people will remain anchored in place, like a spider captive in its own web.<sup>4</sup>

Deeply invested in combatting such perceived social dangers, local art critics raised several pressing and self-reflexive questions: To what extent *was* freedom of expression possible in Turkey, and in its allegedly free and open political sphere? How did the state of Turkish art reflect on the state of Turkish democracy in comparison to an array of international political alternatives? And what was the role of art criticism itself, which allegedly represented multiple and competing views, in ensuring freedom of expression in Turkey and buttressing the country's international standing? These inquiries would drive political and cultural debates of the final years of the 1950s, ultimately providing the very basis for the revised program of individual social and political rights that was articulated by the new constitution that followed the coup of 1960.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "Fikir hürriyeti . . . fikirde, sanatta, siyasette, zihinleri ideal olana yönelten bir tenkid şuurudur. Bu tenkid şuurı olmasaydı insanlar en ideal bir düzen içinde dahi, kendi ağları içinde mahpus bir örümcek gibi oldukları yerde kalırlardı." Cemal Tollu, "Dergilerin mühim vazifeleri" [Magazines' Important Mission], *Yeni Sabah*, November 28, 1952, 2.

<sup>5</sup> As Karpat explains, "The social ideas developed in 1954–1960 and during the revolution were eventually incorporated in the Constitution of 1961. Defining Turkey as a national, secular, and social state, it recognized extensive individual rights and freedoms and spelled out a broad social programme to be carried out by the state. Thus, while providing a legal basis for social reforms, it also ensured safety for individuals to engage in political activity in order to achieve these goals." "The Turkish Left," 183.



## 1. CRITICISM COALESCES, 1940–1950

Although there were Turkish art-focused publications dating to the early twentieth century, as late as the 1930s art criticism was not considered to be a discrete form of writing in Turkey, and there was widespread agreement, as the editors of the journal *Ar* put it succinctly in 1937, that “Turkey [had] no art critics.”<sup>6</sup> *Ar* (1932–1938; 1945), whose phonetic pronunciation echoed the French word for “art” and which took up the Republican category of “national art” (*milli sanat*) as its main topic, was one of the two primary art journals to appear in Turkey before the 1940s.<sup>7</sup> It was preceded by *The Journal of the Ottoman Painters Society* (*Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi*) (1911–1914). Printed in the Ottoman script, the earlier journal featured didactic entries on individual artists, specific artistic techniques, and art history, and, in the words of art historian Wendy Shaw, it manifested a commitment to “providing information and discussion rather than critique or analysis of artworks.”<sup>8</sup>

By the 1940s art criticism (*sanat eleştirisi*) began to coalesce into a more distinctly analytic phenomenon. The idea of social critique gained increasing traction within both the context of literary discussions about criticism (*eleştiri*) and a newly emergent space of debate: “magazines of art and ideas” (*fikir ve sanat dergileri*). Turkish “magazines of art and ideas” brought together Turkish writers on a range of cultural topics—literature, art, society—while providing an

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<sup>6</sup> “*Ar*’a Dair Bir İki Not” [One or Two Notes About *Ar*], *Ar*, no. 1 (December 1937): 6, cited in İpek Duben, *Türk Resmî ve Eleştirisi: 1880–1950* [Turkish Painting and Art Criticism] (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2007), 172. Duben’s book is the most comprehensive account of Turkish art criticism.

<sup>7</sup> *Ar* also provided an important forum where members of the artist’s group known as the D Group (*D Grubu*, 1933–1947), including Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, began to formulate their early theories about cubism. Wendy M. K. Shaw, *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 170–171.

<sup>8</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi: 1911-1914* [The Ottoman Painters’ Society Newspaper: 1911-1914] (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2007); Shaw, 117–118.

important showcase for the work of contemporary international writers in translation.<sup>9</sup> For example, a 1951 advertisement for the magazine *Pazar Postası* (1951–1959), where both Bülent Ecevit and Adalet Cimcoz published intermittently and which became an important venue for the “Second New” (*İkinci Yeni*) poetry movement, listed among others the following articles: “Communism and Buddhism” (Walter Persian), “Classic Capitalism” (Albert Pasquier), a translation of a T.S. Eliot poem by prominent man of letters Can Yücel, and an essay by Nurullah Ataç, the head of publications at the Turkish Language Association. Run by small networks of intellectuals, such “magazines of art and ideas” typically circulated between 500 and 2,000 copies and targeted a readership with a preexisting interest in the subjects they featured.<sup>10</sup> One of the most prominent debates that took place in such publications during the 1940s centered on the role of criticism within Western and (Ottoman) Turkish literary traditions, questioning whether or not Turkey could claim to have a criticism tradition at all.<sup>11</sup> Throughout

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<sup>9</sup> Some of the most prominent included Necip Fazıl Kısakürek’s influential journal *Büyük Doğu* (*The Great East*) (1943–1978), a conservative publication which advocated a return to an Islamicate order and argued against Kemalist modernization, and where Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu wrote some of his earliest essays; *Yeni Ufuklar* (*New Horizons*) (1952–1976), co-founded by Sabahattin Eyüboğlu and the writer and critic Vedat Günyol; *Eser* (*Masterpiece*) (1947–1948), a short-lived magazine initiated by the Ankara-based architect and furniture designer Selçuk Milar; and *Yaprak* (*Leaf*) (1949–1950), a literary review founded by Orhan Veli Kanık, one of Turkey’s foremost modernist poets and a dear friend to many of the intellectuals who frequented Galeri Maya. For more details see: Hıfzı Topuz, *Türk Basın Tarihi: II. Mahmut’tan Holding’lere* [*History of the Turkish Press: From Mahmud II to the Era of Big Business*] (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2003), 186–191.

<sup>10</sup> Turkey’s population was around 20 million in the year 1950, its literacy rate approximately 40%. Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar, *The Politics and Poetics of Translation in Turkey, 1923–1960* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 147.

<sup>11</sup> Sabahattin Eyüboğlu’s 1940 translation of Montaigne’s *Essais*, for example, became a landmark event for the Turkish identification of criticism as a distinct literary genre. Along with his close friend Nurullah Ataç, Eyüboğlu was widely credited with introducing the concept of criticism to Republican Turkey. Whether one agrees or not (many would assert instead that the origins of Turkish criticism lay in an earlier tradition of Ottoman *feuilletonisme*, for example), his *Denemeler* (*Essays*) certainly marked a key moment in the public apprehension of the concept in the twentieth century. See, for example: Azra Erhat, “Eleştiri Üstüne Eleştiri” [Criticism of Criticism], “Sabahattin Eyüboğlu,” and “Sabahattin Eyüboğlu’nun Düşüncesi” [Sabahattin Eyüboğlu’s Thought], reprinted in *Sevgi Yöntemi* [Methods of Love] (Istanbul: İnkılâp ve Aka Kitabeveleri, 1980), 9–38, 240–249; Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, “Birincik Münekkidimiz Nurullah Ataç” [Our Foremost Critic Nurullah Ataç], *İşte Dergisi*, no. 1 (February 1944), reprinted in Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, *Toplu Eserleri 1938–1945* [Collected Writings 1938–1945] (Istanbul: İşbankası Kültür Yayınları, 2002), 228–229; and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, “Edebiyat Anketi” [Literature Survey], *Yeni Adam*, no. 236 (July 6, 1939): 4.

the 1940s, scattered articles on art appeared alongside such debates as an integral part of the broader terrain of “art and ideas.” However, because the number of exhibitions mounted locally were still relatively few, the arts writing that took shape alongside 1940s debates about literary criticism was not always based in the evaluation of artworks or exhibitions. Instead this former model of criticism remained wedded to the descriptive and biographical impulses of its predecessors.<sup>12</sup> Thus, “magazines of art and ideas” provided a forum in which literary debates about criticism (*eleştirir*) gradually began to interpenetrate those about art criticism (*sanat eleştirisi*). Such self-reflexive criticism laid the ground for the 1950s, in which increasing local art events about which to write led daily newspapers opened themselves up to the format of the arts column as a way to reach a vastly expanded readership.

Two ersatz “help-wanted” ads penned in the 1940s by the painter, poet, and cultural critic Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu encapsulate the shifting definitions of art criticism that were developing quickly at the time, paving the way for new understandings of the form in the 1950s. The first, titled “Wanted: Writer” (1941) (*Bir muharrir aranyor*), is a parody of job advertisements that newspapers and magazines typically issued in search of staff journalists. The faux advertisement’s unrealistic and exaggerated requirements—which included not only being intimately acquainted with “every inch of Anatolia” but also having “received one’s due share of Western culture, learned a language, and received a few diplomas there”—wryly commented on the contradictory demands that the Kemalist modernization project placed on the country’s intellectuals, who were expected to revive a deeply local cultural heritage while simultaneously promoting an overarching westernization project.<sup>13</sup> However, Bedri Rahmi went on to complain,

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<sup>12</sup> Duben, 215.

<sup>13</sup> Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, “Bir Muharrir Aranyor” [Wanted: Writer], *Ulus*, October 7, 1941, reprinted in *Toplu Eserleri 1938–1945* [Collected Writings 1938–1945] (Istanbul: İşbankası Kültür Yayınları, 2002), 83–85.

“it is far from clear whether this writer should be a poet, a novelist, a story-teller, a critic, or a journalist.”<sup>14</sup> It was not only because of this unrealistic set of expectations that this imagined ideal writer remained elusive, but also because, in 1941, nobody could agree upon just what *type of writer* and literary form were best suited to the nation’s current needs. When, three years later, Bedri Rahmi published his second article, his demand for a writer had become a search for a critic. In 1941 he had used the Arabic-derived Ottoman term *muharrir*, which implies description, editing, and redaction; by 1944 he used the word *münekkit*, a term which implies critical judgment.<sup>15</sup> In the 1944 article, which he titled “Wanted: Critic” (*Bir münekkit aranyor*), the painter now honed in on the type of writer that he sought, issuing a far more specific demand:

We seek a critic (*münekkit*). If nothing else, one little one! Maybe others would multiply in his wake. However much we may need an exhibition space that can accommodate five hundred masterpieces, we are just as much in need of a critic who can make those works his own. . . . All jokes aside, to the list of things we are ordering from Europe, it would be fitting to add a critic with a very good understanding of painting and sculpture.<sup>16</sup>

The shift in Bedri Rahmi’s demand—from *muharrir* to *münekkit*, from writer to critic—indexes the increasing urgency with which Turkish intellectuals advocated for art criticism as essential to the development of a national cultural sphere during the multi-party period. Bedri Rahmi sardonically suggested that Turkey had grown accustomed to simply “ordering” social, political, and cultural imports from Europe in an effort to hasten the processes of modernization and westernization that been accelerating since the reform (*Tanzimat*) era of the late nineteenth century. His account of modernity for sale, of import and export, carried a critical edge even while assigning to Europe the singular power to galvanize a Turkish cultural sphere to life. Yet,

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<sup>14</sup> “Bu muharririn şair mi, romancı mı, hikâyeci mi, münekkit mi, gazeteci mi olacağı pek belli değildir.” Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> *Münekkit* derives from *tenkid etmek* via the Arabic term for critic, *naaqid*, and the root ن - ق - د (n-q-d); *muharrir* from the Arabic word for editor, *muharrar*, and the root ح - ر - ر (h-r-r), which indicates noting down, or recording.

<sup>16</sup> Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, “Bir Münekkit Aranyor” [Wanted; Critic], *Vatan*, April 27, 1944, reprinted in *Toplu Eserleri 1938–1945* [Collected Writings 1938–1945] (Istanbul: İşbankası Kültür Yayınları, 2002), 251–254.

“all jokes aside,” Bedri Rahmi also possessed a deep faith in the Turkish intelligentsia’s capacity to produce local critics in Europe’s “wake.” The larger hope underwriting the poet-painter’s call for a Turkish critic is that such a figure would help the local art world develop to a level of self-sufficiency to the extent that the looming importance of Western paradigms would eventually be eclipsed. In short, by the mid-1940s, members of the Turkish intelligentsia began to argue that there was a specific need for art critics, who, they suggested, would have an integral and determining role in the progressive development of the Turkish art world as a robust and independent sphere of national cultural production.

Thus, Bedri Rahmi’s vision—which was also the predominate view of his peers—assigns the art critic a structural role within an ideal future art world made up, like a well-oiled machine, of a series of independent components that fit together to facilitate its proper functioning. Using a string of vivid metaphors to make his point, Bedri Rahmi explained:

Only critics have historically succeeded in the work of discerning and diffusing the essence of art. Lacking the bridge that critics construct between them, the viewer and the artist are condemned to remain distant from one another. Any place where the critic has not extended his illuminating finger, art and the art lovers who have managed to emerge it has managed to generate will be like people condemned to die of hunger in a land of plenty.<sup>17</sup>

The writer’s description of the Turkish art world as a land of creative plenty, to which its citizens and its artists have no access because they lack the guidance of the critic, reverberates with Tollu’s equally dramatic evocation of a Turkish people rendered immobile, like a “spider trapped in its own web.” The two critics’ metaphors of death, entrapment, and stagnation reflect a view that, by the early 1950s, achieved consensus: that organizing more and more exhibitions was simply a dead end unless there were critics to challenge artists intellectually and to insist on the discursive component of art. In this instrumentalist view a rationally constructed art world could

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

only reach its full efflorescence once all the proper components were acquired; to possess any given component without the other foreclosed the possibility of the Turkish art world reaching its full potential. This functionalist view, however, could also be extended to a view of society at large. For Bedri Rahmi was making a larger argument about positionality and what it meant to be a critic in a broader sense within society. While his call was quite literally a specific demand for art critics, to be a “critic” here ultimately meant to be a member of society engaged in the betterment of society at large.

## 2. NEW AUDIENCES AND NEW OUTLETS FOR CRITICISM, 1950s

Just a decade after Bedri Rahmi made his demand for “one little critic” the writer announced excitedly that “all of a sudden the tiny little exhibition announcements from the back pages of our newspapers have become one of the most important topics of discussion.”<sup>18</sup> Between 1950 and 1952 several of Turkey’s major papers, which independently reached between 30,000–50,000 readers daily, began publishing columns specifically devoted to art criticism.<sup>19</sup> In the format of the daily newspaper column, art criticism was marked by its authors’ journalistic engagement with contemporary events, and local exhibition reviews were a cornerstone of the form. The new columns were shaped by the same cadre of intellectuals who had simultaneously played the roles of artist, writer, gallerist, and teacher in the Turkish art world since the 1930s. The names are familiar by now. Between 1950–1956 Cemal Tollu presided over “Conversations on Art” (*Sanat Bahisleri*, the noun *bahis* notably implying a wager, a bet, or stakes) at *Yeni Sabah*. Concurrently, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu wrote a column called “The Art World” (*Sanat*

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<sup>18</sup> Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, “Bir, İki, Üç” [One, Two, Three], *Cumhuriyet*, September 20, 1954.

<sup>19</sup> Along with *Cumhuriyet*, *Ulus*, and *Yeni Sabah*, which had some of the highest circulation, the top daily papers of the era were *Akşam*, *Vatan*, *Hürriyet*, *Dünya*, *İstanbul Ekspres*, and *Tercüman*. Topuz (2002), 217.

*Dünyası*) at *Cumhuriyet* (1952–1957), and Ecevit threaded nearly one hundred art criticism articles through his daily political column at *Ulus*, Ankara’s largest paper (1950–1956). Adalet Cimcoz and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar began to make art a regular concern in their cultural commentary.<sup>20</sup> A handful of more conservative thinkers like Malik Aksel (1901–1987) and İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu (1886–1978) also wrote intermittently about art.<sup>21</sup> The many images of “the art critic” that proliferated in the Turkish press when Istanbul hosted the annual gathering of the International Association of Art Critics (*Association Internationale des Critiques d’Art*) in 1954 reflects the growing mainstream interest in art criticism that helped drive these columns’ success. While attending the Congress and serving as the judges for the *Developing Turkey* painting contest, the European critics Herbert Read, Paul Fierens, and Lionello Venturi were profiled in countless columns and interviews, and their head shots were featured on the front pages of the local press. (Figures 2.32–2.35) If Turkey’s membership in AICA signaled the growing legitimacy given to art criticism as a professional vocation, such images also indicated the increased visibility that the figure of the critic came to have in the early 1950s. By 1954 the president of AICA’s Turkish chapter, Nurullah Berk, would proudly announce to a roomful of

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<sup>20</sup> Cimcoz got her start writing theater reviews at *Tasvir* in 1946. Between 1947 and 1954, she wrote under the pen-name Fitne Fücür, and published hundreds of arts and society columns in *20. Asır*, *Salon*, *Hafta*, and *Tef*. Later in the 1950s she wrote for *Aydede*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Ulus*, *Varlık*, *Yeditepe*, and *Yeni Ufuklar*. Tanpınar’s criticism from the period has been reprinted in Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Yaşadığım Gibi* [As I Have Lived] (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1996); and İnci Enginün and Zeynep Kerman, *Günlüklerin Işığında: Tanpınarla Başbaşa* [In Light of The Journals: Face to Face with Tanpınar] (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2007).

<sup>21</sup> An expanded version of this study will devote greater attention to the conservative accounts of culture that developed alongside and in conversation with the work of left-leaning thinkers addressed here. Because of their alternative intellectual investments, institutional bases, and social networks, more conservative writers did not structure their writing as regular columns about the secularized modern art world, but instead integrated discussions of contemporary art into their historical and theoretical investigations of Turkey’s Islamic cultural heritage. Baltacıoğlu taught Islamic Aesthetics at Istanbul University from 1925–1933 and was deeply invested in preserving Islamic material heritage in Turkey. He served as editor of the weekly journal *Yeni Adam* from 1933–1978. Malik Aksel was one of the first instructors at the Gazi Teaching Institute (*Gazi Eğitim Enstitüsü*), which opened in Ankara in 1931 and was distinguished from the Istanbul Academy of Fine Arts by its mission to train art teachers for high schools rather than artists. He wrote at *Pazar Postası* in the 1950s, had great reverence for Ottoman painters, and was interested in Islamic art and the history of anti-imagery in the history of Islam. See Malik Aksel, *Sanat ve Folklor* [Art and Folklore] (Istanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2011).

visitors at the AICA Congress that “every [Turkish] newspaper now has its art critic.”<sup>22</sup> Bedri Rahmi’s plea had not fallen on deaf ears: the art critic had arrived.

Together, Tollu’s and Ecevit’s writings mark two ends of the spectrum of practices that constituted left-leaning art criticism in 1950s Turkey. In the remainder of this chapter I will touch upon the work of a half-dozen critics, but I will focus in particular on these two writers as representatives of the broader discourse. Tollu was, in many ways, an obedient bureaucrat and a career civil servant. His lifelong position at the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy positioned him at the heart of the state cultural apparatus, and he remained loyal to the state-run arts infrastructure throughout various regime changes. Even while employed at *Yeni Sabah*, a paper known for its strong support of the Democrat Party, Tollu nevertheless frequently took the Democrat administration to task for its paltry support of the fine arts.<sup>23</sup> Tollu chose the neo-impressionist Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) as a guiding light early in his career and had a reputation as a dogmatic promoter of the rigid set of formal principles that he had derived from his study of the French artist. A painting in the collection of the Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture, for example, displays Tollu’s interest in Cézanne’s approach to *passage*—the articulation of forms that appear to stand simultaneously for multiple objects, as in the overlapping horse’s legs at the center of Tollu’s canvas. (Figure 3.1)

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<sup>22</sup> Simone Gilles-Delafon, *Report on Inaugural Meeting*, AICA Folio I, “5ème Congrès, 6ème Assemblée Générale, Istamboule, 1954,” subfolder “Comptes Rendus,” Fonds AICA Internationale, 1948–2003, Les Archives de la Critique d’Art, Rennes, France.

<sup>23</sup> Tollu became an instructor at the state Fine Arts Academy in Istanbul in the late 1930s. He retained the approval of government circles throughout the regime changes of the 1940s and ‘50s, participating in state-run Homeland Tours (*Yurt Gezileri*) in the late 1930s, receiving a state scholarship to study in France and a commission for the murals at the Ankara Opera in 1947, and serving on the jury of State Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions in the mid-1950s. Tollu had previously written intermittently for various newspapers and journal between 1933–1949, including *Cumhuriyet*, *Vatan*, *Tanin*, *Yeniden Doğuş*, *Yaşayan Sanat*, and *Ar*. All biographical information is drawn from Adnan Çoker, *Cemal Tollu* (Istanbul: Galeri B, 1996).



Like Tollu, Ecevit was thoroughly integrated into the Turkish art world through his activities as a writer, a gallerist, and a member of AICA. What made Ecevit rare amongst his intellectual peers, however, was that all of the platforms from which he acted—his own gallery, Helikon, the Ankara paper *Ulus*, and the political journal *Forum* that he co-founded—remained resolutely outside the government’s purview. Ecevit was outspokenly against the ruling regime in his columns at *Ulus*, the primary mouthpiece of the opposition. His broader investments lay with documenting and theorizing the development of events in the art world that, like his own endeavors, represented a new wave of activity independent of the intervening state. Yet despite the two writers’ differences, their criticism was united in its fundamentally didactic spirit and its adherence to the ideology of *halk terbiyesi*, or popular training, that was so crucial to the galleries addressed in Chapter One.<sup>24</sup> Tollu, for example, explicitly declared that “above all else [criticism] must be instructive (*öğretici*).”<sup>25</sup> He approached this task by providing reading recommendations and book reviews to his audience, writing encyclopedia-like entries on topics such as “academicism,” “Fauvism,” “fresco,” and “light and shadow,” and instructing them in European and Turkish art historical canons through biographical entries on artists.<sup>26</sup> Ecevit, on the other hand, adhered closely to the format of the exhibition review while altering the way he

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<sup>24</sup> As Dina A. Ramadan has pointed out in the case of Egypt, where emphasis was similarly placed on helping a popular readership cultivate “proper taste” (*al-dhawq al-salim*) in the 1950s, here art criticism “is ultimately invested in . . . the wider discourses involved in cultivating a bourgeois artistic awareness and aesthetic sensibilities, what Bourdieu would call cultural competence, as part of the larger project of constructing the modern subject.” Dina A. Ramadan, “Cultivating Taste, Creating the Modern Subject: *Sawt El-Fannan* and Art Criticism in 1950s Egypt,” *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 42, no. 1/2 (2008): 26. See also Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 79–80.

<sup>25</sup> Cemal Tollu, “Hür ve Orijinal Olmak” [To Be Free and Original], *Yeni Sabah*, September 29, 1954, 3.

<sup>26</sup> It seems likely that some of Tollu’s articles are encyclopedia entries that he has translated from French. At one point, for instance, he refers to this practice specifically, suggesting that “we take a look at a small encyclopedia.” Cemal Tollu, “Kırk Yılda” [In Forty Years], *Yeni Sabah*, December 21, 1955, 3.

framed the column's larger lesson for Turkish and Anglophone readers.<sup>27</sup> In short, even as Ecevit remained unaffiliated with the state cultural apparatus and Tollu securely ensconced within it, both devoted themselves to Bedri Rahmi's model of a critic as an instructor for a national collective.

Through their terminological choices about which words to use for "critic," Turkish writers advocated different visions for the political and social role this new figure would take within the local cultural scene. Each term—*eleştirmen*, *münekkit*, *sanat yazarı*, *tenkidçi*—was a lexical starting point from which individual writers projected their own visions of a social and political world, a world built around different conceptions of their own authority as "critics" and of their audiences as readers within the national sphere. Traditionalists like Tanpınar and Tollu preferred the Ottoman term *münekkit* (or *münekkid*). As an adjective derived from an Arabic verbal root in accordance with Arabic grammatical rules, *münekkit* carried a whiff of a bygone era while signaling its users' possession of a brand of scholarly knowledge that Turkey's younger generations lacked in the wake of the 1928 language reform.<sup>28</sup> Consistent with this inflection, Tollu (who was widely regarded as one of the most inflexible of the Academy's painting instructors and frequently addressed his audience with the arch "we") projected his role as a critic in terms of a looming intellectual authority who peremptorily instructs an unschooled reader. Other writers, like Bedri Rahmi, Cimcoz, and Ecevit, adopted newer terms like the bastardized *tenkidçi* (a hybrid of the Arabic-Ottoman *tenkid* and the Turkish structural suffix *-çi*, signifying profession or occupation); the Turkish neologism *eleştirmen*; or the more generic

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<sup>27</sup> The clearest iteration of this can be observed when looking at the different way that Ecevit framed the exhibition reviews he duplicated, in both English and Turkish, for different publications. For his anglophone readership, Ecevit omitted the justificatory framing explanations that he gave to his Turkish readers, explanations as to *why* it was important for Turkish readers to learn about art. See, for example: "Yugoslavs, Başağa, and Children," *Turkish-American News*, October 21, 1953; and "Ankara'da Sergiler" [Exhibitions in Ankara], *Dünya*, October, 1953.

<sup>28</sup> *Münekkit* derives from *tenkid etmek* via the Arabic term for critic, *naaqid*, and the root ن - ق - د (n-q-d).

*sanat yazarı*, or art writer. The palpable novelty of these terms signaled their users' commitment to the modernizing impulse of the Kemalist reform project as well as the notion that this was a new breed of intellectual for a new era in Turkey's history.

Since the 1928 reforms, language had been a reigning metaphor for debates about self-expression in Turkey. The Kemalist overhaul of the Turkish language did away with the Arabic script used in Ottoman Turkish, which had first developed in the fourteenth century, replacing it with the Latin alphabet. It also excised Arabic and Persian terms, seen as an unwanted link to Islamic culture for the young secularizing republic, and replaced them with Turkish neologisms.<sup>29</sup> The newly-created language was thus one of the primary mediums through which a holistic Turkish nation (*ulus*) was ushered into being: the modern Turkish language is inseparably bound up in the politics of the nation's formation as such as well as the long-standing debates about the relationship of the intelligentsia to the *halk* detailed Chapter One.<sup>30</sup> Art critics in the 1950s therefore did not merely use language to forward arguments about Turkish art, politics, and society; they also contended with the history and politics of modern Turkish in a self-conscious and self-reflexive manner.

As with Tollu and Tanpınar, Bedri Rahmi's, Cimcoz's, and Ecevit's uses of this novel vocabulary was concurrent with the different linguistic politics that they each developed during

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<sup>29</sup> Literary scholar Talat Halman notes that "in 1920 the written language consisted of 75% Arabic, Persian, and French words, but by 1970 words of Turkish origin had risen to 80% whereas foreign borrowings were reduced to only 20%." At the same time, literacy rates soared, jumping from 8% in 1927 to 30% by 1945. See: Talat S. Halman, *The Turkish Muse: Views and Reviews, 1960s–1990s* (Syracuse, N.Y: Crescent Hill Publications, 2006), 227; and Hale Yılmaz, "Learning to Read (again): The Social Experiences of Turkey's 1928 Alphabet Reform," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 04 (2011): 681.

<sup>30</sup> As literary scholar Nergis Ertürk explains it, "The politics attending [the] use [of Ottoman Turkish] were already complex by the end of the fifteenth century, with the dramatic expansion of a linguistic gap separating the speech and writing of the learned class (*havas*) from that of the commoners (*avam*). . . . [L]ate nineteenth and early twentieth-century nationalism saw the recoding, through the Orientalist discipline of Turcology, of a 'vulgar' Turkic linguistic element . . . as the foundation of Turkish-speaking Muslim identity." Nergis Ertürk, *Grammar and Literary Modernity in Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 7, 14.

this time—an era that one writer described in terms of experimentation, uncertainty, and new potential in the realm of written meaning, when “the [Turkish] language hadn’t yet settled.”<sup>31</sup> Ecevit’s militant use of “pure” new Turkish (*öz Türkçe*) positioned his readers as fellow citizens in a modern nation-state heading into the future. Given the democratic imperatives of the 1950s, classical Ottoman *Divan* literature, which came out of Arabic- and Persian-inflected court poetry, was increasingly seen as an elitist model of literary production that was insufficiently “of the people”—writing that was too “Ottoman” was thus often viewed with suspicion and thought to perpetuate a regressive politics. Ecevit duly scrubbed his work of obvious Ottomanisms, omitted concepts affiliated with a Republican past (such as *milli sanat*, or national art), and gradually did away with French borrowings, settling on a compact, almost telegraphic writing style that intentionally opposed the notorious Alexandrianism of the Ottoman literary tradition.

