

ISTANBUL. PASSION, JOY, FURY

45 artists and architects, over 100 works presenting the transformations, conflicts, innovations and hopes of a city that has become the symbol of contemporary change.

11 December – 30 April 2016

#Istanbul

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Rome, December 2015. Social transformations, political tension, conflicts and new community dynamics have made it the symbol of global change: this is Istanbul, to which from 11 December 2015 to 30 April 2016 MAXXI is dedicating **ISTANBUL. PASSION, JOY, FURY**, an exhibition **curated by Hou Hanru, Ceren Erdem, Elena Motisi and Donatella Saroli.**

This exhibition is the second stage in a project devoted to the cultural realities of the Mediterranean and the relationship between the Middle East and Europe initiated in 2014 with the exhibition of contemporary Iranian art and which is due to continue in 2017 with a project devoted to Beirut.

ISTANBUL. PASSION, JOY, FURY presents the work of **45 artists, architects and intellectuals** through major works, new artistic projects and audio-visual testimony in multiplicity of idioms and expressions. Starting out with reflections on key issues spotlighted in the Gezi Park protests in 2013, the exhibition, thriving from examinations of the current mutations of the urban, cultural and social reality in Istanbul and their impacts on creative practices, tackles existential questions that apply to all of us: Are we ready for change? Is it right to fight? Is it really necessary to work so hard? Is it possible for people to live together in peace? And above all, can we still hope for a better tomorrow? Artists, architects and intellectuals have replied to all of these questions through their work, developing a solid critical commitment, of which the exhibition presents an overview, mapping the various experiences that have evolved in the city and thanks to the city: **artistic, architectural, cinematic and critical projects.**

The exhibition, resulted from a long-term research inspired by conversations with the local creative community of Istanbul, explores the **urban changes** of the city as the major condition for creative practices. It pays particular attention to the issues of gentrification, ecological crisis and informal and self-organization initiatives, etc., highlighting the **political conflicts** and **the resistance** with works that deal with issues associated with justice, violence and gender; it reviews the **innovative models of production** associated with consumerism and the challenges of the working class, underlines **urgent geopolitical issues** such as those of minorities and refugees and lastly proposes **new solutions**, joyous and proactive petitions and strategies for reconstruction because it is vital that we never lose **hope.**

The exhibition consists of the following sections:

A Rose Garden? This part of the exhibition acts as an introduction to the project as a whole. The protest at Gezi Park in Istanbul has become a symbol of the resistance of civil society against the regression of democracy in which artists and intellectuals have played a central role. The works of the artists and architects of this area recount the traces of that experience and the reflection it provoked, including the animated film *Rose Garden with the epilogue* by **Extrastruggle** (also responsible for the graphic identity of the exhibition as a whole), the performance *At the Edge of All Possibles* by **Zeyno Pekünlü** who presents the public with the emotions of the Gezi protests through the memory of those days or *Post Resistance*, the photographic series by **Osman Bozkurt.**

Ready for a change? Istanbul has been at the centre of profound urban change based on the logic of profit and the exclusion of the poor. Gentrification and social division have been stimulated in the name of innovation and urban development. In this section, artists and architects bear testimony or attempt criticism like **Serkan Taycan** who with his photographs recounts the expansion of the residential quarters around Istanbul, a concrete landscape that looms from the hills, or like **Halil Altindere** who with the video *Wonderland* recounts the differences between communities. The project by the **Superpool** group of architects *Mapping Istanbul in 2015* is an attempt to map the exponential change that has invested the city over the last few years, a video updating of the mapping produced in 2009. With the project *To build or not to*

build MAXXI has called three groups of architects **PATTU**, **SO?** and **Architecture For All** to create a series of installations in the museum spaces that investigates public space in Istanbul. A reflection on the consequences of the proliferation of spontaneous construction, frequently unregulated and aggressive, and on the formal characteristics of those finished and unfinished spaces. It is an interrogation of the possible form of the urban regeneration of Istanbul, starting out from those space created by the incorporation within the old urban fabric of new structures.

