THE BORDERS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN TURKEY: INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITIONS AND TURKISH FESTIVALS

Abstract

In the global world, intercultural communication relies on art as a tool to deliver a given message, since art provides a long-term strategy to increase the common ground among people who are divided by cultural differences. Art, in all its mediums, links its creators and their audiences’ cultures, creating dialogue. It also unites those who create it and leaves them with a higher understanding of different thought processes and influences. The scope and extent of cultural diplomacy in Turkey was rather limited compared to that of European countries until the 1980s. The state as regulator, protector and organizer had to wide its horizon in cultural relations in politically powerful countries at the beginning of the 2000s. In collaboration with public and private institutions as well as with non-governmental organizations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been making contributions to numerous activities entitled Week/Days/Years/Seasons of Turkey in order to promote the country on a wider scale.

Keywords: Art Festivals, Turkish Art, Intercultural Communication, Cultural Diplomacy, International Relations
TÜRKİYE’DE KÜLTÜRLER ARASI İLETİŞİMİN SINIRLARI: ULUSLARARASI SANAT SERGİLERİ VE TÜRK FESTİVALLERİ

Öz

Anatlich kelimeler: Sanat Festivalleri, Türk Sanatı, Kültürlerarası İletişim, Kültür Diplomasisi, Uluslararası İlişkiler

Introduction
Intercultural communication is a form of communication that aims to share information across different cultures and social groups. Intercultural communication is sometimes used synonymously with cross-cultural communication. In this sense it seeks to understand how people from different countries and cultures act, communicate and perceive the world around them. Analyzing this issue as in the case of international art festivals gives us the basic notion of cultural codes and images. Organizing state-sponsored exhibitions is an intricate, multilayered process of global communication, with the purpose of transforming negative stereotypes into positive ones and to improve the political and economic standing of their country. Particularly, art exhibitions are modes of cultural representation to be used to propagate a certain view of a nation's history. Although art history is not political as such, it conveys political messages among different cultures.

The study that I introduce above was represented under the title of identity and cultural studies focused on the dynamics of restructured cultural policy after 1980s. For promoting Turkish culture and art in international exhibitions, Turkish Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Tourism organized international activities such as Turkish years or seasons, and festivals. This study clarifies how and which ways Turkish culture and art are represented in the last thirty years. In addition to, analyzing communication activities of Turkish art and culture in international scale exhibitions lead to negative consequences in terms of false description and oriental identity constructions.

This paper aims to give basic socio-political reason behind communicative representation in international art and culture exhibition. From looking at global perspective, these exhibitions are chance to show richness and value of Turkish culture. However, in the process of integration of EU (European Union), strategies that were utilized in international exhibition aimed at promot
ing intercultural communication. In order to deconstruct prototypical image of Turkey, the exhibitions provided a site of nation seeing in a global art scene in a common ground. The basic question is that how national representation is changed in the last thirty years in intercultural communication in terms of self-representation and identity construction.

**Intercultural Communication and Cultural Diplomacy After The 1980s**

In the global world, cultural communication relies on art as a tool to deliver a given message, since art provides a long-term strategy to increase the common ground among people who are divided by cultural differences. Art, in all its mediums, links its creators and their audiences’ cultures, creating dialogue. It also unites those who create it and leaves them with a higher understanding of different thought processes and influences.

The scope and extent of cultural diplomacy in Turkey was rather limited compared to that of European countries until the 1980s. The state as regulator, protector and organizer had to widen its horizon in cultural relations in politically powerful countries at the beginning of the 2000s. In collaboration with public and private institutions as well as with non-governmental organizations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been making contributions to numerous activities entitled Week/Days/Years/Seasons of Turkey in Order to promote the country on a wider scale.

In the twentieth century, art seems to have been a diplomatic cornerstone articulating visions of the countries demonstrating the cultural capabilities of the nations. During cold war the world’s great artworks have been increasingly used for international propaganda. Great art works are above daily politics, but still they have political meanings. One major type of these art exchanges were “blockbuster” exhibitions which toured museums and carried out political missions. According to Judith Huggins Balfe, four variables determined the structure of international exhibitions after the 1980s: the political agenda of the sponsoring state, the aesthetic qualities and power of the art works, the characteristics of the elite and mass art audience, and the “received” interpretation of the exhibited works (Balfe, 1987: 197). After the Cold War, American state politics in visual and performance art were closely related to the foreign policy of the state, stressing achievements in business and statecraft. The country steadily raised the standards of artistic accomplishments and enlarged the cultural opportunities of the citizens. The idea was to show that the USA commanded respect throughout the world not only for its strength but for its civilization (Arndt, 2005:398). The international policy on visual and performance art took new directions. The purpose was to create a media event. The technique of presenting artwork to support political agendas has become increasingly refined. These techniques have become more widely understood as well as practiced.

