

How a National Museum perception is created through a special collection from imaginary to reality

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Résumé : L'histoire de la muséologie en Turquie peut être retracée en quatre étapes: la première tentative de création d'un musée a été conduite par Fethi Ahmet, ministre de la guerre et directeur de Tophane, de retour à Istanbul en 1846 après avoir visité plusieurs pays occidentaux. La collection, conservée à l'Eglise Sainte Irène, était constituée d'armes et de trophées de guerre datant de la conquête de Constantinople par les Turcs, ainsi que d'objets provenant de fouilles archéologiques. La seconde période de muséologie en Turquie commence en 1881 à la nomination d'Osman Hamdi Bey au poste de directeur du musée qui s'appellera plus tard Müze-i Hümayun (Musée Impérial). Sous la direction de son directeur, la collection est agrandie et enrichie et bientôt un nouveau musée est construit par Alexandre Vallauray et inauguré en 1891. La troisième période est celle de la fondation du Musée de Peinture et de Sculpture d'Istanbul en 1937 après la proclamation de la République turque. Le point d'orgue de la quatrième période est l'inauguration d'Istanbul Modern en 2004. Nous examinerons dans cet article le processus d'ouverture d'Istanbul Modern, sa contribution à l'histoire de la muséologie et ses pratiques, ses relations avec les cercles artistiques contemporains et le marché de l'art. Nous discuterons également de son utilisation comme vitrine dans le processus d'adhésion à l'Union Européenne et de la manière dont il est présenté comme établissement public et musée national en dépit du fait qu'il soit un musée privé exposant une collection privée.

Mots-cléfs: Musée, idéologie, collection d'art contemporain, collection, oeuvre d'art, Art turc.

Abstract: The milestones in the history of museology in Turkey can be assembled roughly under a few titles: The first attempt at creating a museum was conducted by Fethi Ahmet Pasha, the Minister of War and Marshal of Tophane who returned to Istanbul in the year 1846 after visiting several Western countries. The collection was developed by collecting various weapons, all the war booty dating back to the times of the Conquest of Constantinople by Turks, as well as the artifacts discovered during excavations, which were taken to the Aya Irini Church. The second period in Turkish museology begins with the appointment of Osman Hamdi Bey in 1881 as the Director of the Museum that would later be named Müze-i Hümayun (1869, The Imperial Museum). Under Osman Hamdi's surveillance the collection was highly developed and expanded, leading to the construction of a new museum building by Alexandre Vallauray, which was opened to public in the year 1891. The third period is the establishment of the first museum of fine arts, the Museum of Painting-Sculpture in Istanbul built in 1937, after the declaration of the Turkish Republic. The focal point of the fourth period in the history of Turkish museology is the inauguration of Istanbul Modern in 2004. In this article the opening process of Istanbul Modern, its contribution to the history of museology, its

practices and its relations with the contemporary art circles and art markets will be examined. Also the interesting fact that it has been utilized during the European Union accession process as a show-case, presenting the establishment as both a public and a national museum in spite of being a privately owned museum hosting a private collection will be duly discussed.

Key words: Museum, ideology, contemporary art, collection, work of art, Turkish art.

One of the most problematic areas in the history of Turkish museums are museums of “fine arts.” Those “fine arts museums” opened in Ankara and İzmir after the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture, were sometimes supported by art works borrowed from the collection of the Istanbul Museum and at other times they exhibited new collections. Yet these new museums were neither given satisfactory support by the State and developed accordingly, nor could they attract enough visitors to their exhibitions. Therefore, beginning with the Istanbul Museum of Painting-Sculpture (İRHM) which is one of the most important establishments of Turkish modernity, museums of fine arts in Turkey have been unable to reach and accomplish the ideal of creating an identity as an institution, and it has not been possible for them to implement, substantiate and complete the process of creating a concept of museum that can be accepted as an institution that belongs to the whole public. İRHM that has taken the role of a show-case or mirror reflecting the changes occurring in Turkey since the declaration of the Republic in its capacity as one of the institutions of Turkish modernism, influenced by the changing cultural climate of the country has turned its role over to Istanbul Modern in the beginnings of the 2000’s. Actually, in spite of the “modern” sound in the name of the institution, it can be claimed that Istanbul Modern is prominent actor within the context of globalization and postmodernity processes. In the beginning of the 2000’s, when some of the institutions of modernist “Kemalist” pro-enlightenment that is formally regarded to be the founding philosophy of the State lost their power and others were deserted, the building of a new museum that claimed to be “modern” may seem interesting or rather paradoxical. In spite of the highly subjective content of its collections, their weakness from the view-point of its quantitative and qualitative characteristics in comparison with the İRHM collections, Istanbul Modern stands up tall right next to İRHM as a monument that helps us comprehend various facets of Turkey that keeps changing with the times. These two museums represent the diversity of comprehension and utilization between the state owned museums and those that are person/institution owned, giving the viewers a chance to appreciate concrete data on the subject.

