

Çimenin
Vaadi
The
Promise
Of
Grass

ULUSLARARASI 5. MARDİN BİENALİ | 5th INTERNATIONAL MARDİN BIENNIAL
mardinbiennial 20 MAYIS MAY 20 HAZİRAN JUNE 2022



INTERNATIONAL DESIGN FOUNDATION GALLERY

The International Design Foundation Art Gallery was originally built as an outhouse for the Şalleme family, a merchant family from Yârdin. Influenced by the 19th century architecture in Mardin, the building was designed to function as a warehouse for storing goods and loading them onto camels. It was later bought by the Dabbakoğlu family, which was mainly occupied with leatherwork. As a result, the building was in use as a leather processing and shoemaking workshop until the 1940s. After being requisitioned as a military cafeteria for a period, it was converted into a residence in the 1970s. The building was restored in 2020 as an art gallery.



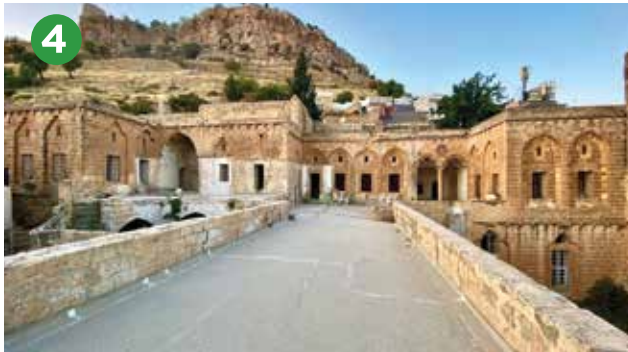
THE DESIGN FOUNDATION SQUARE GALLERY

A traditional Mardin mansion from the 19th century, the building was used as an office by the Germans who arrived in the region for the construction of the Baghdad railway in 1910. Its east-facing facade was altered as a result of the expansion of the 1st Street to accommodate vehicular traffic. The cloister attached to the structure, which was formerly used for conducting miscellaneous activities such as soccer ball workshops, silver filigree workshops, warehousing and sale of local products etc., was transformed into an art gallery in 2022.



GERMAN HEADQUARTERS

İskender Atamyan Mansion, used during World War I as German Headquarters by virtue of Germany's alliance with the Ottoman Empire, dates back to the 19th Century and is architecturally consistent with Mardin mansions. The building was also used by Mustafa Kemal Pasha as a garrison, dwelling, and headquarters.



THE CAMEL INN

The Camel Inn is a quintessential example of mansions built in the traditional Mardin style of architecture. Located in Gül District, just below the Citadel of Mardin, the inn overlooks the Mesopotamian Plain. Since no inscription or historical data has been found, the exact date of the structure's founding remains unknown. Nevertheless, going by the architectural features of the inn, it could be inferred that the first two floors were built in the 19th century, and the last floor added between 1940 and 1950. Camel mangers can be found in the courtyard and the barn section of the building, located on the ground floor. Historically, the inn signified one of the stops frequented by camel caravans, which led to its emergence as one of the key trading centres in the region. It changed hands several times between many well-established families from Mardin and has been variously inhabited as a residential space and a trading centre. Its restoration is underway since 2019. The inn will be put into service for the first time since for the 5th Mardin Biennial.



THE MANSION WITH ORIEL WINDOWS

The Mansion with Driel Windows overhanging the Mesopotamian plain, is an exemplar of traditional two-storey Mardin residences. The structure, which was approximately built between 1830 and 1850, is known to belong to the Kavas family, one of the merchant families of Mardin. It is one of the three mansions with oriel windows in the region. While it is known with certainty that the other two mansions were designed by Lole the Chief Architect, it is only a surmise that this particular mansion was also one of his projects. The lower floor was used as a caravanseraı where merchandising was carried out. The mansion was restored in 2017, and now serves as an art gallery and a café.



CARPENTERS COFFEE HOUSE

The mansion on the upper part of the Revaklı Çarşı (Arcaded Shopping Centre) also known as Sipahiler/Tellallar Çarşısı (Cavalrymen or Criers' Shopping Centre) serves as a coffee house for the carpenters based in the area.