The blockbuster exhibition of 1976-1979 titled the “Tut Show” displayed the political nature of the sponsor’s agenda to attract masses rather than school children. Because the exhibition was a cultural propaganda of Egypt organized to promote ancient Egypt to the Western World. Certainly, the 8 million in the audience and $16 million in world-wide profits would (Balfe, 1987: 204). The Tut Show not only provided commercial gains but also provided national prestige for Egypt. The USA government regarded the success of national exhibitions in 1980s. They decided to expand the National Endowment Fund for the Humanities, which was one of the funds that provided exhibition costs for a number of international art exhibitions hosted in the USA.
After the 1970s, state-sponsored loan exhibitions were one of the main agendas of the cultural policies of the USA, Britain and France. Organizing state-sponsored exhibitions is an intricate, multilayered process of global diplomacy, with the purpose of transforming negative stereotypes into positive ones and to improve the political and economic standing of their country. Particularly, art exhibitions are modes of cultural representation to be used to propagate a certain view of a nation’s history. Although art history is not political as such, it conveys political messages among different cultures.

On a large scale, national festivals have eclipsed the spectacular blockbusters of the mid-1970s and 1980s as national promotion vehicles. Such shows as The Treasures of King Tutankhamen (1976-1979), Irish Gold: Treasures of Early Irish Art (1978), Five Thousand Years of Korean Art (1979), The Treasures of the Kremlin (1979), The Treasures of Ancient Nigeria (1980) were realized with the financial support of multinational corporate sponsors and focused on the national artifacts of these respective cultures in the USA (Wallis, 2000: 267). These exhibitions served the function of followings: the promotion of tourism, the development international business and political connections, museum advertising.

**Agendas Of Turkish Art After The 1980s In International Exhibitions**

In 1986, as the Turkish minister of culture and tourism, İlhan Evliyaoğlu stated that the purpose of the Sultan Suleyman exhibition was “to enable those people who cannot visit Turkey to see our culture and our resources (Turism Office, 1986: 15). However, Turkey’s image in the Western world was not positive in the 1980s and this was perceived as being one of the main problems in cultural policy. Due to the lack of sponsorship, state advertising, exhibition promotion, and educated state officers, Turkish state authorities did not have well-prepared strategies in public relation activities at that time.

The Turkish state had the following roles in a process of the image building of the Turkish nation: a wealth protector and upholder, a regulator, an arbitrator, and finally an organizer (Burçoğlu and Kozay, 1999: 881). In this sense, we can see the state-centered mission of art and culture in international public relation activities. The Turkish state took the role of protector, pioneer, regulator and upholder, arbitrator, and organizer in internationally exhibitionism. Prime Minister Turgut Özal played a leading role in organizing cultural activities at the international level aimed at promoting Turkish tourism. The efforts of Özal’s government in developing cultural tourism came into reality in 1988, when the number of foreign tourists who visited Turkish museums exceeded the number of national tourist for the first time. Approximately 500,000 foreign tourists visited Turkish museum as a result of public relations in the international arena (Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 1993: 43). Heritage tourism is one type of cultural tourism widely used by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism displaying heritage sites, artifacts, and events to draw the attention of foreign tourists (Sigala and Leslie, 2005: 6).

As sign of the promotion of tourism in the 1980s, Turkish state officers hoping that history exhibitions would attract tourists to Turkey, published hand catalogues on Turkish history and its cultural heritage. In the catalogue, the cultural richness and modern face of the country provided a positive image for tourism as well as economic progress:

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1 Heritage tourism is a phenomenon based on tourists motivations and perceptions rather than on specific site attributes. Heritage tourism is aform of special tourism that offers opportunities to portray the past in the present.
Turkey today is a young and modern state with a dynamic and creative nation always aware that they were and are the people with the longest tradition of independent states. This is indeed a heritage as valuable as economic strength and a source of confidence as Turks who have made their country quite self-sufficient in the last few decades, look to the future with pride and hope (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1987:7).

