



METU AH PROG GRADUATE SEMINARS

AH 504 & 604 Fall Semester 2025-26

This is the official document prepared for the graduate seminar course of AH 504 and AH 604.

Fall 2026 Semester

Date of the Meeting: 14.01.2026
at Dekanlık Büyük Toplantı Salonu, Faculty of Architecture

Online Meeting Link:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZWFkZWRLYmEtNzRlNS00ZTJkLWFkMzAtOTdiMGMxYTViZjZm%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22b0a2e24d-d188-4a4c-a1e4-82162e060566%22%2c%220id%22%3a%22de46a396-ac7e-4637-8436-8cf6ba7feee7%22%7d

Meeting ID: 398 466 361 062 35

Passcode: d5oh2xi2

Course Instructors: Ekin Pınar, Elif Kaymaz

09:30 – 10:00

504

**Geometry as an Intellectual Language:
The Cosmogram as An Interpretative
Lens on Medieval Islamic Architectural
Thought (10th–16th c.)**

Roha Yousaf Mughal

10:00 – 10:30

504

**Night Entertainment Venues in
Yeşilçam Cinema: The Spatial
Construction of Gender (1950–1985)**

İrem Aslanbaş

10:30 – 11:00

604

**Transformation of Fin-De-Siècle
Batumi from An Environmental
Perspective**

Öykü Su Sezen

11:00 – 11:30

604

**Contemporary Art as Critical Spatial
Practice in Conflicted Lands:
SWANA, 1990–2010**

Canay İtez

Geometry as an Intellectual Language: The Cosmogram as An Interpretative Lens on Medieval Islamic Architectural Thought (10th–16th c.)**Roha Yousaf Mughal**Supervisor: **Ali Uzay Peker**Jury Members: **Çağla Caner Yüksel**
Pelin Yoncacı Arslan

This paper reviews the literature on Islamic architectural thought in the Medieval era, through the contemporary lens of the cosmogram, to rethink geometry as an intellectual language. Most scholars agree that geometry serves a more substantial purpose than just an aesthetic one in Islamic architecture, yet the current scholarship diverges between metaphysical perspective and dynastic symbolism. This paper transcends this dichotomy and maintains the historiographical continuity of tangible and intangible geometric interpretations by studying the intellectual landscape of the medieval Islamic world, where intellectual, spiritual, and material realms were perceived as interconnected rather than separate. Islamic cosmology in medieval thought conceives “intellect” as a divine attribute to observe and contemplate the manifestation of the cosmos. Even though geometry cannot directly materialize divine essence, its mathematical sophistication offers itself as an intellectual medium to reveal celestial structures underlying our physical world. Because the universe was understood as an ordered and harmonized creation of God, and geometry was a science reflecting these principles medieval thinkers developed significant knowledge on mathematical sciences, stemming from recognized metaphysical relationship between man and cosmos. It was “intellect” that allowed to portray this into geometry as a diagrammatic mode of thinking (cosmogram) in the medieval worldview. Based on the epistemological definition of “ilm” (knowledge), for medieval Muslim intellectuals, geometry functioned as a mediating science: a bridge between the metaphysical “Divine Intellect” (al-‘aql) and material reality. As in Rosenthal’s ideology, it is a trinity of light, thought, and society, which is Islamic cosmological synthesis. Focusing on the period between the tenth and sixteenth centuries, the paper traces a historical trajectory in which geometry shifts from a theoretical framework to a functional necessity. The analysis of mathematical transmission, transcribing philosophical evidence, and diagrammatic examples collectively reinterpret cosmological principles translated into tangible spatial order in medieval architectural practice. Therefore, it proposes that medieval Islamic architecture may be understood as a physical cosmogram, in which geometry functioned as a systematic means of orienting knowledge, space, and intellect within a divinely ordered cosmos.

keywords: Geometry, Cosmogram, Islamic Cosmology, Medieval Islamic Architecture, Intellectual History, Diagrammatic Thinking

10:00 – 10:30

504

Night Entertainment Venues in Yeşilçam Cinema: The Spatial Construction of Gender (1950–1985)