THE PROMISE OF GRASS/
THE GIFT OF DISPOSSESSION

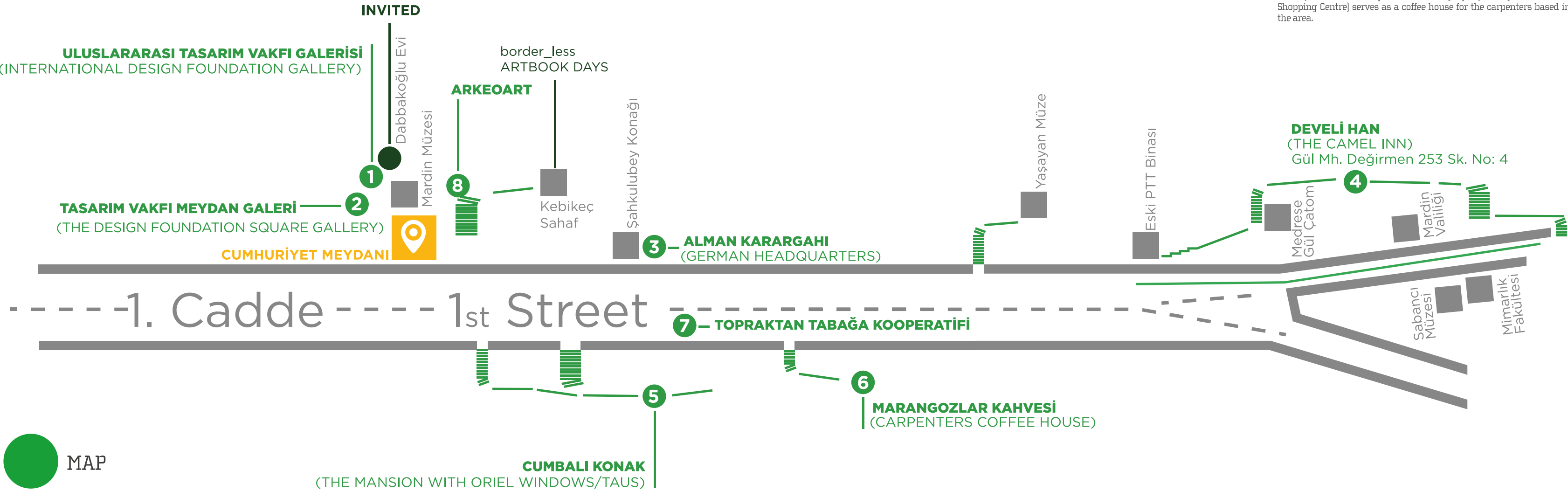
Curated by
Adwait Singh

Set against the swelling tide of disenfranchisements as well as a literal rise in sea level, the exhibition indulges the counterintuitive notion of dispossession as a gift, wagering hopes for an economy of renouncement. The recent spate of proletarian movements the world over can be interpreted as a reaction to the consolidation of crisis-capitalism as the governing logic of our times. The globalisation of capitalist enclosure, or its corollary, the privatisation of security, can be gathered from the pervasive phenomenon of gated societies, surveillance networks, integrated databases, hostile architecture, floating sea barriers and carceral systems. As a result a vast majority is finding itself progressively locked out. Indeed, globalisation — the universal outreach that sought to unite us across socio-cultural differences — has been systematically appropriated by statist ideologies that terrorise the masses with the imagery of immigrant hordes waiting to overtake their jobs, social security and way of life. Ironically, these divestments are in fact enacted by the self-same regimes using globalisation as a scapegoat. How do we resolve this impasse between capitalist encroachments on the one hand, and growing deprivation on the other?

Our provocation is that globalised dispossession need not be an existential dead-end and can instead denote the juncture where capitalist territorialisation having come a full circle, finds its operational logics inexplicably reversed. The exhibition calls into question the biopolitical instrumentalisations of uprooted bodies, recalling the fact that not only has migration played a fundamental part in our evolution but has also been historically valued as a source of cultural exchange and social vitality. In wandering renouncement, are revealed the seeds of a new order based on the principles of non-filial sociality, parcelised sovereignty, and creative commoning. If the monopolistic proclivities of capitalism are to be blamed for poisoning the land and its various gifts, then it stands to reason that a propitiatory gesture must follow mystical lines of love that stake parts to reclaim the whole. It would, in other words, demand a volitional deindividuation and decolonisation of the self. Taking dispossession to be a prerequisite for liberation, one can slowly start mustering the ruins into a shared internal resource for issuing new currencies centred around empathy, care, and egalitarianism.

Returning to the idea of gift economies that function in the spirit of barter, largesse, and reciprocity, the exhibition transmits histories, cosmologies, futurisms, experiments, and songs of the dispossessed that espouse alternative perspectives on ownership, exchange, and relationality. Such a moment is within grasp, as we witness glitches in a system showing signs of overload. The flickering social ecologies from the Cooperative of Somankidi Coura (Mali) to the penitentiaries of Tibet, have come to symbolise both the laboratories where new models of sovereignty and co-existence are being tested, as well as the focal points of sanctioned violence. In myriad mystical tongues, their self-assured and wilful resilience sings to us the promise of grass.

VENUES



MAP

INTERNATIONAL DESIGN FOUNDATION GALLERY

- Ritu Sarin & Tenzing Sonam
TIBET / INDIA
- Karan Shrestha
NEPAL/ INDIA
- Almagul Menlibayeva
KAZAKHSTAN / GERMANY
- Fatoş İrwen
TURKEY

THE DESIGN FOUNDATION SQUARE GALLERY

- Bouba Touré & Raphaël Grisey
FRANCE, MALI / GERMANY
- Asunción Molinos
SPAIN / EGYPT
- Thukral & Tagra
INDIA

GERMAN HEADQUARTERS

- Gülsün Karamustafa
TURKEY
- Lara Ügel
TURKEY
- Nandita Kumar
INDIA / AOTEAROA
- Uriel Orlow
SWITZERLAND
- Jonas Staal
NETHERLANDS
- Sasha Huber
HAITI / SWITZERLAND / FINLAND
- Zahra Malkani
PAKISTAN
- Mikhail Karikis
GREECE / UK
- Sibel Horada
TURKEY