Cimcoz and Bedri Rahmi similarly developed an anti-elitist stance through language. They both espoused a loose, conversational mode of writing and punctuated their columns with hypothetical questions and conversational segues. In this way they simulated a friendly, informal chat as a means to introduce their readers to the unfamiliar topic of the fine arts. Bedri Rahmi in particular penned several humorous articles condemning elitist critics’ disconnect from popular language and cultural traditions.<sup>32</sup> Cimcoz’s writings typically appeared under the header “Society Gossip” (*Sosyete dedikoduları*) or “City Gossip” (*Şehir dedikoduları*) or “Were You There Too?” (*Siz de orada miydiniz?*). While in contemporary Turkish *dedikodu* translates to “gossip,” in the context of Cimcoz’s columns it did not carry the negative implication of

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<sup>31</sup> Azra Erhat, “Eleştiri Üstüne Eleştiri” [Criticism of Criticism], reprinted in *Sevgi Yöntemi* [Methods of Love] (Istanbul: İnkilâp ve Aka Kitabevleri, 1980), 11. The essay is about Sabahattin Eyüboğlu and Nurullah Ataç’s early experiments writing criticism in the 1940s and 1950s.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example: Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, “Eleştirme Bulaştırma” [Criticism-Contamination], *Türk Folklor Araştırma Dergisi*, 1952, reprinted in *Toplu Eserleri 1952–1953* [Collected Writings 1952–1953] (Istanbul: İşbankası Kültür Yayınları, 2002), 69–74.

potentially malicious or unfounded discussion of personal affairs. Rather, the emphasis fell upon the other terms referenced in the column headers—“city” and “society”—and Cimcoz’s writings are best described as society columns or society journalism. From the mid-1940s throughout the 1950s, Cimcoz wrote witty narrative accounts of events attended by Istanbul’s wealthy and its intellectual and artistic elites. These writings combined factual reportage with innuendo and speculation, and often included biting commentary on individuals’ personal lives or physical appearances. For example, of the opening events at the AICA Congress in 1954 Cimcoz wrote:

Who *wasn't* there to hear the opening speech that day. Absolutely everybody showed up! I checked, all of our delegates and the bigwigs that I’m talking about have got gorgeous eyes. For example I’d never seen [founding member of the Democrat Party] Fuat Köprülü from that close up, we came nose to nose, but because he didn’t extend his hand to me I didn’t dare to reach out my hand, and my dear Ziyad didn’t think it was necessary to introduce me, but when I looked into Fuat’s eyes I got dizzy, what sparkly eyes, what a gorgeous color.<sup>33</sup>

Even as she revealed her own proximity to the “high society” whom she critiqued, Cimcoz always adopted the tone of a humble observer. This rhetorical self-positioning encouraged the average reader to look with her eyes and envision themselves in her shoes, pressing through crowds at a cocktail, waiting for the curtain to rise at the theater, or attending a modern art exhibition with a glass of champagne in hand. “Who am I, the serious people at this paper invited me on board too without considering my stature. . . . And they charitably gave me some columns,” wrote Cimcoz in a column about the opening events for the painting contest *Developing Turkey*. “Anyway, my job is to give you Istanbul’s gossip [*dedikodu*], let’s get

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<sup>33</sup> “Kimler yoktu o gün orada açılış nutkunu dinlemek için. Kimler de kimler! Söz alan bizim delegeler ve kodamanların baktım hemen hepsinin gözleri güzel. Meselâ Fuat Köprülü’yu hiç bu kadar yakından görmemişim, burun buruna geldik, o elini uzatmadığı için ben cesaret edip uzatamadım elimi, Ziyadçığim da tanıştırmaya lüzum görmedi beni, fakat Fuat beyin gözlerine bakınca başım döndü, o ne cıvıl cıvıl gözler, o ne güzel göz rengi.” Fitne Fücür [Adalet Cimcoz], “Siz de Orada Miydiniz?” [Were You There Too?], *Hafta*, September 17, 1954.

started.”<sup>34</sup> As is reflected by Cimcoz’s presence at these two important art world events, her columns were not merely an account of the social dynamics of such gatherings, but also provided a means for her to engage the art and artists she was so invested in promoting at her own gallery. Thus, Cimcoz’s “society journalism” was a multi-layered discourse that brought together multiple forms of reportage and critique, from social commentary to art criticism, in order to provide a keen analysis of the convergence between modern Turkish art, its producers, and its consumers in 1950s Istanbul.<sup>35</sup> In short, their modes of address and the very choice of term through which Tollu, Tanpınar, Ecevit, Cimcoz, and Bedri Rahmi identified themselves as “critics” operated as a means through which they projected their own position within a far larger landscape: the Turkish Republic envisioned through a national readership.<sup>36</sup>

As Turkey continued its efforts to work within a multi-party system, criticism gained traction precisely because a left-leaning intelligentsia considered it to exemplify a larger democratic principle, namely the free expression of individual opinions unlimited by the power of the state. Yet plenty of conservative critics combatted this view, arguing that this kind of unbridled freedom opened Turkey up to the incursion of dangerous political ideologies such as Communism. When the conservative novelist and columnist Peyami Safa penned an editorial on the topic of “The Most Dangerous of the Communists Among Us,” for example, he did not argue that such “underground activities” (*yeraltı faaliyetleri*) were taking place in the heart of the

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<sup>34</sup> “Neyliyeyim, bu gazetede ciddî insanlar, boyuma bakmadan almışlar aralarına beni de. . . . Oysa ki görevim sizlere İstanbul dedikodusu yapmak, başlıyalım bari.” Fitne Fücür [Adalet Cimcoz], “İstanbul Dedikoduları” [İstanbul Gossip], *Halkçı*, September 26, 1954.

<sup>35</sup> While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to plot a history of society journalism in Turkey, it is also important to note that, as in the Anglo-American context, Cimcoz’s columns were positioned as a specifically “feminine” mode of writing, both penned by a woman and pitched at female audiences in an attempt to profit off of women readers. For an overview of the American and British tradition, see “Society Reporting,” in Stephen Vaughn, ed. *Encyclopedia of American Journalism* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 486–489.

<sup>36</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

government or in the schools but rather located them in magazines, in publishing houses, and specifically in the art columns that most national papers now possessed:

Communism in Turkey works in subterranean ways, and these are where the real danger lies. Concealing their identity and appealing to snobs, dandies, fops, and an unremarkable youth under the appealing guise of novelty, progressivism, or leftism, Communists make use of the fine arts, find ways to cut away at the roots of the national spirit, establish magazines and publishing houses and put out scores of books; they even control the arts pages of some of the daily papers. . . . If you take a look at the ‘Art World’ columns in some papers, if you look at some of the left-leaning magazines who promote these new ideals, you will see that they all share these characteristics.<sup>37</sup>

Safa’s zealous article reflects the growing identification of art criticism as a politically potent space for leftist agitation.<sup>38</sup> The left’s own vision of criticism’s role within a larger national political sphere had taken full form by the time the editors of *Forum* declared in 1954 that “ideas [must be] openly shared and debated” in order for “a stable order of freedom to be established in our country” (*memleketimizde kararlıklı bir hürriyet düzeni kurulabilmesi için*).<sup>39</sup> Their advocacy of critical dissent would only increase in political importance as opposition to the Democrat Party mounted and as battles over newspaper censorship heated up in 1955 and 1956, a series of developments that I address in the final section of this chapter.

### 3. A MOUNTING CRISIS, 1955–1956

By the middle of the decade art criticism was fully caught up in the growing crisis around the freedom of expression in Turkey. In the immediate wake of the anti-minority pogroms of September 1955 (discussed in the Conclusion of Chapter One), the ruling administration issued a

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<sup>37</sup> Peyami Safa, “Bizdeki Komünistlerin En Tehlikelileri” [The Most Dangerous of the Communists Among Us], *Milliyet*, 1954, reprinted in Şakir Eczacıbaşı, *Çağrışımlar Tanıklıklar Dostluklar* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2010), 195

<sup>38</sup> On Safa’s shifting intellectual and political allegiances, see Ertürk, 136–137.

<sup>39</sup> “This is *Forum*,” reprinted in Çakmak, 158.

new series of restrictions nearly every day, outlawing criticism of the government, forbidding reports on the recent declaration of martial law, and banning the publication of any news or images regarding the events themselves. The following year the Democrats pushed through Laws 6732 and 6733, declaring that papers could be punished for publishing content with “bad intentions or private motivations” and for insulting the “reputation or power of the state or the government.”<sup>40</sup> The declining state of the Turkish press began to receive international attention that same year, when the government arrested and imprisoned *Ulus* publisher Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın (1875–1957), an elder statesman of Turkish journalism. By 1958 the situation had become so dire that the International Press Association sent an official letter of protest to prime minister Adnan Menderes.<sup>41</sup>

A February 1956 issue of *Ulus* provides a powerful illustration of the ways that debates about art developed alongside broader discussions about freedom of expression. On its front page, an announcement about the reopening of Helikon Association (which, due to its Greek-derived name, had been temporarily closed by the government in the anti-minority chaos of 1955) appeared next to a strident headline declaring that “intellectual freedom and the safety of intellectuals should above all be protected against administrative and political influences.”<sup>42</sup> (Figure 3.2) Perhaps at no other moment had the discursive interlacing of art and politics in Turkey been so clear as when art critics weighed in on the question of intellectual freedom (*fikir hürriyeti*) in exhibition reviews that abutted alarmist editorials on the pages of the country’s embattled papers of record.

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<sup>40</sup> Topuz (2002), 199–201.

<sup>41</sup> Hıfzı Topuz, *Türk Basın Tarihi: II. Mahmut’tan Holding’lere* [History of the Turkish Press: From Mahmud II to the Era of Big Business] (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2003), 197, 202.

<sup>42</sup> *Ulus*, February 27, 1956, 1.



That both Ecevit and Tollu abandoned their art columns within mere months of each other (August and October 1956, respectively), and that both did so after writing final articles about the same event, reflects the serious impact the oppressions of the mid-1950s were having on the art world. Ecevit had stopped writing exhibition reviews around the time of the 1955 pogroms and the Helikon Association's closure; as issue-focused polemics supplanted exhibition reviews, his writing became dramatically more negative in tenor.<sup>43</sup> Tollu's column, too, grew into a bitter litany of what he saw as irreparable deficiencies—issues such as the lack of arts education in the national high schools, the paucity of retrospectives of major painters, and the smallness of the gallery scene.

The event upon which the two critics' final art columns focused was the cancellation of a large-scale state-sponsored painting exhibition titled *Paintings of the Provinces (Vilâyet Tabloları)*. The exhibition itself was the result of a travel program that the Democrat Party had built on the model of the Republican-era Homeland Tours (*Yurt Gezileri*, 1938–1943), in which a range of artists had been sent to the far reaches of the country to paint scenes from Turkish life. The resulting canvases were to take up permanent residence in the newly-built Grand National Assembly in Ankara designed by the Austrian architect Clemens Holzmeister (1886–1983). Details about the sequence of events remain murky, but it is clear that the exhibition, which opened in early May 1956, was swiftly shut down by government officials. (Figure 3.3) According to Tollu, who had traveled to Bodrum as a participating artist in the fall of 1955, an unnamed member of parliament had superseded the authority of the jury in charge of selecting paintings for purchase by the state, decreeing that not a single one of several hundred paintings

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<sup>43</sup> Ecevit's columns about art took on a more negative cast as pieces such as "Anatolia's Neglected Deficiency: Art," "Two Ankara Shortcomings: Academy and Museum," and "The Unthinking Intelligentsia" intermingled with equally vehement political screeds like "Martial Law and Human Rights" and "Censorship and the Foreign Press."

was fitting to be hung in the National Assembly.<sup>44</sup> Others recount far different reasons for the exhibition's closure.<sup>45</sup>

Whatever actually occurred, one thing is clear: the spectacular failure of the program was widely understood as a confounding, even irrational, instance of state censorship, deeply emblematic of the impossibility for Turkish artists to work freely under an increasingly oppressive regime. For Tollu and Ecevit, the *Paintings of the Provinces* debacle represented a breaking point in their own engagement with the art world, a final straw that triggered two of Turkey's most prominent critics to leave behind the vocation upon which they had expended years of effort. In the face of the challenges of the mid-1950s, the *Paintings of the Provinces* episode was thus emblematic of a Turkish intelligentsia's gradual loss of faith in art's ability to sustain the democratic promises they had previously envisioned for it.

Despite Tollu and Ecevit's different relationships to the ruling administration, in their respective final columns about the failure of the *Paintings of the Provinces* exhibition both of them vehemently condemned the Democrat Party's effects on Turkey's cultural sphere and the failures of the Turkish intelligentsia. Throughout, Ecevit referred to the administration within quotation marks, signaling the spuriousness of the ruling party's claim to embody the principles of democratic governance given its recent record of abuse of the legal system and the press: "It

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<sup>44</sup> Tollu reported on the exhibition in three stages. See Cemal Tollu, "Bodrum'dan" [From Bodrum], *Yeni Sabah*, September 28, 1955, 3; "Aynı Hamurdan" [From the Same Dough], *Yeni Sabah*, July 25, 1956, 2; and "Zaman'ın İçinde bulunmak" [To be of One's Time], *Yeni Sabah*, August 1, 1956, 3.

<sup>45</sup> Some claim that government officials cancelled it because they did not approve of the abstract paintings on display. According to Hughette Eyüboğlu, however, the cancellation took place due to a comment made by her mother-in-law, Eren Eyüboğlu, who had participated in the "Paintings of the Provinces" program and was based in Antalya. When asked what she liked most about Antalya, Eyüboğlu reportedly replied that "there were a large number of donkeys (asses)." The writer Bedrettin Tüncel, himself from Antalya, assumed that Eyüboğlu's comments were intended as an insult to the people of the region and complained publicly about the artist. Hughette Eyüboğlu reports that, in solidarity with Eren Eyüboğlu, the participating artists withdrew their paintings from the exhibition on the night that it opened and that the government subsequently claimed to have closed the exhibition itself. Hughette Eyüboğlu, interviewed by the author, June 20, 2014, Kalamış, Istanbul.

appears that the ‘Democrat’ leaders, who suppose that they have finished with the matter of the press, the university, and the courts, Supreme and otherwise, have now turned their gaze upon art,” he warned.<sup>46</sup> In an equally damning article, Tollu called the ruling party’s democratic credentials into doubt. The painter implied that, by imposing their own priorities on the selection process, members of parliament were circumventing their political duties to represent the interests of a national collective in the context of a democratic representational government:

Is it possible that not even thirty artworks produced are of a quality to make happy the 540 members of parliament, who have been chosen by the will of 24 million citizens to speak on their behalf on relevant issues? For years, hundreds of [Turkish] young people have been sent to various European cities to complete their education. All of these youths have been supported by the government because they display high levels of success in their chosen profession. Some of them are painters and sculptors. Is it really possible that, in contrast to the successes of students in other professions, the artists lag behind?<sup>47</sup>

Building further on this portrayal of the Democrats as anti-democratic, Ecevit went so far as to compare the recent actions of the Democrat Party officials to the totalitarian cultural policies of former Soviet official Andrei Zhdanof (1896–1948), who had helped engineer the violent political purges that took place under Stalin in the 1930s.<sup>48</sup> The young journalist finished by darkly predicting that Turkish artists might soon expect to be treated similarly to those in Communist Russia and Nazi Germany, suggesting that “the recent hubbub . . . at the exhibition of ‘Paintings of the Provinces’ organized by the Turkish parliament, is a sign that Turkish artists

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<sup>46</sup> “Basının, üniversitenin, mahkemelerle Yargıtay’ın işini bitirdiklerini sanan “Demokrat” idareciler, anlaşılan şimdi de gözlerini sanata çevirmektedirler. . . . Son günlerde Devlet Resim ve Heykel Sergisinde başlayıp TBM’nin tertipledeği Vilâyet Tabloları Sergisinde kopan fırtına, Türk sanatçıların da aynı dertleri “Demokrat” liderler elinden çekmek üzere olduklarına işaretir.” Bülent Ecevit, “Bizim ‘Zdanof’lar ve Modern Sanat” [Our Own ‘Zhdanofs’ and Modern Art], *Ulus*, May 10, 1956, 3.

<sup>47</sup> Cemal Tollu, “Aynı Hamurdan” [From the Same Dough], *Yeni Sabah*, July 25, 1956, 2.

<sup>48</sup> In 1946 Zhdanof was put in charge of the Soviet Union’s cultural policy and formulated what came to be known as the “Zhdanof Doctrine.” Under “zhdanovism” artists were required to adhere to a world-view that saw the world divided into two camps—the Western “imperialist” approach and the Soviet “democratic” one—and, at risk of persecution or death, to use their art in support of state ideology. Despite his short tenure, Zhdanof’s ideas remained in place as official Soviet doctrine until Stalin’s own death in 1953.

should soon expect the same treatment from their ‘Democratic’ leaders.”<sup>49</sup> Thus, the powerful conjuncture of artistic expression, state authority, and representative governance that the *Paintings of the Provinces* program was intended to promote came, instead, to embody its opposite: the constriction of freedom and the total abandonment of democratic practice in Turkey.

## CONCLUSION

Newspaper criticism of the 1950s, at once journalistic and didactic, provided a forum in which its practitioners advocated a range of competing and overlapping visions of “the critic” within both the Turkish art world and Turkish society at large. What is more, they self-reflexively made use of the Turkish language, a shifting field of meaning that “hadn’t yet settled,” not just to advance arguments but to embody specific models of critical authority in light of Turkey’s political past and vis-à-vis a reading public. Their shared project only took on greater urgency as they persisted in the face of growing censorship. Tracing the trajectory of Turkish newspaper art criticism—its appearance as an integral part of the burst of cultural activities that attended the Democrat Party’s 1950 arrival to power, its authors’ lively involvement in the art world, and, finally, by their increasing disillusionment and eventual abandonment of the cultural realm—gives access to the broader dynamics that defined the activities of Turkey’s cultural elite during this decade of change. Indeed, by 1956 an entire cohort of left-leaning thinkers had already begun to identify this as their collective experience of the decade. The editors of *Forum*, the political journal of which Ecevit was a co-founder, were among those who articulated this shared set of concerns most clearly in 1956. Taking stock of the last few years, they mourned the “boundless optimism” (*engin bir iyimserlik*) of the early

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<sup>49</sup> Ecevit, “Our Own ‘Zhdanofs’ and Modern Art.”

1950s, a period during which many members of their circle had “invested themselves in helping root Western mindset and traditions within the Turkish universities.”<sup>50</sup> The *Forum* writers explained that “as they began to feel the full force of the regime’s pressure,” Turkish intellectuals no longer had the luxury of pursuing their goals through intellectual and cultural avenues. Instead, they were compelled to leave the life of the mind behind in order to seek alternate means by which to “stand their ground and resist the blows of a blind and unrelenting power.”<sup>51</sup> For many of the *Forum* circle—including Ecevit, who abandoned the cultural realm to enter parliament in 1957 and subsequently spent the rest of his life in politics—this entailed active involvement in Turkish party politics. Others, like Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu and Cemal Tollu, continued to seek out new avenues within the art world that had long been their home. In the final years of the 1950s, as I explain in this dissertation’s Epilogue, international exhibition opportunities at biennials in Brussels, Paris, São Paulo, and Venice provided a crucial new outlet for these artists who had an increasingly difficult time in their home country but continued in their persistent search for new horizons for their practice.

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<sup>50</sup> “Türk üniversitelerinde Batılı geleneklerin ve zihniyetin yerleşmesine gayret sarf ettiler.” “This is *Forum*,” reprinted in Çakmak, 158.

<sup>51</sup> “Bir yere tutunma, kör ve amansız kuvvelerin savurmasına, köklemesine karşı direnmek için.” Ibid.

## EPILOGUE

### **“The Face of the World of Tomorrow”: Turkish Art at International Biennials, 1957–1961**

On the morning of May 27, 1960, Turkey awoke to the announcement that the Turkish army had ousted the Democrat Party in a military coup. The intelligentsia greeted this news with excitement: “The Army has saved the Turkish nation from a calamity so great that even the immense moral and material difficulties it has recently endured begin to appear insignificant,” Bülent Ecevit declared in his column.<sup>1</sup> The 1960 overthrow was the culmination of long-standing concerns about the growing concentration of power in the hands of a single party and a single man, the prime minister Adnan Menderes (1899–1962). Over the preceding three years, the Democrat Party had consolidated its authority through a series of increasingly dramatic gestures while continuing to flaunt the democratic principles it had once claimed to uphold.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, a leftist opposition had grown increasingly bold. After 1957, notes historian Kemal Karpat, the RPP gained the confidence “to enlarge their social programme and bring to the fore the leftist members,” and by 1958, “some party leaders openly defended socialism. The psychological and organizational ground for a new leftism was thus prepared. It needed only the opportunity to emerge, and this was supplied by the military revolt of 1960.”<sup>3</sup> In Istanbul and Ankara hostility towards the ruling party grew into a full-fledged movement: “by 1960, not only the bureaucrats

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<sup>1</sup> Bülent Ecevit, “Ekmek Gibi. . .” [Like Bread. . .], *Ulus*, June 17, 1960, 1.

<sup>2</sup> For example, hoping to preempt a negative response to their increasing unpopularity, the Democrats held elections in October 1957, a year earlier than scheduled. The same month, the Democrats inaugurated a loyalty campaign called the *Vatan Cephesi* (Fatherland Front), a much-scorned propaganda program that dominated the airwaves through 1958 and included hours-long radio reports listing their alleged supporters. Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: British Academic Press, 1995), 232–239.

<sup>3</sup> Karpat, “The Turkish Left,” 181.

and the intellectuals, but also Istanbul business circles rallied to the ranks of the opposition.”<sup>4</sup>

The military occupied government buildings in Istanbul and Ankara and dissolved the Democrat Party with the aim of establishing a new constitution and returning to parliamentary democracy. They formed a National Unity Committee (*Millî Birlik Komitesi*), tried and executed Menderes and two of his ministers, and restored freedoms of the press that had been eroded over the preceding half decade. Thus, Turkey’s intelligentsia, who had been so excited about the 1960 regime change, were shocked when the military junta expelled a veritable “who’s who of the Turkish intelligentsia” from their university posts in October of that year.<sup>5</sup> This arbitrary disciplining of 147 professors, including Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, was inconsistent with a movement that otherwise claimed to be emancipatory: the event cast its entire premise into doubt. Ecevit echoed many others’ analysis of the event when he pointed out that “many of the individuals who were ousted from their posts . . . were talented and brave scholars who made the Revolution their own, who openly were on the front lines of opposition against the Democrat Party, and who fought not only at their desks and their newspaper and magazine columns, but in the very streets,” before going on to query, “How can we [now] trust the National Unity Committee to establish and nourish democracy in this country?”<sup>6</sup> The 1960 coup heralded the beginning of a long period of upheaval. With the changes of the following decade—including the global student movement and events of 1968, Turkey’s shifting role in the Cold War, and the domestic rise of socialism—the terms through which Turkish artists, writers, and academicians

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<sup>4</sup> Çağlar Keyder, “The Political Economy of Turkish Democracy,” *New Left Review*, no. 115 (June 1979): 16.

<sup>5</sup> Fatma Müge Göçek, *Denial of Violence: Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence against the Armenians, 1789-2009* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 292. For a detailed account of the press coverage of the events, see: Yitzhak Oron, ed., *Middle East Record* (Tel Aviv: Israel Program for Scientific Translations, 1961), 2:524–526.

<sup>6</sup> Bülent Ecevit, “Üniversiteye neden vuruldu?” [Why Was the University Attacked?], *Yeni Ulus*, October 29, 1960, 1.

debated art's significance within society transformed entirely.<sup>7</sup> In architecture, the question of “socially engaged architecture” (*toplumcu sanat*) gained new importance, as architects “advocated . . . direct engagement with the country's social conditions and political structures.”<sup>8</sup> In art, performance practices gained additional momentum through dialogue with protests and other public actions that characterized this tumultuous political period, while the new importance given to posters in the context of an emergent left movement provided a prominent outlet for the interface of art and politics.<sup>9</sup> “Should an architect directly or indirectly participate in politics? What is the professional limit of architectural engagement? Is it in designing buildings or should it rather be extended to the transformation of society's economic and political infrastructure as a whole?”<sup>10</sup> Such were the questions that came to dominate the architectural realm, as did their analogues in the art world. Much like it did elsewhere across the world, the 1960s in Turkey saw the waning of political and artistic frameworks of the modern and a shift towards a set of problems that would come to define the contemporary in art.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> As the left turned into a full-fledged movement for the first time, Turkey's political situation remained unstable throughout the following decade and often clashed violently with the nationalist right. As Mehmet Salâh explains it, “Turkey entered a twenty year period in which almost every form of class struggle was experienced by millions of people: from the youth movement to upheavals in the army, from working class movements to urban guerrilla activities, from civil servant unionisation to unrest and the organisation of activities in the police force.” Mehmet Salâh, “The Turkish Working Class and Socialist Movement in Perspective,” *Libcom.org*. (blog), August 14, 2013, <http://libcom.org/library/turkish-working-class-socialist-movement-perspective>

<sup>8</sup> Bozdoğan and Akcan, *Turkey*, 155.

<sup>9</sup> For example, the openly socialist Turkish Worker's Party (*Türk İşçi Partisi*, founded in 1961),

used artist and journalist Fikret Otyam's photographs of Anatolia on their 1967 calendar alongside entries from the national constitution in order to critique poor infrastructure, while the artist Abidin Dino designed TİP's second logo in 1969. See Gürdaş (2015) and Yılmaz Aysan, Esra Yıldız, Ebru Seyhan, and Emek Can Tülüş. *Afişe çıkmak: 1963–1980 solun görsel serüveni* [Posters: Visual Escapades of the Left, 1963–1980] Istanbul: İletişim, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Bozdoğan and Akcan, *Turkey*, 173.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example: Bora Gürdaş, “Deneysel, bireysel, cesur çıkışlarla dolu” [“Full of experimental, individual courageous departures”], special issue, “1960'lar: Eylem yılları” [The 1960s: The Years of Action], *Istanbul Art News* (March 2015): 21.



In the final pages of this dissertation, I focus on the years immediately preceding and following the 1960 coup (1957 to 1961) in order to examine the political and artistic debates that shaped the beginnings of the contemporary period in Turkey. While the young cultural critic Ecevit was able to move into the professional realm of politics when the pressures of the Democrat Party weighed too heavily on his cultural activities, several established artists who made their home at the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy did not have the same motivation or means to leave the art world behind. Instead, they turned to opportunities abroad. What happened when authoritative figures of the Turkish art world entered into an international art scene at this juncture, presenting themselves, their fellow Turkish artists, and their home country before a global audience even as their political system was on the brink of collapse? In what follows, I shift my analysis from artistic sites in Istanbul and Ankara to biennials in São Paulo and Paris.

Beginning in 1956 the painters Nurullah Berk (1906–1982), Sabri Berkel (1907–1993), and Cemal Tollu (1899–1968) used their senior status to gain opportunities to organize Turkish exhibition pavilions in Paris, São Paulo, and Venice.<sup>12</sup> Turkish art first appeared at an international biennial in 1956, when Berkel curated the Turkish pavilion in Venice.<sup>13</sup> Over the

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<sup>12</sup> An additional important example of Turkish exhibitions abroad was the elaborate pavilion Turkey contributed to Expo 58, the Brussels world fair of 1958, with a pavilion by a team of Turkish architects headed by Utarit İzgi and a large-scale mosaic designed by Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu. Because this was a world's fair, rather than a biennial of contemporary art, this exhibition was bound up with a slightly different set of questions around national industry and the inclusion of art within architectural structures in the International Style. See, for example, Bozdoğan and Akcan, *Turkey*, 131–137; Sibel Bozdoğan, “A Lost Icon of Turkish Modernism: Expo 58 Pavilion in Brussels,” *Docomomo* 35 (2006): 62–63; Johann Pillai, *The Lost Mosaic Wall: from Expo '58 to Cyprus* (Nicosia: 2010); Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, “Brüksel Mektupları: Cam Pazarı” [Letters from Brussels], *Cumhuriyet*, March 24, 1958, 3; “Brüksel Mektupları: Bir eksiklik var ama. . .” [Letters from Brussels: Something's Missing. . .], *Cumhuriyet*, March 31, 1958, 3; and “Belçika Mektupları: Üçgen Salgını” [Letters from Belgium: The Triangle Epidemic], *Cumhuriyet*, April 16, 1958, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Berkel also organized the Venice pavilions in 1958 and 1962, after which Turkey did not participate again until 1990. On the Turkish state's slowness to respond to the Venice Biennial's multiple invitations to exhibit from the late 1940s onwards, see: Cemal Tollu, “Devlet ve Sanat Mükâfatı” [The State and the Art Prize], *Yeni Sabah*, December 16, 1953, 3; “Milletler Arası ve Biz” [International Exhibitions and Us], *Yeni Sabah*, January 4, 1954, 3; “Venedik Haberleri” [News from Venice], *Yeni Sabah*, July 4, 1956, 3; “Venedik Sanat Gösterileri” [Venetian Art Exhibitions], *Yeni Sabah*, April 12, 1950, 3; and “Zamanın İçinde Bulunmak” [To be of One's Time], *Yeni Sabah*,

next several years Turkish artists showed in São Paulo (under the curatorship of Berkel and Tollu) and in the Paris Biennial (where Berk oversaw the Turkish exhibition for nearly a decade).<sup>14</sup> Like so many of the hybrid intellectuals addressed in the preceding chapters—individuals who were simultaneously active as artists, writers, gallerists, and teachers—Berk, Berkel, and Tollu now added the vocation of curator to their own diverse roster of activities.<sup>15</sup> This trio of artist-curators were hardly, however, the up-and-coming young practitioners upon which these youth-focused events typically placed a premium: Tollu had joined the faculty of the Fine Arts Academy in 1937, while Berk and Berkel had taught there since 1939. From one perspective, these fathers of the modern Turkish art world, set in their ways and aging rapidly, were relics from another era, washed up on foreign shores. And yet they resolutely took up the task of articulating and proclaiming the ways in which they and their fellow Turkish artists stood on the cusp of the future. Berk, Berkel, and Tollu served as bridging figures whose very role was to span the historical formations of the “modern” and the “contemporary” that came into increasing distinction through international biennials in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

May 1960 was quickly seen as the culmination of the earliest chapters of Turkey’s experiments with democracy; it represented the opening of a new era in which preexisting distinctions between authoritarianism and democracy became blurred as the hope that the latter

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August 1, 1956, 3. On the Turkish pavilions in Venice, see: Nancy Jachec, *Politics and Painting at the Venice Biennale, 1948-64: Italy and the Idea of Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 158–160.