İrem Aslanbaş

Supervisor: **Belgin Turan Özkaya**

Jury Members: **Celal Abdi Güzer**

Lale Özgenel

Ekin Pınar

While prominent metropolitan venues such as major gazinos are well documented in architectural and cultural histories of republican Turkey, a broader range of entertainment spaces, including meyhanes, pavyons, and tavernas, remain less visible despite their central role in everyday urban life. These venues constitute what Swati Chattopadhyay defines as “small spaces”: ordinary, peripheral, transient, and discontinuous interiors that resist archival preservation, yet become persistently visible through cinema. Methodologically, this study approaches Yeşilçam cinema as an alternative architectural archive, utilizing the music film genre to examine the spatial organization of gender. Through a comparative analysis of two exemplary films, *Vesikalı Yarım* (1968) and *Ağlattı Kader* (1984), the paper traces the shift from the female spectacle of the 1960s, where the venue facilitated voyeuristic consumption, to the construction of arabesk masculinities in the 1980s, where the male figure becomes the spectacle depicted through emotional vulnerability. The study foregrounds various architectural spaces of entertainment through visual analysis of cinematic scenes, exploring how such spaces impact the possible lived experiences of both the patrons and the workers of these venues. Ultimately, this study examines the representation of night entertainment venues in Yeşilçam cinema (1950–1985) as gendered architectural spaces and argues that these venues function as key sites for negotiating gender, sexuality, and modernity in mid-20th-century Turkey.

keywords: Yeşilçam Cinema, Entertainment Venues, Gendered Spaces, Music Film, Small Spaces

Transformation of Fin-De-Si cle Batumi from An Environmental Perspective

 yk  Su Sezen

Supervisor: **Belgin Turan  zkaya**

Jury Members: **Elvan Altan**
Ahmet Erdem Tozo lu
Ecem Sarı ayır

In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, Batumi underwent a profound urban transformation shaped by intertwined political, imperial, and economic processes. Among the many influencing factors, the environment, understood not as a passive background but as an active factor, played a decisive role in the city's modernization and industrialization. This paper attempts to examine the urban transformation of fin-de-si cle Batumi from an environmental perspective, focusing on environmental elements that shaped and were shaped by modern planning, engineering, and design practices. Theoretically building on recent work in discussions surrounding the environmental history of architecture, this study treats the environment as a dynamic actor within urban processes. It argues that Batumi's transformation cannot be fully understood without considering the reciprocal relationship between natural conditions and human interventions. This paper critically examines the existing literature on Batumi's economic, urban, and imperial history within the framework of environmental history and architectural history. By bringing together historical studies on Batumi with theoretical work on environmental agency, the research focuses on three environmental elements that were connected to the city's change in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: marshes, designed vegetation, and petroleum. Accordingly, the article is structured around three thematic axes. Firstly, it examines the draining of marshes through canal construction and agricultural regulations, treating wetlands as catalysts for large-scale infrastructure and sanitation engineering projects. Secondly, it examines the deliberate design of nature through parks and the Batumi Botanical Garden, highlighting how climate, exotic flora, and landscape became experimental tools at the boundaries of the natural and designed environment. Thirdly, it analyses "petroleum spaces," investigating how the circulation, storage, and export of Baku oil reshaped Batumi's urban form and infrastructure. By exploring these elements, it reveals how environmental forces and modern design practices co-produced Batumi as an industrial port city within the context of the Russian empire.

keywords: Batumi, environmental history, draining the marshes, Batumi Botanical Garden, petroleum infrastructure, industrial port

Contemporary Art as Critical Spatial Practice in Conflicted Lands: SWANA, 1990–2010**Canay İtez**Supervisor: **Belgin Turan Özkaya**Jury Members: **Ekin Pınar**
Seçil Özcan Geylani

The decades following 1990 marked a profound geopolitical, territorial, and cultural reconfiguration across South West Asia and North Africa (SWANA), shaped by the enduring afterlives of colonial and postcolonial conflict. The end of the Cold War (1991), the conclusion of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), the Gulf War (1990-91), the intensification of the Israeli Palestinian conflict, and the rise of neoliberal globalization jointly transformed the borders, the regimes of mobility, and the spatial organization of everyday life. These overlapping historical ruptures generated not only new territorial orders, but also a persistent global association of these regions with crisis, instability, and violence. Grounded in the work of numerous artists from the region starting from the 1990s, the central concern of this preliminary study is "In what ways did contemporary art practices between 1990-2010 function as critical spatial practices on conflicted lands? And how can their spatial logic inform an expanded historiography of architecture and territory?" Building on these questions, it surveys how these artists' identities, shaped by conflicted geopolitical conditions, and their sense of belonging and memory grounded in places generate spatial and architectural narratives. I situate these artistic practices as challenges to the hegemonic, often so-called Western, representational frameworks that cast the region as a timeless landscape of turmoil. Here, I argue, art does not appear as aestheticized responses to abstract political events; rather, it emerges as situated practices formed through the lived experience of inhabiting fractured terrains. Ultimately, the study positions these contemporary artists as spatial agents and witnesses who produce knowledge of place from within displacement and articulate conditions of conflict through a critical spatial poetics. Art thus becomes both a mirror and a method: a reflective surface for historical wounds and a critical tool for producing new spatial knowledge, new modes of belonging, and new political possibilities.

keywords: Critical Spatial Practice, Contemporary Art in SWANA, Conflicted Geographies, Displacement, Identity & Belonging, Place & Memory

