

Utopian Ottoman Literature + Forgotten Sea Structures of Istanbul

Ideas on a Water Vehicle for Istanbul in the Future

Hasan Cenk Dereli, Istanbul/Turkey, +90 533 331 26 77, c.dereli@gmail.com

This paper clarifies the mediators behind the research based design process of an experimental water vehicle, that triggered with the encounter to the Ottoman utopian literature that is not well known nor around the world, neither in Turkey and photographs of an almost forgotten six meter high wooden fish trap structures on the shallow sea ground along the Bosphorus Istanbul that vanished totally from the city-scape and vernacular design knowledge around early 20th century.

Prelude

While reading the book “47 Days” by historian Cemal Kutay that covers selected parts of a diary of Omer Faiz Efendi, the mayor of city Istanbul around 1860’s who attended to the journey of Sultan Abdulaziz, the only visit made by an Ottoman Sultan to western Europe, designer came across to a sentence mentioning a writer named Ali Aziz Efendi of Crete (Kutay, 2012). That sentence, addressing his book called “Dreams of Ali Aziz Efendi” written in 18th century was on city descriptions mixed with science fiction and supernatural elements. At that moment designer got through the semi open door of an unknown era of Ottoman literature that he was up to discovered. This literature, mostly called as “dreams” is all about political and scientific utopias written in Ottoman Empire.

Scene – 1: Istanbul, 400 years later...

Throughout the investigation on Ottoman Utopias mostly from secondary resources, designer had the chance to read a primary resource in modern Turkish, titled “Development in Dreams” by Molla Davutzade Mustafa Nazim Erzurumi. This book, written in 1913 was about the writer himself who slept one afternoon and woke up in the future Istanbul, 400 years later. The book has detailed aesthetic descriptions of the city, infrastructure, life style and everyday technology flourished with utopian and science fiction motives like self-driving cars, shopping malls with automated food courts, capsule hotels, wear & fly suits, pocket watch sized cinematography machines, holograms, intersecting streets in the skies, three levelled bridge connects the two continents and more.

Books like “Development in Dreams” from early 20th century and also older ones from 19th and 18th century reflecting the non-common but inspiring imagination of their times, pushed the designer to investigate the Ottoman Empire’s visual memory of those centuries.

Scene – 2: Analyse, Wooden Machines to Live on the Sea

In the photography archives book of Suna Inan Kiraç Association (Genim, 2006), designer found out photographs of six meter high not well known wooden structures, fish traps of Bebek, examples of almost forgotten vernacular architecture on the coast of Bosphorus.

Wooden fish trap structures along the Bosphorus (Image1) doesn’t exist anymore. They left no trace of themselves on any kind of existing local architecture. These structures detached from the coast, a specific type of being in the sea with their tripod like main structure was a machine invented for observing and catching fishes that swim in groups with the currents of Bosphorus. With the excitement of fish traps, designer started a research to make drawing and 3d model analyses of these extinct examples of vernacular architecture. (Image2-3-4)

Scene – 3: Creation, Ideas on a Water Vehicle

With the inspiration from the descriptions of Molla Davutzade Mustafa Nazim Erzurumi on future technologies from the beginning of the 20th century and these structures, designer researches on a sea vehicle as an experiment on a travelling unit and a state of being/dwelling on the water. This vehicle aims to bring a new essence to the relation of the city, citizen and the sea. It will re-visit the

forgotten memories of fish traps and futuristic dreams of the Ottoman Empire and blend them with future projections to open up a discussion on Istanbul that today in constant search for a definition of an identity and also its future in the realm of global warming.(Image5)

Finale:

Whatever new are dreams of past and hopes for tomorrow! Today and future can be mediated...

“Yes, because the fact that revolution until 1910 has been shown here continuously 30 nights long, if there is still someone who didn't see that, they can go to Turkish bazaar, buy a pocket watch sized electric cinematography machine and watch exact same thing with it.”



Image1

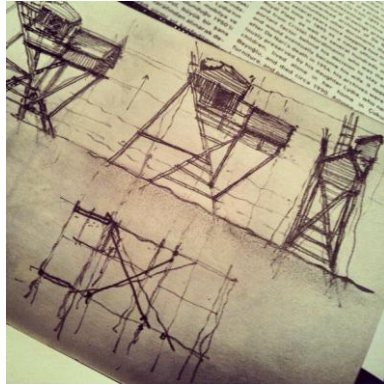


Image2



Image 3

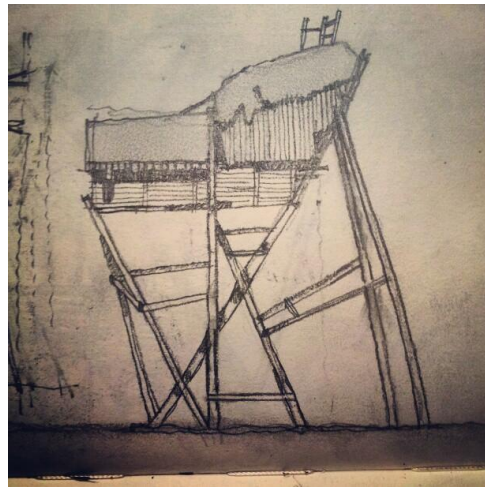
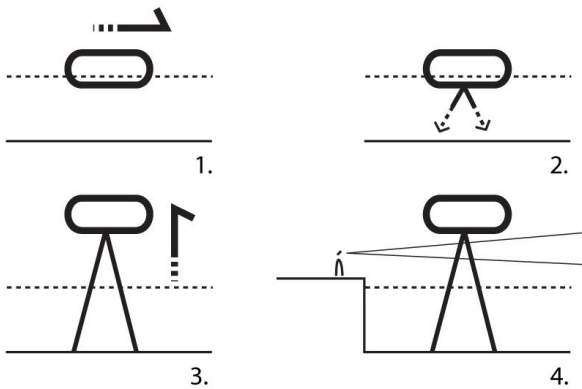


Image4



1. on the move 2. find the location 3. rise 4. a new coast-scape

Image5

Resources:

Kutay, C. 2012. 47 Gün, Abm Publications, Istanbul
 Genim, S. 2000. Konstantiniyye'den İstanbul'a, Istanbul Arastirmalari Enstitüsü Katalogları, Istanbul