The Istanbul Modern was opened by Prime Minister Recep Tayip Erdoğan in the month of December 2004, finished off in haste in order to coincide in time with the final decisive meeting of the European Union. The initial work on the establishment of the institution goes as far back as the year 1987 when the first meeting of the International Istanbul Biennial was held. Actually the idea of creating a new fine arts museum besides İRHM is not very new. Endless repairs and renovations going on at the İRHM, its various problems that can never be solved has also led the members of the Museum of Painting-Sculpture Association into seeking possibilities concerning a new building.¹ In the year 1991, an industrial building in Haliç dated to be from the 19th century, formerly known as Feshane is handed over to the Istanbul Foundation of Culture and Arts (İKSV), for a duration of 47 years, under the name of Metropolitan Municipality Nejat Eczacıbaşı Museum of Art. The renovation and repairs started on October 4th, 1991 and the 3rd International Istanbul

Biennial was opened here on the 13th of October, 1992 (Atagök, 1998: 109-110). But unfortunately due to some technical problems that could not be solved, there was some misunderstanding and various problems between the Union and the municipality and the project was abandoned in the year 1993. (Eczacıbaşı, 2004: 8)

All ventures regarding the building of a museum was suspended up to the time when the 8th International Istanbul Biennial was held in the year 2003. The entrepot number 4 where some of the main activities of the 8th Biennial were being held was allotted to the İKSV by the Prime Minister and thus the project that had been waiting for its completion for more than ten years, could at last be finished in 2004. The Director of the museum, Ms. Oya Eczacıbaşı has said: "If our Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan would not take control of the situation, we would not have been able to make this opening" (Hızlan, 2004: 30). These words are rather interesting viewed from the angle of existing relations between the reigning political powers and business, and parallel to it the world of culture. In *Hürriyet*, one of the more prominent daily newspapers in Turkey, this "interesting story" is told on two consequent days by Doğan Hızlan, covers the subject of the interest shown by the present day government towards arts, specifically contemporary arts and its ability to foresee the future, something that has never been achieved previously by former governments. The story also covers the lyrical praise delivered by Oya Eczacıbaşı.²

During those days when the İRHM was about to extinguish its own existence due to lack of care, lack of viewers and money, the Istanbul Modern Museum, unfortunately opened its doors under the shadow of this paradox. (Aliçavuşoğlu, 2009: 14) Another interesting thing is the fact that the official home of the Prime Minister is right next to the İRHM building. In a sense, the ruling government preferred to build its own institution instead of modernizing or carrying İRHM to another venue, which is one of the most important establishments and stepping-stones of early Republican modernism. The favoritism is apparent to such an extent that the seemingly unsolvable problem of suitable venue for the museum is solved immediately with just a movement of Erdoğan's two lips, a dream becomes reality and the concrete photograph of the state-private sector-art triangle is thus taken. On the other hand, İRHM's parquet floors that creak, the rooftop that leaks, and its director who sheds many a tear while he gives interviews to the reporters are overlooked completely (Aliçavuşoğlu, 2007: 2). Some of the very special and precious pieces are taken from its collections, borrowed for the opening ceremonial exhibition of the Istanbul Modern and in the end it enters a phase of restoration that has continued for a very long time and still goes on, İRHM has entered a phase where the end is rather vague, unknown, left to its fate, slowly being forgotten by all.³ The expansion of Erdoğan's interest concerning museums does not remain limited to the Istanbul Modern; during the month of July, on the night that the pre-election restrictions had started he opens the doors of Santral Istanbul surrounded by an "elite" crowd. It is rather interesting to note that with these two opening ceremonies he gains the title of the Prime Minister who has inaugurated the greatest number of modern arts museums in the history of the Turkish Republic (Aliçavuşoğlu, 2007: 3).

