MID-CENTURY MODERNISM IN TURKEY
Architecture Across Cultures in the 1950s and 1960s

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Architecture as advertising

The Istanbul Reklam Building

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The Istanbul Reklam Building is an iconic example of modern Turkish architecture of the late 1960s when, due largely to the protection of the domestic market, the private sector thrived, and a new generation of clients started commissioning innovative architectural works to promote and advertise their businesses. The building was the result of an open national competition that was publicized as the "first private sector-sponsored architectural competition" in Turkey (Fig. 8.1). Designed by architects Günay Glingörgülü (1936-2010) and Mehmet Tunca (1921-2000), the winning scheme opened in a prominent location in the historic core of Istanbul in 1974. Architectural historians have praised the building, but have never examined it closely. For Metin Serim (1984), Istanbul Reklam is a "very successful" example of Brutalist formalism. For Üzeyir Türeli (1998), the building is "another Brutalist work exemplary of the duo's short-lived, not-so-productive but interesting mannerism." For Ayla Özdiken (2005), the building is among the most important examples of Brutalism in Turkey. The building's importance, however, lies not only in its stylistic and formal characteristics but also in its deep involvement in the economic and cultural life of Istanbul.

Earlier studies of this time period identify that the shift from state to private sponsorship was parallelized in the 1960s with a new professional concern and sensitivity for context. This chapter explores an instance where a private sector client commissioned an over-scale building with a complex and heavy program in a historic urban context, and where the architects skillfully managed to reduce the effect of that scale by introducing inspired architectural devices. The chapter also adds that private sector clients, such as Istanbul Reklam, sought to use architecture as advertising. Most importantly, I argue that the building is a unique example of crossover advertising where one of the products advertised is modern architecture. The Istanbul Reklam Building was a media building: media content (advertising) was produced in it, photographic images of it were later disseminated through media, and it was a medium through which the agency advertised itself. To start with, naming this advertising agency after the city of Istanbul was a conscious branding decision. Yet in all the phases of the building's life, from competition through construction and use, the architecture promoted the advertising agency. In turn, the agency advertised the building.
Istanbul Reklam produced a range of services in promotion and publicity, from ads in newspapers, on radio and television to illuminated outdoor signs and custom printing, but, among all, it thrived as part of the burgeoning motion picture industry. Its building was commissioned by the agency's founder and owner Süleyman Gürbaykan (1931–1992). According to his daughter Bebe, Gürbaykan was Turkey's first "Mad Man" (reference here to the US period drama television series about advertising agencies in New York, set in the 1960s).

Founded with the help of Gürbaykan's caricaturist friend Masaata Uykuş, the agency started in 1959 as a small bureau with borrowed furniture in an office building in the Çağaloglu district. After Turkey's 1960 coup, the government adopted an import substitution model that set limits on imports in order to promote local products. This economic policy provided a boost to Turkey's small businesses, and, in turn, to the business of advertising, as firms looked to publicity as a means of increasing their ability to compete. In this favorable climate, Istanbul Reklam soon grew to have multiple offices and Gürbaykan prospered. He married Turkey's 1960 beauty queen Gider Kerim, took many business risks, and flaunted fast luxury cars. At his house in the modern suburb of Levent, home to film stars and industrialists, he lavishly entertained his clients and employees. The garden featured a pool that offered impressive views over the prestigious district, while underneath was hatted a small theater where he hosted screenings of his company's motion picture advertisements. By 1963, the agency had spread to eight rented offices in Çağaloglu. They were close to each other, but the need for rapid internal communication made the separate offices difficult to operate and manage. Gürbaykan's solution was to consolidate the offices in a new building. The building that opened six years later boasted print and publishing facilities, a photography lab, a sound recording studio, film production and projection rooms, an art gallery, a film theatre, offices, and service functions spread on nine levels (Fig. 8.2).
There were several distinct phases of the building's life through which the advertising agency was advertised: the building site, the process of the competition, the process of building, and the promotion of the building after it was completed and occupied. Istanbul Reklam may or may not have been the first private sector-sponsored architectural competition in Turkey; what is curious is that it was advertised as such. I will examine the competition process most closely, however the other stages are also revealing. What was the motivation behind the competition? What are the features that distinguish the winning scheme from other entries? How was the building used, experienced, and altered over time? What features of the building continue to capture the imagination of Turkish architects and architectural critics today? In this discussion, I will use competition documents and announcements, Gürbüzkan's biography, Kablıf, and conducted in the form of a book-length interview, interviews with Gürbüzkan's daughter and Günsay Çilingiroğlu (both conducted in October 2007), popular media and architectural magazine coverage of the competition and surveys of the building itself in order to examine architecture as an assemblage of networks and influences. I will pay particular attention to the role of the client and the business of advertising. I seek to expand on earlier overviews and surveys of the period that focus on the agency of select architects within a framework of political periodization, and, thus, to contribute to a new generation of architectural histories interested in broader networks of human and non-human actors that collectively shape the built environment.