<sup>14</sup> For the first edition, Bahattin Örnekol, a Turkish cultural attaché in Paris, was listed as the organizer after which Berk served as curator from 1961 to 1967. Sabri Berkel curated the Turkish pavilion at the 1957 São Paulo Biennial in 1957 and Cemal Tollu organized the 1961 edition.

<sup>15</sup> While it is beyond the scope of this study to trace a history of the curator in Turkey, it is worth noting that curating was far from an established profession in Turkey in the 1950s. It was quite unusual when, in the 1970s, Berk identified himself in a short biographic film with the unusual title of “*sergi komiseri*,” a mutation of the French *commissaire d’exposition*. Indeed, until the end of his life Berk organized international exhibitions of Turkish art in locations as diverse as Paris and Strasbourg, and oversaw the Turkish pavilion at the Paris Biennial until 1971. The film is untitled and undated, but the director listed is Nilay Erol. It appears to be relatively near to the end of the artist’s life in the 1970s. Nurullah Berk Family Archive, Istanbul.

would sequentially supplant the former was definitively dissolved. The scholar Murat Belge captures the paradoxical nature of this military action that was hailed as liberatory: “The 1950 election [when the Democrats had initially come to power] was a democratic and progressive event that had a reactionary outcome, while the 1960 coup was blatantly undemocratic yet produced a liberal reform of Turkish government.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, the 1950s, which so many hoped would mark Turkey’s definitive break with one political order (the authoritarian) in favor of another (the democratic), instead culminated in the uneasy realization that such distinctions were far from clear-cut. These would only continue to remain intertwined in the years ahead. In short, Berk, Berkel, and Tollu’s experiments of the late 1950s and early 1960s took place at the very moment when abiding understandings of Turkish political history as a straightforward, unidirectional, and progressive forward advance began to unravel. These artist-curators thus bore the burden of responding to an international community that demanded Turkey’s whole-hearted embrace of international democracy (expressed formally through the idiom of abstraction) even as the very possibility of democracy in Turkey was once again questioned—this time due to the oppressions of the Democrat Party in the final years of the 1950s and the resulting military coup.

By the time the Paris Biennial was founded in 1959, its main curator Raymond Cogniat already observed a worldwide “proliferation of biennials,” citing the new but already prestigious São Paulo Biennial (est. 1951), and the well-established Venice Biennial as examples.<sup>17</sup> The sheer number of countries and artists who showed in such exhibitions proliferated as well: for example, the number of participating countries in the Venice Biennial, which was the first of its

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<sup>16</sup> Ahmet Samim [Murat Belge], “The Tragedy of the Turkish Left,” *New Left Review*, no. 126 (April 1981): 66.

<sup>17</sup> Raymond Cogniat, “Préface” [Preface], in *Première Biennale de Paris* (Paris: Biennale de Paris, 1959), vii.

kind and was founded in 1895, doubled between 1948 to 1964, reaching nearly three dozen.<sup>18</sup> In the Middle East, Egypt established a Biennial of the Mediterranean in 1955, while the Tehran Biennial launched in 1958.<sup>19</sup> The Paris Biennial, which decreed that participating artists must be under thirty-five years of age, sought to mark itself off from other exhibitions of this type by emphasizing its role as an experimental forum for young artists and audiences. Nevertheless, all of these exhibitions gave special value to the idea that it was primarily younger artists whose work, brought together in a grand international assembly, made it possible to “make out the face of the world of tomorrow,” in Cogniat’s evocative phrase.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, this series of interlinked concepts—youthfulness and contemporaneity as driving the search for a democratic and international future—constituted the primary framework through which such biennials articulated their visions of “the world of tomorrow” in the immediate post-war period.<sup>21</sup> These large-scale exhibitions were critical sites where countries that engaged each other on a world political stage used art to make future-facing statements of democratic intent, and World War II was the key historical reference point through which these art events articulated their own importance. The organizers and supporters of such biennials argued that the war marked a historical break before which now-defunct models of art-making and visions of the

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<sup>18</sup> Nancy Jachec, *Politics and Painting at the Venice Biennale, 1948–1964: Italy and the Idea of Europe*. (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 8.

<sup>19</sup> There is a growing literature on the history and forms of the biennial. See, for example: Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic, eds., *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-Wall Europe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005); and Carlos Basualdo et al., eds., *The Biennial Reader* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> Cogniat, vii.

<sup>21</sup> For example, the emphasis upon youth was so important that in 1971 the French ambassador to Turkey reached out to the biennial organizers to “insist discreetly on Berk’s age”—he was sixty-five at the time—prompting the aging curator to be relieved of his duties. The ultimate choice of Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu as the organizer for that year’s exhibition, nearly Berk’s peer in age, was based on the concession that he, at least, was “young at heart.” Letter to unknown author from French ambassador, 1971, Dossier “Biennale de Paris 1971,” sub-folder “Participation Turquie,” Fonds AICA.

international community had been prevalent and after which it was imperative to formulate entirely new ones.<sup>22</sup> Tollu explained this perspective to his readers at *Yeni Sabah* when he noted that, before the war, artists “who were academic and protected by Fascist regimes” had won prizes at the Venice Biennial, whereas the work of artists who received biennial awards after WWII manifested the principle of “freedom won in all realms after the war.”<sup>23</sup> As I detailed in Chapter Two, abstraction—and gestural abstraction in particular—was the primary currency of the international vision of “world artistic production” or “the cycle of world art,” to use Berk and Tollu’s phrases, that such large-scale exhibitions promoted.<sup>24</sup> It was not coincidental that Tollu’s article, in which he argued that it was imperative that Turkey adhere to “the free world’s understanding of art,” was titled “To be of One’s Time.” For it was precisely through these emergent visions of pre- and post-war history, which would increasingly come to be mapped as the “modern” and the “contemporary” in art, that notions of timeliness and contemporaneity gained articulation at mid-century.<sup>25</sup>

International biennials pushed Berk, Berkel, and Tollu to move out of their own comfort

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<sup>22</sup> Documenta, founded in Kassel in 1955, was perhaps the most emblematic of this idea, a gesture made by the Germans to indicate their readiness to leave behind the legacy of WWII and embrace a new world order. David Galloway, “Kassel Redux: A History of Documenta,” *Art in America* 70 (September 1982): 7–10.

<sup>23</sup> Cemal Tollu, “Zamanın İçinde Bulunmak” [To Be of One’s Time], *Yeni Sabah*, August 1, 1956, 3. In her study of the international rise of gestural painting through the lens of the Venice Biennial, Jachec demonstrates that, after a decade of debates centering on the tension between abstraction and realism, it was around 1958 that gestural painting came to be explicitly associated with “the European Idea” in the Venetian context. The year 1962, she argues, marked the “end of the [Italian] government’s concerted effort to promote gesture painting as a symbol of a culturally unified Western Europe,” whereas “other countries that had unwaveringly promoted informalism, such as [the US,] West Germany and Spain, had largely abandoned it.” Jachec, 118, 122.

<sup>24</sup> I have translated “world artistic production” from *production mondiale*, the phrase that Berk used in his French-language essay. “Cycle of world art” is my translation of the Portuguese phrase *ciclo da arte mundial*, which appears in Tollu’s Portuguese catalog text, and was most likely translated from Tollu’s original French. Nurullah Berk, “La Turquie,” in *Première Biennale de Paris* (Paris: Musée National d’art moderne de la Ville de Paris: 1959), 109; Cemal Tollu, “Turquia,” in *VI Bienal Internacional de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Museu de Arte Moderna, 1961), 359.

<sup>25</sup> On emergent distinctions between the categories of “modern” and “contemporary” art, see Richard Meyer, *What Was Contemporary Art?* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013).

zone into new realms of artistic practice demanded by an international community. All three curators' thinking remained closely bound up with a set of formal and conceptual paradigms that had colored some of the earliest Turkish experiments with “synthetic” and abstract approaches to painting since the D Group first ignited such debates in the context of their cubist experiments in the 1930s. Tollu, whose profile I addressed in depth in Chapter Three, was a staple of the Turkish art world, where he was known as the obdurate proponent of a highly codified approach to painting based on his study of the French neo-impressionist Paul Cézanne. Berk and Berkel taught alongside Tollu at the Fine Arts Academy and were close friends. In an undated black-and-white film about Berk made towards the end of the painter's life, in which Berkel also appears, Berk describes his personal approach to painting as an effort to find a “synthesis” (*sentez*) between the formal components of miniature painting and the imperatives of easel painting in a Western tradition.<sup>26</sup> (Figures 4.1–4.2) Berk remained devoted to this model throughout his life, which can be seen earlier in the painting he submitted to the Yapı ve Kredi painting contest of 1954. There, the painter's incorporation of decorative motifs and his use of flattened, non-perspectival space nod to the miniature tradition, while his inclusion of monochrome geometric shapes—particularly the fragmented squares, triangles, and circles in the painting's horizontal upper register—reference Western abstraction. (Figure 2.9) Because of his early advocacy of abstraction in the 1940s, Berk's friend and colleague Berkel had long been considered as a member of the advance guard driving the forward movement of Turkish art. Berkel, originally from Albania, was widely seen as the first practitioner of abstract painting in

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<sup>26</sup> The film is untitled and undated, but the director listed is Nilay Erol. It appears to be relatively near to the end of the artist's life in the 1970s. Nurullah Berk Family Archive, Istanbul. After attending the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy (then known under the Ottoman term of *Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi*), the Francophone Berk studied art in Paris in the late 1920s and 1930s and began writing for a wide range of publications including the “art and culture magazines” *Yeditepe* and *Varlık*. It was largely through the efforts of Berk, who was then president of the Turkish chapter of AICA, that Turkey managed to host the 1954 annual congress in Istanbul.

Turkey. In his catalog text for the 1957 São Paulo Biennial, Berkel described his own work as “moving from the complex to the simple via symbols that become ever more stripped down,” a clear statement of his allegiance to a model of art-making that privileged formal experimentation over explicit social content.<sup>27</sup> The painting Berkel submitted to the biennial that he himself was curating used only a few continuous lines to trace a barely discernable form—a horseman, according to the painting’s title—whose hollows he filled with solid fields of color. (Figure 4.3) An untitled canvas from 1953, on the other hand, which features not outlines but sharp-edged slices of color overlapping and intertwining into looping knots, represents Berkel’s other primary approach to painting. (Figure 4.4) As their own painterly approaches demonstrate, it was precisely because of their involvement in early twentieth-century Turkish debates that Berk, Berkel, and Tollu were designated as the gatekeepers to an international experience of contemporary Turkish art at mid-century. Yet, as I will show, the manner in which they curated international biennial pavilions revealed that they were wary of uncritically subscribing to the formal and conceptual paradigms of these contemporary exhibitions. Indeed, the three artist-curators insisted upon bringing together selections of artworks that challenged the insistence upon abstraction as the only formal category for “world artistic production.”

A dichotomy of “abstract” versus “national” or “regionalist” art structured all of the Turkish pavilions curated by this resolutely modernist trio in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In their catalog essays, which, like their curatorial selections, follow a remarkably consistent template, these authoritative Turkish curators uniformly identified “two primary tendencies” that

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<sup>27</sup> Sabri Berkel, “Turquia” [Turkey], in *IV Bienal Internacional de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Museu de Arte Moderna, 1957), 375. All of the São Paulo Biennial catalogs are available at: <http://issuu.com/bienal>

they saw as characterizing Turkish art.<sup>28</sup> On the one hand, there were artists who they described as meeting the demands of this international viewing public—artists who “deliberately adopt international currents” (abstraction) and “who invent new forms and have an eye towards the future.”<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, Berk, Berkel, and Tollu all recognized a second cadre of artists: those practicing what they alternately dubbed “regionalism or nationalism” and “realism, or art for museums.”<sup>30</sup> The Turkish art community received a particularly powerful message as to the international currency that abstract art—and sculpture in particular—carried when Kuzgun Acar, a former student at the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy, won the first prize at the 1961 Paris Biennial with a sculptural assemblage made of welded iron nails.<sup>31</sup> (Figures 4.5–4.6) The 1961 Paris Biennial, where nearly half of the artworks submitted by Turkey were abstract painting and sculpture, is a representative case study that I will focus on for the remainder of this Epilogue. (Figures 4.7–4.12) The very similarity of Acar’s submission to other vortex-like constructions made of nails that were included in the same exhibition speaks to the common formal approaches promoted by the international circuit of biennials.<sup>32</sup> (Figures 4.13–4.14) In Paris, Mustafa Aslier’s linocuts of village scenes fulfilled the requirement for “national” or “regional” art,

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<sup>28</sup> See, for example: Nurullah Berk, “Turquie” [Turkey], in *Première Biennale de Paris* (Paris: Musée National d’art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1959), 108–109; “Turquie” [Turkey], in *Deuxième Biennale de Paris* (Paris: Musée National d’art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1961), 113–114; Sabri Berkel, “Turquia” [Turkey], in *IV Bienal Internacional de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Museu de Arte Moderna, 1957), 375–376; and Cemal Tollu, “Turquia” [Turkey], in *VI Bienal Internacional de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Museu de Arte Moderna, 1961), 358–359.

<sup>29</sup> Berk (1959), 109; Berkel (1957), 375.

<sup>30</sup> Berk (1959), 109; Berkel (1957), 375.

<sup>31</sup> The award came with the guarantee of a solo exhibition at the Musée National d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris the following year. The attendant press and exhibition opportunities were enough to launch the young artist’s career. On sculpture at post-war biennials and the effects of the prize system, see Jachec, 10, 101.

<sup>32</sup> The medium of sculpture, which typically had very little support in Turkey, received a major boost in value when the country began participating in international biennials where it was a more significant exhibition category. A cadre of Turkish modernist sculptors including Ali Teoman Germaner (b. 1934), Hadi Bara (1906–1971), İlhan Koman (1921–1986), and Zühtü Muridoğlu (1906–1992) received unprecedented exhibition opportunities and exposure.



which was met at other biennials by similarly figurative and “folk art”-inflected works. (Figures 4.15–4.16)

The co-presence of these two conflicting formal paradigms in the Turkish pavilions—one seen as the ultimate example of contemporaneity and international relevance, the other clearly of waning importance to all but a few—does not merely suggest that these aging curators were unable to adapt to the changes of the times. Instead, it might be read as a principled gesture of quiet resistance based in a deep, if not fully articulated, wariness of the homogenizing drive that would later come to be recognized as the signature effect of the international biennial format.<sup>33</sup> Berk, Berkel, and Tollu were clearly concerned that to capitulate fully to the biennial’s demand for artworks that spoke the international language of abstraction would be to relinquish some important form of cultural specificity. While all three repeatedly noted Turkish artists’ ability to work abstractly, they also were quick to emphasize that “Oriental” or “national” components remained significant. As Tollu put it, “[although] contemporary plastic arts [in Turkey] integrate naturally into the cycle of world art, this does not impede our artists from seeking imprint their work with a sense of the national, all without abandoning the general conceits of Western art.”<sup>34</sup> The justificatory tone of catalog essays such as Tollu’s reflects the fact that, despite occasionally receiving important marks of legitimation at international biennials, countries like Turkey felt themselves at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the Western nations that dominated these exhibitions, occupied stronger geopolitical positions, and could lay historical claim to having generated the modernist artistic traditions that underpinned the abstract modes. The three curators’ desire to retain an “imprint” of the uniquely Turkish artistic self thus reflects an unwillingness to

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<sup>33</sup> For an analysis of biennials, markets, and artistic homogenization after 1989, see: Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); and Carlos Basualdo et al., eds., *The Biennial Reader* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> Tollu (1961), 359. See also Berk (1961), 113.

compromise by speaking solely on the formal terms preferred by this new global exhibition format. Rather than using the exhibitions to mark a clear sequential shift from the fading modern into the immediate moment of the contemporary, Berk, Berkel, and Tollu insisted on communicating the unfolding of historical time in Turkish art even within this most presentist of exhibition formats. These curators' insistence upon including non-abstract works reflected a deeply ambivalent response to the siren song of the international contemporary at the very moment of its emergence.

## CONCLUSION

The historical break that 1950 has come to represent between the Republican Era (1923–1950) and the Democrat period (1950–1960) has become overdetermined much of the relevant historiography.<sup>35</sup> Yet what made the 1950s so crucial is precisely its role as a transitional period between two historical eras typically seen as radically separate: the republican single-party era under a Kemalist order and the tumultuous period of the 1960s that saw, among other crucial changes, the public emergence of a strong left. It is precisely this transitionality that gives the 1950s its importance, and observing this period can help us move beyond existing teleologies. Without denying the significance of the effects that the varying ruling parties' policies had upon Turkish daily life, in this dissertation I have sought to loosen this analytical dichotomy of *state* and *culture*. In my study of the 1950s Turkish art world—its institutions, painting practices, and art criticism—I instead aim to show that the question of what constituted *art* or *politics* in the

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<sup>35</sup> Though there are of course exceptions, it is significant that most of the current accounts of modern art and art criticism in Turkey all end at 1950. See, for example: Ipek Duben, *Türk Resmi ve Eleştirisi: 1880–1950* [Turkish Painting and Criticism 1880–1950] (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2007); Nilüfer Öndin, *Cumhuriyet'in Kültür Politikası ve Sanat 1923–1950* [Art and Cultural Politics of the Turkish Republic 1923–1950] (Istanbul: İnsancıl Yayınları, 2003); and Wendy M. K. Shaw, *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

first place was radically up for debate, to say nothing of the relationship between the two. Furthermore, I have argued that by engaging these very debates we can gain a more nuanced sense of the multi-faced, sometimes even paradoxical, ways in which Turkey's citizens conducted a diverse set of personal and collective experiments with the idea of democracy—experiments that were not limited merely to either reinscribing or resisting state action but were driven by a complex set of ideological motivations and personal allegiances.

In Chapter One, for example, I showed how different generations of the Turkish intelligentsia, represented by the gallerists Adalet Cimcoz and Bülent Ecevit, thought about what it meant to be loyal to Kemalist political principles even while moving away from the single-party system that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had initially established into a new form of multi-party democracy. What is more, I demonstrated that the different cultural elites that attached themselves to Galeri Maya in Istanbul and Helikon Derneği in Ankara used the galleries' programming and the range of media they defined as "art" in order to put forward their respective visions of how Turkey's citizenry should conduct itself in the new era of multi-party democracy. In Chapter Two I delved into the international dimensions of Turkish politics of the 1950s by analyzing encounters between foreign and Turkish artists, critics, and thinkers at the *Developing Turkey* painting contest and the AICA Congress of 1954. Here I analyzed Turkey's early Cold War concerns about how the young nation measured up in relation to totalitarian and democratic models that were then present on a world stage. I also examined various thinkers' conflicting views of how Turkey should use art in endeavors of "cultural diplomacy" within this international context. In Chapter Three I demonstrated that the act of writing itself became a political act within the art criticism columns of mainstream newspapers, where critics self-consciously used language to project specific visions of Turkish society and the role of the

dissenting individual within it. Finally, I suggest here in the Epilogue that even the most easily dismissible gesture—senior Turkish curators’ inclusion of figurative works alongside the abstract art they otherwise prioritized for exhibitions of international biennials—should be considered as intimately bound up with Turkey’s ongoing political struggles as the country headed rapidly towards a military coup in the late 1950s.

In May and June of 2013, protests broke out in Istanbul’s Taksim Square, just a minute’s walk away from Atatürk Kitaplığı, the library where I was conducting the bulk of my dissertation research at the time. Bulldozers had recently begun to destroy one of the city’s few green spaces to make way for a faux-Ottoman mall and theme park, a project spearheaded by the right-wing Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in order to promote a conservative Islamist agenda. What began as a small demonstration soon turned into widespread and violent protests against the contemporary administration’s growing limitations on freedom of expression. Across Turkey, over three million citizens from all walks of life gathered publicly to demand their rights to free speech and public space. The government responded quickly and violently. Nation-wide, a dozen people were killed, some 8,000 were injured, and over 3,000 were arrested.<sup>36</sup> Over the following months, the events in Taksim came to represent the reawakening of a dormant popular belief in democracy in Turkey and the politicization of vast segments of a national citizenry who, until then, had considered themselves to be largely unconcerned with politics.

Taksim profoundly changed the way I viewed my object of study, and raised a series of larger questions that I carried with me as I completed my research and wrote the dissertation over

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<sup>36</sup> Christopher de Bellaigue, “Turkey: Surreal, Menacing . . . Pompous,” *New York Review of Books*, December 19, 2013. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/dec/19/turkey-surreal-menacing-pompous/> and “2.5 Million People in 79 Provinces Took to the Streets” [2.5 milyon insan 79 ilde sokağa indi,] *Milliyet*, June 23, 2013. <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2-5-milyon-insan-79-ilde-sokaga/gundem/detay/1726600/default.htm>

the subsequent two years. What was the historical relationship of art to Turkish democracy movements underpinning those of today? If Ecevit argued in the 1950s that art's significance lies in its ability to politicize the individual in the face of totalitarianisms, to what extent does this vision endure now? What is the role of art in this moment of political upheaval and transformation? Now, in 2015, we can begin to think through some of these questions with the retrospective clarity gained during the intervening time since the Taksim protests have left the site of the park to take on new forms elsewhere.<sup>37</sup> But we can also see the seeds of these debates at a fifty year remove, in the context of the democratic struggle immediately after WWII, when the country's citizens eagerly seized the right to vote and began to lay the ground for the democracy they would so avidly work to protect in the twenty-first century.

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<sup>37</sup> Individuals active in the Istanbul contemporary art world, for example, describe the art world as one of the continuing sites of engagement with issues that emerged out of Gezi, whether it be a new level of investment in speaking to previously disconnected audiences, or art practices that demonstrated what one curator called a "more collective spirit." Nevdan Jamgochian, "In the Wake of Gezi, Taking Stock of Istanbul's Art Scene," *Hyperallergic*, February 9, 2015. <https://hyperallergic.com/180922/in-the-wake-of-gezi-taking-stock-of-istanbuls-art-scene/>

## FIGURES



**Figures 0.1–0.2** National Chief İsmet İnönü visits the third annual State Painting and Sculpture Exhibition, 1941. Photographs reproduced from: Oğuz Erten, *Türk Sanatına Yön Veren Sergiler ve Yahşi Baraz'ın Büyük Sergileri* [Influential Turkish Art Exhibitions and Yahşi Baraz's Important Exhibitions] (Istanbul: Galeri Baraz Yayınları, 2012), Vol. 1.



**Figures 0.3–0.4** *Above*: National Chief İsmet İnönü visits cartoonist Semih Balcıoğlu's exhibition at Galeri Maya (May 20–June 3, 1952). *Below*: Semih Balcıoğlu, İsmet İnönü, Muhlis Sırmalı, cartoonist Ali Ulvi Ersoy, Adalet Cimcoz, and Balcıoğlu's older brother Şahap (*from left to right*). Photographs reproduced from: Semih Balcıoğlu, *Önce Çizdim, Sonra Yazdım: Yaşamı* [*First I Drew, Then I Wrote: A Life*] (Istanbul: Yapı kredi Yayınları, 2001).





**Figure 1.1** Yildiz Moran, *Portrait of Adalet Cimcoz*. Moran Family Archive. Photograph reproduced from: *Yildiz Moran: Zamansız Fotoğraflar* [Yildiz Moran: Timeless Photographs] (Istanbul: Pera Müzesi, 2013).





**Figure 1.2** Bülent Ecevit, 1957. Bülent Ecevit personal archive, Ankara.



**Figure 1.3** Zeki Faik Izer, *Devrim Yolunda* [On the Road to Revolution], 1933. Oil on canvas, 176.5 x 237 cm. Istanbul Painting and Sculpture Museum. Photograph reproduced from: Erten.





**Figure 1.4** Şeref Akdik, *Registering for School* [*Okula Kayıt*], 1935. Oil on canvas. Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture. Photograph: Sarah-Neel Smith, 2013.

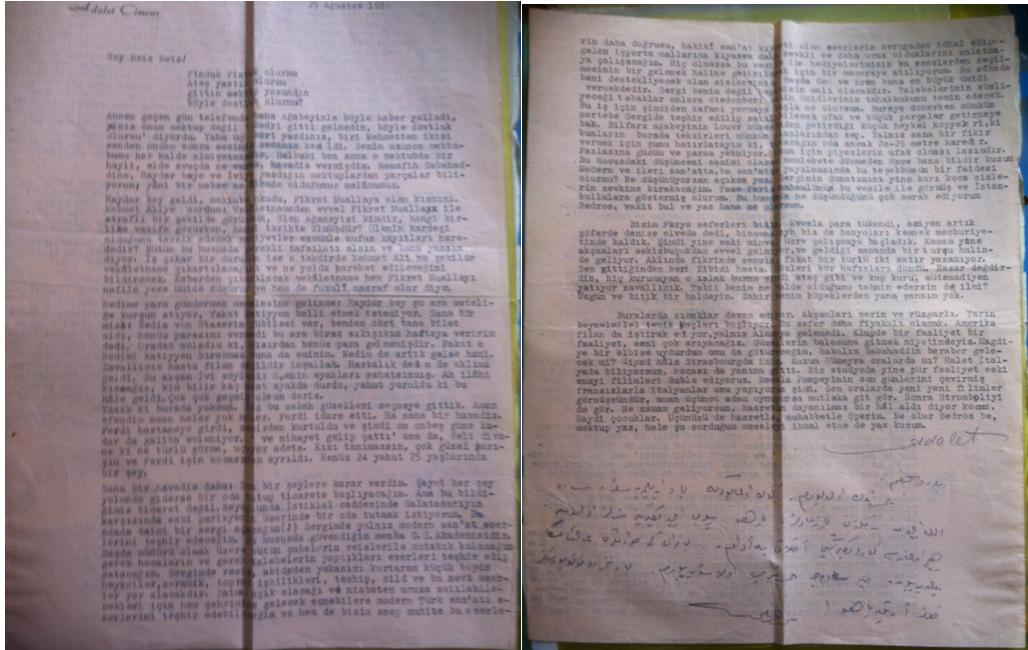


**Figure 1.5** Cemal Tollu at Galeri Maya. Yapı kredi Bankası Archive, Adalet Cimcoz Album, Image #1101-2/11.34. Beyoğlu, Istanbul.



**Figure 1.6** Portrait of Bedri Rahmi Eyübođlu in his studio. Photograph reproduced from: “Never before seen works of art reveal artist’s life in US,” *Hürriyet Daily News*, February 15, 2013, <http://www.hurriyetaailynews.com/images/bedri%206.jpg>

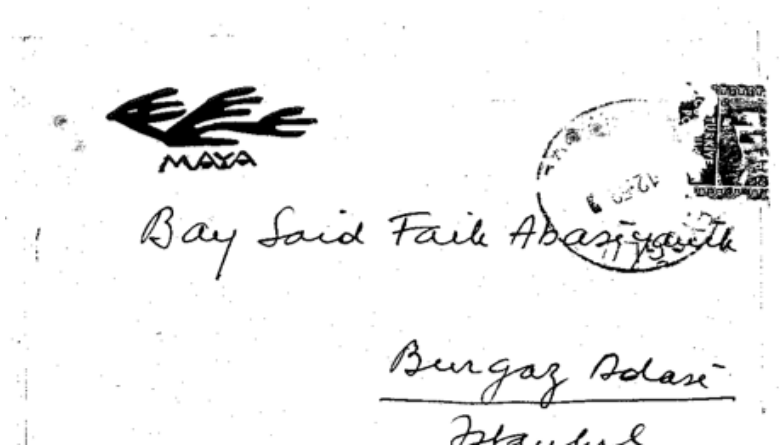




Figures 1.7–1.8 Typewritten letter from Adalet Cimcoz to Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, August 25, 1950. Recto (left) and verso (right). Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu Archive, Istanbul.



**Figure 1.9** Sabahattin Eyübođlu and Adalet Cimcoz, *center*. The figure on the left is Eyübođlu's wife, Magdi Rufer. Yapıkredi Bankası Archive, Adalet Cimcoz Album, Image #1101-2/11.19. Beyođlu, Istanbul.