Turkey attempted to focus and enhance the national image for foreign consumption in well-publicized exhibition “The Age of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent”, shown in Washington, D.C in 1987, Chicago, and New York as a part of “the Festival of Turkey: The Continuing Magnificence” in 1987-1988 (http://publicdiplomacy.wikia.com/wiki/Turkey). This exhibit was a practice for the sending touring exhibitions around the world to promote Turkish cultural heritage and address misperceptions. “The Age of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent” was also the first blockbuster and travelling Turkish history exhibitions in the international arena. Actually, planning for the show began in 1978. The exhibition aimed to challenge the commonly held warlike perceptions of the Ottoman Sultan, Kanuni Sultan Suleyman by emphasizing his role as a reformer in the arts and architecture. At that time, Turkish-USA diplomatic relations were sensitive. For this reason, the curatorial negotiations required the involvement of institutions, such as the State Department, the Information Agency, the White House, and the President of the Metropolitan Museum.

Turkey’s basic motivation for organizing this exhibition was to represent Turkey’s democratic face and eradicate negative stereotypes that had formed over the years, the image of the 1980 coup d’état, the continuing conflict with Greece over the issue of Cyprus, claim of the Armenian Genocide, and the oppression of the Kurdish nationalist movement were basic problems in foreign policy.

In 1985, the government of Turkey enlisted the aid of Gray and Company, a prominent Washington public relations firm with close ties to the Reagan administration. For $600.000 a year, Gray and Company’s mission was to “improve and increase knowledge of the Republic and increase knowledge of the Republic of Turkey in the United States. Turkish Gray came up with the plan for a yearlong festival of exhibitions, performances, lecturers, and with the common theme Turkey: The Continuing Magnificence (Wallis, 2000: 270). The company sought a way to represent the modern face of the country, drawn from an epoch of the Turkish past venerated in the West: the Turkish renaissance of the arts during the reign of the Ottoman emperor Suleyman I (1520-1566).

The exhibition carried extraordinary examples of sixteenth century Ottoman art which showed the wealth of Turkish art as well as the power of the Ottoman Empire. Wallis writes that “Turkey’s construction of nationalism was bound up with ideologies of imperialism. Prominently displayed maps, illuminated scenes of battles and conquests, ceremonial armor, and the bellicose language of the wall texts reiterated the importance of the Ottoman expansionism to the development of culture.” (2000: 271). However, the period of the sixteenth century titled golden age discourse in terms of art and architecture reached the highest level in at that time. The logic of the Sultan Suleyman exhibition pointed to a central paradox that was common in national exhibitions in order to establish a strong image within the international community. The selection of objects based on a deformed representation consisted of conventionalized versions of the national image, asserting the glorious past, reconstructing stereotypical differences, and provoke

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The sense of fear. In the case of Turkish festival, Bloomingdale served Turkish coffee and cakes; the National Gallery provided Turkish cigarettes that were a symbolic construction of the sense of Turkishness. Thus, due to improper public relations activity, Turkey adopted an imposing stereotypical identity that might be called “self-Orientalization” with a stereotypical image of Turks providing their American audience was no more than presenting the classical version of the Turkish image.

As Benedict Anderson states: “If nation-states are widely conceded to be ‘new’ and ‘historical,’ the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and still more important, glide into limitless future. (Anderson, 1983: 19). The exhibition indicated such deployments of art in a more assertive way to sell the image of the country. In this regard, the national image was a part of the political system that showed culture, history and the identity of the nation in the international arena.

In 1991, the Memphis Culture Organization in the USA, in a unique partnership with the National Geographic Society, launched “Wonders: The Memphis International Cultural Series”, with exhibits from past civilizations such as Ramses the Great, Catherine the Great, Splendors of the Ottoman Sultans, the Etruscans, Napoleon, the Titanic, Ancestors of the Incas, and the WWII through Russian Eyes. (http://www.cityofmemphis.org/framework.aspx?page=45). The series of exhibitions helped to build a strong and impressive team of professionals to develop, organize, produce and market cultural dialogue programs for audiences throughout the world. The exhibits attracted over 12 million people at several American venues. “The Splendor of Ottoman Sultan” was one of the exhibition organized in this cultural series; it had considerable impact on its American audience. Its video cassette was also produced to draw American citizens’ attention to Turkey.