Conception: Disciplinary paradigms and transnational influences

Historians of modern Turkish architecture have been interested in Turkish architects' transnational dialogues versus regionalist tendencies, but they have also been inclined to interpret architectural works in light of larger political shifts such as "nation building." Other types of influences—that may range from the iterative process of programmatic typologies, e.g. hospital, schools, libraries, to the availability of construction materials, which are semi-independent from national political conjectures—also have a bearing on individual works. Strongly criticizing architectural historians' political frames of reference, Uğur Tamsay explains (2004) that in the familiar model of architectural history writing, there is a turning point that is the beginning of Republican architecture. According to this model, from that turning point until 1950, the country is characterized by efforts of nation building and a modernization period defined by single-party rule. [...] The period after 1950 is still written as a series of architectural transformations interpreted—good or bad—according to political positions. For example, the 1960s is a decade dominated by architectural discourses centered on political freedoms and social concerns. And finally, a period of opening up, identified with the age of [Turgut] Özyal [economic liberalization from the 1980s onwards] is the backbone of architectural changes. [...] Thus, the 1950s under Democrat Party rule has been characterized as a period of "Americanization," as Turkey strengthened its ties and collaboration with the US in the realms of politics, economy and culture. In architecture, European Modernism was exported to the rest of the world via the US. A built example that is commonly cited in architectural histories of the decade is the Istanbul Hilton Hotel (1952-1955), designed by the American architectural firm Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill in collaboration with Turkish architect Sedad Eldem. Its key features, e.g. the Corbusian egg-crate façade and horizontal mass raised on pilons, were emulated in a number of well-known buildings by Turkish architects such as the Istanbul Municipal Palace (1953) by Nevzat Irol and the Cınar Hotel (1959) by Rana Züpe, Ahmet Akın and Emin Ernani. International influences on Turkish architecture were not limited to American and European sources, however; Meltem Gürel's focused study of İzmir's Island Casino, for instance, has explored this design's dialogue with Latin American Modernism. Architecture historians have also mentioned the influence of Japanese Metabolism. Çilingiroğlu and Cine's works—especially the Taksim Pavilion (1972-1974), realized for that newspaper's headquarters and printing press several years after the Istanbul Reklam Building, and which features heroic cantilevers—are in obvious conversation with Japanese experiments of the 1960s. Metabolism's general influence on Turkish architects during this decade is often acknowledged in passing reference but not necessarily traced thoroughly.

Gürbüzkan's biography reveals that the building's conception was, indeed, influenced early on by Japanese, as well as Latin American examples, but not necessarily only on stylistic grounds. Before the competition, Gürbüzkan visited the Japanese advertising giant Dentsu in Tokyo and spent several days there observing how they worked. During that trip he was most impressed by the notion of a purpose-built office building for an advertising agency.