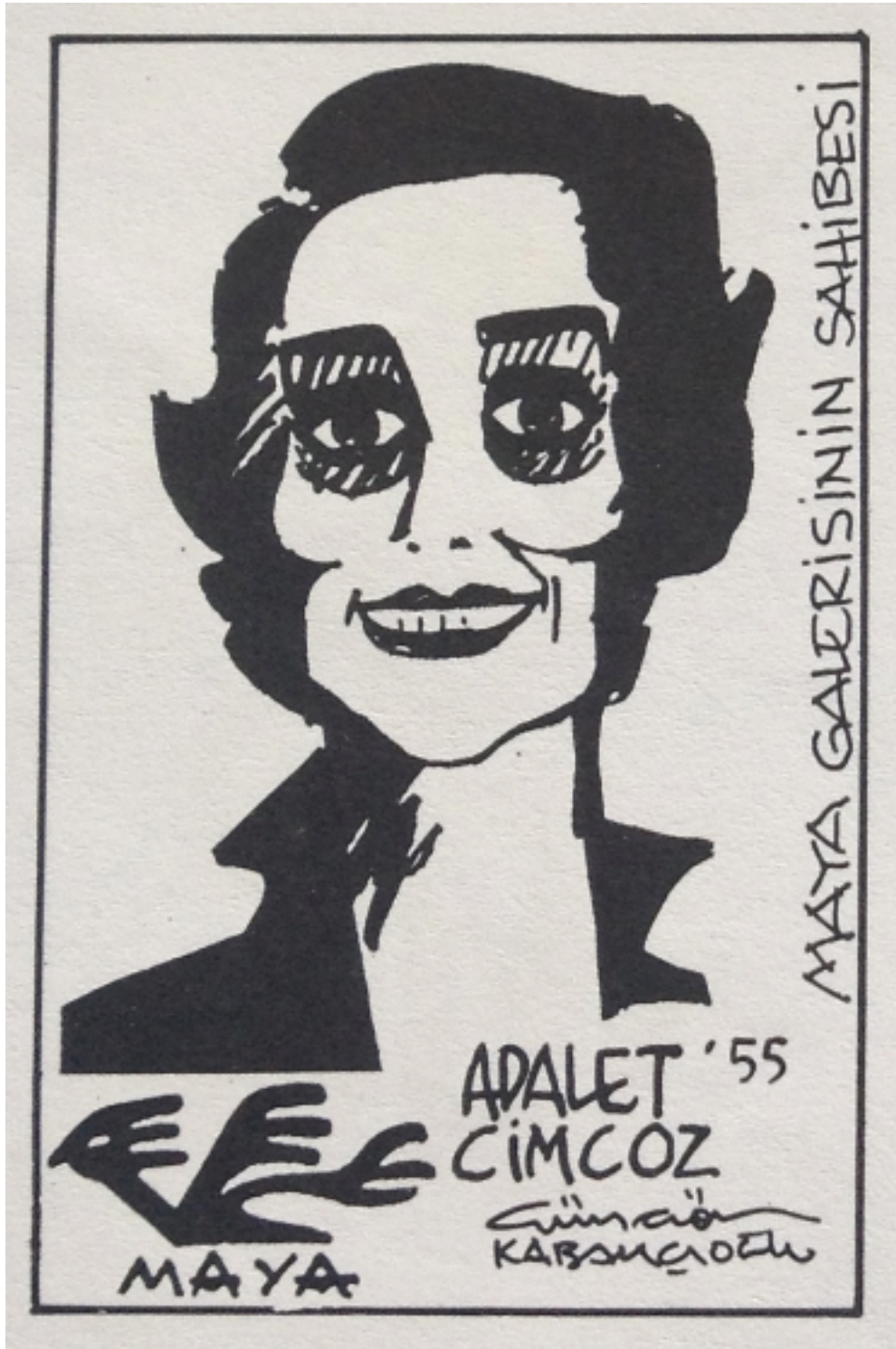


**Figure 1.10** Invitation envelope, addressed to the novelist Said Faik Abasıyanık and featuring Galeri Maya's flying stag logo designed by Bedri Rahmi Eyübođlu. Ömer Faruk Şerifođlu Archive, Istanbul.



**Figure 1.11** Snapshot of Adalet Cimcoz showing Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu’s block-printed curtains with the flying stag logo (*left*) and his decorated panel of a poem, *Karşı*, by Orhan Veli, one of Turkey’s preeminent modernist poets who was close with Cimcoz until his death in 1949. This may be “Exhibition of Painting and Poetry” (*Resimli Şiir Sergisi*) held in February 1952. Yapıkredi Bankası Archive, Adalet Cimcoz Album, Image #1101.2/11.83. Beyoğlu, Istanbul.

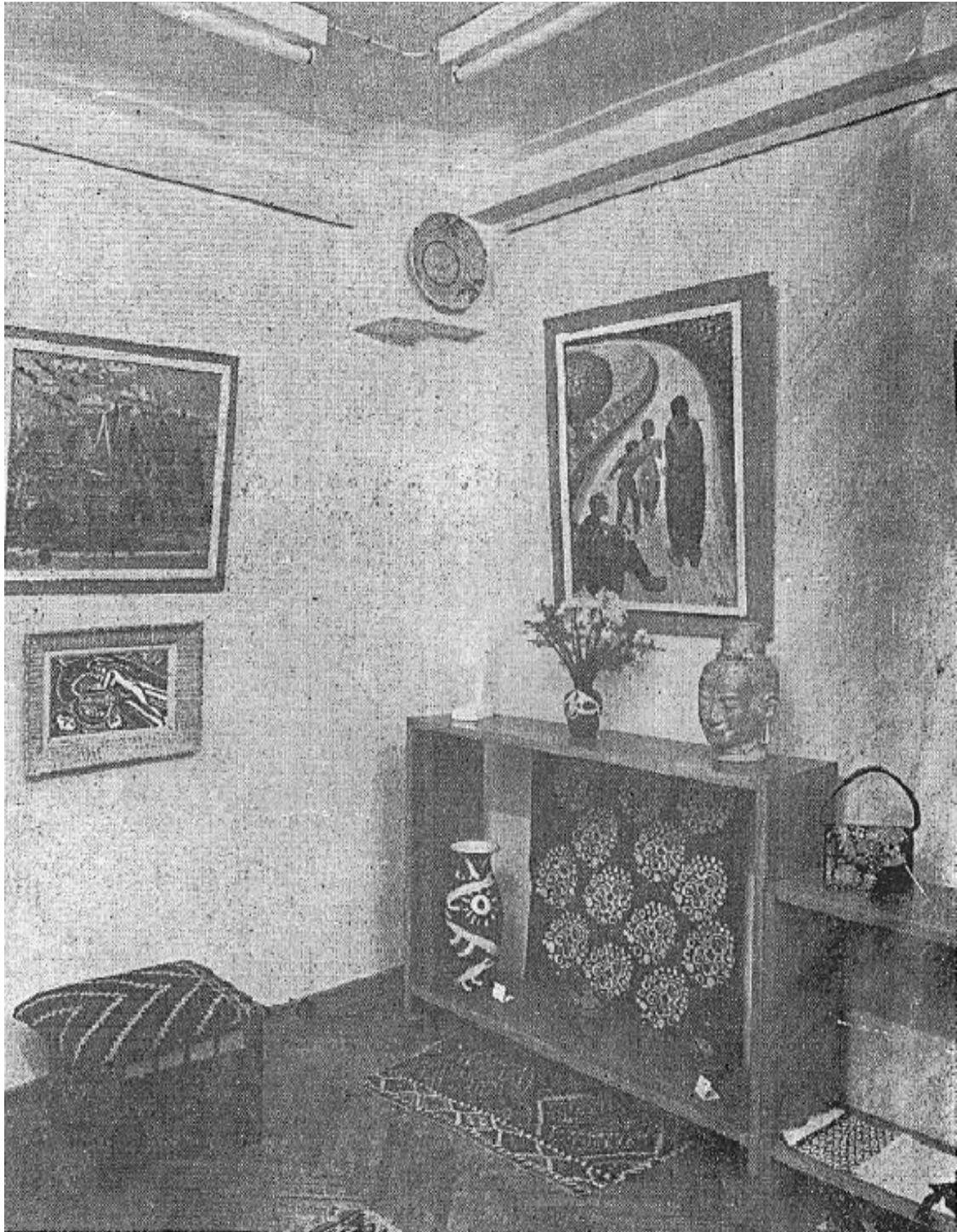




**Figure 1.12** Güngör Kabakçioğlu, caricature of Adalet Cimcoz labeled “owner of Galeri Maya.” Yapıkredi Bankası Archive, Adalet Cimcoz Album, loose sheet. Beyoğlu, Istanbul.



**Figure 1.13** Henri Matisse, *The Sheaf (La Gerbe)*, 1953. Maquette for ceramic (realized 1953). Gouache on paper, cut and pasted, on paper, mounted on canvas, 115  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 137  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (294 x 350 cm). Collection University of California, Los Angeles. Hammer Museum. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney F. Brody.

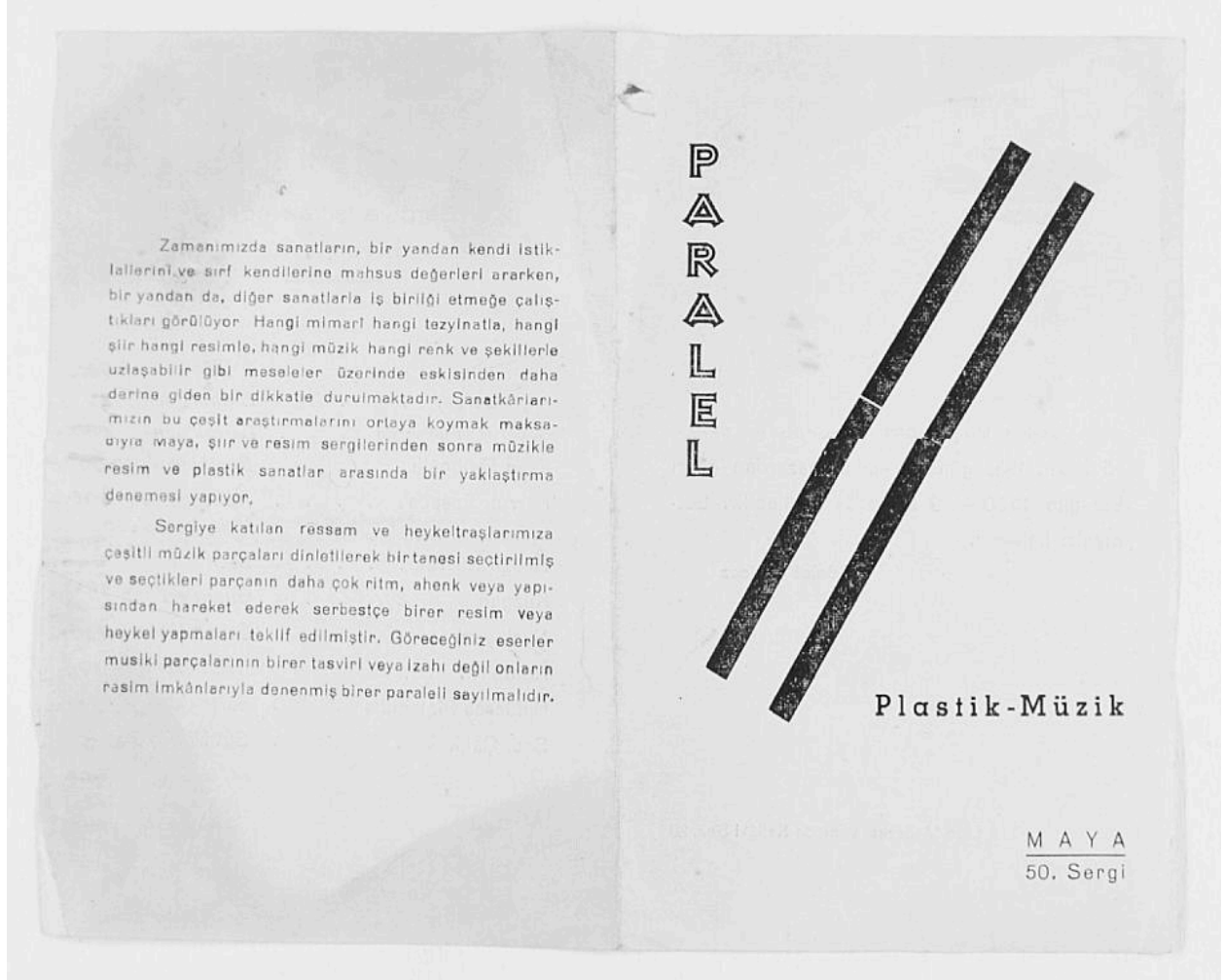


**Figure 1.14** Interior of Galeri Maya, potentially the opening exhibition. Photograph reproduced from: Kaptana.

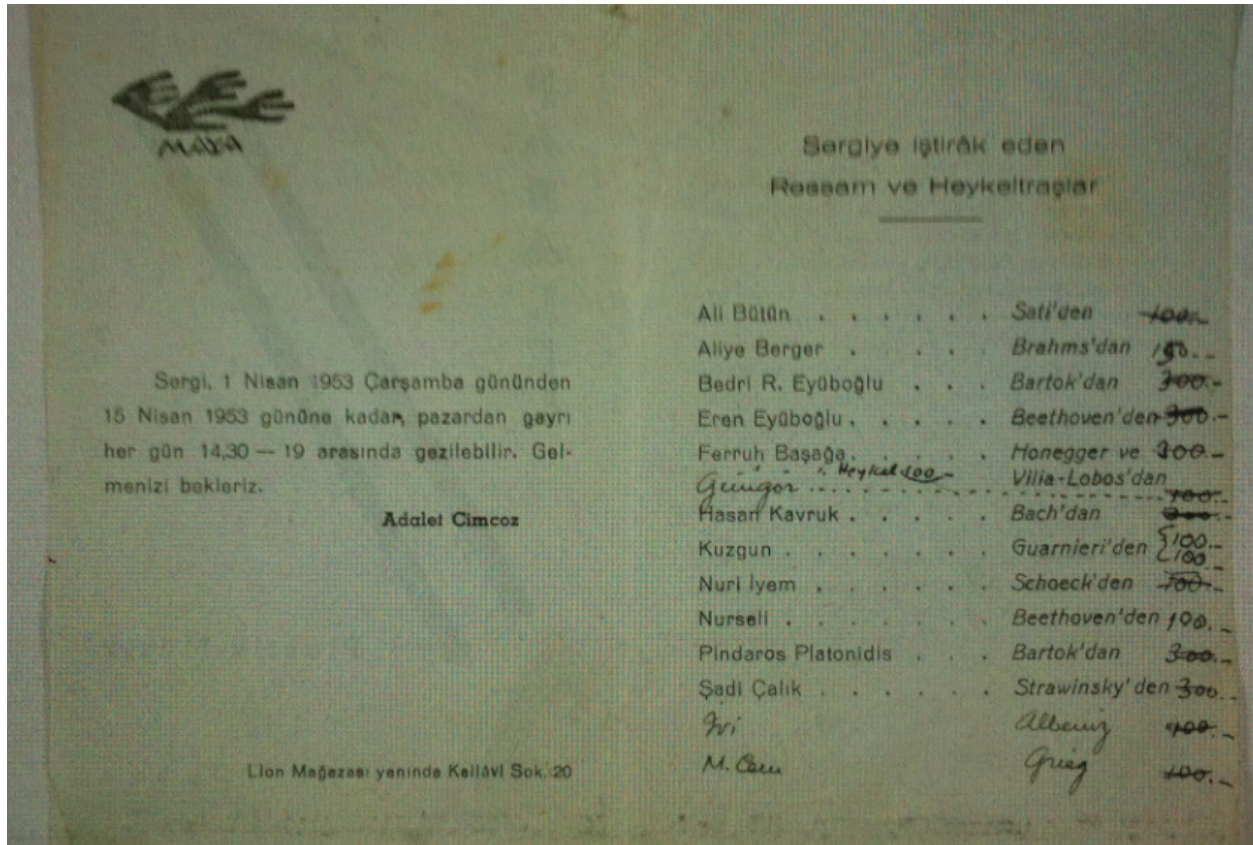




**Figure 1.15** Fragments of Turkish *kilim* (woven rugs) and puppets used in traditional Turkish *Karagöz* plays. Yapıkredi Bankası Archive, Adalet Cimcoz Album, Image #1101.2/11.289. Beyoğlu, Istanbul.



**Figure 1.16** Brochure from Galeri Maya's fiftieth exhibition, "Paralel: Plastik-Müzik," April 1953. Archived in film negative form, Yapı kredi Bankası Archive, Adalet Cimcoz Album, Image #1101.1/9.41. Beyoğlu, Istanbul.



**Figure 1.17** Artist and price list from Galeri Maya's fiftieth exhibition, "Paralel: Plastik-Müzik," April 1953. Archived in film negative form, Yapı kredi Bankası Archive, Adalet Cimcoz Album, Image #1101.1/9.7. Beyoğlu, Istanbul.



**Figure 1.18** Reproductions of objects from the Louvre collection, Galeri Maya. Yapı kredi Bankası Archive, Adalet Cimcoz Album, Image #1101.2/11.333. Beyoğlu, Istanbul.





**Figure 1.19** Sabahattin Eyübođlu (*center*, in suit) with İsmail Hakkı Tongu (*left*) at the Hasanođlan Village Institute outside of Ankara. Photograph reproduced from: Iřın.





**Figure 1.20** Bedri Rahmi Eyübođlu, *Kırmızı Bacaklı İđdeli Gelin* [İđdeli Bride with Red Legs], 1954. Gouache on paper, 72 x 70 cm. Eyübođlu Family Collection, Istanbul.





**Figure 1.21** Adalet Cimcoz at Galeri Maya. Film negative, Yapı kredi Bankası Archive, Adalet Cimcoz Album, Image #1101.1/9.31. Beyoğlu, İstanbul.

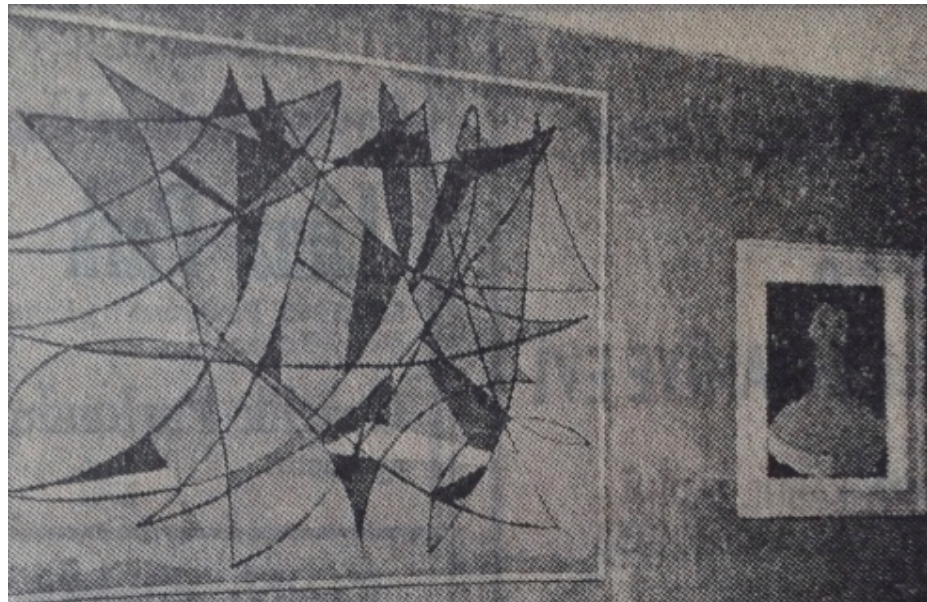


**Figure 1.22** A 1953 Helikon Orchestra concert showing the musicians playing alongside paintings. *From left to right, Aynan Erman, Judith Rosen, Danyal Erinç, Rosen's husband, Bülent Arel, Rasin Arsebük, and Faruk Güvenç.* Photograph reproduced from: Bülent Ecevit, "Helikon."





**Figure 1.23** Nail Paza (biographical details unknown), [title and date unknown]. Photograph taken at Helikon Association. *Ulus*, October 18, 1953, 3.



**Figure 1.24** Ferruh Başağa (1914–2010), [title and date unknown]. Photograph taken at Helikon Association. *Ulus*, September 20, 1953, 3.



# Soldan geri!

## Antidemokratik kanunların kaldırılması beklenirken Ceza Kanununun 159 uncu maddesi şiddetlendiriliyor

### Menderes artık tenkidedilemeyecek, karikatürü yapılamıyacak, sadece şakşaklanacak

### Bir vicdan meselesi

#### Bileşim Cebri YALÇIN

Avrupa ile bilimsel olarak... (Text continues with political commentary on the 159th article of the Criminal Code)



### Fahri doktor Kralice

Hollanda Kraliçesi Juliana'nın... (Text mentions the queen's visit and the doctor's role)



### Yedek Subayda Teftiş

# Kasım Gülek Antalya ilcelerinde

## Her tarafa hararetle karşılanan C. H. P. Genel Sekreteri bugün Korkuteli'nde yapılacak bir toplantıda hazır bulunacak

CHP Genel Sekreteri Kasım Gülek Antalya ilceleri arasında... (Text reports on his activities and the meeting in Korkuteli)

### C.H.P. teklifi tüm Menderes'e cevabı

#### Genel Sekreteri bugün Korkuteli'nde

### Truman Japonya ile barış andlaşmasını imzaladı

### Truman Japonya ile barış andlaşmasını imzaladı

#### Başkan, bu vesikaların imzalanması ile Pasifik bölgesinde can ve emniyet sağlanmıştır, dedi

#### Başkan, bu vesikaların imzalanması ile Pasifik bölgesinde can ve emniyet sağlanmıştır, dedi



### Devlet resim sergisi açıldı

19.000 Devlet Resim ve Heykel Sergisi... (Text mentions the opening of the exhibition)

### Kanunuz muamele

Teşarfa Yalılı, İbrahim Etil... (Text discusses the 'Kanununuz muamelesi')

### Vasfi Raşit Sevig Tahripleri ayıptıyor

'İnkilâpla girdiğimiz fevkalâdî mahlûkatı... (Text criticizes 'Tahripleri')

### Alman esir kampından kurtulanların töreni

Yunanistan'a gidiyor... (Text reports on a ceremony for German prisoners)

### Diktatörlük

Demokratik Parti'nin... (Text discusses dictatorship)

### Cumhurbaşkanı İzmir'e gidiyor

Atina'ya... (Text reports on the President's trip)

### Eisenhower Taft mücaadelesi

General Eisenhower... (Text reports on Eisenhower's actions)

### General Arnold Türkiyeye döndü

General Arnold... (Text reports on General Arnold's return)

### Başbakan Toprak Ofis Müdürü ile görüştü

Prime Minister Toprak... (Text reports on a meeting)

### Emin Kalafat'ın bir takriri

Emin Kalafat... (Text mentions a report by Emin Kalafat)

### Okla fıvattına!

Okla fıvattına!... (Text mentions 'Okla fıvattına')

### Bucünkü hava

Bucünkü hava... (Text reports on the weather)

### Teminat meselesi

Teminat meselesi... (Text discusses the 'Teminat meselesi')



### Eğer doğru ise Particiliğin feci bir hikâyesi daha

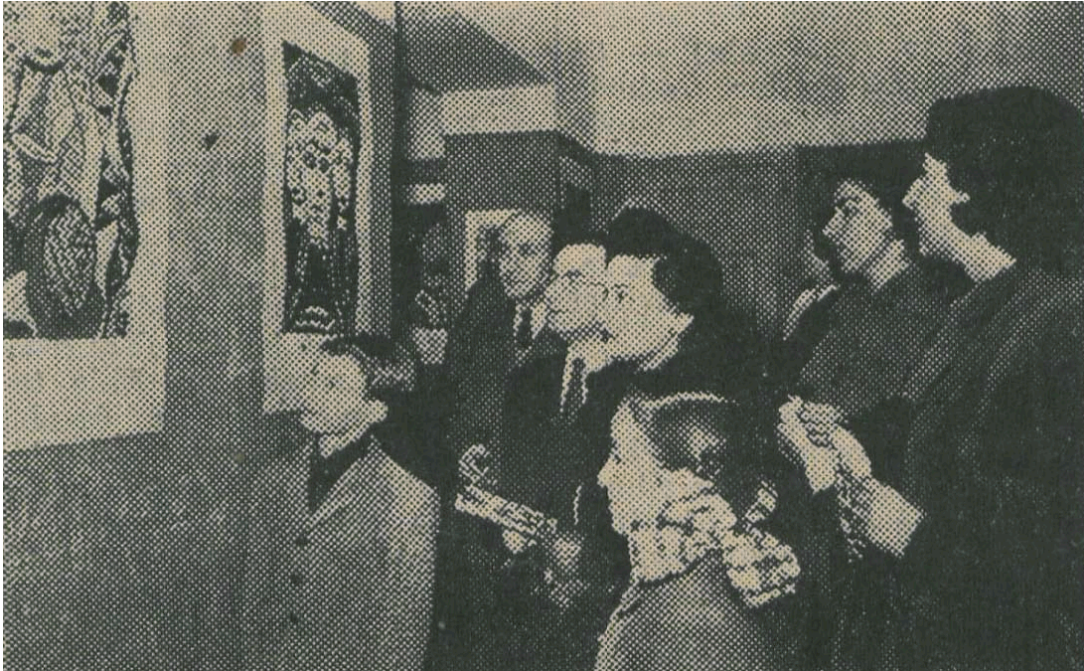
Particiliğin feci bir hikâyesi daha... (Text discusses 'Particiliğin feci bir hikâyesi daha')

Figure 1.25 Art reproduced in Ulus. Note the photograph of a sculpture on the front page (left). The article to which it is attached addresses the annual State Painting and Sculpture Exhibition and appeared in Ulus on April 16, 1952).



**Figure 1.26** Art reproduced in *Ulus*. Ecevit's articles were frequently accompanied by documentation of artworks on view. This article is titled “The Eyüboğlu's New Exhibition” and appeared in *Ulus* on April 26, 1953.





**Figures 1.27–1.28** *Above*: Interior view of Helikon, during the group exhibition with which Helikon resumed its activities after a brief closure in 1955. *Below*: Visitors attend a group exhibition that opened on February 21, 1956, and that may have been the gallery's final exhibition. *Ulus*, February 27, 1956.





**Figure 1.29** The caption in which the Turkish word *non-figüratif* is misprinted as the proper name Nafi Güratif. It reads: “The painter Cemal Bingöl has opened an exhibition full of paintings in the style of Nafi Güratif, an emergent style that has existed since 1946, on Mithat Paşa Avenue. By using as its means the balance of lines and color, this type of painting not only meets the demands of painting itself, but on top of this its decorative aspect is essentially suited to use the walls of living rooms and entry halls. There is no imitation of nature in this new style of painting, there is just the harmony of lines and colors. The photograph shows one of the paintings in the exhibition.” *Ulus*, December 11, 1953.



**YAPI ve KREDİ BANKASI**  
Sanat ve Kültür Mükâfatları  
Jüri Kararları

**Resim Mükâfatları : 16.000 Lira**

1. Mükâfat :	Aliye Berger	5.000 Lira
2. " :	Fethi Karakaş	3.000 "
3. " :	Hakkı Anlı	2.500 "
4. " :	Remzi Türemen	2.000 "
5. " :	Hagmet Akal	1.500 "
6. " :	Cemal Tollu	500 "
7. " :	Abdurrahman Öztoprak	500 "
8. " :	Kemal Yükselengil, Halit Doral	500 "
9. " :	Salih Acar	500 "
10. " :	Antranik Kılıççı	500 "

**Afiş Mükâfatları : 4000 Lira**

1. Mükâfat :	Bülent Akgürgen	1.500 Lira
2. " :	Mesut Manioğlu	1.000 "
3. " :	Yüksel Güçsan	500 "
4. " :	Fikret Akgün	500 "
5. " :	Fikret Akgün	500 "

**Musiki Mükâfatları : 12.500 Lira**

**I. Bale musikisi**

1. Mükâfat :	Bülent Tercan	6.000 Lira
2. " :	Ferit Tüzün	3.000 "
3. " :	Nuri Sami Koral	1.500 "

**II. Melodiler**

1. Mükâfat :	Nevit Kodallı	500 Lira
2. " :	Cenan Akın	500 "

**III. Gençlik marşı**

Jüri müsabakaya gelen eserleri mükâfata lâyık görmemiş ve beşer yüz liralık mükâfat dağıtılamamıştır.

**Senaryo mükâfatı : 10.000 Lira**

Jüri, gelen eserleri derecelendirecek mahiyette bulmamış, yalnız eser sahiplerinin emeklerini mükâfatlandırmayı teklif etmiş, bankamız da jürinin bu kararına uyarak mükâfatları dağıtmıştır.

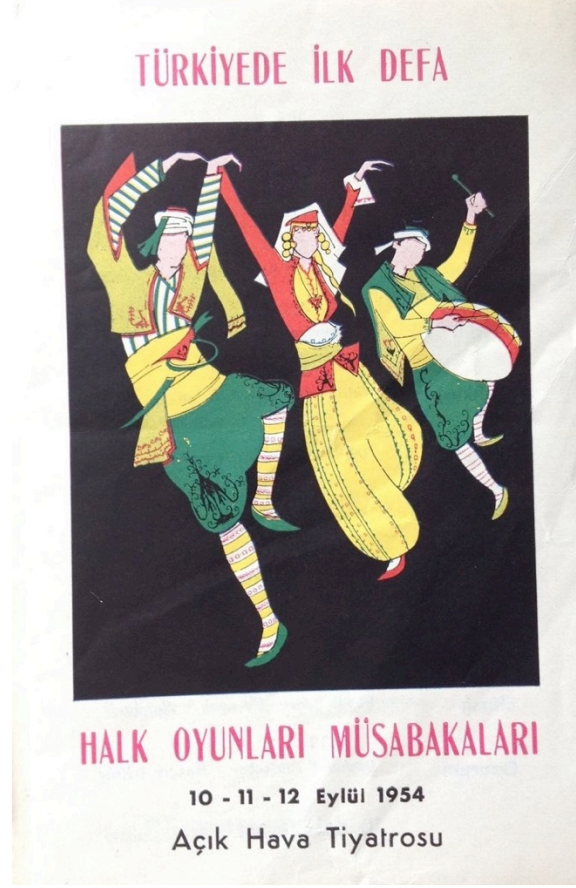
**Kültür mükâfatı : 10.000 Lira**

"İyi İnsan, İyi Vatandaş.. adlı kitap için gelen eserlerden üçüne jüri kararınca 5000 liralık mükâfat müsavi surette dağılmıştır. Diğer kültür eseri için 5000 lira, jürice hiçbir eser mükâfata lâyık görülmediğinden dağıtılamamıştır.