Can we fight back? Over the years the city has been not only the setting for heated confrontations between urban visions, but also the arena for social conflicts and political debates. Questions such as cultural identity, civil rights, freedom of speech and religious faith are at the heart of social life and creative practices are closely linked to them. This part of the exhibition features among others works by **Sarkis** an artist who was present in the Turkish pavilion at the last Venice Biennial and the delicately feminist and committed work by **Güneş Terkol** who creates tapestries with a political theme with the female communities.

Should we work hard? Turkey's attempt at integration within the global economic system has led to the uncontrolled economic expansion of the city that has always been associated with the coexistence of diverse economic systems. The new *laissez faire* ideology has upset established positions, the working classes have lost their rights and the need for an alternative has become a central issue in artistic and architectural thinking. *Do we really have to work so hard?* This is the question asked by **Ali Kazma** with a series of videos devoted to very different jobs such as those of the calligrapher and the butcher and **Burak Delier** who in a video recounts the attempts of major companies to create "community" through recreational activities.

Home for all? Istanbul is historically a cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic and multicultural city despite having also been the setting for the oppression of minorities. The refugees that in recent times have been pouring into Turkey have inevitably had an impact on the city too: will it be a further burden or a new opportunity? This section features among others works by **Hera Büyüктаşçıyan** who presents works on memory of multi-ethnicity, and the film by **Cynthia Madansky & Angelika Brudniak** on Turkey's eight borders. **Mario Rizzi** and **Cengiz Tekin** present portraits of the more recent refugees settled in the city.

Tomorrow, really? Istanbul and Turkey, like Europe and the Middle East, are confronting with a profound economic and democratic crisis and the consequences of war. The future appears to be decidedly precarious, but the works brought together in this section reveal the existence of a laboratory of ideas and projects focussing on the construction of possible alternatives. The works include the site specific performance by the collective **Ha Za Vu Zu**, the site specific work by **Ceren Oykut** that invades the walls of the museum with large scale drawings and the video by **İnci Eviner** *Nursing Modern Fall* in which the rational and irrational represented by modernist architecture and ruins collide, while a group of women try to affirm their existence and their capabilities.

Together with the exhibition MAXXI is presenting **La storia in movimento. Racconti del cinema turco dagli anni Sessanta ad oggi** curated by Italo Spinelli. Two events on **30 and 31 January 2016**, which through feature films, shorts and documentaries will trace the social, political and cultural history and the ongoing transformation of contemporary Turkey.

FEATURED ARTISTS AND ARCHITECTS

Hamra Abbas, Can Altay & Jeremiah Day, Halil Altındere, Emrah Altınok, Architecture For All (Herkes İçin Mimarlık), Volkan Aslan, Fikret Atay, Atelier Istanbul: Arnavutköy, Vahap Aşar, İmre Azem & Gaye Günay, Osman Bozkurt, Angelika Brudniak & Cynthia Madansky, Hera Büyüктаşçıyan, Antonio Cosentino, Burak Delier, Cem Dinlenmiş, Cevdet Erek, İnci Eviner, Extrastruggle, Nilbar Güreş, Ha Za Vu Zu, Emre Hüner, Ali Kazma, Sinan Logie & Yoann Morvan, Networks of Dispossession, Nejla Osseiran, Ceren Oykut, Pınar Öğrenci, Ahmet Öğüt, Didem Özbek, Şener Özmen, PATTU, Didem Pekün, Zeyno Pekünlü, Mario Rizzi, Sarkis, SO?, Superpool, ŞANALarc, Ali Taptık, Serkan Taycan, Cengiz Tekin, Güneş Terkol, Nasan Tur.

The press kit and images of the exhibition can be downloaded from the Reserved Area of the Fondazione MAXXI's website at <http://www.fondazionemaxxi.it/area-riservata/> by typing in the password **areariservatamaxxi**

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