It was a tremendously interesting, seventeen-to-eighteen-story building. Everything was perfect. About fifteen hundred employees worked there. It affected me deeply. I visited every corner of the building [...]. Its modern structures influenced me. I asked for [the name of] the architect. They said it is one of Japan's most recognized architectural practices. They added, it was the first building in the world designed and built on purpose for the needs of an ad agency. There are very large ad agencies in the US, in the UK, in France. Especially bigger than ours [in Turkey]. Three to five times the size of our [Turkey's] biggest firm. I have seen most of these. Their buildings were not done according to the workflow
of an advertising agency from the foundation to the roof. They all inhabited converted buildings, be it a mansion or a palace. For this reason, the Dentus building in Tokyo was the first building erected according to the needs of an advertising agency. […] I went on a tour of South America in the fall the same year […] I departed from the group and visited Brasilia, the new capital of Brazil, for a few days. I visited and studied the best examples of modern architecture, which I could only dream about here [in Turkey]. At some point, I even met the famous architect Niemeyer and his friends who founded the city.11

Gürbüzkan wanted to have that “modern” look which he found in Brasilia and Tokyo rather than in Europe. Yet his memory needs to be taken as a reflection of his aspiration and retrospective rationalization.

The Dentus building is a model for Istanbul Reklam in terms of its program as a purpose-built advertising agency building, and its symbolism as a building advertising an advertising agency. The famous Japenese architect of the Dentus Building, whose name Gürbüzkan cannot recall, is Kenzo Tange. Following his 1960 Tokyo Plan, Tange developed an urban planning scheme for To-shi, a dense commercial district in Tokyo.13 The scheme consisted of high-rise buildings in a grid plan, connected by bridge-like structures. The interesting aspect of this design was that the project emerged from a commission for the main office building of the Dentus advertising agency, which envisaged a main office building 100 meters tall with twenty-one floors, and giant pillars set at a span of thirty-two meters. In execution, however, only the Dentus building was erected in 1967-1968; moreover, its height was reduced to twelve floors and its horizontal structural spans were also moderated. The resulting building is much less interesting than the Istanbul Reklam Building. The Dentus headquarters has a monotonous front façade, and a blank side façade that dominates the street experience and is inevitably featured in most contemporary photographs. It does not contribute to the immediate public realm, and it is in no way a “stylistic” or formal model for the Istanbul Reklam Building.

The competition process

The design for the Istanbul Reklam Building was acquired through an open competition. What was Gürbüzkan’s motivation in launching an open competition? It is rare, even today, for privately owned companies in Turkey to hold open competitions—limited, invited competitions are preferred over open ones. Such competitions are generally used in commissions for civic buildings. They are organized with the belief that they will broaden architects’ access to important public projects, and also that the client will get the best and most innovative design. Having noted this, one of the most famous open competitions of the twentieth century internationally was the Chicago Tribune Tower.14 It was for the privately owned company that printed the newspaper Chicago Tribune. The building was intended to be not only a real estate investment but also an advertisement for the company. The competition was an effort on behalf of the company to present itself as a civic institution that would transform the image of the city. Some of these notions also apply in the case of the Istanbul Reklam Building, a company that also identified itself with its city, as its name demonstrates, and promoted its architectural design competition as advertising for its business, which happened also to be advertising.

At the beginning, architectural competitions in modern Turkey were dominated by limited ones, and were open only to foreign architects. Open competitions were eventually organized due to the demands of Turkish architects who were disgruntled by the state’s commissioning the new Republic’s nation-building projects to their European colleagues. According to Mimar Târuk Galip, writing in Arkitekt in 1930, the first competition open to Turkish architects was organized by a provincial municipality, Elazığ (Elazığ), for a cinema building in 1931 (the winner was Mimar Svki Eşref Bey).15 The first major commission in the capital city, Ankara, was organized by the Melli Beşir ve Tasarruf Cemiyeti for that city’s Exhibition Hall in April 1933, of the two top-placing entries, by Turkish architect Svki Eşref (Başcemici) and Italian architect Paolo Vietti, the commission was given to the Turkish architect, leading to much praise in local architectural circles.16 Architectural competitions were opened not only for “public,” civic, or cultural buildings, e.g. ministries, public offices, municipal buildings, or state museums, but also for many different program types ranging from cinema buildings to hotels to factory buildings. However, these were also commissioned by government-affiliated, public agencies or government-owned companies, including banks, which would lead state-led industrialization, e.g. Sonaerbank (focusing on textile production, 1933-1957). Marker competition would be the necessary prerequisite for private sector firms to commission building designs through architectural competitions, and a new economic policy based on the import substitution model after 1960 provided the impetus for domestic competition. Yet, this broad shift in the economic realm cannot in itself explain why Istanbul Reklam launched a competition in 1968.

