

# Preface

In the decades following the Second World War, the urban transformation of Istanbul was more radical than in most cosmopolitan cities, comprising all levels from large scale planning to architectural details. While rational traffic solutions, housing and building construction were the targets of urban transformation, some more sustainable solutions were found in the renewal of streetscape and other forms of public space. On the one hand the city possessed a rich, globally famous heritage, on the other hand there was the wish to maintain, or retrieve, its position at the forefront of development.

Within this framework, a two-day international seminar was held at SRII, The Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, on November 29 – 30, 2016, one day with oral presentations and one day for study visits to selected buildings in relation to paper contributions. The seminar explored aspects of transforming the architectural structure of Istanbul during three decisive decades, 1950–1980, with a certain regard for the values most often neglected in late modern urban transformation, those concerning the cultural relevance of public space. We are grateful to our colleagues for their valuable contributions to the seminar; and we are indebted to the audience for their critical questions and comments – paving the way for this volume.

The publication brings together a selection of recent doctoral and post-doctoral works as well as international research projects based on archival research and discursive reading, offering a reading on the period from the 1950s to the 1980s in Istanbul. In the light of social, economic, political and cultural data, the publication intends to tell the story of urban, architectural and cultural transformation processes of the three decades and tell imaginations, representations and executions of the physicalisation as well as the rapid growth of Istanbul. The book is not a depiction of the urban planning of the city: it gives the opportunity of re-thinking about the processes, the architects, urban designers, the artists and the people of Istanbul, and their visions of the city. In this regard, the new readings unveil dichotomies, conflicts, but also dynamics and potentials of Istanbul that let us speculate on its future. Having envisaged the transformation of Istanbul from the urban, architectural and artistic scope, these works give new feedback for a broader understanding of the city of Istanbul in general.

We have grouped ‘general public’ papers before moving to individual buildings and finish by approaching contemporary experiences and comments. Johan Mårtelius’ initial pages are reminders of the continuity and long-time perspective of public space in Istanbul, to which the late modern period has contributed. İpek Akpınar’s contextual political reading of the period focuses on major urban transformations of Istanbul. Meltem Gürel’s critical paper unveils transformation in the seafront Ataköy. İdil Erkol underlines the leading architectural examples and aspects of the transformation of Istanbul in the 1950s. Şebnem Şoher gives the story of a unique social housing example at Tozkoparan. Focusing on buildings

and the streetscape, Gertrud Olsson offers a background to the building material used and unveils a journey from Byzantine mosaics to the Betebe company. From the story of the mosaic, Elâ GÜngören takes us to sculptures and unveils the critical relation between public art and public space in the city. Having covered a general scope from yesterday to today, Bilge Yıldırım Okta tells the story of the Taksim Square. Burcu Selcen Coşkun focuses on the renovation projects of the period and underlines the critical role of three female architects in the transformation. Finally, Björn Magnusson Staaf gives a critical discussion on cultural and architectural heritage issues in late modern Istanbul, with references to the writings by Orhan Pamuk.

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