

Semra Uygur



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Design Approach

We believe the most critical input in architectural design is comprehension of the context. Architectural product should belong to its own place, time and the reason /function leading to its creation. Effect of light, slow consumption, solidity and graceful aging constitute the main theme and essence of our architectural philosophy. Our main design goal is to achieve serenity in perception, yet spatial richness focusing on the main concept and integrity.

CER MODERN: ANKARA MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART AND FINE ARTS GALLERY

The railway sheds (cer) are significant edifices of "memory" of the Republican history. The original mass is composed of three identical rectangular sheds and the fourth one added later built following the nationalization of railways during the first years of the Republic (1926-1927). The buildings merit restoration and preservation for several reasons irrespective of their architectural value: they reflect the characteristic façade properties of their own era, display architectural features belonging to the transitional period from the Ottoman to the Modern Turkey, are among the few examples of industrial inherits in Ankara and capable of initiating an urban transformation in terms of their location and new function.

The two original units of the first period sheds were partially demolished and reconstruction was not possible. The reorganization and reinforcement of these units therefore were achieved by a concern to determine the identity of the entire complex. A transparent curved wall wrapped the two old units, like a "bandage", and integrated the newly built unit with those of the old. The new additions display a peaceful harmony with the old units, define the exterior space and emphasize the courtyard.

TED ANKARA COLLEGE CAMPUS – PRE-SCHOOL

The main design concept of the TED Ankara College Campus is based on creating an urban structure. The building clusters represent the districts while the open areas, the squares. The same principle of structuring is used in the building clusters (districts), as well.

Throughout the school classrooms and their auxiliary spaces are clustered along the inner streets; these alleys open to the genuine learning space, the main inner street (main alley). The structural elements are displayed in their bare form and the details are exhibited in their most plane existence as they are considered to be a part of the education. Spaces get their real color from those living inside and from the life itself. The effect of light is real and introduces emotional colors. The classrooms, the classroom clusters get their own color. The exposed concrete and brick are for the children and the youngsters to use the building comfortably. The medium becomes beautiful and dynamic where the building is animated by the voices of children and youngsters, and the walls are colored by their own artwork.



GELIBOLU (GALLIPOLI) PENINSULA HISTORICAL NATIONAL PARK ZEYTINDERE LOCATION, WAR CEMETERIES 19, 20, 21 and 23

The main concept of design of the "Cemetery dedicated to the victims of Çanakkale (Dardanelles) Wars" is based on preserving the spirit of the period without losing the soul of the victory achieved despite the hard geographical conditions and limited resources.

The stainless steel identity plates of the martyrs lying parallel to the ground surface reflect the infinity of the sky and nature during the day and manifest that our martyrs are part of the nature. Different reflections of the sun on this shiny surface, on the other hand, bring dynamism to the cemetery space. At night the earth almost cracks; the incandescent light spreading into the sky represents the light, the power which is given and that which will continue to be given to us until eternity by our martyrs.

In this piece of nature which has all the natural beauties, the respect we have for our martyrs of Çanakkale Wars, wars that shaped our future, embodies itself silently and modestly in the cemetery.

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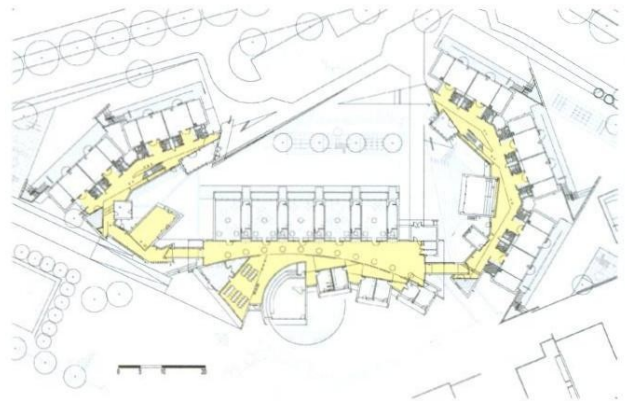
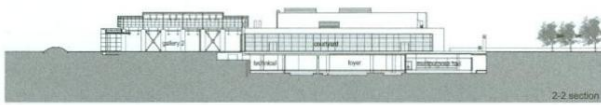
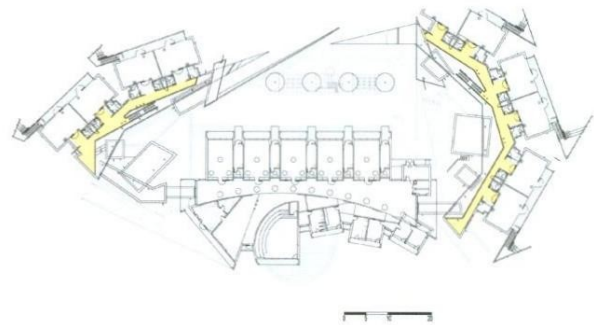
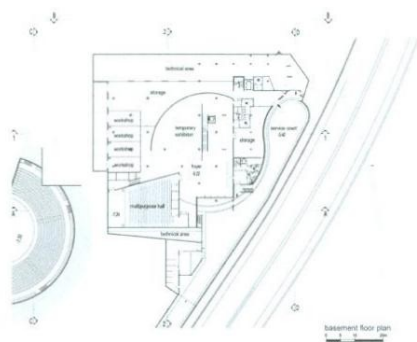
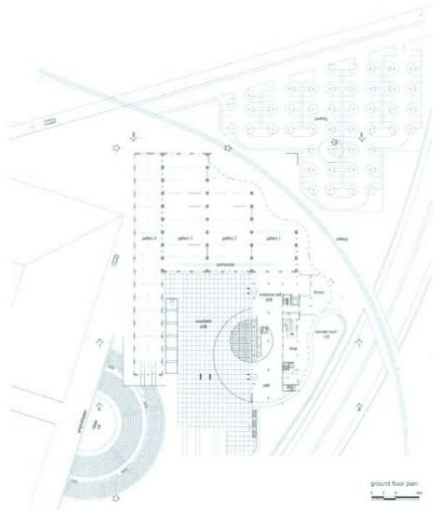