Istanbul Reklam promoted the competition in print announcements emphasizing that it was the first private sector competition held in Turkey. That this fact was turned into advertising copy manifests Gürbüzkan’s effort to promote himself in the field of advertising through the field of architecture. The competition was advertised in newspapers for a month from 15 September 1968 on. Following the deadline of 16 December, it was adjudicated from 26 December 1968 to 1 January 1969 by a jury of well-known local experts including architect Neco Eldem (1921-2005) and civil engineer Niyazi Duman (both of whom were professors at Istanbul Technical University); Marsuf Oral (1918-2010, the cofounder, with Turbat Çanekoğlu (1921-2009), of Turkey’s first large architectural practice İnşaat.
The competition brief mandated both programmatic and site constraints. Cagaloglu was ideal for its concentration of print presses, publishing houses and agents' offices and bookshops. Being in the historic peninsula and at an elevated location, however, the built form had to conform to height limitations. The entries were to employ a small historic structure on the site. Right in the middle of the two lots that make up the building site, at the cross section of Bab-ı Ali and Nurişanı Miy Avenue, stood the late nineteenth century mausoleum under protection. Thirdly, it was located in an urban fabric characterized by narrow plots and horizontal projections above the entry level. Such projections, called camiha, in typical wooden vernacular buildings had already been translated into load-bearing masonry apartment buildings that replaced them in the district. The proposals had to relate to the morphology of the urban context.

The jury made several recommendations in its report, one of which addressed the city's building regulation authority. In defense of the proposal's violation of existing height limits, the jury wrote that the eventual building would be appropriate for the city. The proposal's footprint was also closer to the mausoleum than would have been normally allowed; it required eliminating the mausoleum's surrounding garden walls and replacing the original paving of its courtyard. A second recommendation by the jury addressed the High Council of Monuments in order to defend the proposal's interventions to the historic monument. Gürbakan used, and proudly admitted to using, the prestige of the jury members and the legitimacy of the competition's institution, the Chamber of Turkish Architects, to get these code violations approved. In December 1969, the winning entry was successfully used to amend the zoning plan; in July 1970, the building permit was granted; and in May 1974, the building had received its certificate of occupancy. By this time, however, Istanbul Reklam's line of business—motion picture advertising—was in serious decline.

Design and construction

Gürbakan used architecture and the process of building as a vehicle to promote his business—and vice versa. After the site was purchased but before an architectural design was commissioned, the site was surrounded by a five-meter-high fence (Fig. 8.3). Istanbul Reklam used this fence as a giant billboard. Reklam's clients pitched in the construction in exchange for space on the fence. The first contributor was Jot brand, a local producer of men's razor blades. This, possibly the most significant legacy of the project, was nothing less than a new way to finance architecture. Still today façades are designed as scaffolding for ads. During construction, Gürbakan came up with a second funding scheme that emulated a method of building component acquisition used to fund philanthropic projects. He asked for donations from companies in exchange for future promotional work: windows arrived from Çardarlıoğlu Alımımyus, telephones from Türk
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The best examples [of the extreme articulation of parts as an expressive system] are the work of Günay Cingilorgullu and Muhlis Tunca, first in their Istanbul Reklam Building and then in other ones. In the first case, their building surrounds a small historic building, without touching it. The small volumes connect with hollow junction details, structural elements are apparent. The final expression is a sculpted, "dematerialized," tiny membrane which embraces the outer space more than its own inner space.