The details that have found its reflections in the media during the preparation process of the Istanbul Modern carried with it some reminiscences of historical content, going back in time to the opening of İRHM and all the work involved with it. İRHM had also been opened with great haste when Atatürk commanded the inauguration ceremony of museum to be held during the Second Turkish Congress of History and before Atatürk

traveled back to Ankara (Mülayim, 1999: 123). Approximately 70 years after this event, the Prime Minister of that period ordered the opening of a museum on December 2004 instead of May 2005, more precisely ordering the delivery of a command for an earlier opening to all those people concerned. This is another example of cyclical politics intervening with art, where contemporary art is perceived simply as a convenient tool for manipulating people and carries a rather meaningful similarity. In fact both parties are satisfied with the outcome; while the Eczacıbaşı family enjoys the satisfaction of having solved the problem of location for the museum, the ruling party is enjoying a political “coup de grace” because for those in power Istanbul Modern is the convenient propaganda material that can be used effectively against Western countries and the “secularist” and “modernist” groups, those people who live in Turkey. The museum of modern arts that has already been in existence for 81 years becomes a renovation, an “ideal” that has just been discovered and brought to reality during their period of office in Turkey. Istanbul, within the context of becoming a globally acknowledged city, now has one of the obligatory criteria, maybe the most important one, it now has a modern museum at last.⁴

In the Ottoman period, the general concept of a museum was as a show-case that would emphasize the all-encompassing power, the capability of the government and the vastness of its boundaries. During the times of the Turkish Republic however, museums were conceived as institutions that would teach and educate people so that they could be prepared to become a civilized nation; IRHM is one of the most concrete evidences of this evolution towards this ideal of museology (Aliçavuşoğlu, 2010: 83). Istanbul Modern on the other hand, can be regarded as a tool used by the reigning power simply as a show-case to be utilized during the process of accession to the EU, a kind of guarantee as well as a medium through which the AKP, the ruling party that has its roots in the “Milli Görüş” (National Vision Movement) which is the most important representative of Islam, can legalize its existence and gain acceptance within those elite circles that favor secularistic thinking. In this pattern of inter-relations there is a sort of “win-win” situation is involved. On the opening night of the museum, when about 3 thousand elite visitors selected from diverse areas such as business, politics and art world were invited, congratulation messages sent by important political leaders such as Chirac, the President of the Republic of France, Schröder, the Prime Minister of Germany, Blair, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom were read out loud. All of these messages sent by leaders of these three most important European countries had one common denominator, which was: Turkey will be able to become a part of the European cultural legacy with the aid of the Istanbul Modern. The Prime Minister claims that they aim to close the abyss that separates politics from culture/arts (Radikal, December 12th, 2004). Erkan Mumcu, the Minister of Culture and Tourism in that period said: “The only thing that Istanbul lacked was a museum of modern arts, and now it is done!” (<http://www.akparti.org.tr>)

This venture of the Eczacıbaşı family that had a happy ending in 2004, had to face a commercial dilemma before the end of its first year in operation. Galataport was sold to a consortium that included Ofer amongst its members at the price of 4.3 billion dollars. Talk about the demolition of entrepot number 4 where Istanbul Modern is hosted, had begun circulating in the city. Acting on these rumors, Ethem Sancak one of the founders who had donated to the collections and Oya Eczacıbaşı arranged for a meeting with Erdoğan and obtained a promise from the Prime Minister: “If the Galaport tender ends according to the first apparent results I will ask the Ofer to keep the structure of Istanbul Modern just as it is. I do not approve demolishing of Istanbul Modern.” Erdoğan assures

Oya Eczacıbaşı and Ethem Sancak that he would make them start the process from the other end if and when its necessary: “We will obtain a copy of the project and ensure the attachment of Istanbul Modern to Galaport just as it is, without any changes.” Thus Erdoğan not only relieved the minds of Eczacıbaşı and Sancak but he also asked them to search for new areas. “There are many monuments in Istanbul that can be evaluated and renovated for use as a museum or other purposes. We also need to save them from becoming dumping grounds of the city. Prepare your projects and bring them to us, so that we can evaluate and put them to good use.” Erdoğan’s speech encouraged Sancak to speak up: “Your honor, if the Archeological Museum in Istanbul was handled by a team like ours it could become a museum that would rival the Metropolitan Museum in the USA.” In the end Oya Eczacıbaşı and Ethem Sancak leave the Prime Minister’s office, quite relieved as far as the Istanbul Modern museum was concerned (Munyar, 2005: 26)

