

## **Istanbul, Open City: Exhibiting Anxieties of Urban Modernity**

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### ABSTRACT

The second half of the twentieth century was a period of rapid urbanization in Istanbul. During this time, the city witnessed the development of a consumer society, the expansion and cultural ascendancy of the middle class, and the development of modern techniques of image mass production and consumption. Furthermore, the "opening" up of the city, through its newly constructed boulevards and large population movements, gave way to a widespread cultural obsession with the city.

Through a broad spectrum of archival material—from daily papers, to popular and professional magazines, to films—this study examines a series of exhibitionary sites selected from successive moments during this time period to observe how the city has been staged with competing power effects. My use of the term exhibitionary sites denotes the media of the streets, print, film, and exhibitions. Underlying all of these sites, each of which transcended their physical place to include their mediated transmissions, was a desire to shape the public through culture and create urbanite citizens out of the crowds. Contemporary debates on the future of the city often include retrospective analyses and reinterpretations of these sites. As Turkey strives to accomplish its long standing goal of joining Europe, images and imaginings of the city acquire new and complex significance. Using Istanbul as a case, this dissertation identifies the interconnectivity of urban representations, the production of subjectivity, and the built form. Firstly, the findings of this study revealed that urban representations had tangible effects on the experience of the city and the development of its built form. Secondly, in the process of staging and consuming the city through its representations, both the producers and audiences assumed new subject positions. Thirdly, this study demonstrated that increased democratization and the ensuing diversification of public spheres resulted in a move in the urban representations of Istanbul from faithful reproductions of photographs, which addressed a national audience in the print press, to replicas of theme park settings intentionally distorted to speak to specific local publics. By analyzing the role of urban representations in self fashioning in a rapidly and continually transforming urban environment, this dissertation concludes that urban modernity cannot be located in exact time; rather, it is an ongoing process, marked by competing efforts to make it one's own.

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