Guides for the student of architecture and the general public similarly suggest that the building respects the scale of the local fabric. Short statements universally rehearse that the building is special because it "is an excellent example of new architecture in keeping with the scale of its surroundings" or that "the design [and the corner plot effectively and] has kept the Ottoman mausoleum located inside into account, (and) leaves a Brutalist effect with its architectural form and elements." However, the building was in fact over-scaled; it exceeded the height limitations on the site by two stories. The preservation of the historic structure on site was actually a requirement or constraint dictated by the competition brief and regulations. The success of the project lies in the use of projections and the unexpected effect on the massing, what Yücel identifies as dematerialization.

The question of how to build in sensitive historic inner city areas was born a challenge and an opportunity for Turkish architects. Istanbul Reklam reveals one of the three distinct approaches that Turkish architects developed. An early example of "contextual modernism" in Turkish architecture is Sedef Hekim Eldem's Social Security Complex (Sosyal Sigortalar Kurumu, SSK, 1962-1970), in the historic neighborhood of Zeyrek, lining the wide, sloping Atatürk Boulevard. Eldem is known for his typological studies of vernacular houses dubbed as the "Turkish Houses," as a source for a nationalized modern or contemporary architecture. In the Social Security Agency Complex (1962-1964), Eldem applied to an institutional building architectural details and aggregate massing derived from his extensive documentation of wooden houses. This project, which later received the 1986 Aga Khan Award for Architecture, was "praised for the sensitive composition of articulated volumes, which harmonizes exceedingly well with the traditional background." This complex is across the street from an earlier competition project, the Istanbul Textile Traders' Market (Istanbul Manufakturlar Carşısı, IMC, 1959), designed by Doğan Tekeli, Sami Sis, and Metin Heygilli. It is another example of contextual modernism, comprised of low-rising buildings organized around courtyards stepping up along the sloped terrain and slightly turning toward the views of the nearby Süleymaniye Mosque Complex. Again in the case of IMC, it was the competition brief that prescribed a fragmented, spread-out, low-rise massing. In fact, this approach had become quite popular by the mid-1960s. Its frequent use and successful results in competitions were openly criticized by
architectural critics, for whom the results of the increasing number of competitions were not necessarily innovative. These two buildings, SSK and DMG, facing each other on the historic peninsula represented two distinct approaches to sensitivity to historic context. The winning scheme for the Istanbul Reklam Building introduced a third method. It reinterpreted the traditional building projection into articulated masses, avoiding the morphological simulacrum in Edem's SSK, or the spread of Tekeli, Siva and Hegyö's DMG, but skillfully providing an infill solution fitting for the relatively tight inner city lot. The reference to the traditional house typology was to subtile it has escaped most architectural critics, which can be considered a success of the design's interpretative abstraction. Most consultants praise only the C-shaped plan; however, as mentioned, this was prescribed by the competition brief, and so it is present in all the entries. In their winning scheme, Cilingiroğlu and Tunca broke down the Istanbul Reklam Building's façade through the use of three- and four-story projections. The plasticity of the projections in the building is a reversion of cambal where horizontal openings repeat on each floor. Windows are articulated as transparent openings that extend the full height of the projection. The projections read like glass boxes, which are framed by concrete screen walls only at the top and sides. There are variations among the projecting volumes in height and surface treatment. On the Baltı-An elevation, where the mausoleum is located, and to the left of this historic structure, is a narrow, tall, and (in-plan) deep section of the building with a façade-projection that is four stories tall, but the treatment of the screen walls that frame the big projection box visually reduces its scale. On the other side of the mausoleum, still on Baltı-An on its Nuruosmaniye Avenue corner, there are two projecting volumes of three stories each, one more recessed than the other. A concrete screen wall fronts one; the other is fully glazed. All these articulations skillfully break down the mausoleum building by so many edges that it no longer has any. The treatment of walls facing the mausoleum is plain; they act as a neutral backdrop to the small-scale, marble-clad historic structure. Finally, this built design has no visible entry doors. The projecting volumes cantilever above the five meters-high ground floor—acting as large canopies that draw passers-by inside from the plaza across the site to the mausoleum. This effort to vacate the ground floor can be observed in most of the other prize-winning entries.

