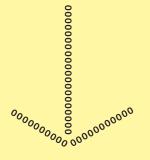


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GRANT SCHEME FOR COMMON CULTURAL HERITAGE: PRESERVATION AND DIALOGUE BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE EU-II (CCH-II)

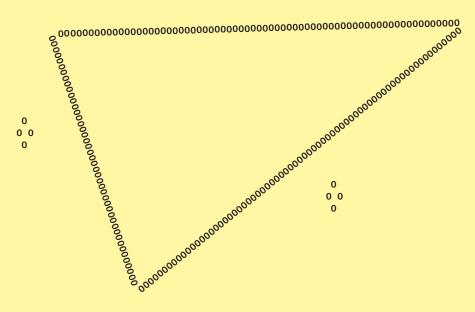
MULTIDISCIPLINARY PLATFORMS FOR CULTURAL COLLABORATION (CO-LAB) PROJECT

CLEMENS LAUER



EMÍN'S TEA HOUSE













EMİN'S TEA HOUSE CLEMENS LAUER 1/6

How hard it is for me to write about what I experienced in Istanbul afterwards, precisely because that is what it was all about: the experience. Rather, the following is an attempt to recount the four weeks that I spent taking part in *Camekân* through anecdotal images and scenes.

Çekçek:

The main means of transportation in the city. Ubiquitous, always heavily loaded, regardless of the completely overcrowded streets and traffic, these handcarts are on the road 24/7 and transport goods and waste from A to B points. It quickly became clear, especially in the wake of Jannik's thrust, that we would also be needing such a vehicle ourselves, to bring our found and purchased materials and semi-finished products to the studio.

We finally found what we were looking for at a scrapyard in the district of Eminönü. A used, but decent model, at a fair price. Our first attempt at moving the cart around was like a kind of driving lesson: At first, we barely made any progress, not knowing how to steer the new vehicle properly through the streets, until I took my cue from an experienced *çekçek* driver and imitated his movements. Conveniently, our itineraries were the same, and after 15 minutes, I felt like I could move through the crowds, flying by just as he did.

To this anecdote, I would like to add a small one, seen as it so fits the topic, and, incidentally, just to make it clear that I can by no means move like experienced *çekçek* drivers. I was in the district of Cihangir, on my way to the studio in the morning and it was raining heavily. As I came up one of the many hilltops, I did not believe what I saw: a young man driving a handcart was sledding down the hill at breathtaking speed, braking only with his feet.

Şalgam:

The first time I came across this drink made from fermented vegetables was in a fish restaurant. Mustafa¹ had booked a table for us. I immediately fell in love with the taste, which was totally unprecedented for me then. Along with *raki*, water, and finally coffee and *çay*, there were five beverages

1 MUSTAFA EMİN BÜYÜKCOŞKUN, ONE OF THE EIGHT MENTORS OF THE PROGRAMME, EDITOR'S NOTE.

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on the table in front of us, in addition to the plates of fish. *Şalgam* itself is a highly healthy antioxidant and source of vitamin C, perfect with heavy food. It is also available in Karlsruhe, at the Konuk Market on Werderplatz, and henceforth always in my fridge.

Evrim Kavcar; "Concepts are Lies":

One of the first mornings that I spent in Istanbul, after a few beers the previous night, Evrim came into our studio with a smile on her face. Her energy was immediately noticeable. She asked a few questions, and finally said: "Concepts are nothing but lies, you are here to have a good time, everything else will come by itself." She was right, and I feel so fortunate to have met her. A great Istanbul artist.













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Corona, Personal Hüzün:

Then, after two strokes of the PCR tests (the first I had had), there it was, Corona had said hi. After two years of being constantly forced to deal with the subject, it was as if a very well-known person finally stopped by. But of all things, in my already limited time in this city? For the next seven days, I explored Istanbul exclusively through Orhan Pamuk's homonymous book. The *Hüzün* which he described so well, the melancholy inherent to the city, I got to experience in my own personal way: during my mandatory isolation, with, as my sole distraction, the contemplation of the square in front of the hotel and its hustle and bustle through my room's window for hours on end. Still, I would not want to have missed these days in Istanbul either.

Gizli Bahçe, Club: "If Berlin has Berghain, we have Gizli Bahçe."

Kolay Gelsin, Istanbul's fences:

Even before I came to Istanbul, I realised – mainly through walks using Google Street View - that the galvanised fences that impede the view of construction sites and abandoned buildings everywhere are cityscape-defining. I wondered if they could be considered a symbol of this city, analogous to the wooden houses that used to be omnipresent in Istanbul. Did wooden houses once stand where the fences are today? To me, this constituted a discovery of a typical feature of Istanbul, with which something had to be done. Jannik and I transported the galvanised metal via *çekçek* to the studio, to produce stools out of it together. With the simplest of shapes, rough cubes, tin snips and hammers, we crafted right-angled stools out of the sheet metal. Implementing these intentionally amateurish and martial methods, we pounded away at the metal in a deafening noise until Turan, Barın Han's janitor, came up the stairs and looked at us in disbelief. When we finally looked up at him, he said, completely taken aback: "Kolay Gelsin" (may it be easy for you).

Traffic Jam, Dengbêj Music: p.m., traffic jam, one day before

5 p.m., traffic jam, one day before the opening: Yağmur² and I rush through the city to procure the last materials.





2 YAĞMUR GÜZLE, FROM THE ISTANBUL DESIGN BIENNIAL TEAM, EDITOR'S NOTE. Not one car makes an inch of progress on this busy Friday afternoon. Only we do, because we were well advised to walk. From one of the cars stuck in the traffic jam, which we pass, loud singing resonates... Inside the SUV, a young man is sitting, smiling, proud of his music. I go up to him and ask him if I can take a picture of his cell phone's screen so I can remember the artist: Şakiro, a Kurdish singer. As for the song, it is titled "Emro". One of many musical diamonds I took with me from my stay in Istanbul.

Street Dogs:

Because of my experience with street dogs in Delhi, I was initially very wary of those that populate the streets of Istanbul. However, one day, I had bought a PVC pipe for a prototype and was taking a detour down Kennedy Street, when one came up to me, quite purposefully too. He had spotted me from across the street and started running breakneck across the busy street, almost getting bumped twice before finally getting closer to me. I immediately went into defense mode and faked a blow with the pipe. He backed away but came right back until I realised he just wanted to jog along with me. For twenty minutes, he walked with me or, when the sidewalk narrowed in front of me, waited for me as I fell back and looked up attentively every time. After a while, he disappeared all of a sudden, just like my fear of the Istanbul street dogs.

I arrived in Europe, and departed from Asia. One of the many things that are only possible in Istanbul. This collection is by no means complete, but will hopefully convey a small impression of why I learned to love this city.

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