The subject matter of the dialogues in this meeting, presents us with rather striking examples of data concerning specifically the policies involved in the privatization of culture and art, the commercial values of such works within the framework of the globalization process. The fact that after the festivals and biennials, considered to be one of the main motors that assist globalization and economical improvement (Yardımcı, 2005: 12), museums that exhibit contemporary art are also being placed at the focal point of this motor is clearly apparent in this dialogue. Chin-tao Wu, in her very important study titled “The Privatization of Culture” analyzes in great detail the intervention of commercial companies into matters concerning art, their strategies aimed at gaining more power and their relations with the political ruling powers in England and America since the 1980’s. At the beginning of the book she asks this question: “I wonder how the cultural power and authority of the State works; which mechanisms are put to operation so that the state and the private sector can interact effectively, how does the traffic between the two operate?” In the dialogues that we quoted sentences like “look for new places” or “Give the Archeological Museum to a team like us” can be considered a very striking answer given from the Turkey of the 2000’s to this question. The privatization processes that can be summarized as the basic principle that involves the restriction of State’s functions in general and its abandoning many previous areas of activity eventually have also reached the sectors of art and museum, actually this was unavoidable anyway. Instead of solving the unproductive and inert structural problems of the country (like the selling of important state owned enterprises such as Tüpraş-Petkim instead of restoring them or activating the Liquid Capital system so that it can function properly) the State has chosen to retire from its true positions as the ruling power. Another example of the State’s withdrawal from responsibilities is the handing over of the rights to the café and gift-souvenir shops of 55 museum in Turkey for 8 years to Bilintur with the payment of 136 million TL.

Istanbul Modern that had been opened with a “subjective” collection that could never be compared with the collections of IRHM either in quality or in quantity, seems to have captured the leading role on the stage of present day museums. This controversial situation can be explained with the better resources duly utilized in the promotion and publicity of various displays and programs, the combination of museum activities within the triangle of education-entertainment-meeting point for the people, resulting in a renovation of the identity of the museum and the addition of temporary exhibits besides the permanently exhibited collections that has become an irresistible invitation to viewers. In the interviews with Oya Eczacıbaşı, the idea that this modern museum is what Istanbul lacked and needed is stressed and generally an impression that the

museum belongs to the “public” rather than the private sector, thus creating another false illusion. “I wish this place was one of the symbols of Istanbul. But we did not start this venture with this aim in mind. We only wanted to compensate for the inadequate number of modern arts museums in Turkey” (Aras, 2004: 5) This statement can be read as a paradoxical union of modesty and ambitious assertiveness. Oya Eczacıbaşı continues with this claim of hers in the *Modern Experiences* catalogue of 2007-2008 and she expresses her belief that the museum had strengthened its position as a reference center for those who wanted to follow the progress and improvement of Turkish art, also stressing the fact that the Istanbul Modern is the only museum with such a vast single area in Turkey (Eczacıbaşı, 2006: 8).

Istanbul Modern has copied its name from the Tate Modern opened in 2000 whose “chimney” was added later; and the logic behind Tate Modern exhibitions are taken as a role model. Just as in the Tate Modern and many other museums, the thematic exhibition style was selected instead of chronological order. This exhibition style chosen by the Tate with the aim of covering up some of the deficiencies in their collection has also been chosen the model used in the formation of the Istanbul Modern due to the quality of its collection. The fact that the Tate –that was the first modern art museum of the 21st century– was selected as a role model is not really very interesting since the Tate is a model that has stamped its identity on the 2000’s regarding museum practices.

In the opening, besides their own collection, some or probably a greater number of art works borrowed from the IRHM and İş Bank collections were exhibited. Even though attempt at enriching the “subjective” quality of the nucleus collection was made in the years that passed by buying new artworks, it was not sufficient enough to cover the contemporary and modern productions created after the 1970’s in Turkey, an area where great need for fulfillment existed. Therefore the Istanbul Modern, as far as its collection is concerned cannot go any further than being a one-legged lame alternative of the IRHM under these conditions. As to its relation to the Tate Modern, it will remain only a structural similarity as far as the logic behind temporary exhibits and collections is concerned.