The building in use

The Istanbul Reklam Building was a form of advertising in all the stages of its making enumerated above; yet it was also built by and for advertising. The agency made the lion's share of its earnings in motion picture advertising. This specific form of advertising, and its relatively low status deriving from that of Turkish cinema, was possibly a key motivation for Gürbaskan to commission or use architecture to enhance the prestige of his agency. Motion picture advertising is not a topic taken up in the few histories of Turkish advertising, nor do histories of Turkish cinema address this type of promotion. The agency worked with a vast number of film theaters. It had on staff film technicians and directors who produced animated films and short live-action films shot on location. The building program reveals that film production and screening were central to its operation. Since Turkish cinema as a sector was not highly regarded among cultural elites because of the films' mass appeal and melodramatic, rage-to-riches stories, it may not be farfetched to suggest that some of the content for Turkish cinema would rub off onto Istanbul Reklam. In contrast, one of Turkey's most respected advertising agencies, Fral Reklam, was co-founded by Vitali Hakko, who was also the founder and owner of Yıldız, Turkey's most prestigious and expensive fashion house. Patronage of architecture and the promotion of design could similarly provide Gürbaskan theBoosted cultural capital and symbolic power that his business line did not. It is thus important to briefly dwell on the Turkish advertising industry.

Not only in Turkey but also around the world, mass media infrastructures have been crucial in the development of advertising and so has the development of a consumption-oriented economy. By 1960, the Turkish printed press still had widespread influence. Radio, cinema, and later TV emerged as important venues. Radio and TV were state-controlled and required a bidding process by agencies for airtime. Moreover, these media were directly controlled by the political party in government. Cinema production, however, was fully market-driven but, on shoestring budgets, had its own budgetary, and political, constraints. The popularity of Turkish-language, locally made feature films had turned filmmaking into a lucrative business. As a result, Turkey became one of the biggest film producers worldwide; a New York Times article written in 1960 was headlined, "Anyone with a little money may make a film in Turkey." In contrast to Hollywood productions, these domestic products had no promotional budgets. While films were little promoted, there was much product advertising within the movie theater.

This new mode of advertising in movie theaters helped boost the local advertising sector. Half an hour of ads were typical as preludes to feature films. Despite the relatively high costs involved in preparing motion picture ads, which resembled short films, the huge demand for cinema in Istanbul made this method of promotion particularly appealing. Agencies were able to customize their ads according to the socio-economic status of the district the theater was located in. Amongst the fifty-eight advertising agencies producing movie ads, the main agencies were Grafika, Istanbul Reklam, Baysal Film, Ankara Reklam, Studio Çişti, and Manaş and Yeni Ajans. Istanbul Reklam reportedly took the lion's share of ad space in Istanbul, at sixty percent. According to competing advertiser Vedad A., Istanbul Reklam dominated the market with its high volume of cheap product. Istanbul Reklam screened its motion picture advertising in dozens of cinemas.
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food company, on the issue of customization. The client asked the agency to screen motion picture advertising in poorer neighborhoods. However, one day, the Art Ulanı's owner went to a screening close to his home in the upper-middle class district of Harbiye, at the Konak Sineması (designed by architect Rüştüden Gümür), and saw the company's promotional film there before the feature film. He admonished Gürbaşkan on the phone the next day.

The buyer of my product is a middle-class family. The market for Art Ulanı baby food is Kasımpaşa, Aksaray, Eyüp. The citizen living in Harbiye or Nişantaşı buys baby formula from the American bazaar. What is he going to do with Art Ulanı?26

The above fragment from Gürbaşkan's memory is explicit about his company's target audience: poorer families who lived in lower-income areas and flocked to see Turkish films. Yet, it is also revealing of Gürbaşkan's effort to promote himself to upper-middle-class audiences because he placed the Art Ulanı ad in the Konak film theater at his own expense, despite his client's wish. Gürbaşkan embossed his client, because of the social signification of the domestically produced baby food in comparison to the American competition, reflecting tensions in upper-middle-class values and perceptions. Since Istanbul Reklam's main advertising revenue was from locally produced products sold to the lower middle classes that were not even tolerated by the producers of those products, how could the agency move into a more prestigious stratum of advertising? How could it increase its cultural capital? Associating with the field of design and patronizing architects were relatively efficient and sure ways of achieving this goal.