★

Mükâfat kazananların Yapı ve Kredi Bankasının İstiklal Cad. No. 336 daki Genel Müdürlük Umumi Kâtipliğine müracaatları rica olunur.

**Figure 2.1** Newspaper announcement of the winners and prize money granted by the Yapı ve Kredi Bankası Art and Culture Awards. Yapı kredi Bankası Archive, Kùpùrler [Clippings] Volume 165. Beyođlu, Istanbul.



**Figure 2.2** Brochure for the Yapı ve Kredi Bankası Folk Dancing Awards. Yapıkredi Bankası Archive. Beyoğlu, Istanbul.



**Figures 2.3–2.4** Press coverage of the Yapı ve Kredi Bankası Folk Dancing Awards. Clippings from *İstanbul Ekspres*, September 7, 1954 (left) and *İstanbul Ekspres*, September 13, 1954 (right). Yapı kredi Bankası Archive, Küpürler [Clippings] Volume 165. Beyoğlu, Istanbul.



**Figures 2.5–2.7** “Yapı ve Kredi Bankası 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Art and Culture Awards” brochure. Front and back covers (left and center) and painting contest rules 1–7 (right). Yapı kredi Bankası Archive. Beyoğlu, Istanbul.





**Figure 2.8** Salih Acar (1927–2001), *İstihsal* [Production], 1954. Oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm. On view with restricted access at Yapıkredi Bankası General Headquarters, Levent, Istanbul. Photograph: Sarah-Neel Smith, 2013.



**Figure 2.9** Nurullah Berk (1906–1982), *İstihsal* [Production], 1954. Oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm. On view with restricted access at Yapı kredi Bankası General Headquarters, Levent, Istanbul. Photograph: Sarah-Neel Smith, 2013.



**Figure 2.10** Remzi Türemen (dates unknown), *İstihsal* [Production], 1954. Oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm. On view with restricted access at Yapıkredi Bankası General Headquarters, Levent, Istanbul. Photograph: Sarah-Neel Smith, 2013.





**Figure 2.11** Zeki Faik İzer (1905–1988), *İstihsal* [Production], 1954. Oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm. On view with restricted access at Yapı kredi Bankası General Headquarters, Levent, Istanbul. Photograph: Sarah-Neel Smith, 2013.



**Figure 2.12** *Left:* İlhami Demirci (1908–1976), *İstihsal* [Production], 1954. Oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm. *Right:* Anonymous, *İstihsal* [Production], 1954. Oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm. Yapı kredi Bankası General Headquarters, Levent, Istanbul. Photograph: Sarah-Neel Smith, 2013.





**Figure 2.13** Aliye Berger, *İstihsal* [Production], 1954. Oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm. Yapıkredi Bankası General Headquarters, Levent, Istanbul. Photograph: Sarah-Neel Smith, 2013.

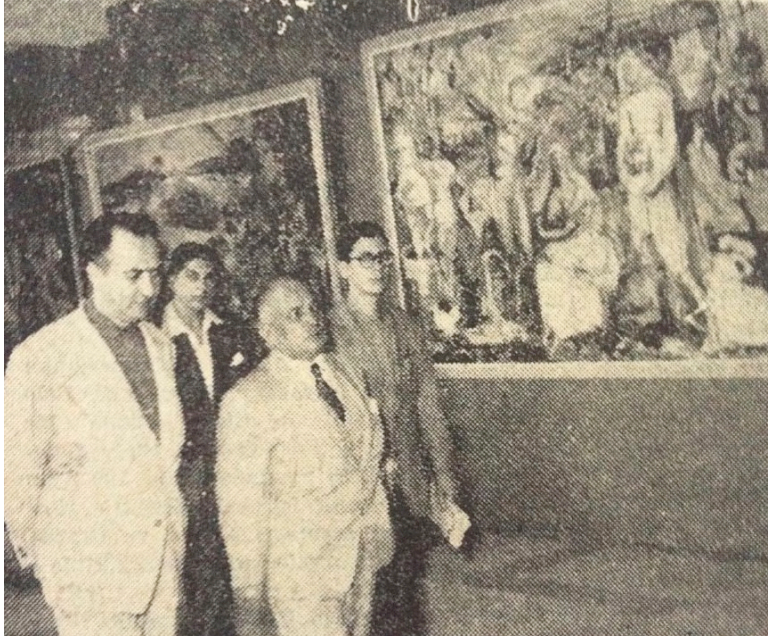




**Figure 2.14** Installation view of *Developing Turkey*. Far right: Cemal Tollu's submission. Photograph reproduced from: H. Mecdi Velet, "Tek başıma gezdiğim bir sergi" [An Exhibition I Visited Alone], *Akşam*, September 16, 1954.



**Figure 2.15** September 12, 1954 press coverage of *Developing Turkey* showing Eren Eyüboğlu's submission, *İstanbul Expres*. Yapıkredi Bankası Archive, Küpürler [Clippings] Volume 166. Beyoğlu, Istanbul.



**Figure 2.16** Local municipal officials visit the exhibition, shown in front of Zeki Faik İzer's submission, *Yeni İstanbul*, in September 1954. Yapı kredi Bankası Archive, K p rler [Clippings] Volume 166. Beyođlu, Istanbul.





**Figure 2.17** Press coverage showing Aliye Berger's painting, *Vatan*, September 13, 1954. Yapı kredi Bankası Archive, Kıpürler [Clippings] Volume 165. Beyođlu, İstanbul.



**Figure 2.18** Aliye Berger, *Prihoda the Violinist* (1950). Engraving. Nejat Eczacıbaşı Vakıf Collection, on long-term loan to the Istanbul Modern Museum of Art.



**Figures 2.19–2.20** *Left:* Aliye Berger, *Self Portrait*, n.d. Engraving. *Right:* Aliye Berger, *Carl Berger*, n.d. Engraving. Nejat Eczacıbaşı Vakıf Collection, on long-term loan to the Istanbul Modern Museum of Art.





Allye Berger'in karakalem bir resmi

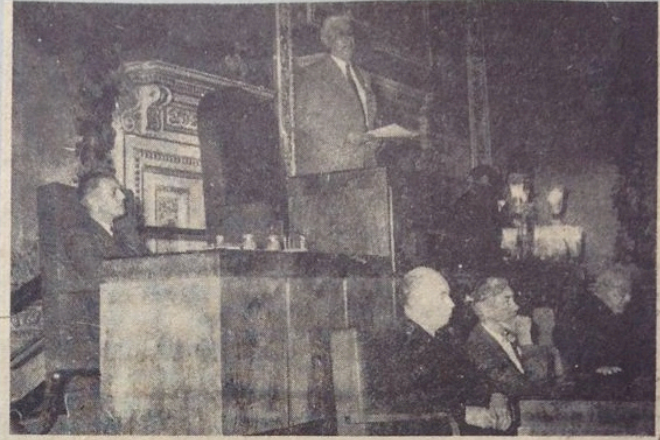
**Yurdumuzda İlk Defa Büyük Çapta Yapılan**

**Resim ve Afiş Konkuruunu  
Bir Kadın Ressam Kazandı**

Aylâ MERİH

LIONELLO VENTURI :

— Akademi'de açılan resim sergisi beni çok ilgilendirdi. Bu sergiye en çok beğendiğim resim Adnan Öker'in bir köşede duran küçük bir mücerret tablosudur. Mücerret resme meyleden iki ressam daha katılmış ressamlar arasında önemli göründüler bana. Akademi'ye geldiğimden beri Akademi çevresinde yaptığım temas-



Sanat Tenkitçileri Kongresinde (sağdan sola) Lionello Venturi, Herbert Read ve yukarıda ayakta Paul Fierens

## Üç sanat tenkitçisinin Türk sanatına dair görüşü

Dünyaca tanınmış bu üç sanat tenkidcisi, sanatımızın gelişmesi için entere san şeyler düşünüyorlar

Ayşe NUR

Şehrimizde toplanan Sanat Tenkitçileri Kongresi Lionello Venturi (İtalya), Paul Fierens (Belçika) ve Herbert Read (İngiltere) gibi dünyaca tanınmış üç sanat tenkidçisinin şehrimize gelmelerini sağlamıştır. Bu üç tenkidci aynı zamanda konusu "Kalkınan Türkiye" olan büyük resim müsabakasında jüri vazifesi görmüşlerdir. Kendilerine Türk resmi üzerine ne düşündüklerini ve bu müsabakada eserleri hangi değer ölçülerine göre seçtiklerini sordum. Bu suallerime verdikleri cevapları konuya sırası ile aşağıya yazıyorum:



engel olmuştuz. Bu sergide de jüri olarak eserler arasında bir seçim yaparken en canlı, en serbest ve hayal gücüne kendini en çok bıraktım ressamların eserlerini değer verdik, yalnızca usulüğü ve kompozisyon mükemmelliğini bakmadık.

— Ressamların halk geleneğini canlandırma gayretleri nice doğru değil mi?

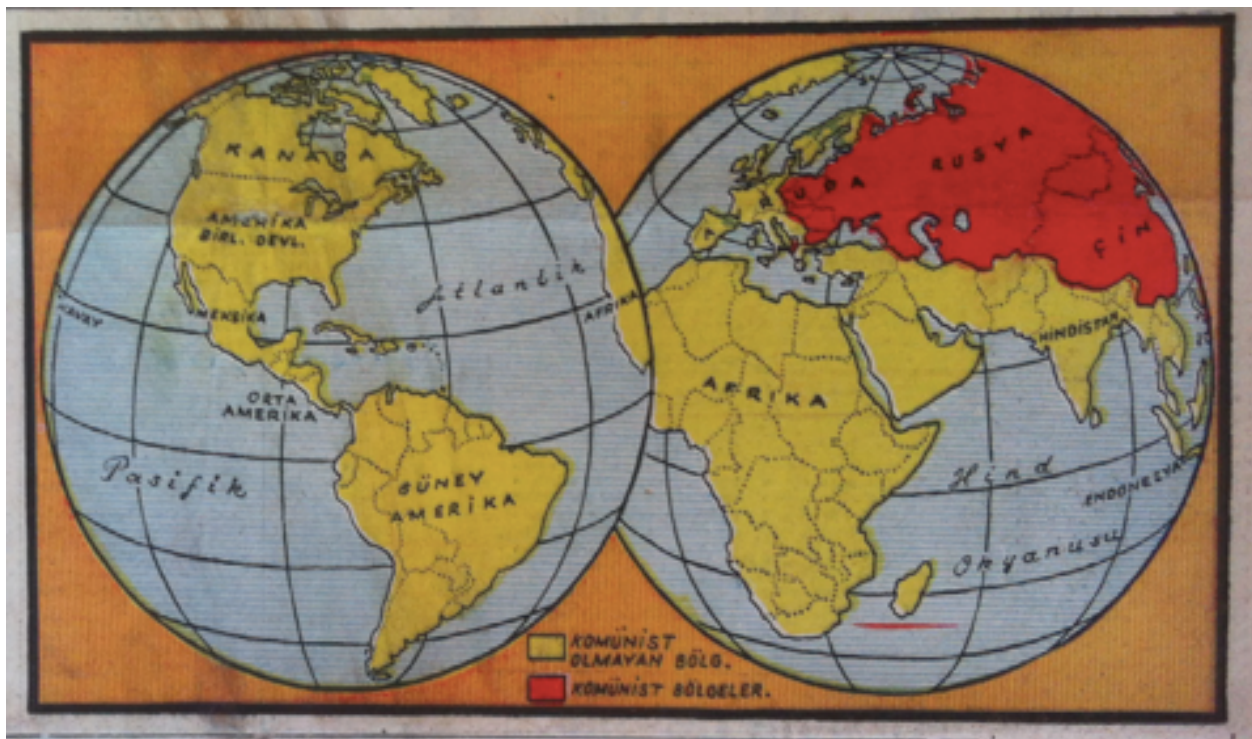
— Ressamlarımızda bu gayretleri seziyoruz. Bir çoğu Türkiye'nin genç halk sanatına dayanarak yeni sanat için özel bir yol bulmaya çalışıyorlar. Fakat bu yol bulunmaz değilse de, neticeye ulaşmaları için bir sanatçıya ihtiyacı vardır. Bu mesele bugün halde değildir. Ve bence canlı bir sanat yaratmak için halk geleneğinden hareket edilemez.

HERBERT READ:

— M. Fierens'in fikirlerine mumiylele iştirak ediyorum. İstediğim kura katılan ressamlar arasında çokunun konuyu ele alırken-

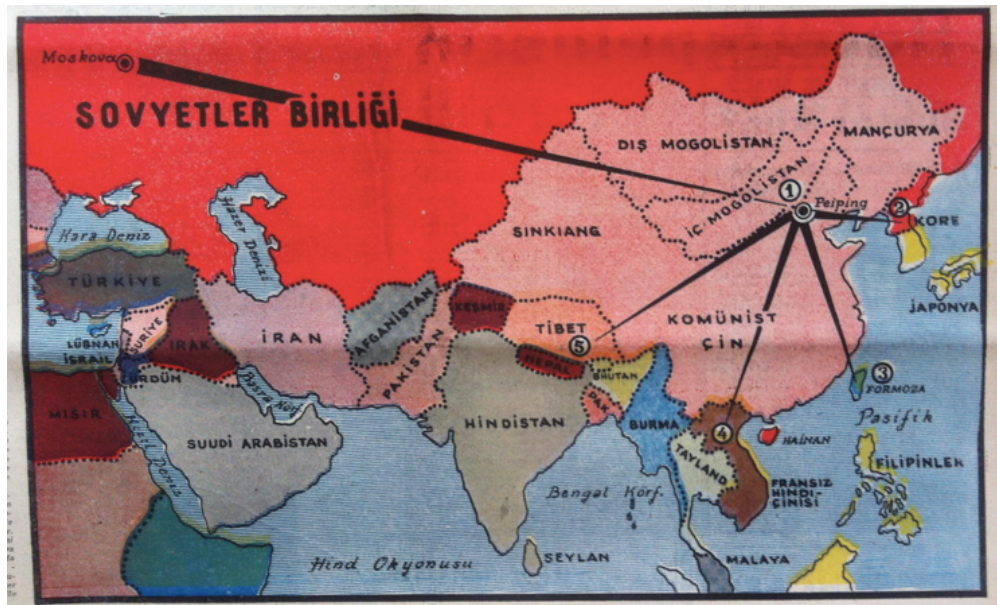
**Figures 2.21–2.22 Left:** Aylâ Merih, “Yurdumuzda İlk Defa Büyük Çapta Yapılan Resim ve Afiş Konkuruunu Bir Kadın Ressam Kazandı” [Woman Painter Wins First Large-Scale Painting and Poster Contest Held in Our Country], *Yeni İstanbul*, September 12, 1954. **Right:** Ayşe Nur, “Üç Sanat Tenkitçisinin Türk Sanatına Dair Görüşü” [Three Art Critics’ View of Turkish Art], *Yeni İstanbul*, September 16, 1954. Yapıkredi Bankası Archive, Küpürler [Clippings] Volume 165. Beyoğlu, İstanbul.





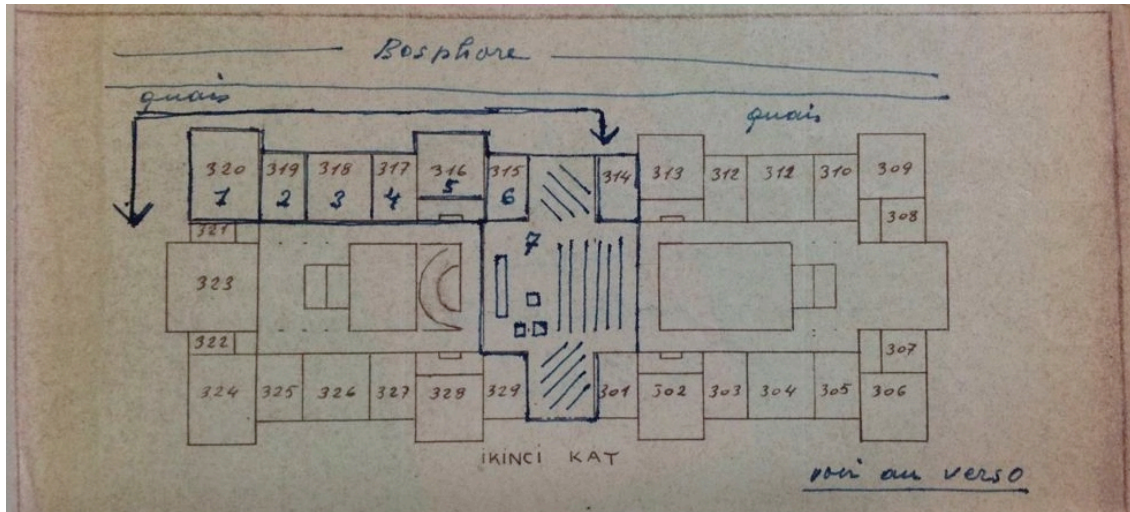
**Figure 2.23** Front page of *Ulus* showing “Non-Communist Regions” in yellow and “Communist Regions” in red (*top*). Map detail (*bottom*). *Ulus*, March 2, 1951.



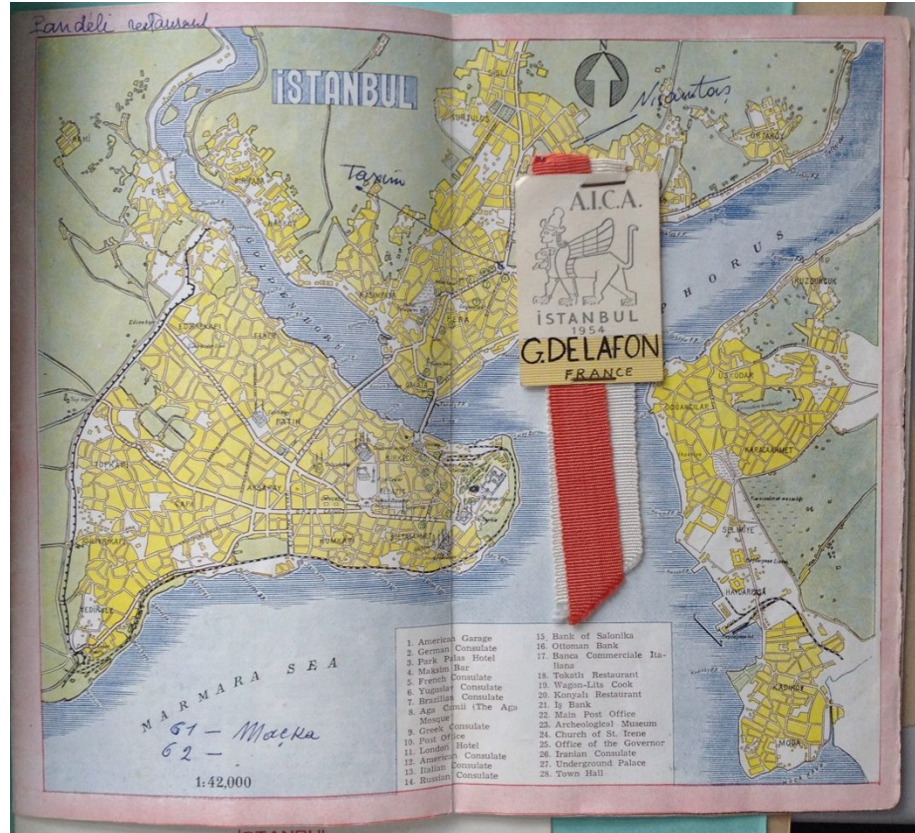


**Figure 2.24** Front page of *Ulus Pazar İlavesi* (Ulus Sunday Supplement) showing Turkey's perilous position beneath the looming Communist axis of Soviet Russia and China (*top*). Map detail (*bottom*). N.d., ca. early 1950s.





**Figure 2.25** Nurullah Berk. Drawing sent to AICA General Secretary Simone Gilles-Delafon showing the accommodations for the AICA Congress on the second floor of the Dolmabahçe Palace. Section 7 (*top left*) shows the main conference area, with the raised dais where speakers stood (indicated by a narrow rectangle, *center left*) and rows of audience seating (indicated by single lines, *center*). Berk also took care to indicate the location of the scenic waterfront views of the Bosphorus (Bosphore, *top*). Fonds AICA, Archives de la Critique d'Art. Rennes, France.



**Figure 2.26** AICA ephemera. Map of Istanbul provided to visiting AICA participants and Simone Gilles-Delafon's nametag. Note the use of an ancient Assyrian *lamassu* diety, a winged, human-headed lion, as the logo for the Istanbul AICA Congress, which invokes Turkey's pre-Islamic material culture. Fonds AICA, Archives de la Critique d'Art. Rennes, France.



**Figure 2.27** AICA ephemera. Brochure (left and center) showing the route of the SS Ankara, the ship that many European AICA attendees took to Istanbul, whose route began in Marseille and proceeded via southern Italy and northern Greece to Turkey, before finishing in Venice. Right: List of AICA passengers, Simone Gilles-Delafon. Fonds AICA, Archives de la Critique d'Art. Rennes, France.



Calligraphique  
Les éléments graphiques dans  
la Peinture européenne Contemporaine

M. le Président, Mesdames, Messieurs

Durant les six derniers mois j'ai eu l'occasion de  
faire un important tour d'étude sur les travaux de plus jeunes  
peintres contemporains à travers l'Etat Unis en me d'une  
exposition de leurs œuvres au Musée Guggenheim à New York.  
Avec votre permission j'aimerais étendre le titre de mon  
rapport sur les éléments graphiques dans la peinture contemporaine  
pour inclure les Etats Unis, l'Europe - ~~l'Asie~~ ~~l'Afrique~~  
pour inclure le développement de cette influence  
qui s'était manifestée dans l'histoire de l'art européen  
et dans laquelle je salue des points d'une possible nouvelle  
direction pour l'art du continent américain,  
aussi bien qu'au sein de l'Occident entier.

Mes amis et collègues d'Amérique et d'Europe  
de la Calligraphie orientale qui a marqué la peinture  
européenne pendant les cent dernières années. Au 20<sup>ème</sup>  
siècle parmi les jeunes peintres le goût a été grandement  
influencé par l'Extrême Orient. Comme au 19<sup>ème</sup> siècle il avait été  
de l'art de Mohammed à Munich dans la première décennie  
de ce siècle ouvrir le monde de l'art de développement  
aux jeunes peintres du monde qui devraient être les chefs de la  
prochaine génération - Matisse et Kandinsky pour nommer  
seulement deux des plus éminents. Jean Miró doit son intérêt  
pour la composition à son héritage catalan de  
sa tradition hispano-maurisque de l'Orient méditerranéen - Klee et  
les autres de leur côté en Afrique du Nord et plus de stimulation  
de l'exposition de Munich.

Cependant ces peintres du 20<sup>ème</sup> siècle et leurs confrères, -

**Figure 2.28** Simone-Gilles Delafon. French translation of Guggenheim Museum Director James Johnson Sweeney’s presentation, “Calligraphic Elements of Contemporary European Painting.” Fonds AICA, Archives de la Critique d’Art. Rennes, France.



**Figure 2.29** Clipping showing Belgian critic Paul Fierens (standing, *top*), Turkish AICA organizer Nurullah Berk (seated at dias, *left top*), unknown individual (*bottom row, left*), British critic Herbert Read (*bottom row, center*), and Italian critic Lionello Venturi (bottom row, *far right*). Photograph reproduced in: Ayşe Nur, “Üç Sanat Tenkitçisinin Türk Sanatına Dair Görüşü” [Three Art Critics’ View of Turkish Art], *Yeni İstanbul*, September 16, 1954. Yapı kredi Bankası Archive, Küpürler [Clippings] Volume 165. Beyoğlu, Istanbul.



ON BEŞ GÜNLÜK FİKRİ VE SANAT GAZETESİ



TUFHAN SELÇUK

KARIKATÜR ALBÜMÜ

BÜYÜK BOYDA DÖRT RENKLİ NEPİS BİR BARTON  
KAPAK İÇİNDE ÇIKTI. FİYATI 150 KURUŞTUR

BAYİLERDEN İSTEYİNİZ

Sayı : 68 — 1 Eylül 1954 — Fiyatı 30 Kuruş

ON BEŞ GÜNÜN ÖZETİ

**YURTTA :** Beşinci Milletlerarası Sanat Tenkitçileri Kongresi  
8 Eylülde İstanbul'da toplanıyor — Yeni mevsime  
Şehir Dram Tiyatrosu ve Küçük Sahne birer  
Shakespeare, Şehir Komedi Tiyatrosu da bir  
Molière temsili ile başlıyor.

**DÜNYADA :** Venedik Film Festivali eylülün ilk haftasında açılıyor  
— Belçika'da 2 Eylülde toplanacak olan Şairler  
Kongresine bu yıl da katılmıyoruz !

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5. MİLLETLERARASI SANAT TENKİTÇİLERİ KONGRESİ



Prof. Celal Esad Arseven

\*\*\*

BUGÜNKÜ TÜRK  
RESMİNDE ESKİ  
TÜRK GELENEĞİ

**D**OGU ve Batı konusuna giriş  
yolu üzerinde Profesör  
Arseven, bugünkü Türk  
resminin başlıca endişe-  
leri, mükemmeliyet  
tarifi etti. Doğu plastik  
sanatlarıyla Batı anlayışının terkibini  
gerektirdiğinden, gayriyle klasik  
mâzîleriyle baki sanatî mâzîlerinin  
insanîliği ve lâhîrî.

Fakat bu konuşma girmesinden önce, be-  
niz genç olan bir kurum ressamıdır da-  
ha gençlerin şimdiki araştırmalarını  
(Soru örneğinde)  
NURULLAH BERK

DOĞU SANATINDA VE  
MODERN SANATTA  
PERSPEKTİFİN TAHRİFİ

**P**ERSPEKTİF tahrifi Şark  
sanatında çok yaygın-  
dır. Bu, acemliğe veri-  
leniz. Çünkü Şarklı  
sanatçıların perspektif  
istisnâ ustaca kulla-  
nabildiklerini gösteren yeteri kadar örne-  
k vardır.

Eğer perspektif tahriri acemilikten  
ileri gelmiyorsa, ya geleceğe dayanan  
yordur ya da sanatçı perspektifi belirli  
güdülerle tahrir ediyordur.

Şark sanatında perspektifin tahriri  
edilmesindeki başlıca etkenin gölgele-  
meler olduğu düşünülebilir. Çünkü yüzyıl-  
lar boyunca Şark sanatının yoluyla, ki-  
şisel buluşlardan çok yaygın ve kalı-  
p gelenekler çıkmıştır.

Bununla beraber, gölgelemler de bazı  
ikiel güdülerden doğarlar. Ne var ki  
gelenekleri ortaya getirdikten sonra  
bu ikel güdüler unutulup gidebilirler.

Şark sanatında perspektifin tahririne  
sebeplere ilkel güdüler acaba nelerdir?  
Bunların buluşup ortaya çıkmasını  
sanat tarihine diğer! Fakat bu ikel  
güdüler üzerinde tabiiyetin yitirilmesi  
(Soru örneğinde)  
BÜLENT ECEVİT

MODERN TÜRK  
RESMİNDE ESKİ  
SANATIN İZLERİ

**M**ÜHTEREM heyetimize pek  
mahal olan sebeplerin  
dolayı bir milletini yaşı-  
yan sanatında hıyanet  
veren geleceğin, bizdeki  
köklerimizden biri üzerin-  
de düşünülmesini açıklamak fırsatını  
bağladıları için, "Sanat Tenkitçileri  
Kongresi"ne teşekkürle sözce başlamak  
isteyim.

