



ISTANBUL
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

İstanbul Conferences

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The Changing Face of İstanbul in the 18th Century

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In the conference, Semra Ögel presents the creative transformation on the architectural scene of 18th-century İstanbul through the Tulip Era and important buildings.

The architectural transformation of İstanbul in the 18th century coincides with the reigns of Sultans Ahmed III (1703-1730) and his son Mustafa III (1757-1774). Between the reigns of these two sultans is the Nuruosmaniye Mosque, a turning point in Ottoman architecture, the construction of which was initiated by Ahmed III's nephew Mahmud I (1730-1754) and finished by his brother Osman III (1754-1757).

Known as the Tulip era, the reign of Ahmed III constituted a period in which perspectives were widened. Court life began to spread to the city, the shores, and the nearby forests through pavilions and palaces. Another important change was ornamentation, which became the symbol of the Tulip Era. It extended from indoors to outdoors and determined the new visage of the city. For the first time since the Anatolian Seljuks, stone decoration became part of the city. With its miniature Anatolian portal look, Ahmed III's mother Emetullah Gülnuş Sultan's fountain in Üsküdar constituted a starting point in this regard. The subsequent series

of fountains shaped the art of the century with their Eastern and Western references, as well as the new interpretations of traditional stonemasonry. Dated 1728-1729, the two fountains of Ahmed III located in Üsküdar and in front of Topkapı Palace, created a new typology known as the “public square fountain.” The richly ornamented large marble blocks in the middle of the square assumed their place in the urban fabric as an innovation.

The construction of these public square fountains continued during the reign of Mahmud I. The change of style after 1740 also began with the fountains. They combined flower and fruit depictions with water and created an image of paradise on earth, taking the style of art and life to all the squares and corners of the city.

Following a long break, Mahmud I initiated the construction of Nuruosmaniye, a new “selatin” mosque (a grand mosque built by a sultan or a royal family member) in 1750. The building made way for new interpretations with a deep-rooted architectural tradition. The masses and building elements gained movement, new designs emerged, and the use of building elements such as pillars in ornamentation displayed unexpected and surprising compositions. The articulations in the interior and the new compositions on the exterior surfaces became part of Ottoman architecture.

Similar to the entire royal family that experienced the innovations taking place during the reign of his father Ahmed III, Mustafa III followed in the footsteps of Osman III, who completed the construction of Nuruosmaniye, and upheld the fountain building tradition.

Conference will be held in Turkish.

The event is free of admissions.