Gürbaşkan envisioned an international profile for his agency. However, the agency's fate followed that of Turkish cinema as the latter went into decline after 1970. Gürbaşkan wanted to enter the TV ad business but state-owned television was highly regulated, with a business model that supported big business. Televisör did not suit the agency's repertoire of clients, which included small businesses.26 Istanbul Reklam ended up withdrawing from this effort following a lawsuit. In the 1980s, when Turkey abandoned the import substitution model and adopted liberal economic policies, re-opening the market to foreign goods, Gürbaşkan registered the building as the headquarters of "Hepsin" (Istanbul Reklam Exposition). He marketed it as an exhibition and promotion venue through the 1980s. Since the early 1990s, the building has been rented out, and to this day it is used as a bank branch. This has meant significant remodeling inside. With the exception of replaced window fenestration and painting, the outer appearance has not been altered.

Despite the lack of thorough critical assessments, Istanbul Reklam has remained one of the most significant examples of modern architecture in the collective imaginations of Turkish architects. It is not a surprise that it was one of the projects featured in the photographic work of Ali Taşkın in the
official Turkish entry, “Place of Memory,” to the Venice Biennale in 2014. It was among the twenty-three projects chosen by the guest editor, architectural critic Aykut Kılıçlar, for the special issue of local architecture magazine Betonart on the (40th special, 2014) issue of “exposed/rough” (brut) concrete. The journal, the title of which translates as “the art of concrete,” was launched a decade ago to showcase good examples of concrete against the popular perception of “concrete-ization” (betonolapya) as both the metaphor and culprit of unregulated rapid urbanization. In his short essay, architect Bogajcan Dundaralp considers the building’s contextualism “obligatory” since it is situated in the historic peninsula, within the historic fabric, on an important intersection, across a historic mosque and with a historic structure within its very site. My above discussion of the building in comparison to the two other building complexes (SKK and IMC) suggests that while contextualism may have indeed been regarded as essential at the time, Turkish architects developed different methods to actualize that goal.

I must note that observers outside the field of architecture will have different views on the building, sometimes diametrically opposed to the professionals’. Searching for a contemporary online image, for example, I came across a blog featuring photographs of the mausoleum under the title: “Slave to Ferroconcrete: The Mahmut Nedim Pasa Mausoleum,” indicating that the surrounding building is an oppressive menace to the historic monument. Another blogger rightly framed the mausoleum so as to exude the modernist building. In fact, it was somewhat difficult to find a contemporary image of the Istanbul Reklam Building. Kılıçlar, whose photograph of the building is featured here, explains in a 2014 interview that he had to photograph the building himself for the above-mentioned issue of Betonart for lack of decent present-day shots (Fig. 8.5).

The use of extensive exposed concrete surfaces, now painted gray, has associated the building with Brutalism at the time it was built. Originally, Brutalism, or New Brutalism, was used to describe the work of a small group of young architects in the UK in the 1950s and 1960s, such as Alison and Peter Smithson. As defined by architectural theorist Reyner Banham in the mid-1950s, Brutalism’s characteristics included formal legibility of plan, exhibition of structure, exposure and validation of materials “as found,” and a sense of moneymaking. As Banham noted, Brutalism was soon negatively associated with merely rough, cast concrete in the public’s eye. In addition, in Turkey, modern construction in concrete frame, as it rapidly replaced the city’s older wooden and masonry fabric, came to be seen as the culprit of a rapid, unplanned urbanization gone awry. All these associations contribute to the common perception of the Istanbul Reklam Building today.