Ayrıca'daki tarzda resim sanatının  
mâzîli yüzyılı aşmadığı halde, örnekleri-  
ni gözeceğine bugünkü resminde bi-  
ze mâhûsa bir hava veren sebep nereden  
geliyor? Son elli yıl içinde yetişmiş  
yüzyüze ressam arasında talip ve şah-  
siyet sâhibi olanları dahi birbirine yak-  
laştıran, onlara "Türk" damgasını vur-  
duran gizli sebep nedir? Kanaka, birisi  
Türk resminin en objektif örneklerinde  
bile azıcık dekoratif bir karakter, süs-  
leyici bir vasf taşınmasında buluyoruz.  
Boya olmasa önce bir zaruretler. Ara-  
besikle karıştırılmaması içinden o cis-  
"simonite"ni, ari, lâhîri fâdîlîdir.  
mek gayretli düşünüş peyzajları dahi  
eski mücerret resim sanatımıza yönelen  
sathıgibi bir zamanlar güzel yaşamı  
mâhûserlerini yaratmış bir cemiyetin mâ-



Milletlerarası Sanat Tenkitçileri Bir-  
liği (A. I. C. A.) başkanı Paul Fierens  
(Belçika)



Milletlerarası Sanat Tenkitçileri Bir-  
liği (A. I. C. A.) genel sekreteri Mm.  
Gilles-Delafon (Fransa)

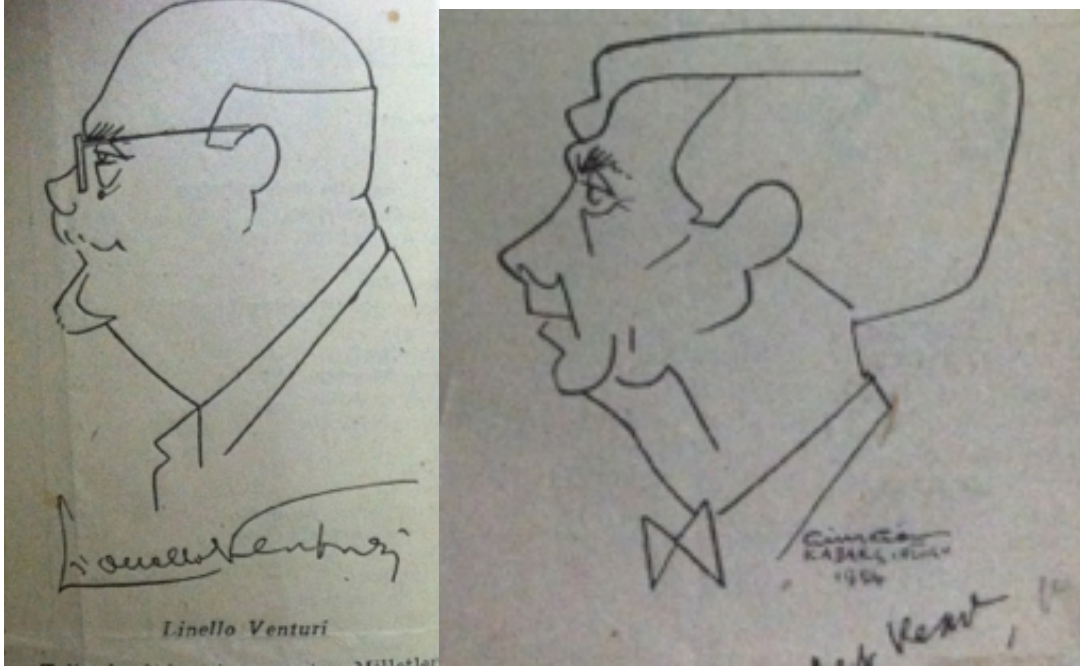


New York Guggenheim Müzesi Müdürü  
M. James Johnson Sweeney

yanına giren onu yığurana gördü ve an-  
layışın doğması kaybet tabiridir.

Geçen yüzyılın ikinci yarısında res-  
minin diğ. gerçek adam akülü bağlan-  
ış. Fakat bağlanış sadece teknikti. İta-  
ra imkânlarıydı. Kullanılan vasıtalar,  
yani boya, renk ve diğ. gerçek, bakış  
tarzı değişmiş değildi. Bunun değişibili-  
(Soru örneğinde)  
ZAHİR GÜVEMLİ

**Figure 2.30** Turkish press coverage of the AICA Congress, including portraits of Turkish art historian Celal Esad Arseven (*far left*), AICA President Paul Fierens (*top right*), AICA General Secretary Simone Gilles-Delafon (*center right*), and Guggenheim Museum director James Johnson Sweeney (*bottom right*). This issue of the arts and culture magazine *Yeditepe* also included Turkish-language reprints of the Turkish speakers' presentations, including those of Nurullah Berk, Bülent Ecevit, and Zahir Güvemli. Additional international coverage addressed that year's upcoming Venice Biennial and a Poetry Symposium in Belgium. *Yeditepe*, September 1, 1954.



**Figures 2.31–2.32** Güngör Kabakçioğlu, caricatures of Lionello Venturi (*left*) and Herbert Read (*right*). *Yeditepe*, September 1954. Yapı kredi Bankası Archive, Küpürler [Clippings] Volume 168. Beyoğlu, Istanbul.



**Figure 3.1** Cemal Tollu, Untitled painting, ca. 1950s. Ankara Museum of Painting and Sculpture.



## Eğitim Bütçesi müzakeresinde İnönü dedi ki: Günlük politika bahanesiyle ilim adamı izaç edilmemelidir

İlimin hürriyeti ve ilim adamının emniyeti başlıca idari ve siyasi tesirlere karşı mahfuz bulunmak lazımdır - İlimle günlük politika arasındaki hududun takdiri siyaset adamlarının elinde olursa ilim zarar görür

İlimin hürriyeti ve ilim adamının emniyeti başlıca idari ve siyasi tesirlere karşı mahfuz bulunmak lazımdır - İlimle günlük politika arasındaki hududun takdiri siyaset adamlarının elinde olursa ilim zarar görür



## Eğitim meselelerinde C.H.P. nin görüşleri

Fethi Ülkü, "Öğretim ve eğitim bir zaman politikanın değişen ihtiyaçlarına göre değişir, münazar ve muayyen istikamette sürmüştür yürütmelidir" dedi

## "Bıçak kemiğe dayandı"

İstanbul'da iki farklı meclisler toplantısı bugün C.H.P. Grupları başta...

## Volanverilik icabı

Bünyeye Çökü YAZGIN  
İlimin hürriyeti ve emniyeti başlıca idari ve siyasi tesirlere karşı mahfuz bulunmak lazımdır - İlimle günlük politika arasındaki hududun takdiri siyaset adamlarının elinde olursa ilim zarar görür



DEMİR KESİPOLUK - Araplar da 4 haneli birer sayı...  
Bunlar bizim için hürriyetin bir göstergesidir.

## D. P. sözcüsüne göre

## Türk Üniversitesi güyareşit değilmiş

Prof. İ.H.R. Atadmir, Üniversitelerimizde hakkı münasip ilim adamı bulunmadığını söyledi - Güneş ve Çelikkaya üniversitemizi ve ilim hürriyetini savundular

Büyük Millet Meclisi'nde...  
C.H.P. Grupları başta...

## B. M. Meclisinde geceki oturum

Tartışmalardan sonra Milli Eğitim Bütçesi kabul edilerek Beyazıt'ta Bütçesine geçildi

B. M. Meclisi...  
Tartışmalardan sonra Milli Eğitim Bütçesi kabul edilerek Beyazıt'ta Bütçesine geçildi

## Yeni bir piyano müzesine razı

Yeni bir piyano müzesine razı...  
C.H.P. Grupları başta...

## İngiltere Müstemlekeler Bakanı dün Kıbrıs'a geldi

Eiden'in emriyle self-determination üzerinde Makarios'la anlaşacak - İrkdaşlarımız ilibaki İngilizce şartları bildirdiler

İngiltere Müstemlekeler Bakanı...  
Eiden'in emriyle self-determination üzerinde Makarios'la anlaşacak

## Ziraî ihracatımız

Ziraî ihracatımız...  
Türkiye'nin ziraî ihracatı...

## Mısır'da yeni seçim kanunu

Mısır'da yeni seçim kanunu...  
Yeni kanuna göre kadınlar arzu ettikleri takdirde seçime iştirak edebilecekler

## Perudaki isyan bastırıldı

Perudaki isyan bastırıldı...  
Peru'daki isyan...

## O gereği bize ait!

O gereği bize ait!...  
O gereği bize ait!

## Yeni bir piyano müzesine razı

Yeni bir piyano müzesine razı...  
Yeni bir piyano müzesine razı

## Mısır'da yeni seçim kanunu

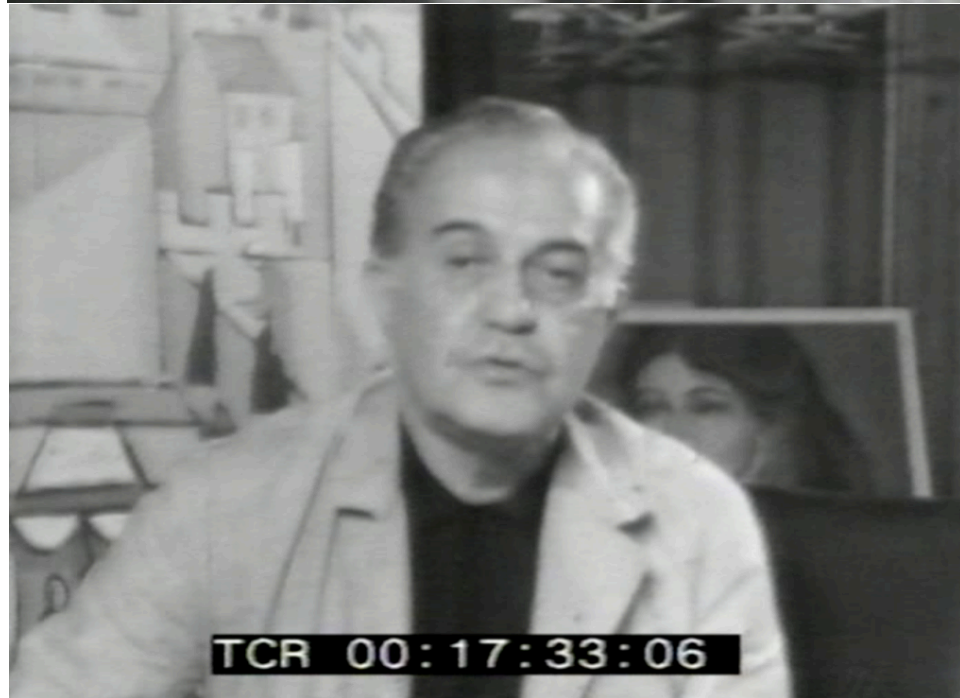
Mısır'da yeni seçim kanunu...  
Yeni kanuna göre kadınlar arzu ettikleri takdirde seçime iştirak edebilecekler

Figure 3.2 The front page of Ulus, February 27, 1956. Interior view of the Helikon Association above an announcement of the gallery's reopening (photograph, center right) alongside a headline that reads "We should not be concerned with intellectuals under the guise of day to day politics. Intellectual freedom and the safety of intellectuals should above all be protected against administrative and political influences—If drawing the boundary between knowledge and day to day politics is left to the discretion of politicians, knowledge will suffer" ("Günlük politika . . . , upper left).

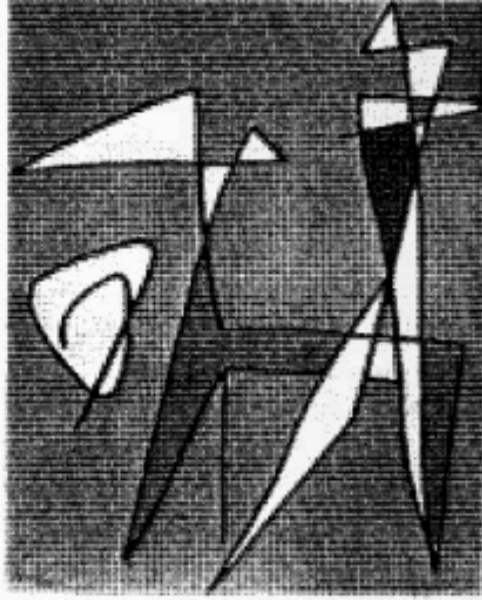


**Figure 3.3** Exhibition view of the “Paintings of the Provinces” exhibition. Front page of *Ulus*, May 8, 1956 (left) and detail (right). The caption below the photograph reads: “The exhibition of paintings of the provinces which will be hung in the new Grand National Assembly building currently under construction have been put on display at the Ankara Exhibition Hall. Above are pictured curious visitors who are looking at these paintings.”





**Figures 4.1–4.2.** Sabri Berkel (*top*) and Nurullah Berk (*bottom*). Film stills, untitled film, dir. Nilay Erol, ca. 1970s. Nurullah Berk Family Archive, Istanbul.



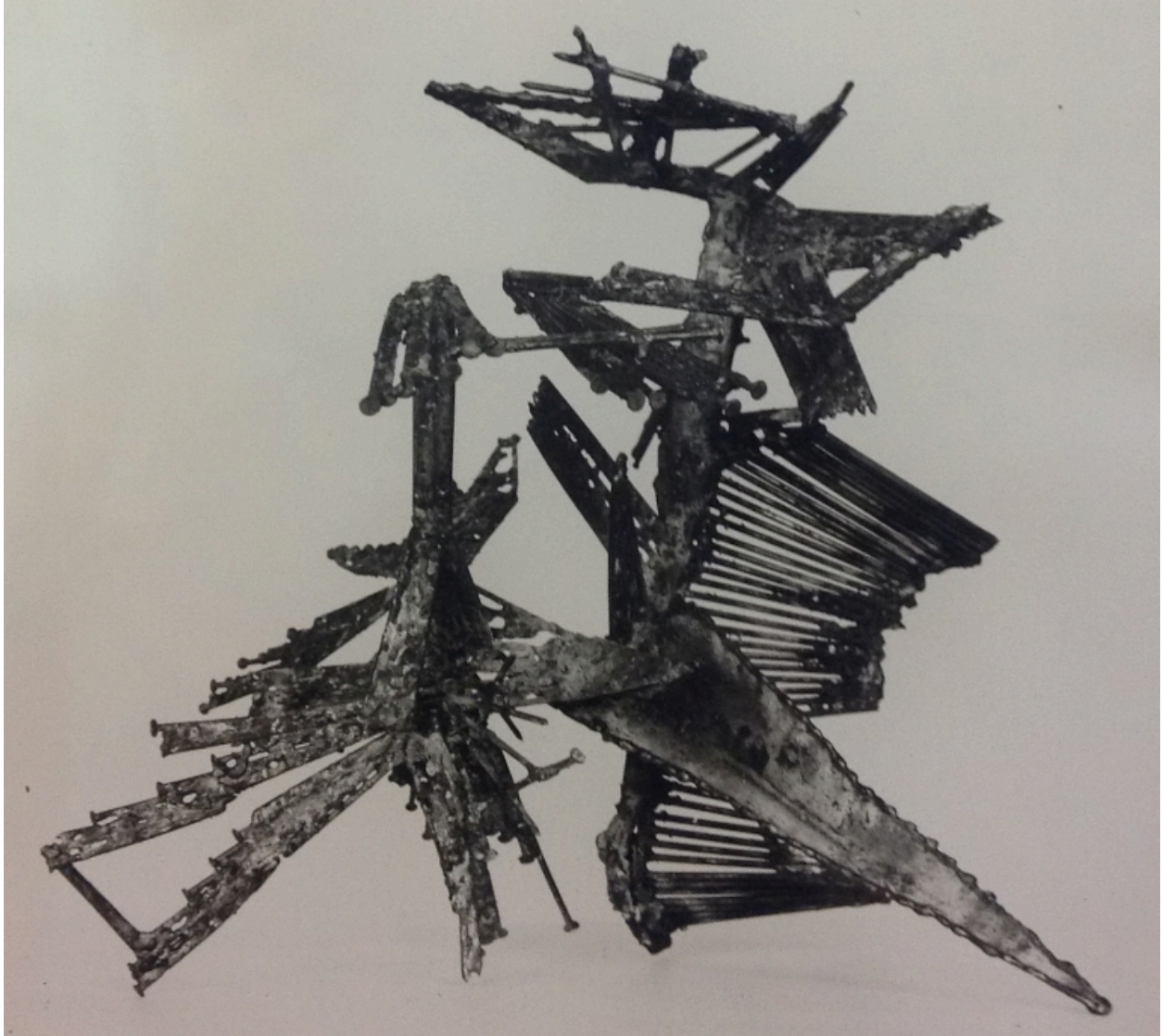
SABRI BERKEL (Turquia) — Cavaleiro  
OSWALDO GUAYASAMIN (Equador) — Mãe e filho, 1955

**Figure 4.3** Plate from the 1957 São Paulo Biennial exhibition catalog showing Sabri Berkel's submission, a painting whose title has been translated into Portuguese as *Cavaleiro* (cavalier or knight).

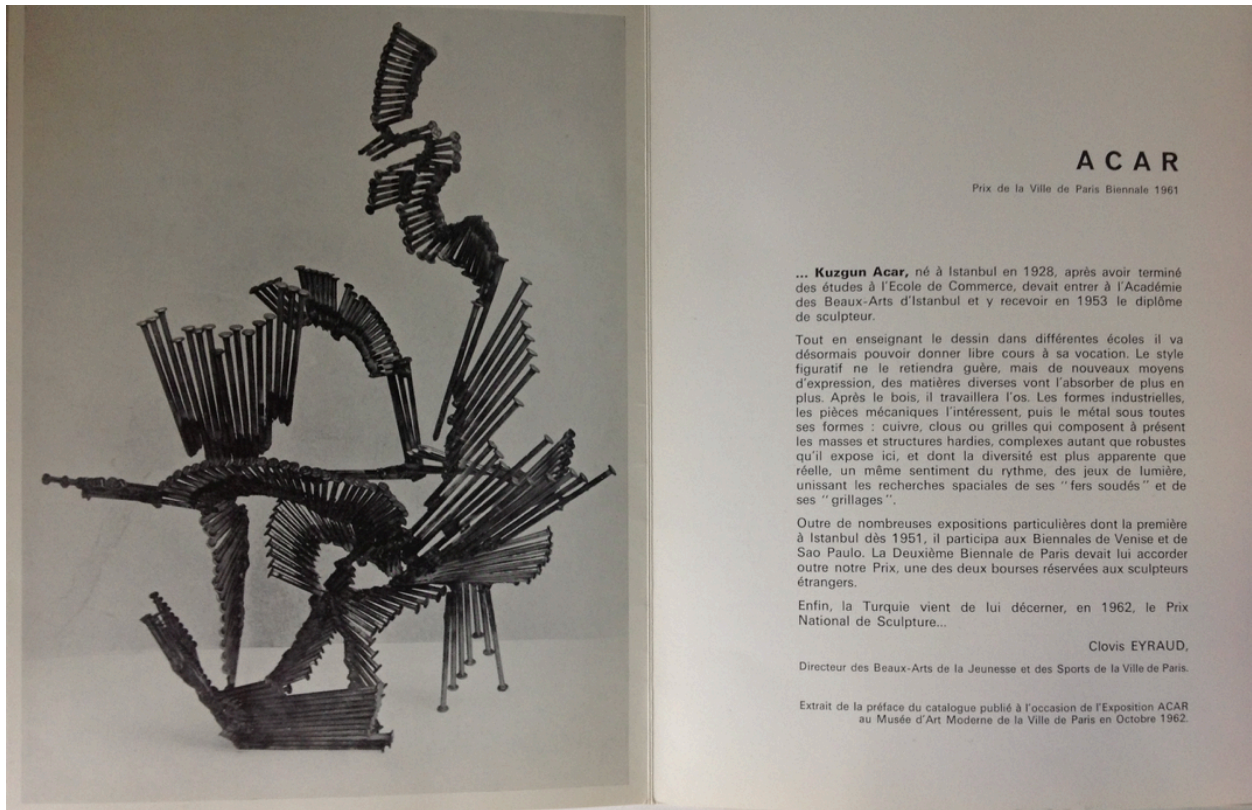


**Figure 4.4** Sabri Berkel, untitled painting, n.d. Oil on canvas, 61 x 49 cm. Photographs reproduced from: Betül Kadiođlu, ed., *Sabri Berkel: Dönemler I (1930–1955)* (Istanbul: Yapıkredi Yayınları, 2006).





**Figure 4.5** Kuzgun Acar, *Sculpture*, 1961. Iron nails. Photographic reproduction archived in Dossier Biennale de Paris 1961, Participation Turquie, BIENN.61Y0275, Fonds AICA, Archives de la Critique d'Art. Rennes, France.



**Figure 4.6** “Acar: Prix de la Ville de Paris Biennale 1961” [Acar: 1961 Paris Biennial Prize], text by Clovis Eyraud originally written for the catalogue to Kuzgun Acar’s solo exhibition at the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (October 1962), and reprinted in “Acar et Anselmo” [Acar and Anselmo], brochure for an exhibition held from February 13–March 13, 1963, Galerie Lacloche, Paris. Dossier Biennale de Paris 1961, Participation Turquie, BIENN.61X052/15, Fonds AICA, Archives de la Critique d’Art. Rennes, France.





**Figure 4.7** Reşat Atalık, *Painting*, 1961. Oil on canvas, 107 x 120 cm. Photographic reproduction archived in: Dossier Biennale de Paris 1961, Participation Turquie, BIENN.61Y0277, Fonds AICA, Archives de la Critique d'Art. Rennes, France.

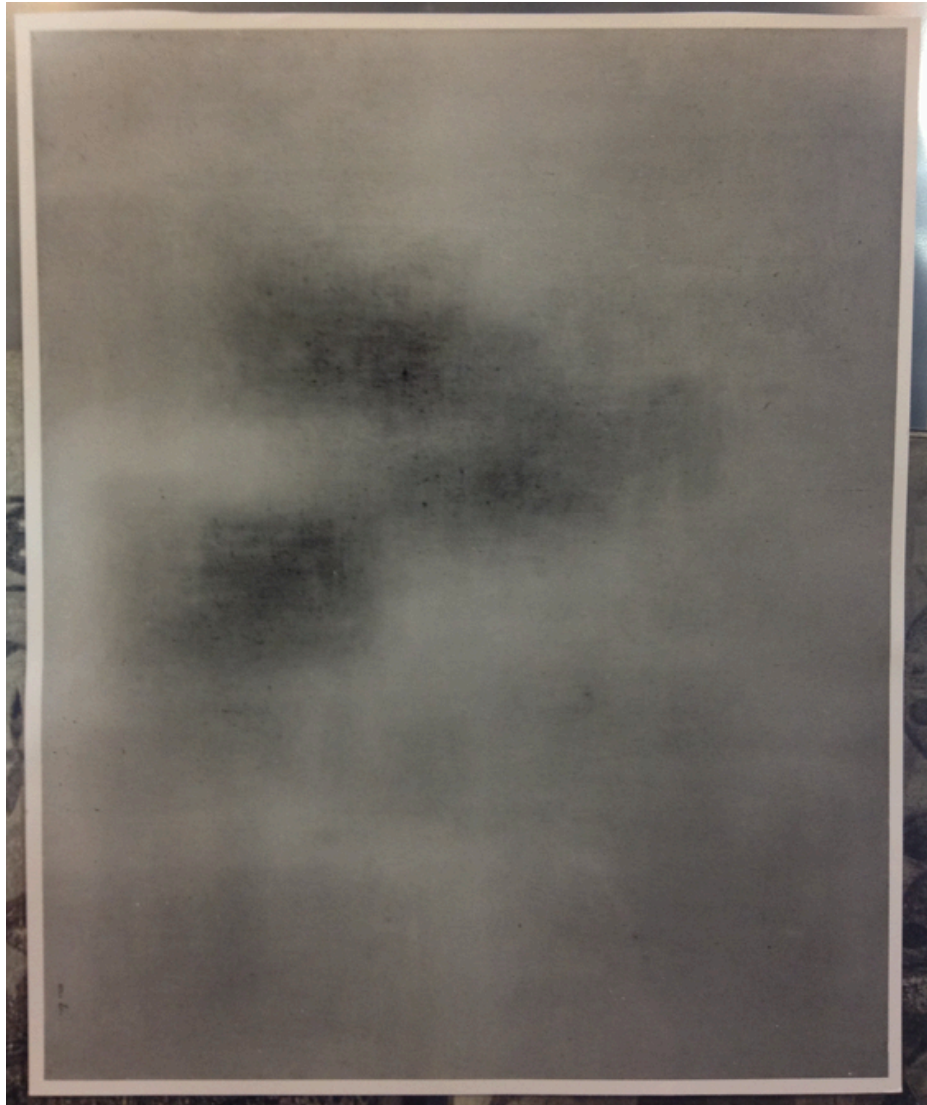




**Figure 4.8** Adnan Çoker, *Painting*, 1961. Oil on canvas, 100 x 120 cm. Photographic reproduction archived in: Dossier Biennale de Paris 1961, Participation Turquie, BIENN.61Y0278, Fonds AICA, Archives de la Critique d'Art. Rennes, France.



**Figure 4.9** Erdoğan Değer, *Composition*, 1960. Oil on canvas, 81 x 100 cm. Photographic reproduction archived in: Dossier Biennale de Paris 1961, Participation Turque, BIENN.61Y0279, Fonds AICA, Archives de la Critique d'Art. Rennes, France.

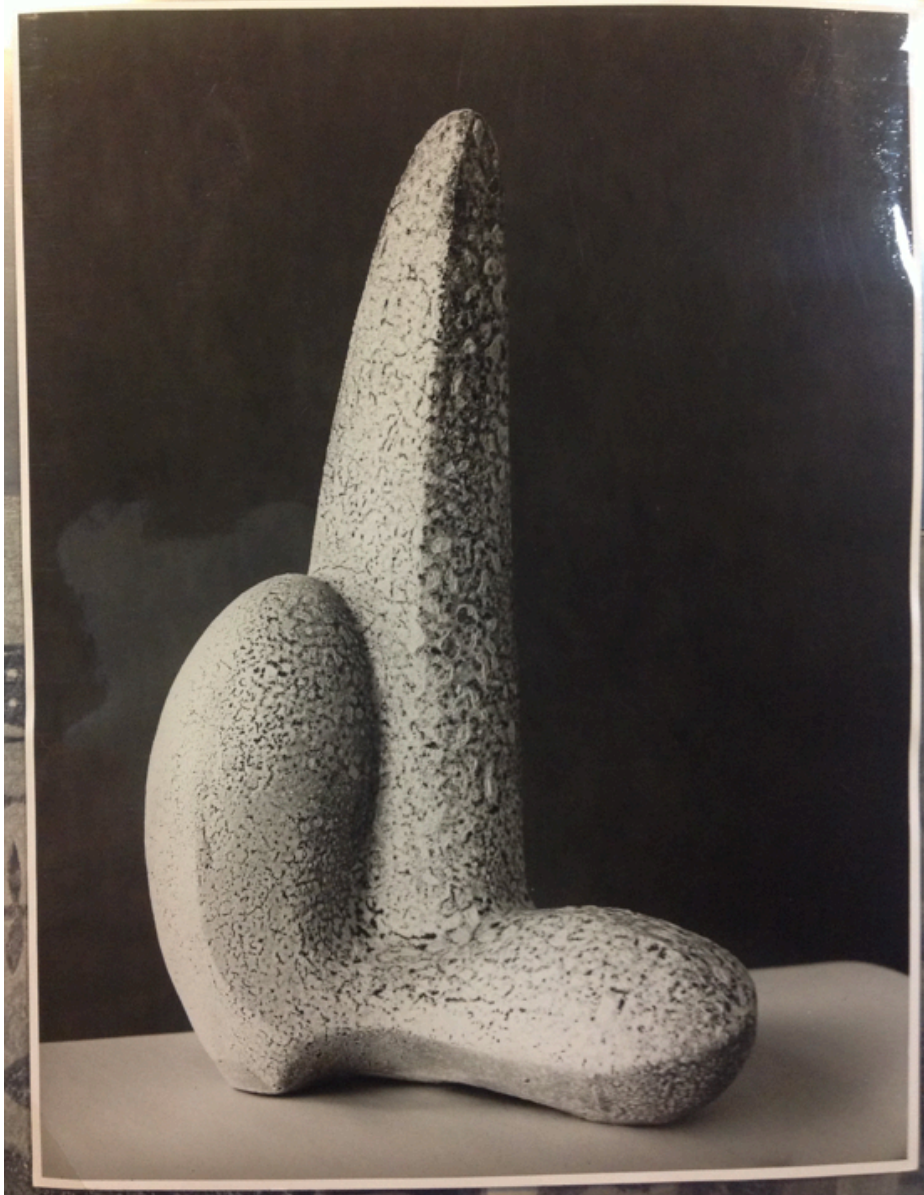


**Figure 4.10** Cemil Eren, *Composition*, 1960. Oil on canvas, 81 x 100 cm. Photographic reproduction archived in: Dossier Biennale de Paris 1961, Participation Turquie, BIENN.61Y0280, Fonds AICA, Archives de la Critique d'Art. Rennes, France.