The museum model where the chronological order is followed, supporting the concept that art develops with the passage of time is not followed by the Istanbul Modern. Instead of this method the nonlinear postmodern model museum style is adopted due to weakness and various gaps in its collection (Barker, 1999: 66). As commonly known by everyone, the Istanbul Modern collection does not include masterpieces: it does not have such a claim anyway. Yet its name and the aura it has created or attempted to create both raises the bar of expectations and creates some confusion in people’s minds regarding the claim that it represents “us.” The museum tries to compensate for its inadequacy of its current art works by rather limited number of new purchases it makes and transient exhibitions. It is apparent that the Istanbul Modern needs quite a lot of time till it can become a real museum.⁵ In this context the Istanbul Modern that developed into its present dimensions in the era where the capitalistic cultural system ruled and before such basic institutions as public museums of fine arts, history of art, art criticism and canon could begin to exist is in fact the most impressive symbol of this different kind of modernity (Köksal, 2011) If the fact that Istanbul Modern is synonymous with the word ruling powers must be remembered and it is being used both as a means of legitimizing and for manipulation of certain things, then perhaps the criticism directed to the museum that reflects the impression of a public museum can become more meaningful.

Well then, with what sort of a challenging assertion does the Istanbul Modern started its journey? Does it adopt the role of a representative of the national art world that aims to reflect the memory of art impartially? Oya Eczacıbaşı in the catalogue prepared for the opening of the Istanbul Modern, heralds the arrival of an art museum of world-wide capacity, the arrival of which had been awaited with great yearning during the past years. She views the museum as a dream that comes true, an institution that combines the artistic and cultural values of the East and the West, decorated with the most original examples of the cultural synthesis, directed towards a future worthy of Istanbul's glorious past (Eczacıbaşı, 2004: 8). But when viewed from the stand point of academic objectiveness which most of the museums boast about (Wallis, 2008: 277) the opening collection of the Istanbul Modern is naturally subjective and biased. Practices of the curators and professional collection gathering processes are utilized with the aim of obliterating this inherent subjectivity. These new purchases, attempts towards incorporating contemporary art may be interpreted as a chance for the Istanbul Modern to move away from the long shadow cast by the IRHM. One of the basic characteristics that differentiates the Istanbul Modern from international art museums is the fact that its collections are limited with the "local" artists. In the international arena no museum that defines itself as permanent and central will allow the existence of a collection formed solely by national artworks. Even the Tate Britain has been converted into a national museum that exhibited the art of Britain only after the opening of the Tate Modern. Actually art works by foreign artists that attended the International Istanbul Biennial organized by IKSVM since 1987, could have been bought and a currently up-to-date and international collection could have been thus created. It is rather interesting to know that the only international work of art exhibited in the inauguration ceremony of the Istanbul Modern happens to be the "Stairs of Hell" by Monica Bonvicini.⁶ The references hinted at and the messages stressing the globalization process have not truly materialized as yet. In other words the Istanbul Modern, if we are to use a frequently repeated expression, has "remained local while thinking global."

Art market has been on the rise since the 1980's and though there were periods of recession at times, overall impact was very effective and the market had gained impetus, becoming very active, and the private museums led by the Istanbul Modern after the 2000's boosted the sales as never before. Museums competed fiercely during the auctions;⁷ the interest in collecting spreads out of the three figures in the premier league, namely Koç, Eczacıbaşı and Sabancı. The galleries began to sell contemporary works of art in such numbers that were unseen up to those times and many privately owned museums were opened. New concepts and fashions had arrived; in TV series the rich and elite characters states lines announcing their desire "to open a museum commemorating his name" or expressing "a wish to continue in the business world as a collector of contemporary art." Another wave created by the Istanbul Modern was especially influential on those artists that were included in the collection. Within the limitations of the local environment where the artistic value of art is not yet established, the most important "justification" factor is the inclusion of one's works in a museum. Here the subjectivity of the collection is out of context and the Istanbul Modern in its capacity as a prominent determiner of value, deeply influences the market. Istanbul Modern has now become a powerful culture builder in spite of its relatively short history.