Istanbul Reklam, today

Istanbul Reklam is revered by architects as an important example of modern Turkish architecture but dismissed by the general public. It is timely to look at this building, because of what it reveals about architectural culture, about advertising and motion pictures, about Istanbul’s cultural geography, and about Turkish economy and politics through the 1960s and the 1970s. The common approach to these decades until recently was to frame them through military coups, national development policies, and the architectural profession’s interest in a contextually sensitive, or socially engaged

Figure 8.5 Contemporary photograph of the Istanbul Reklam Building, 2014, Aykut Kılıçlar’s photograph
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to use architecture for advertising. And by "building," as should be clear by
now, I am referring to a moving object that starts at the level of an idea and
continues to move after the physical building is in place. Moreover, it is pos-
tible to map a unique Istanbul enabled by the building. And conversely,
the building can be considered as an accumulation of distinct networks
—of users including professionals, clients, and audiences; of film theaters;
architecture; and of advertising.

Notes

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his close reading and organizational suggestions.

1. The coverage of the competition announcement in the newspaper Milliyet,
2. Istanbul Reklam is mentioned in many of the "first generation" surveys of Turkish
architectural history, including but not limited to those by Odakam, Sinan, Tanyeli,
and Yücel. It is featured among the exemplary projects from the 1960s in the
online exhibition "Museum of Architecture" created by The Building and Informa-
tion Centre (Yeşil Enderun Merkezi). Online. Available at www.architecture.org/gallery/
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4. S. Gürbüzian, "Architects and Architects in Modern Turkey," in R. Kasuba (ed.): The
Cambridge History of Turkey V 6: Turkey in the Modern World, Cambridge, UK:

5. E. Alphs, "Beau Mirac Men'ler 'sahab hisab'烟and," (Our Mud Men did not
drink whisky in the morning), QJ [Kemalener's Quarterly] Türkiye (26 March
2012). Online. Available at www.pogosu.net/Mekteb-don-doger-digil [accessed
6 September 2014]. Bece Gürbüzian (Akyazı's claim on 10 July 2012 appears
under "comments" to this article.)


33. E. Kuran, "İstanbul Ruh" [Creative spirit], Mandats 14, 1965, pp. 7-8. Koru quotes an anonymous expert, "Akmulator", by a flashboyed bet hitler's hitler show paragula arizladesi, bunlar bir film araylitesi kumite aritmatikde [Masse are broken down into parts as if due to a practical, functional result, and these are composed as if the plan were a painting]. Online. Available at dergi.morguturk/dergi/6451/0463.pdf (accessed 6 September 2014).

34. Y. Okrug, "Koloman Mäkoinstein" [modernity 1840-1940] [The first century of our advertising 1840-1940], Istanbul: Reklamci Dergisi, 1999, S. Nezihoglu, "Reklaminic" [advertising]. Cartoons: Dynamic Turkey: Archikbibliy [Republican-era encyclopedia of Turkey] & Istanbul: Beyazit Varamis, 1983- 


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commissions, first as a way of promoting Turkish architects, and second for raising the quality of Turkish architectural discourse and production. The Presidential Residence in the Atatürk Forest Farm and Zoo (Atatürk Orman Çitleği) is designed by İpek Türel, known for his historicist designs. It is a 1,000-room "palace" controversially built in a protected nature preserve. See a review of this building in A. Arzu, "Başkentin Sarayları ve Mimari Tarih" [Presidential palace and architectural history], skyscraper, 29 August 2014. Online. Available at www.skcp.com/dosyalarda/baskentin-saraylar-ve-mimaristik-tarihi/2009 (accessed 6 September 2014), Zaha Hadid Architects' Marcel Plan for Kartal was commissioned in 2006 by the Greater Istanbul Municipality. Online. Available at www.zahahadid.com/marcelplan/kartal-penina-masterplan (accessed 6 September 2014), Frank Gehry designed Istanbul's Kuleli Military School in Tophane, Istanbul. The project was commissioned by one of Turkey's wealthiest industrial families, on what used to be a public park with spectacular views of the Golden Horn and the historic peninsula; the site was converted in the 1990s into a building for state-owned Turkish Radio Television, and then rented out as an exhibition hall with paid parking in the lower levels and a public plaza on the upper level. Online. Available at www.ikladiyapim.com/news.php?action=display&NewsID=23937 (accessed 6 September 2014). Kanyon is designed by Jørn Utzon and executed locally by Tabanlıoğlu Architects. Online. Available at www.icde.com/regions/place/index.html (accessed 6 September 2014).