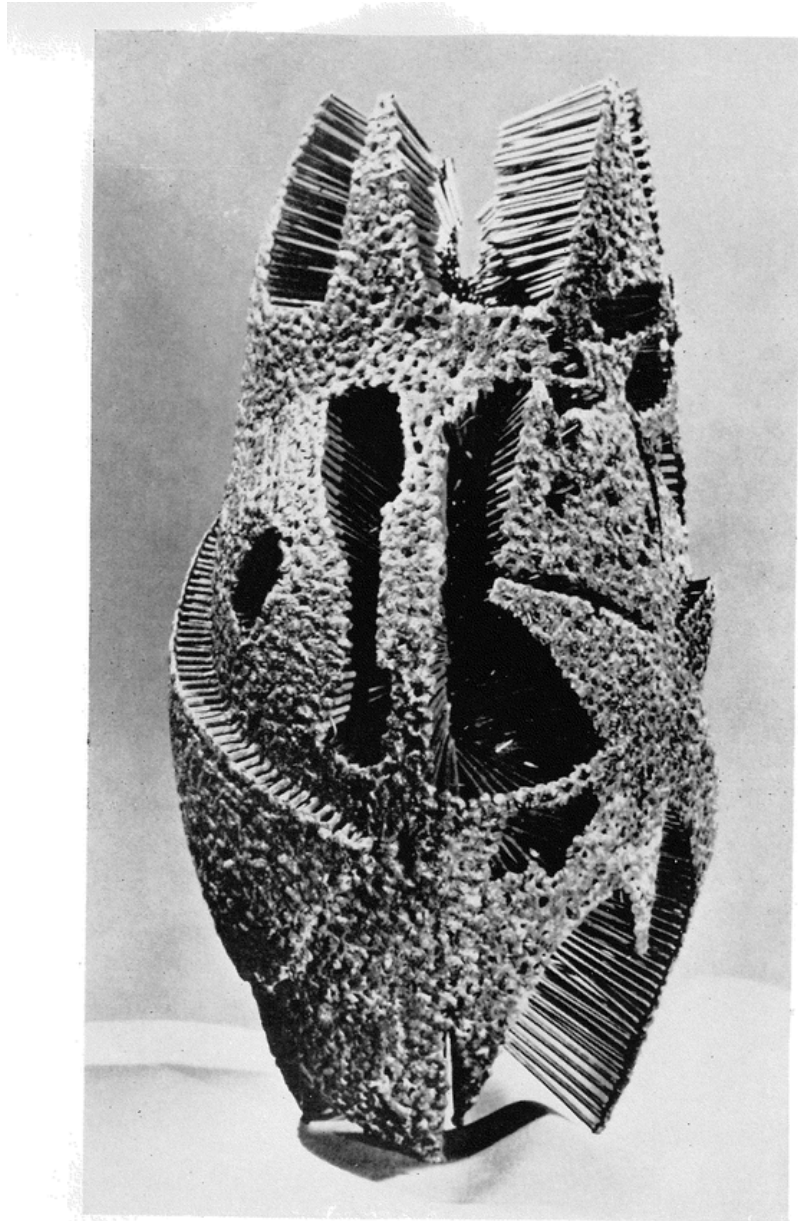




**Figure 4.11** Tülay Tura, *Composition*, 1960. Oil on canvas, 107 x 68 cm, Photographic reproduction archived in: Dossier Biennale de Paris 1961, Participation Turquie, Fonds AICA, Archives de la Critique d'Art. Rennes, France.



**Figure 4.12** Hakkı Karayığitoğlu, *Sculpture*, 1961. Ceramic. Photographic reproduction archived in: Dossier Biennale de Paris 1961, Participation Turquie, BIENN.61Y0281, Fonds AICA, Archives de la Critique d'Art. Rennes, France.



Dusan Dzamonja - Sculpture II (Yougoslavie 17).

Planche 28

**Figure. 4.13** Dusan Dzamonja, *Sculpture II*, 1960. Iron nails. Featured in the *Deuxième Biennale de Paris: Manifestation Biennale et Internationale Des Jeunes Artistes* [Second Paris Biennial: Biannual and International Exhibition of Young Artists] (Paris: Les Presses artistiques, 1961), Plate 28.



Caroline Lee - La mer (États-Unis 18).

Planche 50

**Figure 4.14** Caroline Lee, *The Sea*, 1961. Soldered iron, 200 x 180 x 40 cm. Featured in the *Deuxième Biennale de Paris: Manifestation Biennale et Internationale Des Jeunes Artistes* [Second Paris Biennial: Biannual and International Exhibition of Young Artists], Plate 50.





**Figure 4.15** Mustafa Aslier, *Adam et Eve*, 1961. Linocut, 41 x 51 cm. Photographic reproduction archived in: Dossier Biennale de Paris 1961, Participation Turquie, BIENN.61Y0276/1, Fonds AICA, Archives de la Critique d'Art. Rennes, France.



**Figure 4.16** Mustafa Aslier, unidentified linocut, most likely *La Petite Cabane* [The Little Cabin], 1960. Dossier Biennale de Paris 1961, Participation Turquie, BIENN.61Y0276/2, Fonds AICA, Archives de la Critique d'Art. Rennes, France.

## APPENDIX A

### Galeri Maya Program of Exhibitions

I have compiled this data from three main sources. The sequence of exhibitions is drawn from Melda Kaptana's book, *Maya ve Adalet Cimcoz* [Maya and Adalet Cimcoz], according to which Galeri Maya opened on December 25, 1950 and closed on July 7, 1955. Specific dates and other exhibition details are drawn from announcements published in daily newspapers, invitations, and other ephemera that I collected during my research.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Artist</b>	<b>Medium</b>
<b>1950</b>		
December 25–?	Group exhibition	–
<b>1951</b>		
–	Piet Kraus (1909–?)	Painting
–	Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu (1911–1975)	Block prints
–	Nedim Günsür (1924–1994)	Painting
–	Zühtü Müridoğlu (1906–1992)	Metalwork
–	İsmail Altınok (1920–2002)	Painting
–	Avni Arbaş (1919–2003)	Painting (“Paris Studies”)
–	Altan Erbulak (1929–1988)	Caricature
mid-September	– Photographs of ancient Turkish art	
–	Azra İnal (details unknown) and	Painting
–	Fethi Karakaş (1916–1977)	
October	Füreyâ Koral (1910–1997)	Ceramics and lithographs
<b>1952</b>		
Feb. 15–?	–	Art and poetry ( <i>Resimli şiir</i> )
March 1–15	Ferruh Başağa (1914–2010)	Painting
–	Aloş [Ali Teoman Germaner] (b. 1934)	Sculpture and carved wood
–	Azra İnal (details unknown)	Painting

–	Nuri İyem (1915–2005)	Painting
–	Dimitro Manoyudis (details unknown)	Painting
May 20–June 3	Semih Balcıoğlu (1928–2006)	Caricature
June 4–July 18	Kemal Sönmezler (details unknown)	Painting
–	Vaalko J. Digemans (details unknown)	Painting
–	Fikret Otyam (b. 1926)	Painting
October	Arif Kaptan (1906–1979)	Painting
October 11–30	Ferruh Başağa (1914–2010)	Painting and sculpture
–	Kuzgun Acar (1928–1976)	Sculpture
–	Güngör Gören (details unknown)	Painting
–	Ömer Uluç (1931–2010)	Painting
–	Haluk Muradoğlu (details unknown)	Painting
Dec. 6–14	–	Fikret Adil art collection
–	Kuzgun Acar (1928–1976)	Ceramics
–	Ali Bütün (details unknown)	Sculpture
<b>1953</b>		
–	–	Reproductions of Renaissance masterpieces
–	Nevzar Üstün (1924–1979)	Poetry and photographs
Jan. 31–?	Pindaros Platonidis (1914–1988)	Mosaic
March 2–15	Nevin Demiryol (details unknown)	Painting
March 16–21	Şeref Bigalı (1925–2005)	Painting
–	Yüksel Özgür, child painter (details unknown)	Painting
April 1–15	–	“ <i>Paralel: Plastik-Müzik</i> ” [visual artists respond to pieces of music]

April	Güngör Kabakçiođlu (b. 1933)	Caricature
–	Limasollu Nacı (1920–1992)	Photography
–	Rafik Sabuncuođlu (details unknown)	Painting
–	Atıf Hancerliođlu (details unknown) and Eli Yađıçođlu (details unknown)	Painting
–	Max Meinecke (details unknown)	Drawings by members of the Vienna Art Club
–	İsmail Altınok (1920–2002)	Painting
–	Güngör Güven (details unknown) and Ömer Uluç (1931–2010)	Painting
–	Kuzgun Acar (1928–1976), Ali Bütün (details unknown), and Nuri Usta (details unknown)	Ceramics
–	İhsan Cemal Karaburçak (1897–1970)	Painting
–	Ferruh Başađa (1914–2010)	Painting
–	Rosette Matalon (details unknown)	Painting
–	Nuri İyem (1915–2005)	Painting
–	Pindaros Platonidis (1914–1988)	Mosaic
–	Nuri Özgiray (details unknown)	Painting
Dec. 15–?	Marta Kaya Tözge (?–2007)	Painting
<b>1954</b>		
Jan. 2–15	–	Turkish caricaturists
–	Sadi Diren (b. 1927)	Ceramics
Feb. 1–?	Aloş [Ali Teoman Germaner] (b. 1934)	Painting and sculpture
–	Oktay Günday (?–1989)	Painting
–	Abdurrahman Öztoprak (1927–2011)	Painting

April 16–30	Adnan Çoker (b.1927 ) and Lütfü Günay (b. 1924)	“Non-Objective and Abstract Painting”
–	–	Book exhibition
–	Nazan İpşiroğlu (b. 1923)	“Ürgüp in Photographs”
–	Öz Sömer (details unknown)	Embroidery
May	Galeri Maya is temporarily shut down due to financial difficulties.	

June “Rescue Exhibition” (*Kurtarıcı Sergi*) including work donated by the artists Kuzgun Acar, Atilla Altan, Avni Arbaş, Alis As, İbrahmi Balaban, Ferruh Başağa, Aliye Berger, Şeref Bigalı, Ali Bütün, Sadi Çalık, Adnan Çoker, Nevin Demiryol, Ferruh Doğan, Selma Eminoğlu, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, Eren Eyüboğlu, Leyla Gamsız, Ara Güler, Oktay Günday, Lütfü Günay, Nedim Günsür, Güngör Güven, Nazan İpşiroğlu, Nuri İyem, Güngör Kabakçioğlu, Asuman Kılıç, Füreya Koral, Abdurrahman Öztoprak, Pindaros Platonidis, İvi Stangali, İhsan Surdum, Marta Kaya Tözge, İlhan Ugan.

### **1955**

January	–	“Young Painters and Sculptors”
January	Kuzgun Acar (1928–1976)	Sculpture
End of January	Yüksel Arslan (b. 1933)	Painting
March 17–?	Baha Gelenbevi (1907–1984)	Photographs
–	Asuman Kılıç (details unknown)	Painting
May 2–17	Adnan Çoker (b.1927 ) and Ali Durukan (details unknown)	“Non-Objective Painting”

## APPENDIX B

### Helikon Derneği Program of Exhibitions

I have compiled this data from two main sources. The sequence of exhibitions is drawn from Filiz Ali's book, *Elektronik Müziğin Öncüsü Bülent Arel* [Bülent Arel, Pioneer of Electronic Music]. Other exhibition details are drawn from announcements published in *Ulus*. While it is clear that Helikon Derneği opened on January 18, 1953, I have not been able to establish its final closing date. Finally, there was a marked decrease in *Ulus*' coverage of Helikon during Ecevit's time in the U.S. between October 1954 and January 1955, and there are significant gaps in the exhibition program that I have been able to reconstitute for those years.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Artist</b>	<b>Medium</b>
<b>1953</b>		
Jan. 18–Feb 1	Hasan Kaptan (b. 1942)	Painting
Feb. 20–March 8	–	Reproductions: “French Painting from Impressionism to Surrealism”
Mid-March–April	The Group of Ten ( <i>On'lar Grubu</i> )	Painting
April 5–19	Hakkı İzzet (b. 1909)	Ceramics
April 25–?	Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu (1911–1975) and Eren Eyüboğlu (1907–1988)	Painting
–	Salih Urallı (1908–1984)	Painting
Sept. 27–Oct. 11	Ferruh Başağa (1914–2010)	Painting
Oct. 18–?	Nail Payza (details unknown)	–
Nov. 1–12	İhsan Cemal Karaburçak (1897–1970)	Painting
Nov. 13–29	Füreyâ Koral (1910–1997)	Gouaches and lithographs
December	Cemal Bingöl (1912–1993)	Painting
<b>1954</b>		
–	–	“Contemporary German Painting”
–	Rasin Arsebük (b. 1923)	Painting



Feb. 6–19	Adnan Çoker (b.1927 ) and Lütfü Günay (b. 1924)	“Non-Objective and Abstract Painting”
May	Abdurrahman Öztoprak (1927–2011)	Painting
–	Group exhibition: Aloş [Ali Teoman Germaner] (b. 1934), Kuzgun Acar (1928–1976), Bayram Küçük (details unknown), Oktay Günday (?–1989)	–
–	Nuri İyem	Painting
–	Hayrullah Tiner	Painting
–	Sadi Diren	Ceramics
<b><u>1955</u></b>		
–	Leyla Gamsız	Painting
–	Lütfü Günay	Painting
–	Neşet Günal	Painting
September	Helikon is temporarily shut down by the government.	

**1956**

February 21–? Group exhibition including Rasin Arsebük, Semra Doğada, Özgür Ecevit, Eren Eyüboğlu, Naim Fabihoğlu, Lütfü Günay, Nuri İyem, Hasan Kaptan, İhsan Cemal Karaburçak, Füreya Koral, and Selim Turan.

## APPENDIX C

### **Adalet Cimcoz to Bedri Rahmi Eyübođlu, August 25, 1950 (excerpt from personal letter). Bedri Rahmi Eyübođlu Archive, Istanbul.**

Another bit of news for you: If everything goes smoothly I'm going to rent a space and start selling [lit., trading]. But this isn't sales as we know it. I want to rent a room across from Galatasaray High School on İstiklal Avenue in Beyođlu, one floor above the former Parizyen [shop or club]. I'm going to open a permanent exhibition there (!) I am only going to exhibit modern works of art in my exhibition. My most trusted source in this endeavor will be the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy. First I will come to an agreement with the director and all the department heads, and if necessary I will exhibit and sell works made by students as well as teachers. Painting, small-scale sculptures that no longer look like monuments, ceramics, earthenware illuminations, books, and that sort of work will find their place in my exhibition. Because [the gallery] will remain open consistently and sell [the artworks] at relatively low prices, I am going to both expose the foreigners that come to our city to modern Turkish artworks, and also attempt to explain to our own snobbish circle that these works, I mean the ones of real artistic value, are cheaper and more tasteful than the shoddy goods imported from Europe. At the very least I am setting off on an adventure to try and foster a [local] tradition of selecting gifts from amongst these artworks. It is you [plural] who will be my support in this. It is first and foremost you and Eren who give me the most hope. The exhibition will not be mine alone, but all of ours. The plates that your students will decorate will supply the recognition you have long wanted them to receive. Please start to put your mind to this issue. Start getting together some little pieces of a feasible scale that that you can bring back with you when you return [to Istanbul] for us to exhibit and sell. I'm speaking of objects like the small sculptural copies that your older brother [Sabahattin] brought back from the Louvre museum, from which you can also choose some of the feasible reproductions. Just to give you an idea, let me remind you that the room I am renting is only 20–25 square meters. I don't have the money or the strength for more. That is why the pieces must be small. Be well and let me know your thoughts on this before you come back to Turkey, my dear—will this venture have an effect on Modern and progressive art and its distribution? Tell me openly what you think. I'm leaving the arrangement of the exhibition to you and your wife [Eren Eyübođlu] as you two see fit. That way I will have seen the fresh fruits of Paris and shared them with Istanbul. I'm very curious what your thoughts are on this subject, Bedros, please find the time and write to me.

*Sana bir havadis daha: Ben bir şeylere karar verdim. Şayet her şey younda giderse bir oda tutup ticarete başlayacağım. Ama bu bildiğimiz ticaret değil. Beyođlunda İstiklal caddesinde Galatasaray'ın karşısında eski parizyenin üzerinde bir oda tutmak istiyorum. Bu odada daimi bir sergi açacağım (!) Sergimde yalnız modern san'at eserlerini teşhir edeceğim. Bu hususda güvendiğim menba G.S. Akademisidir. Başta müdürü olmak üzere bütün şubelerin reislerine mutabık kalacağım gerek hocaların ve gerek talebelerin yaptıkları eserleri teşhir edip satacağım. Sergimde resim, abideden yakasını kurtaran küçük boyda heykeller, seramik, toprak işçilikleri, teship, cild ve bu nevi eserler yer alacaktır. Daima açık olacağı ve nisbeten ucuza satılabilecekleri için hem şehrimize gelecek ecnebilere modern Türk san'atı eserlerini teşhir edebileceğim ve hem de bizim snop muhite bu eserlerin daha doğrusu, hakiki san'at kıymeti olan eserlerin Avrupadan idhal edilegelen işporta mallarına kıyasen daha zevkli ve daha ucuz*

*olduklarını anlatmaya çalışacağım. Hiç olmazsa bu vesile ile hediyelerimizin bu eserlerden seçilmesinin bir gelenek haline getirilmesi için bir maceraya atılıyorum. Bu sahada beni destekleyecek olan sizlersiniz. Başta Sen ve Eren bana en büyük ümidi vermektedir. Sergi benim değil hepimizin malı olacaktır. Talebelerini süsleyeceği tabaklar onlara ötedenberi senin ümidlerinin tahakkukunu temin edecek. Bu iş için şimdiden kafanı yormaya başla ne olursun. Buraya dönerken mümkün merteye Sergide teşhir edilip satılabilecek ufak ve küçük parçalar getirmeye bak. Bilfarz ağabeyinin Louvr müzesinden getirdiği küçük heykel kopyeleri, ki bunların burada teksirleri mümkün planlarından seç. Yalnız sana bir fikir vermek için şunu hatırlatayım ki, tutacağım oda ancak 20-25 karedir. Fazlasına gücüm ve param yetmiyor. Onun için piyeslerin ufak olması lazımdır. Bu hususdaki düşünceni samimi olarak memlekete dönmeden önce bana bildir kuzum. Modern ve ileri san'atta, bu san'atın yayılmasında bu teşebbüsün bir faidesi olurmu? Ne düşünüyorsan açıkça yaz. Serginin donatımını yine karı koca sizlerin zevkine bırakacağım. Taze Paris mahsulünü bu vesile ile görmüş ve İstanbullulara göstermiş olurum. Bu hususta ne düşündüğünü çok merak ediyorum Bedros, vakit bul ve yaz bana ne olursun.*

## APPENDIX D

### “Nasıl Doğdu” [How it was Born]

Brochure reprinted in Bülent Ecevit, “Helikon,” *Gergedan* 17 (July 1988): 150–153.

#### How it was Born

They were a handful of friends: every time they got together on weekends or for holidays they would discuss art, music, theater, films with real artistic value, and literature. Those among them who were interested in music informed the others about music, those who were interested in painting [spoke] about painting, and those who were interested in theater and cinema [spoke] about theater and cinema. They'd try to explain to each other what was going on in these areas of the arts in the West. One day they said, we can't keep on this way: perhaps there were other people who could benefit from knowledge of these branches of the arts, and afterwards perhaps they'd find others, like themselves, who wanted to know more about specific spheres of contemporary art [*gününün sanatı*]. “Let's work in a more systematic way,” [they said]. There wasn't a need for a literature organization, but this was not the case for other branches of the arts: there was a need to create a suitable space where music, theater, and 16mm films could be shown, exhibitions could be opened, and talks could be held. They had no funds. They asked Şandan Candar, Mithat Fenmen, and Hilmi Girginkoç to give a concert as a trio. The concert was held, and they earned 750 lira. They put money down for the first three months' rent on a space they found, and they used the remaining 150 lira as their budget: they painted the walls, bought a table and four or five chairs, and Helikon opened in January 1953.

*Üç-beş arkadaşılar: hafta sonu tatilerinde bir araya geldiler mi resimden, müzikten, tiyatrodan, gerçek sanat değeri taşıyan filmlerden, edebiyattan söz açar, içlerinden, müzik ile ilgilenen müzik resim ile ilgilenen resim, tiyatro ve sinema ile ilgilenenler de tiyatro ve sinema hakkında öbürlerine bilgi vermiye. Batıda, bu sanat alanlarında neler olup bittiğini anlatmaya çalışırlardı. Sonra bir gün bu iş böyle olmaz dediler: bu sanat dallarında bilgilerinden faydanılacak belki daha başka kimseler vardı, sonra belki, günün sanatını belirli alanlarda, kendileri gibi, anlamak, bilmek isteyenler de bulunabilirdi; “Daha sistemli bir şekilde çalışalım.” Edebiyatın bir orgazizasyona ihtacı yoktur, fakat öbür sanat kolları için durum öyle değildi: müzik, tiyatro çalışmalarına, 16mm'lik filmler gösterilmesine, sergi açılmasını, konferans verilmesine elverişli bir yerin temini gerekiyordu. Paraları yoktu. Sandan Candar, Mithat Fenmen, Hilmi Girginkoç'tan rica ettiler, üçlü bir konser vermeleri için. Konser verildi, ellerine 750 lira geçti. Tuttukları evin üç aylık kirasını peşin ödediler, geriye kalan 150 liraya bütçelerinin el verdiği kadar eklediler; duvarlara badana yapıldı, cuval gerildi, bir masa, üç-beş sandalya alındı ve 1952 yılının ocak ayında Hasan Kaptan sergisi ile HELİKON faaliyetine başladı.*

#### Cinema

Films shown: Bourdelle, Barlach, Henry Moore, Grandma Moses, Cocteau – *La Belle et la Bête*, Canadian Painters, Open Window, Matisse, Braque, Van Gogh  
Presentations: “New Inclinations in Contemporary Cinema,” Kudret Ayiter

## MUSIC

### Concerts

**Singing, Chamber Music:** March 30, 1953, lobby of the Ankara Opera. Leylâ Gençer, Mithat Fenmen, Fethi Kopuz, Enver Kakıcı, Bülent Arel. Pieces: Duparc, Mussorsky, Ravel, Reşit Rey, Arel, de Falla, Brahms, Franck.

**Ballet:** May 12, 1953, Ankara State Conservatory. Lorna Massford, Robert Lunnon, ballet students.

**Helikon String Orchestra:** January 24, 1954, Ankara State Conservatory. Conductor: Bülent Arel. Soloists: S. Bursalı, A. Erman, J. Rosen. Purcell, Hindemith, Haendel, Respighi, Usmanbaş, Roussel.

### Classes

From 1953 onwards, music lessons on a designated day each week.

### Talks

Talks by İlhan Usmanbaş and Bülent Arel

## THEATER

### Recited Theatrical Scripts

Jean Paul Sartre, *No Exit*; John Millington Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World*; Jean Anouilh, *Wild Girl [La Sauvage]*; Arthur Schnitzler, *Playing With Love*; John B. Priestly, *Dangerous Corner*; W. Somerset Maugham, *Çember* [original English title not identified]

### Scripts in preparation for staging

Under the directorship of Turgut Okutman: Jean Anouilh, *Le Rendezvous de Senlis*

## PAINTING

### Exhibitions

**1953:** Hasan Kaptan, French Painting from Impressionism to Today, The Group of Ten, Hakkı İzzet (Ceramics), the Eyüboğlu's, Salih Uralı

**1953–1954:** Ferruh Başağa, İhsan Cemal, Füreyya Kılıç, Cemal Bingöl (Kollaj), Contemporary Turkish Painters, Rasin Arsebük, Adnan Çoker and Lütfü Günay

“Z” Group, Nuri İyem, Hayrullah Tiner, Hasan Kaptan, Aloş, Abdurrahman Öztoprak, Nail Payza

### **1954–1955**

Sadi Diren (Ceramics)

### **Studio Work**

From 1953–1954 onwards, painting lessons on a designated day each week.

### **Talks**

Talks given by Arif Kaptan, Cemal Bingöl, İhsan Cemal, Nail Payza, Füreyya Kılıç, and Cemal Tollu

## **PRESS**

“As for Helikon art association—we cannot applaud this promising venture enough. Art museums, galleries, and the number of these organizations that a nation possesses determines its place in the civilized world. I congratulate its founders. We look forward to many things from Helikon.” –İhsan Cemal Karaburçak, *Zafer*, February 6, 1953

“The seed of contemporary art that Helikon Association has planted in the barren earth has turned green and begun to sprout.” –Z.K. Noyan, *Vatan*, December 15, 1954

“For the last two years, the Helikon Association, founded by a handful of patriots, has offered many important services. Now an orchestra made up of fourteen young men and women, some of whom are amateur, some of whom are professional or are preparing for a professional music career, has taken its first step onto the musical stage.” –*Halkçı*, November 10, 1954

“It is undeniable that, despite its small membership, the Helikon Association has brought to Ankara the air of an artistic center.” –*Vatan*, December 20, 1953

## APPENDIX E

**Bülent Ecevit, “Artistic Awakening in Ankara” [Ankara’da Sanat Uyanışı], *Dünya*, April 2, 1953.**

Until very recently, we Ankara residents were as jealous of Istanbul’s artistic awareness as we were of its sea and its trees.

Our trees have yet to reach maturity, and we are as distant from the sea as ever, but an artistic awakening has now begun in Ankara as well.

Concert tickets have begun to sell out in the blink of an eye, as soon as they are available. Curiously enough, tickets to the opening night of the opera reportedly sometimes sell out even before they are released. I say “reportedly” because this is a story I heard from one of the people interested in opening nights at the opera. Our opera no longer admits people to the concert hall who are un-groomed or who lack a formal dinner jacket. There are frequent balls at the Opera. You’d think you’re in eighteenth century Vienna. Because, as far as we know, this kind of dandyism no longer exists in any twentieth-century city. Even in the most traditional of cities, like London, people in dinner jackets sit side-by-side with those in sports coats.

Anyhow, this is not the topic at hand!

In the wake of music and theater, people have recently begun to show significant interest in painting. There are at least three or four exhibitions open at any given time. Between the two galleries at Ankara University’s Department of Language, History, and Geography, and the newly founded Helikon Art Association located on Mithat Paşa (formerly İsmet Paşa) Street, there are no gaps. Additionally, exhibitions are held in different school associations’ gathering-places.

It used to be that the state was the most reliable patron of art exhibitions.<sup>1</sup> Now, individuals’ gradually increasing interest fills in the void left by state support.

What is more, an intellectual youth are chief among those who are purchasing paintings. These young people, who invest the money for which they have fought tooth and nail in painting, have increased in number to a tangible degree. In this way, paintings aligned with contemporary art [*çağdaş sanat anlayışı*] receive more attention than ever before.

Officialdom [*resmî*]<sup>2</sup>—whether half-official committees, or rich people who only appreciate painting to the extent that it resembles something else—requires that purchased paintings be “*klasik*.” This is the situation in many countries. Now, with the emergence of buyers from amongst young intellectual circles, painting has attained the patron it craves the most in all countries. In this way, modern art receives support in the most salubrious way.

The fact that the Helikon Association, which receives no aid, was founded and is able to maintain its hold, reveals that an intellectual community has emerged in Ankara. In other Western countries, this type of association are what enable advanced (avant-garde) art

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<sup>1</sup> *Müşteri*, which I have translated as “patron,” also means “customer” or “buyer.” Ecevit used the English word “patron” elsewhere, however. In a talk he gave to a local audience about the Turkish art world, for instance, he was quoted in an American newspaper stating, “no longer could the government continue as a generous patron of arts.” Marjorie Hunter, “Ottoman Empire’s End Freed Turkish Artists,” *Winston-Salem Journal Sentinel*, November 1, 1954.

<sup>2</sup> *Resmî* can translate as a range of things but indicates belonging or affiliation with the state, in contrast to something that is by nature private (*özel*) or personal.



movements to survive. Helikon is, I believe, the first of this type of association in Ankara, and if it is not, it is the most broadly engaged.

At the beginning, the name was thought to be a bit strange. But the fact that it seemed strange was also good, because once heard it is not forgotten.

Helikon was the name of a mountain in Greek mythology. In ancient times, some of the Muses would gather at the mountain of Helikon, some at Parnassus.

The association will primarily take up today's advanced art movements. While its gallery on Mithat Paşa Street is not large, it is Ankara's most central and illuminating gallery. Since mid-October, exhibitions of Hasan Kaptan, the Group of Ten, and an exhibition of some seventy reproductions of modern French paintings with explanatory captions, have opened. Arif Kaptan and İhsan C. Karaburçak have each given talks on the topic of modern painting. In addition, there are film showings about well-known painters and sculptors and related talks. The gallery currently has an exhibition of Hakkı İzet's ceramics, which will be followed by an exhibition by the Eyüboğlus.

The association's musical branch endeavors to introduce contemporary musical movements which are not very well-known in our country, including twelve-tone music. For this, Helikon organizes gatherings with musical records and explanatory texts, and vocal and chamber music recitals. Recently, one of the young generation's important composers, İlhan Usmanbaş, organized a two-night program with explanatory texts on *Vozzeck*.

On the evening of March 30, another concert program held in the foyer of the Great Theater, and featuring Leyla Gençer, Mithat Fenmen, Fethi Kopuz and Enver Kakıcı, will feature songs by another of our young and important composers, Bülent Arel, which he has composed using the twelve-tone technique.

The association's cinema branch will endeavor to support films which our filmmakers, doubtless because they look down upon even the level of culture of our major cities, have neglected to import. Of course, to do this properly requires money, which is connected to time and luck. For that reason, for the moment we are making do with the films that the Embassies Association can get hold of.