Besides these, the Istanbul Modern has made a great impact on social life of the city though this fact is not often put into words. The Museum is a show arena where an

exquisite elite can feel “good” and the general public can “self-educate.” IRHM, just like the old Greek temples is a building that cannot be (is not) entered. IRHM is more like a film setting that contains real works of art than a “real” museum; it cannot be made actively productive, it cannot be entered into (Aliçavuşoğlu, 2010: 85). With the advent of the Istanbul Modern, the “temple” opens its doors. Everything that is necessary for survival of the museum is provided but unfortunately the subject matter of the art works converts the museum into a “décor.” In this museum where this “décor” content is used as background material also the viewers that are necessary for the action come along. Adorno’s saying “Museums need mostly people who would view them” has been proved to be true but now the collection has been pushed back to second place. Besides these, the museum has changed significantly; it is no longer just a place where art works can be viewed, here one could eat dinner, celebrate birthdays of children, special organizations for varied occasions could be held and its shop is open at all times as seen in its international counterparts: it is now a “open” temple. The new show-place of social life is the Istanbul Modern. Some of the details of news concerning the community appearing in the press are important from this angle. For example Egemen Bağış, member of parliament representing Istanbul from the AKP has announced the beginning of their election campaign at the Istanbul Modern according to Milliyet newspaper (Aksu, 2007: 1). In this reception organized by Bağış brought together quite a number of important names from the world of politics, art and business, in this case Istanbul Modern was used as a part of the AKP election strategies, where the platform served as a key, enabling the AKP to connect with the elite classes.

With the opening of the Istanbul Modern art has “united” with the business world, with people of higher social circles, popular culture, politics etc. So much so that visiting Istanbul Modern, dining at its prestigious restaurant operated by Loft, a branch of the famous chain restaurants, watching the historical peninsula, visiting the exhibition became one of the best indicators of having “a style.” Visiting the museum as a family with children drawing pictures in the atelier Modern became one of the prerequisites of being a “white collar” worker. Now the pictures of socially prominent elite people that attended the opening ceremonies of new exhibitions at the Istanbul Modern or other privately owned museums began to appear in the supplements of newspapers or magazines known by the general population as ‘high society’, posing in front of art works being exhibited. Istanbul Modern also seems to have become the “in” place or an alternative for parties the elite spheres gave in their homes or various different venues. The profile of visitors coming to the opening ceremonies of new exhibits, the “cream of society” began to have a closer contact with the artists; art and the business world have coalesced together. Attending the openings at the museums became a metaphor signifying the richness, importance and class superiority; it also assists in boosting up one’s stature in life. Some members of press who are the determiners of this kind of “life style,” continuously pump up the importance of the ritual museum visiting, in its key role in promoting a prestigious life style in their columns. As to the founders of the museum, they more than anybody else enjoy the fruits of this situation, their social status and distinction is highly enhanced; so much so that some of them are honored with the Legion d’Honneur by France.⁸

Linda Nochlin views the museum as a temple raised to the myth of history of art. If we start analyzing the Istanbul Modern from this angle, we observe that it has created a myth around its founders more than anything else, especially during the first years after its opening. Don Thompson’s views on the subject are very enlightening : “Many

a museum is founded by millionaires who wish either to reflect and promote their own tastes concerning art or to immortalize their family name... these museums do not reflect the criteria chosen by the curator of the museum, they express personal desires or ambitions of the millionaire and the opinions of his consultants”(Thompson, 2011: 326). Though recent purchases of art works marks a tendency to minimize the importance of this myth about founders, it does not make us forget the fact that the Istanbul Modern is still a privately owned museum.

The Eczacıbaşı family (also known as IKSŞ) has put its stamp on the art life of Istanbul through various festivals and biennials they have been organizing since the 1970's. They stand right at the focal point of the city's cultural and artistic life as the creator or builder with such works as the Eczacıbaşı Art Encyclopedia, the IKSŞ building in Şişhane and the Istanbul Modern which is special as an impressive finale to all the work. Charitable institution's work cannot be minimized as simply a production of activities because the trust foundation has written the history of art with the encyclopedia it published, exhibited art at its own museum, in other words taking due place almost at the top of the list of actors who have helped create art and culture. The same applies to the Istanbul Modern that is the last and most important achievement of the trust foundation. The Istanbul Modern is an utmost interesting example, showing how a private collection can be made to give the illusion of a national museum and how the private sector can be nationalized.