The 700th anniversary of the foundation of the Ottoman Empire was the turning point for culture exhibitionism in Turkey (Madran, Onal, 2000: 183). This event triggered a cultural promotion campaign in the USA as well as in Europe. “Ottoman Exhibition” shows in the Versailles Palace in Paris realized with the support of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Other Ottoman exhibitions financially supported by the Sabancı Company showed the private Islamic art collection of Sakıp Sabancı, “Master pieces from the Calligraphy and Painting Collection- Letters in Gold” were on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Los Angles Country Museum of Art, Harvard University, the Arthur M. Sackler Museum and at the Louvre Museum in Paris between 1998 and 2000. Spectacularizing the national myth, national festivals present an opportunity for nations to circulate their treasures for building prestige and reputation. Undeniably, these sorts of exhibitions present rare and exciting works of art that otherwise only the ambitious traveler would get to see; this kind of cultural activities increases the capacity of the cultural tourism and national understanding. Especially, the non-Western countries such as Brazil, Egypt, Nigeria, Iran, Thailand, Morocco, and Vietnam had opportunities to promote their images in the First World countries through heritage exhibitions. The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism opened an office in New York and Washington spent a lot of effort on advertising and public relations campaigns.
The Role Of Cultural Self Promotion In Intercultural Art Events

The main focus of the collective efforts and activities taking place in the USA was the promotion of Turkey as an unique cultural tourism destination. “Turkey-The Center of World History” and “Turkey-Where Europe Becomes” were the slogans of the Turkish Ministry of Tourism, which they believed would ensure a unique positioning in the market. Some of the headlines that were used in the advertising campaigns in the 1990s as follows: “Turkey-The World’s Largest Open Air Museum,” “İstanbul-A Fascinating Blend of East and West, Past and Present, Modern and Exotic,” “Turkey- Key to the East, Key to the West,” “This Journey Spans 3,650,000 Days But You Can Do It Ten,” “Turkey-Ageless, Unique, Exciting, Affordable, Friendly, Exotic,” “If you think You’ve Seen the World You’ve Left One Stone Unturned,” “Our Library Hours are Dawn Until Dusk (the Celsius Library in Ephesus),” “The Architecture is Magnificent, the Hospitality is Divine (the Selimiye Mosque)” (Özhan, 1999).

The messages delivered in the promotion campaigns emphasized the unique geographical location, long history, diversity, and richness of Anatolia presenting as a Turkey favorite cultural tourism destinations. However, the slogans that were used in promotional campaigns in newspapers and magazines offered a highly exotic and oriental image of Turkey. Apparently, the reason behind this promotional strategy was creating travel demands for Turkey. Drawing an exotic image was an easy way to succeed in emphasizing the country’s originality in terms of culture and history. In global the world, the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic image of Turkey is properly marketed as a sustainable tourism product of the 1990s. As can be seen in the titles of the tourism slogans, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism mainly emphasized the cultural wealth of Turkey and the role of the country’s land in the making of the civilizations.

The governments of Turkey and Japan agreed to designate the Year 2003 “The Year of Turkey in Japan” during the visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister to Japan in April 2000. During the year, various events were held in Japan with a view to further promoting Turkish culture and history and offering the Japanese people the opportunity to experience Turkish culture and history. A series of exhibitions, fairs, concerts, theatre, cinema activities, conference/seminars on Turkish culture, sport and photography competition was organized.2

Aşdullah Gül, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, said that the most efficient way of developing cooperation is through deepening our knowledge of one another.3 Within this framework, the designation of 2003 as the “Year of Turkey in Japan” constituted a great opportunity. Gül said that “During this year, we will have the chance to better introduce the history of Turkish Japanese relations, aspects of the multidimensional and colorful culture of Turkey, the enormous economic potential and the ever diversifying commercial capacity of our country to Japanese people.”4

In the international relations arena, cultural activities in the 20th century usually were regarded as free time activities to strengthen diplomatic as well as economic relations among neighboring countries. However, Turkish-Japanese relations had a long history. In late 19th century the Erداعrul accident developed a deep sense of affinity with Japan. During the Year of Turkey in

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Japan, a series of fine arts, archeology, photography and cartoon exhibitions were taken places in different cities. Exhibitions on Turkish culture had been held in Japan since the end of World War II. These have included the 1960s “Ancient Turkish Art” exhibition, the 1985 Turkish culture exhibition, the 1988 “The Treasures of Topkapı Palace” exhibition, finally 2002 “The Great Turkey Exhibition.” The most impressive one opened during “the Year of Turkey” titled “Three Great Empires in Turkey,” which featured the treasures of the Hitite, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. NHK, one of the biggest international broadcasting companies in Japan, was the sponsor of this exhibition. Despite the geographical distance between Turkey and Japan, political actors expected that the year of Turkey could promote the continuing growth and development of the deep and long enduring friendship between the citizens of Japan and Turkey.

