



SEMINAR

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The Museum of Innocence and The Construction of Memories

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The Museum of Innocence opened in 2012, and was founded by the author Orhan Pamuk. It has since it opened become one of the noted museums in Europe. It was also awarded the European Museum of the Year Award in 2014, Europe's most prestigious museum price. The museum relates strongly to Pamuk's novel *Museum of Innocence*, published in 2008. The novel tells the love story between Kemal and Füsun, and it takes place in Istanbul between the 1970s until the 2000, with a particular focus on the period 1975-1984. The objects also relate to the places in Istanbul that were important for Kemal and Füsun love story. The story also describes how Kemal start to build a collection consisting of objects helping him to remember all the moments he has shared with Füsun. This collection is, in the novel, finally brought together in a museum called "the Museum of Innocence". The now existing "real" Museum of Innocence" corresponds very closely to how the "fictive" Museum of Innocence" is described in the novel. The objects in the museum are authentic items from the different time periods described in the book. The fictional and the authentic are thus intimately intertwined in the now existing museum. It is a museum over a fictive love story, but one could also say that it is a museum over the recent history of Istanbul. The museum also invites the visitors to interact with the museum in a number of very innovative ways.

The aim of the research project "The Museum of Innocence and the Construction of Memories" is to study in what different ways both the museum and the novel help to construct memories in relation to Istanbul and its history, and in what ways the museum and the novel create a framework for the structuring of these different types of memories. Another scope of the project is also to position "the Museum of Innocence" in the topography of other museums, on international level, as well as on local. In this latter part of the study the analysis will primarily focus on museums focused on urban biography.

Methods used for the research done in Istanbul are:

- a. In depth studies of the museum, and the novel
- b. Visitor interviews
- c. An ethnographic exploration of Istanbul using "The Museum of Innocence" as guide.
- d. Studies of other Istanbul museums from a theoretical-museological perspective