What is really interesting and important however is the fact that while on one hand, the Istanbul Modern perceives itself as the only modern museum in Turkey that has reached international arenas, a fact made acceptable to the others, on the other hand acts as just a privately owned museum where the responsibilities of such an institution are involved. This constitutes the basis for a lot of problems and concern. In the endless story of the Istanbul Modern that seems to be floundering indecisively between being a public/private, national/global, modern/contemporary, museum/gallery traces of Turkey that has been able to pass over to the other side of the modern without becoming modern (Köksal, 2011).

Opening of the Istanbul Modern has brought art together with politics, popular culture and viewers but at the same time it has unfortunately left us face with a subjective private selection that imagines itself to be a collection. This selection, collection or whatever name we may give to it, besides being exhibited in the corridors of the museum, will go up to the area where art history is being written and that is really just where all the problems will begin.

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Notes

¹ Atagök reports that the Union first asked the Mayor of the City of that period, Bedrettin Dalan for assistance but Dalan was not interested in this project; also the Minister of Culture of the same period showed some interest, informing the Union that storehouses in Fındıklı could be reserved for this purpose but this proved to be another dead-end. Another interesting point is raised in Atagök's writings: Dr.Nurettin Sözen, one of the founding members of the Union gave a positive answer to their request during the first days of his new position, after the Union's application dated April 14th, 1989 and the report dated January 8th, 1990 allocating an area in Taksim to this project several meetings were held. But in the end it was understood that the area allotted to the Union was not within the limits of this place and then the Feshane building was offered for the museum. For detailed information look at: (Atagök, 1998: 109-110)Atagök informs us that the idea of building a new museum put forth by the İRHM union was later accepted by the İKVS instead of forming a new Union, after much discussion and argument. Even though there are different opinions concerning this topic, this detail is quite interesting.

² "After the end of last biennial, the Minister of Economics Kemal Unakıtan has told them that they should not close down the place but should continue organizing exhibitions. Oya Eczacıbaşı was worrying about the investments, efforts and all that money that would go down the drain because of the very short duration of the exhibit. Egemen Bağış, an from the AKP representing Istanbul at the parliament, took over the responsibility for speeding up the opening of the museum. A month ago, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the minister of finance Kemal Unakıtan, member of parliament representing Istanbul Egemen Bağış, Mayor of Istanbul, Kadir Topbaş and Oya Eczacıbaşı visited the venue of the museum. The Prime Minister told them that he had given this place for the museum and asked them to complete necessary preparations quickly and gave them an earlier date for opening the place. He explained his justification as follows: "I want this museum to be opened to public before December 17th, when the decision for our entry into the European Union will be made. Do make it ready before that date." Everything gained impetus and speed but there was still one problem to be solved. Since there was no road leading to this place, how could people come here? Upon this question the Prime Minister turned to his followers and said: "You will do it immediately, the road must be completed, stones should be laid down on the road and the environment should be covered with greenery" (Hızlan, November 29th, 2004: 30).

³ The article byDoğan Hızlan, titled "It is necessary to tell people the stories of different parts of Istanbul Modern" can be interpreted as an interesting form of confession of past sins. In this article Hızlan gives us a description of the modern museum that he longs for and talks about his recollections of İRHM, that he has been unable to forget (Hızlan, 2011: 30).

⁴ When we focus on the matter from the view point of globalization we can say that Istanbul is the show-case and doorway of Turkey in this process that is identified as the entry of the country to the stage of the world (Keyder, 2001: 26). It is a fact that in Turkey, Istanbul is the one and only candidate for globalization; this reality explains the reason for its prominence, especially as a cultural center in this period. On this subject, see (Keyder, 1993). The real part played by the Istanbul Modern in marketing of Istanbul as a global city should not be over-looked. In addition, the venue where the Istanbul Modern has seen positioned is also important because of its inclusion within the boundaries of the "gentrification" project .

⁵ Criticism pertaining to the collections and the their content are the subject matter to another article as it would exceed the limits of this one.

⁶ Uşun Tükel's article on this subject is very important. (Tükel, 2010: 92-102.)

⁷ Relations between the art market, auctions and museums, the masterpieces that changed hands or art works that reached exorbitant prices, influenced by the private museums that were opened since 2000's would be subject material of another article.

⁸ This honor had been granted to Sakıp Sabancı by French President Jacques Chirac on November 16th, 2001 on the occasion of the exhibition of "Golden Letters Collection" at Louvre Museum that consisted of calligraphic works and paintings. And it was granted to Güler Sabancı in 2010.