THE CAMEL INN

- Deniz Üster & Burcu Yağcıoğlu
UK, TURKEY / TURKEY
- Kamen Stoyanov
BULGARIA
- E.B. Itso
DENMARK
- Rakhi Peswani
INDIA
- Ömer Pekin
TURKEY
- Abdessamad El Montassir
MOROCCO / FRANCE
- Kathyayini Dash
INDIA / SOUTH AFRICA
- İpek Hamzaoglu
TURKEY / AUSTRIA

THE MANSION WITH ORIEL WINDOWS

- Neda Saeedi
IRAN / GERMANY
- Bhagwati Prasad
INDIA
- Bint Mbareh
PALESTINE / UK
- Almagul Menlibayeva
KAZAKHSTAN / GERMANY
- Thukral & Tagra
INDIA
- Ömer Pekin
TURKEY
- Selma Gürbüz
TURKEY
- Server Demirtaş
TURKEY
- Michael Rakowitz
IRAQ / USA

THE MANSION WITH ORIEL WINDOWS

- Burak Özdemir
TURKEY / GERMANY
- Marwa Arsanios
LEBANON / GERMANY

CARPENTERS COFFEE HOUSE

- Thukral & Tagra
INDIA
- Merve Ünsal
TURKEY

TOPRAKTAN TABAĞA KOOPERATİFİ

- Michael Rakowitz
IRAQ / USA

ARKEOART

- Merve Ünsal
TURKEY

PUBLIC PROGRAM

- Neither here nor there!
A performance by Nejir Erkal (Mardin)
Duration : 45 minutes
21 May, 2022 | 11:00 | International Design Foundation Gallery
- [B]orderly erosions with the shriek of despair as my guiding wavelength
A performance by Bint Mbareh (Palestine / UK)
Duration : 45 minutes
21 May, 2022 |15:00 |The Camel Inn
- Sharing Notes
Kathyayini Dash (India), Petra Nachtmannova (Vienna)
Erkan Çanakçı (İstanbul) and Çağrı Koç (Mardin) in musical collaboration
Supported by Tarabya Cultural Academy
21 May, 2022 |16:00 |The Camel Inn
- Days of Eating
A food-based engagement
by Bhagwati Prasad (India)
20-25 May, 2022 |Various Timings |The Camel Inn
- Reading room
By border_less collective
20 May – 20 June, 2022 |10:00 – 18:00 | Kebikeç Sahaf Cafe
- Democratise Knowledge Economies
Border_less collective, (İstanbul), İpek Hamzaoglu (Vienna), Lara Ügel (İstanbul), Merve Ünsal (İstanbul), Sibel Horada (İstanbul), Thukral and Tagra (New Delhi)
21 May, 2022 |12:00 | Kebikeç Sahaf Cafe
- Mystical Cosmopolitics and Intransigent Sonics
An exchange between Dina Amro (Palestine / UK), Zahra Malkani (Pakistan) and Kathyayini Dash (India / South Africa)
22 May, 2022 |12:00 |German Headquarters

BIENNIAL TEAM

Advisory Board
Döne Otyam
Paolo Colombo
Fırat Arapoğlu
Ayşegül Sönmez
Hakan İrmak

On behalf of the Mardin Cinema Association
Mehmet Hadi Baran | Mehmet Sait Tunc

Directors : Döne Otyam | Hakan İrmak
Curator : Adwait Singh
General Coordinator : Canan Budak
Curatorial Coordinator : Metin İltekin
Project Coordinator : Cansin Seyhan
Curatorial Assistant : Ayşe Ertung
Public Programs Coordinator : Yasemin Bay
Communications Consultant : Pro İletişim
Biennial Campaigner : Çivi Yaratıcı Fikirler
Fund-raiser : Hülya Kızılırmak
Coordinators : Nuri Yılmaz | Aykut İrmak
Press Directory : İlkay Bilgiç
Architectural Projects : Kadir İrmak
Photograph – Video : Mehmet Çimen | Sinan Yıldız
Web : İbrahim Ayhan
Graphic Designer : Bahtiyar Turan
Archive : Osman Aşlmacıer
Translator : Celal Can Bilgiç
Assistant to the Curator : Ömer Salıhoğlu
Assistant to the Director : Nazelin Akgün
Assistants : Dilan Demir | Betül Abak | Nazlıcan Keleşçier
Hazel Ocak | Nuran Aba | Şükriye Aba | Cihat Aktaş
Elif Acabey | Mahmut Öztekin | Derya Cırık | Tuha Elesan
Rojdit Tarakçı | Cemal Aktaş | Dilan Demir | Zeki Üzel

SUPPORTS

SPONSORS



SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS



INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTS

Gülün – Emre Dökmeçi | Sernur Çiftçi | Muammer Brav | Ahmet İren
Nuray Tekin | Cengiz Temel | İnci Aksoy | Füsün Aygüler | Hatice Leyla Ersin