The Ankara Law Employees Thought Club (*Ankara Hukuk Mensupları Fikir Kulübü*) has also contributed significantly to the cultural life of our city. On the occasion of each new play's staging in Ankara, the Club meets and has discussions with the writer, director, and actors; they also organize poetry nights, art talks, architectural visits, and group trips to art exhibitions.

According to what we hear, this Club—some of whose activities everyone can benefit from—will soon widen its reach and also admit members who are not from the Law and Political Science Departments.

Perhaps the best aspect of the new artistic awakening in Ankara is that it is an awakening unconnected to state support. No longer overshadowed, the intellectual community in Ankara has blossomed to the extent that it no longer needs other sources of benefaction.

**Bülent Ecevit, “Ankara’da Sanat Uyanışı” [Artistic Awakening in Ankara], *Dünya*, April 2, 1953.**

*Biz Ankaralılar yakın zamana kadar İstanbullunun denizini, ağacını kışkandığımız gibi, sanata uyanıklığını da kışkanırdık.*

*Ağaçlarımız daha büyümedi, denizden de oldum olası uzağız ama, bir sanat uyanışı şimdi bizde de başladı.*

*Konser biletlerinin satışa çıkmasıyla bitmesi bir oluyor. Operaların ilk gece biletleri ise, her nasıl oluyorsa, bazan satışa bile çıkmadan bitiyormuş. Bitiyormuş, diyorum, çünkü bu, operanın ilk gecesine meraklı olanlardan rivayet. Şimdi bizim operamızın ilk gecelerinde partere smokinsiz, tuvaletsiz insan alınmıyor. Operamızda ikide bir balolar da veriliyor. Kendimizi Onsekizinci yüzyıl Viyanasında sanıyoruz. Çünkü, bildiğimiz kadar, yirminci yüzyılın hiçbir büyük şehrinde böyle züppelikler kalmadı. Londra gibi en gelenekçi bir şehirde operanı~, tiyatroun ilk gecesinde, smokinlisi ile spor ceketlisi, her yerde yan yana otururlar.*

*Her ne ise, konumuz bu değil!*

*Müzikten, tiyatrodan sonra, Ankarada bu günlerde resme de büyük bir bilgi başladı. Her zaman en az üç-dört sergi bulunuyor. Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesinin iki galerisi ile, yeni kurulan Helikon Sanat Derneğinin Mithat Paşa (eski İsmet Paşa) caddesindeki galerisi hiç boş kalmaz oldu. Ayrıca, çeşitli okullarda, dernek lokallerinde de sergiler açılıyor.*

*Eskiden, resim sergilerinin en vefalı müşterisi devletti. Şimdi, devlet koruyuculuğunun boş bıraktığı yeri, kişilerin gitgide artan ilgisi dolduruyor.*

*Hem, sergilerden resim alanların başında da aydın gençler geliyor. Dışinden, tırnağından arttırdığı parayı resme yatıran gençler duyulur derecede çoğaldı. Böylelikle Ankarada, çağdaş sanat anlayışına uygun resimler her zamankinden daha çok ilgi görmüş oluyor.*

*Çünkü resmî, yarı resmî kurullar olsun, resimden, başka bir şeye benzediği ölçüde hoşlanana çoğu zenginler olsun, alacakları resmin, akademik, kendi tabirlerince, “klâsik” olmasını isterler. Bu, birçok memleketlerde böyledir. Şimdi Ankarada resim alanların genç aydınlar arasından çıkması ise, resme, bütün memleketlerde en çok özlediği müşteriyi kazandırmış, böylece, modern sanat en sıhhatli yoldan desteklenmiş olmaktadır.*

*Hiç bir yardım görmeyen Helikon Derneğinin kurulup tutunabilmesi de Ankarada bir aydın topluluğu çıktığını gösterir. Başkaca Batı memleketlerinde, öncü (avant-garde) sanat hareketlerine yaşama imkânı veren bu çeşit derneklerdir. Helikon, sanırım, Ankarada böyle derneklerin ilki, hiç değilse, çalışma alanını en geniş tutmuş olanıdır.*

*Adı ilk önceleri pek garipsendi. Ama garipsendiği de iyi oldu, çünkü bir duyan bir daha unutmuyor.*

*Helikon, Yunan mitolojisinde yer tutan bir dağın adı. Evvel zamanda Müzler, kimi Parnassos kimi de Helikon dağında toplanırlarmış.*

*Dernek, en çok, günün ileri sanat hareketleri üzerinde duracak. Mithat paşa Caddesinde ki galerisi, büyük olmamakla beraber, Ankaradaki en merkezî ve en iyi ışıklandırılmış galeridir. Ocak ortalarındanberi, Hasan Kaptan’ın 10’lar Grubunun sergileri, arada da modern Fransız resminden 70 kadar örnek veren izahlı bir röpröduksiyon sergisi açıldı. Arif Kaptanla İhsan C. Karaburçak, modern resim konusunda birer konuşma yaptılar. Bunların dışında, tanınmış ressam ve heykeltıraşlara ait filmler gösterilerek bu filmlerle ilgili konuşmalar yapılıyor. Galeride şimdi, Hakkı İzet’in seramik sergisi, ondan sonra da Eyüboğlu’ların bir sergisi açılacak.*

*Derneğin mzik kolu, memleketimizde pek az bilinen aędař mzik hareketlerini, o arada 12 ton mzięini tantmaya alıřıyor. Bunun iin, plkla izahl mzik programları, řan ve oda msikisi resitalleri hazırlanıyor. Gen neslin deęerli kompozitrlerinden İlhan Usmanbař, geenlerde Dernek lokalinde iki gece sren izahl bir Vozzeck program tertipledi.*

*30 Mart akřam Byk Tiyatro fuayesinde Leyl Gener, Mithat Fenmen, Fethi Kopuz ve Enver Kakıcı'nin iřtirakile tertiplenen bir konser programında da, gene gen ve deęerli kompozitrlerimizden Blent Arel'in 12 ton teknięile besteledięi řarklar vardı.*

*Derneğin sinema kolu, sinemacılarımızın, herhalde byk řehirlerimizdeki kltr seviyesini bile kmsedikleri iin getirtmekten kaımadıkları filmleri temine alıřacak. Bunun gereęi gibi yapılabilmesi, elbette, paraya, o da zamana ve talihe baęlı. Onun iin řimdilik Eliliklerin Dernek iin elde edebildięi sanat filmlerile yetiniliyor.*

*Drt ay kadar nce kurulan Ankara Hukuk Mensuplar Fikir Kulb de řehrimizdeki sanat hayatına řimdiden epeyce hareket kattı. Kulp, Ankarada sahneye konan her yeni piyes iin, yazar, rejisr ve aktrlerin iřtirakile tartıřmal toplantılar, řiir geceleri, sanat konuřmaları, mimar gezileri, ve resim sergilerine toplu geziler tertipliyor.*

*Baz alıřmalarından zaten herkesin faydalanabildięi bu Kulp, duyduęumuza gre, yaknda, Hukuk ve Siyasal Bilgiler Fakltelerinden olmayanları da yelięe almak zere sahasını geniřletecekmiř.*

*Ankaradaki yeni sanat uyanıřının belki en iyi taraf, bunun, devlet koruyuculuęuna baęlı olmıyan bir uyanıř oluřudur. Ankaradaki aydın topluluęu artık, glge edilmemesinden bařka ihsan istemiyecek kadar geniřleyip olgunlařmıřtır.*

## APPENDIX F

**Bülent Ecevit, “The Artist and Politics” [Sanatçı ve Politika], *Ulus*, January 11, 1954, 3.**

In our country, which has only recently passed through democracy’s gates, people’s individuality and personhood has not yet begun to be considered as a social problem. Most of the state authorities and politicians refuse to consider the people for whom they are responsible as psychological singularities, as entire and singular worlds unto themselves; or they feel no need to do so; or their cultural background and their own interior depths do not allow them to acknowledge such a need.

For most of them, people exist as statistical figures, or at most, nothing more than the crowd in the street.

In our country, we have not yet been able to eradicate the lingering mindset of thousands of years of dictatorship, which gives no importance to the rights and interests of the individual alongside the interests of society; instead, society and the individual are treated as an unconnected duality, where society is the birth child and the individual is the stepchild, a mindset which may require much more time to fully eradicate.

Politicians and state authorities will only feel the need to abandon this mindset when a local citizenry compels them to do so.

As the number of people who are able to raise their voices above the noise of the crowd—and who, considered from a narrow point of view, appear to reduce the interests of society to nothing, instead doting upon the rights of the individual person—increases, politicians’ and state authorities’ views, too, will gain clarity. Individual members of the crowd which currently appears to them as a nebulous mass, will begin to come into focus and stand apart from one another.

In our country, it is writers and, in the broadest sense, artists, who are best situated to begin to pressure politicians and state authorities in this way.

The most significant proof of how effective artists can be in such a process is the importance given in all dictatorships to placing artists under heavy pressure. Such was the situation of artists in Nazi Germany and in Soviet Russia!

Man, in all the breadth and depth of his psychological world, is the artist’s primary subject and material. So much so that even psychologists and psychoanalysts follow the paths paved by artists, in the wake of the traces they have (perhaps unconsciously) left behind.

There can be no democracy in countries where the artist is not actively involved in politics. Because in those countries where the artist is not involved in politics, not only those who govern, but also those who are governed, are unable to learn what Humanity is, how to cultivate respect for Humanity in an abstract sense, and how to give it value above all else in this world. Societies where this value is not given to Humanity are not democratic.

**Bülent Ecevit, “Sanatçı ve Politika” [The Artist and Politics], *Ulus*, January 11, 1954, 3.**

*Demokrasinin kapısından yeni girmiş olan memleketimizde, insanların bireyliği (ferdiyeti) ve kişiliği henüz sosyal bir konu sayılmağa başlamamıştır. Memleketimizde devlet adamları ve politikacılardan birçoğu idaresiyle görevli oldukları insanları psikolojik birer bütüt birer âlem olarak görmekten kaçınmakta yahut buna lüzum duymamakta yahut da böyle bir lüzumu duymalarına kültürleri ve kendi ruh derinlikleri elvermemektedir.*

*Onlarda çoğu için insanlar, istatistiklerdeki sayılardan, bilemediniz sokaktaki kalabalıktan ibarettir.*

*Memleketimizde, toplumun menfaatleri yanında kişinin menfaat ve haklarına önem vermeyen, daha doğrusu, toplumla kişiler arasında, bunlar sanki birbirine bağlı değillermiş gibi ikilik gözeten, topluma öz evlât, kişiye üvey evlât gözüyle bakan, binlerce yıllık bir diktatörlükten arta kalma zihniyet, henüz silinememiştir ve büsbütün silinmesi de belki daha çok zaman istemektedir.*

*Politikacılar ve devlet adamları, bu zihniyeti bırakmak lüzumunu, yer yer vatandaşlar kendilerini buna zorladıkça duyacaklardır.*

*Sesini kalabalığın uğultusu üstüne çıkarabilen ve, dar bir görüş açısından bakıldığı zaman toplum menfaatlerini hiçe sayarmış gibi görünürcesine tek insanın hakları üstünde titriyen insanların sayısı arttıkça, politikacı ve devlet adamlarının da görüşleri berraklaşacak, şimdi onlara bulanık bir bütün gibi görünen kalabalığın uzuvları, birbirinden ayrı durmaya, netleşmeğe başlayacaklardır.*

*Memleketimizde bu yolun açılmasını, politikacı ve devlet adamlarına bu yolda baskının başlamasını en iyi sağlayabilecek durumda olanlar, edebiyatçıları da içine almak üzere geniş anlamıyla sanatçılardır.*

*Sanatçıların böyle bir gelişmede ne kadar müessir olabileceklerine en büyük delil, bütün diktatörlüklerde sanatçının ağır baskı altında bulundurulmasına verilen önemdir. İşte Nazi Almanyasındaki, işte Sovyet Rusya'daki sanatçıların durumu!*

*Genişliğine ve derinliğine bütün psikolojik âlemiyle insan, sanatçının baş konusu ve malzemesidir. O kadar ki psikolog ve psikanalistler bile sanatçıların açtığı yollardan, onların, belki şuursuz bir şekilde bıraktıkları izerden yürürler.*

*Sanatçının politikaya tesirli bir şekilde karışmadığı memleketlerde demokrasi olamaz. Çünkü sanatçının politikaya karışmadığı memleketlerde, yalnız idareciler değil, idare edilenler bile, İnsan'ın ne olduğunu, soyut (mücerret) anlamıyla İnsan'a saygı beslemesini, ona, bu dünyada her şeyden üstün değer vermesini öğrenemezler. İnsan'a bu değer verilmediği toplumlar ise demokratik değildir.*

## APPENDIX G

### Turkish Translations in the Dissertation

The following includes all translations of significant length, listed by chapter and page number. Translations of single sentences and short phrases are included in footnotes.

#### CHAPTER 1

**İsmail Altınok, *Bir Ressamın Notları: Türk Resminin Sorunları* [Notes of A Painter: Problems in Turkish Painting] (DMS Doruk Matbaacılık, 1980), 40. ....21**

*Ressamların çoğu seçici kurulun niteliğine göre resim vermeye başladı, gerçek sanat unutuldu. Yöneticiler karma kurullar oluşturunca da, figüratifçi üyeler, sergide figüratif resmin ağır basması için oyunlara başvurdular. Örneğin, kötü figüratif resimleri sergiye sokarak hatta satın aldirarak işi çağırından çıkardılar. Böylece devlet sergileri amatörler ağırlıklı bir sergi haline geldi. Kısası, egemen ressamlar çıkar ve nüfuz ticareti tutkularıyla devlet sergilerini istedikleri gibi kullandılar, bu sergileri amatörler sergisi haline getirdiler . . . [ve] resmin değerlendirilmesi tamamıyla egemen ressamların tekelinde kalmıştır.*

The majority of artists pandered to the juries and true art was forgotten. Even as the exhibitions' overseers put together committees representing multiple viewpoints, the jury members who supported figurative painting started scheming so that there would be a predominance of figurative paintings. For example, they went as far as including bad figurative paintings in the exhibition, and even had the state purchase them. This led the State Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions to be dominated by amateurs. In short, with their passion for profit and self-promotion, the dominant painters on the juries used the state exhibitions as they pleased, reduced them to the status of amateur exhibitions . . . [and] retained a complete monopoly over the evaluation of painting.

**Bülent Ecevit, “Aydının Derdi” [The Burden of the Intellectual], *Ulus*, October 10, 1956, 3. ....25**

*Ya bir fakültede profesör, ya bir zengin iş adamı, ya da bir yüksek memurdur. Giyim kuşamı ile, duruşu oturuşu ile tam bir “batılı”dır. Bu yurdun “aydın” farından, isterseniz “seçkin” terbidendir. Otobüste, karşısına gelip oturan çarıklı, poturlu, mintanı yamalı adamı tepeden turnağa süzdükten sonra yanındakine eğilir —İşte, der, şimdi mukadderatımıza şu karşıda oturan vatandaş hâkim. Halkının yüzde 80'i cahil olan bir memlekete demokrasi getirilirse, o memleketin hâli böyle olur! . . . [Ama şunu] demesi yanlıştır. Doğrusu, bunu söyleyen “aydın,” giyim kuşamı, duruş ve oturuşu ile, fakat sadece bu kadarı ile, “batılı” olan “seçkin”e dönüp, —Aydınlarının yüzde 80 ya mağrur ve hazımsız, ya tembel ve sorumsuz, ya da korkak ve inançsız olan bir memlekete demokrasi getirilirse, o memleketin hâli böyle olur! demiştir.*

He's either a professor in a department, a rich businessman, or a high-ranking bureaucrat. With his clothes, the way he walks and talks, he's a complete “Westerner.” He is one of this country's “illuminating” lights, of what you might call “selective” breeding. On the bus, after surveying

from head to toe a dirty, ragged man with a patched shirt who sits across from him, he will turn to the man next to him. "There you have it," he'll say, "That man sitting across from us is our future. If democracy is brought to a country where 80% of the population are illiterate, that's exactly what our country will look like!" . . . It's wrong for [the haughty bus-rider] to predict that this is what will happen. In fact, with his clothing, the way he sits and carries himself, and by this means alone, the "Westerner" in fact indicated to his "selective" neighbor: "If democracy is brought to a country where 80% of the intelligentsia are either haughty and spineless, lazy and dyspeptic, or fearful and lacking in belief, *this* is what its future will look like!"

**Cemal Tollu, "Yeni Bir San'at Galerisi 'Maya'" [A New Art Gallery, Maya], *Yeni Sabah*, January 31, 1951, reprinted in Melda Kaptana, *Maya ve Adalet Cimcoz* [Maya and Adalet Cimcoz] (Istanbul: Yenilik Basımevi, 1972), 30. ....26**

*O zaman, İstanbul'un bu ilk galerisini kapatmağa mecbur olurken, hiç olmazsa, Halkevlerinin bu işi üzerine almasını istemiştik. Hatta bu ümitle Halkevleri idaresine bile girdik. Bir şeyler başarmak, sık sık açılacak sergilerle, resim dersleriyle halka faydalı olmak istiyorduk. Arzularımıza set çekildi. Zamanın belediye reislerinden ufak bir galeri, bir sergi yeri açılmasını istedikçe: "Az daha sabredin. İki seneye kadar Taksim'de yapılacak olan şehir tiyatrosu binasında bu ihtiyacı karşılayacak salonlar da bulunacak" deniyordu. Aradan pek çok iki seneler geçtiği halde İstanbul şehri bu çifte nimete kavuşamadı. Memlekete gelen yabancılardan da utanır olduk. Çünkü galerisiz, sergisiz hiç bir medeni şehir tasavvur edilemezdi.*

In those days [the 1940s], when [ceramicist İsmail Hakkı Oygur's] first gallery in Taksim had to close, at the very least we hoped that the Peoples' Houses would take up its task. In fact, we even went to work for the Peoples' Houses in hopes of this. We wanted to succeed at something, to be of use to the *halk* with frequent exhibitions and painting classes. Our dreams were crushed. When we asked the municipality officials of the time for a small gallery, to open an exhibition space, they said: "Be patient a little longer. The new City Theater building which will go up in Taksim in two years will have plenty of rooms that will meet this need." Several years later, the city of Istanbul still had not managed to grant these two promises. We were embarrassed when foreigners came to visit. Because it was impossible to conceive of a capital city without a gallery or exhibitions.

**Adalet Cimcoz, "Adalet Cimcoz'un Gönderdiği Mektup" [Letter from Adalet Cimcoz], *Dünya*, November 24, 1952, 5. Reprinted in Kaptana, 61.....32**

*Ben Maya Sanat Galerisini yalnız ve yüzde yüz sanat endişesiyle açmış bulunuyorum. . . . Ancak geçenlerde . . . üç yıldız imzası ile ve siyasetle iştagal ettiğini beyan eden bir kimse tarafından neşredilen bir yazıda, Galerimden biraz müphem bir şekilde bahsedildiğini okudum. . . . Keyfiyeti Semih Balcıoğlu'na bildirdim. Sanat bakımından takdir ettiğim karikatürcülüğünün siyasi veçhesi dolayısıyla sergisini açamıyacağımı ve bunun da kendisi tarafından takdir edileceğini ümit etmiştim. . . . Hiç istemediğim halde, Galerimin siyasete vesile olduğu kanaatini bana verdi. . . . Galeri benim değil memleket sanat ve kültürünün malıdır. Ne iktidarın, ne muhalefetin ve ne de herhangi bir şahsın buraya fena gözle bakmıyacağını ve bakamıyacağına inanmış bulunuyorum.*



I opened Maya Art Gallery solely, and one hundred percent, in the interest of art...I subsequently found my gallery described in a rather dim light in an article published by someone with a three-star signature, who announced his own busy involvement in politics. . . . I informed [the artist] Semih Balcıoğlu of the state of affairs. I told him that I would be unable to open his exhibition because of the political side of the cartoons that I personally valued as art, and that I hoped he would understand. . . . It proved to me that my Gallery had been instrumentalized for political purposes in a manner that I never intended. . . . The Gallery is not mine but is part of our national arts heritage. I believe that neither the government, the opposition party, nor any individual would or can look negatively upon it.

**Adalet Cimcoz quoted in Kaptana, 71–72. ....37**

*Dört yıldanberi aralıksız çalışmalar, güzel ve başarılı sonuçlar verdi. Halkımız yeni sanatı, genç sanatçıyı alkışladı ve sevmeye başladı. . . . Ayda en aşağı dört yüz kişi galeriyi geziyordu. . . . Anadolu ve yurt dışında Viyana, Almanya, Paris, Amerika ve Yakınşark, Maya ve modern Türk sanatı ile ilgilendi. Avrupa'da neşriyat yapıldı. Bunlar az şey değil.*

The unending efforts of the last four years have yielded wonderful success. The *halk* have embraced new art and young artists and begun to love them. . . . At least 400 people came to the gallery each month. . . . Maya and modern Turkish art saw interest in Anatolia and internationally in Vienna, Germany, Paris, America and the Near East. It was reported on in Europe. These are not insignificant events.

**Short notice about exhibition by Cemal Bingöl ["Nafi Güratif"], *Ulus*, December 11, 1953.....49**

*Ressam Cemal Bingöl Mitha Paşa Caddesinde 1946'dan itibaren yeni doğan Nafi Güratif tarzında resimlerle dolu bir sergi açmıştır. Bu tarz resim çizgi ve renk ahenginden faydalanılarak resim ihtiyacını karşılamak üzere, bilhassa tezyini mahiyette salon ve antre duvarlarında kullanılmaktadır. Bu yeni tarz resimde tabiat taklitçiliği yoktur, sadece çizgi ve renk ahengi vardır. Fotoğraf, sergide bir tabloyu gösteriyor.*

The painter Cemal Bingöl has opened an exhibition on Mithat Paşa Avenue full of paintings in the style of Nafi Güratif, an emergent style that has existed since 1946. By using as its means the balance of lines and color, this type of painting not only meets the demands of painting itself, but on top of this its decorative aspect is essentially suited to use on the walls of living rooms and entry halls. There is no imitation of nature in this new style of painting, there is just the harmony of lines and colors. The photograph shows one of the paintings in the exhibition.

## CHAPTER 2

**"Resim: Spor ve Sergi Sarayında Patlayan Bomba" [Art: The Bomb that went off at the Exhibition and Sports Arena], *Akis*, September 18, 1954. ....60**

*Yazı işlerini idare eden Vedat Nedim Tör modern sanattan “anlaşılmayan” sanattan nefret ederdi. Nitekim bu yarışmaya katılacak ressamalara da fazla modern resimlerin iyi karşılanmayacağını ihsas etmiş hattâ pamuk tarlası resmindeki pamukların, yahut buğday tarlası resmindeki başakların “elle tutulabilecekmiş gibi” canlı ve anlayışlı olmasını sağlık vermişti. Yarışmanın sonundaki dolgun mükâfatları kaçırmak istemeyen ressamlar da bu sözlere uyarak, aslında modern sanata meyilli bile olsalar, tablolarında pamuğu pamuğa, başağı başağa, balığı balığa ve adamı adama benzetmek için ellerinden gelen gayreti sarfetmişlerdi.*

The writer Vedat Nedim Tör hates modern art and “illegible” art. In fact, he insinuated to the painters who were going to participate in the contest that their overly modern paintings would not be received favorably, and that even their bunches of cotton and sheaths of wheat should look lively and legible, “as if you could hold them in your hand.” All the participating painters, who did not want to lose a chance to win the sizable prize, heeded these words and did everything they could to make cotton look like cotton, wheat look like wheat, fish look like fish, and men look like men—even those artists otherwise inclined towards abstraction.

**Fitne Fücur [Adalet Cimcoz], “İstanbul Dedikoduları” [Istanbul Gossip], *Halkçı*,  
September 19, 1954. ....73**

*Mehtap kurulmuş tepeye, geceleri buğulu gri bir ışık altında Boğaz; gündüzleri yaprak bile kıpırdamıyor, alabildiğine sıcak ortalık. . . . Alman delegelerinin hemen hepsi göbekli, babacan adamlar; İngiliz delegasyonu bilhassa başlarında Mister Rid olmak üzere hepsi tığ gibi ince ve uzun adamlar; Amerikalıların çoğu gözlüklü; Fransızlar hemen şarap markalarını öğrenmişler ve esprinin bini bir para bu mevzuda; İtalyan delegasyonu fazla yüz vermiyor etrafa, öyle hususi kokteyllere pek rağbet etmiyorlar. Delegasyonun kadın üyeleri Kapalıçarşı’yı ezberleyiverdiler.*

The moonlit peaks, the Bosphorus under a misty gray light; during the day not even a leaf quivered. . . . The German delegates are all fatherly types with round stomachs; headed by Mister Rid [Herbert Read], the English delegation are skinny and tall as a needle; most of the Americans have glasses; the French have already learned the wine brands and have spent a fortune; the Italian delegation doesn’t get out much, they don’t favor private cocktails of this sort; and the female members of the delegation have apparently memorized the Grand Bazaar.

### CHAPTER 3

**Bedri Rahmi Eyübođlu. “Bir Münekkit Aranıyor” [Wanted; Critic], *Vatan*, April 27, 1944, reprinted in Bedri Rahmi Eyübođlu, *Collected Writings 1938–1945*, 251–254. ....90**

*Bir münekkit arıyoruz. Hiç olmazsa bir tanecik! Belki ondan başkaları türer. Bize beş yüz tane şaheser alabilecek bir sergi salonu ne kadar lazımsa, bu eserleri kendi eseri kadar benimseyebilecek bir münekkit lazım. . . . [Sanat] cevheri akıtma, dağıtma işini yalnız münekkitler başarmışlardır. Arada münekkitlerin kurduđu köprü olmadığı takdirde seyirci ve sanatkar daima birbirinden uzak kalmaya mahkumdurlar. Münekkidin nurlu parmađını uzatmadığı herhangi bir yerde sanat ve meraklıları türemiş olsalar bile bu meraklılar ağzına kadar nimet dolu bir yerde açlıktan ölmeye mahkum kimselere benzerler.*

We seek a critic. If nothing else, one little one! Maybe others would multiply in his wake. However much we may need an exhibition space that can accommodate five hundred masterpieces, we are just as much in need of a critic who can make those works his own. . . . Only critics have historically succeeded in the work of discerning and diffusing the essence of art. Lacking the bridge that critics construct between them, the viewer and the artist are condemned to remain distant from one another. Any place where the critic has not extended his illuminating finger, art and the art lovers who have managed to emerge it has managed to generate will be like people condemned to die of hunger in a land of plenty.

**Peyami Safa, “Bizdeki Komünistlerin En Tehlikelileri” [The Most Dangerous of the Communists Among Us], 1954, reprinted in Şakir Eczacıbaşı, *Çağrışımın Tanıklıklar Dostluklar* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2010), 196–197. ....99–100**

*Türkiye’de komünizmin bir de yeraltı falliyetleri vardır ve asıl tehlikeli olan da budur. Hüviyetini gizlediđi için snoblara, dandilere, züppeler ve şahsiyetsiz gençlere cazip görünen bir yenilikçilik, ilericilik, solculuk makyajı altında, güzel sanatlar yoluyla, milli ruhun köklerine işlemek imkanının bulurlar, dergiler ve tümen tümen kitap çıkaran yayınevleri kurarlar, yine bazı günlük gazetelerde sanat sayfaları idare ederler. . . . Bazı gazetelerde çıkan sayfalarına, “Sanat Dünyasında” gibi sütunlara, yenilik iddiasındaki solcu dergilere bir göz atarsanız, hepsinde bu vasıfların müşterek olduđunu görürsünüz.*

Communism in Turkey works in subterranean ways, and these are where the real danger lies. Concealing their identity and appealing to snobs, dandies, fops, and an unremarkable youth under the guise of novelty, progressivism, or leftism, Communists make use of the fine arts, find ways to cut away at the roots of the national spirit, establish magazines and publishing houses and put out scores of books; they even control the arts pages of some of the daily papers. . . . If you take a look at the ‘Art World’ columns in some papers, if you look at some of the left-leaning magazines who promote these new ideals, you will see that they all share these characteristics.

**Cemal Tollu, “Aynı Hamurdan” [From the Same Dough], *Yeni Sabah*, July 25, 1956, 2. ....104**

*Yirmi dört milyonun mukadderatı ile alâkalı işlerde söz sabihi olan beşyüz kırk mebus çıkararak bu milletin seçtiği mebusları memnun edecek değerde otuz eser verememiş olması mümkün müdür? Senelerdenberi yüzlerce genç, tahsillerini tamamlamak üzere Avrupanın muhtelif şehirlerine gidiyorlar. Bu gençlerin hepsi, seçtikleri meslekte üstün başarı gösterdikleri için hükümet hesabına gönderilmişlerdir. Bunların arasında birkaç ressam ve heykeltıraş da bulunmatadır. Diğer meslektekileri başarılarına mukabil, sanatkârların geride kalmaları kabil midir?*

Is it possible that not even thirty artworks produced are of a quality to make happy the 540 members of parliament, who have been chosen by the will of 24 million citizens to speak on their behalf on relevant issues? For years, hundreds of [Turkish] young people have been sent to various European cities to complete their education. All of these youths have been supported by the government because they display high levels of success in their chosen profession. Some of them are painters and sculptors. Is it really possible that, in contrast to the successes of students in other professions, the artists lag behind?

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