

EXHIBITION:

The Construction of a New City: Ankara 1923-1933

Ankara, Cer Modern, 13 November 2019 - 12 January 2020

The Exhibition rests on new, visual and textual information unearthed and brought together with already materialized historic information. The archival work rests on a 17-year research, which has been used in re-modelling the Ankara of 1933, on its 10th anniversary of being proclaimed the Capital of the new Turkish Republic. The old town was of 30,000 population during the War of Independence; however, it lived influx of populations all over Anatolia as well as from İstanbul after the war. The Administration and the Municipality were forced to commission new expansion plans for the growing city, the first of which already got obsolete in 1924 (Loercher), the second was used in 1925 (Loercher), and yet a new plan was ordered through an competition in 1927 (the winner was Jansen), which was implemented.

The Exhibition narrates the Ankara of 1933, with its residents, with newly emerging urban life and unique examples of *memorabilia*, using archival material with rare postcards and new photo-albums. It further focuses on the New Neighbourhood “*Yenişehir*” (the New City), an output of the 1925 Plan, with its ‘new’ and ‘early modern’ housing, as well as the new ministry buildings for the new capital city. This urban expansion barely represented a local but modern taste, with intellectual, technologic and financial restrictions, but still comparable with the new global counterparts. The decade was rather erased by scholarly studies, parallel to the *vis-à-vis* destruction it experienced, as the early original buildings were replaced by new ones with larger sq.m. in the event of a growing city centre.

“Welcome to the New City” reads the opening text: The first quarter of the 20th century not only comprised the fall of an empire but a new republic was born: search for modernized identity and desire for prosperity, along with rapid technologic novelties, paved the way for revolutionary developments in conceptions of urban space. ‘New society’, ‘new man’, ‘new state’, and ‘new administration’ were all longed for, in the midst of the harsh economic crisis of 1929, which was felt globally. All these triggered a search for more democracy, which allowed changes in social, intellectual, artistic, scientific work along with urban planning and architectural design.

The decade 1923-1933 is the period we hardly knew about in terms of architectural and urban history until recently. The dedicated research was done for 17 years with a ‘Time Machine Venice’ conception, where already covered historiographic material was backed up with new archival documentation, cadastral plans and urban plans, with new photo-albums and unique postcard photographs from collectors, to re-build the City. The virtual construction (3D architectural modelling) of around 350 buildings has proved to offer a new research methodology of societal and community history, with its own tools for its own sake.

What has been revealed is a city anew, which we did not get familiarized with till now, which displays its desire for ‘novelty’, with a ‘robust’ and ‘not playing up to’ character. We have to

study on the Ankara of 1923-1933 more, to drive more into the archetypes long forgotten, the rigour of old styles, procedures regarding the construction of a local municipal government and the cultural milieu of a new born society.

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Sponsored by Vehbi Koç Foundation and Koç University VEKAM

With special thanks to Ankara Enstitüsü Vakfı, Atilla Cangır, Gökçe Günel, Koray Özalp