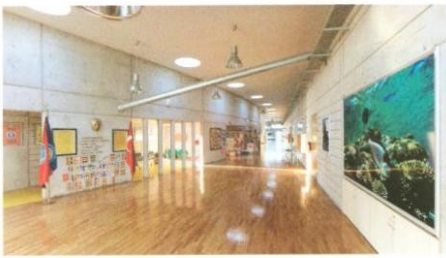
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Architect's Response to the Interview

Recognition of women's work/ voice has been controversial, assumed or rejected by thinkers in other fields. Susan Sontag rejected the category of woman's literature, Simone De Beauvoir believed that in essence there was no difference between feminine and masculine work except in how we look at it. While Foucault did not recognize subordination of the feminine but spoke of power relations, Gayatri Spivak pointed to the internal difference in voice for representation and form. Some have suggested a flickering mode, a back and forth of masculine /feminine positions to be at work in all. Practitioners and theoreticians of architecture and design contributing to this issue present a wide range of backgrounds, domains and structures of work albeit all connect to the middle east region either by birth, by professional interest or education. Many are displaced by choice or despite it, or albeit working in their home country find their discursive professions to operate beyond their immediate environment. The questions posed are meant to collect a sense of how significant contemporary women professionals in architecture and design view their position and what place they see the region and its traditions play in the execution of their work.

1- Do you consider that feminine voice in architecture and design- ie its structures, configurations, modalities of expression, sensibilities or power relations to be specific? Do you find it productive to focus on such differences?

I can say that I am more sensitive and pay attention to functionality and context in design. I do not think that design should focus on reflecting a feminine voice or that such a focus will bring a difference or influence productivity and creativity.

2- Given that modernity and globalization have brought about a more fluid condition of boundaries, geographies and sense of belonging, how do you find identity politics whether in terms of regional affiliations or gendered organization of production/ reception of women's work in architecture to be relevant to the location or structure of your professional practice of design or theory of architecture?

In my geography such politics and relationships do not openly exist in the field of architecture. However, being part of a society and context which in history was actually female dominated and which profoundly emphasized women's societal status and role following the Republic, I think that being a woman brought some advantages. The fact of being less in number (the number of female architects) in addition to being born into and raised in an equalitarian society created a medium where women are even more appreciated.

3- How do you see your work and your position vis a vis your professional work to be affected by being a woman? Do you see architecture's performative processes, technologies of production or its relations of power effect how you conduct your design or production/reception of design as a woman?

I do not think that there is a gender based differentiation in the way architecture is realized. As I mentioned above, I care about function and context and start from plan while my husband whom I work together in all projects starts from the whole and three dimensional look. But this does not reflect a gender based difference but rather team integrity and collaborative work. In the absence of one, the other turns the design processes into production in accordance with the shared sensibilities.

4- Given the specific traditions within which you have worked between the middle east region and outside it – globally perhaps- do you see any changes in the way women's voice/ work, has affected the discipline and attitudes towards modernity and tradition in your environment?

I believe that women have a more developed sense of identity and can be more persistent in preserving the traditions. Identity is an important concept in terms of tradition and context. In this regard, I believe that "context" is the starting point in architecture. To give an example, I do not think that women can make "standardized projects", projects designed independently from the context.