The “Year of Turkey” showed the importance of bilateral relationship politics, economy, technology as well as culture. The “2003 Year of Turkey” at Japan succeeded in improving cultural relations with Japan in every field, and activities under this title went on until the end of March 2004. The positive impact of this activity triggered other organizations in Europe as well as Turkey. The official slogan for the “Japan Year in Turkey” was “Turkey and Japan are closer now.” This reflects the two countries’ determination to reinforce the friendship between them. Turkish officials chose three general objectives: to introduce the beauties of the country covering prominent aspects and traditional and modern facets of the country in all fields. The activities that took place in “Japan Year in Turkey” was similar to the program of “2003 Year of Turkey” with concerts, sport festivals, fashion shows, dance performances, traditional and modern art exhibitions in Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Antalya, Kayseri, Kocaeli and Çanakkale.

The history exhibitions aimed to represent the splendour of Ottoman Turkish cultures. “Treasures of Topkapi Palace and Magnificent Ottoman Dynasty” opened August 1, 2007 in the capital Tokyo. A total of 140 items were showcased in the exhibition, with 111 pieces from the collection of Topkapi Palace and the rest from the Istanbul museum of Turkish and Islamic Art. The works were estimated to be worth $65.6 million (Turkish Daily News, March 17, 2008). The exhibition received the greatest interest from art enthusiasts, having been visited by 200,000 people in Tokyo, 100,000 in Kyoto and 70,000 in Nagoya (Turkish Daily News, March 17, 2008).

“Turks: A Journey of A Thousand Years, 600-1600” explored the art and culture of the Turks from Central Asia to the Bosphorus over a thousand year period between 600 and 1600 AD. Their journey incorporated many different centers of power and artistic traditions. The story begins with the Uighurs, a nomadic people of Central Asia and China, and ends with the Ottoman Empire from the reign of Mehmet II to Suleyman the Magnificent, including the fall of Byzantium and the spread of Ottoman rule to include Mecca and Medina.

More than an exhibition, Turks was a promotion campaign for Turkey in the process to the integration EU to show the diversity of Turkish culture from Central Asia to the Balkans region. In the catalogue, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan wrote “Cultural diversity is a source of richness for all nations. This exhibition comes at a most propitious time, as Turkey’s aspirations towards the membership of the European family of nations in the European Union are center stage” (Turks, 2004: 9). It demonstrates that the civilization of Turks has always looked to the West and has been shaped by Western values and ideas. The Foreign Ministry’s Abroad and Presentation Affairs General Director Ambassador Şule Soysal, in the press meeting
introducing the exhibition stated that the theme of the exhibition was very important considering Turkey’s present day position. Soysal said that “the Royal Academy of Arts accepted the offer because they wanted to prove how creative the Turkish nation was” (Turkish Daily News, 16.01.2005).

In the foreign press, the Turks exhibition attracted the attention of journalists interested in Eastern culture and art. In Britain, Guardian journalist Jonathan Jones asked whether the Ottoman Empire was one of the mightiest the world had ever known, and if the royal Academy’s new exhibition could do it justice? He declared that this exhibition would dissolve myth. It did not prove that Turkey created art to rival medieval Andalucia. But, demonstrating is that the Turkish cultural achievement lay elsewhere, in synthesis and pluralism in art and culture. The Turks were prolifically impure. They may not have created the porcelain- they got from China, but they introduced China’s cultural riches to the world. As can be seen in this statement, the main aim of the exhibition was to display the Turks as “a civilization maker” to geographically situated the Turkish civilization as one of the important civilizations in the Eastern World.”

As is well known, European opinion is changed by questions such as, whether Turkey really is a European country, whether Turks have civilizations, and whether a secular country with a Muslim population could be a full partner in EU? Shape the European public opinion. Of Course, the exhibition doesn’t answer these questions, but it gave a sense of the past civilizations and role of the “Turks” in the Eastern civilizations. David Roxburg, one of the curators of Turks exhibition noted that “to describe the array as eclectic and diverse would be the merest understatement. Nothing can prepare you for the sheer oddness of fusion” (Daniszewski, Los Angeles Times, February 20, 2005: 40).

Shortly, the “Turks” exhibition was the proof of the power of international exhibitions in representing a dynamic and modern image of the country on the eve of integration of to the EU. Creating a sense of “Turkishness” in the heart of Europe provided a sense of the glorious history of the Turks, who still waited at the door of the European Union.

Both promoting Turkish tourism and Turkey’s image in international organizations continued to be main targets for the Turkish governments in 1990s and early 2000s. The focus of all these collective efforts was the promotion of Turkey as a unique cultural tourism destination in order to increase the number of the tourists. In 2008, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism put together a program of activities to stage in conjunction with this year being declared “The Year of Turkish Culture” in Russia. A series of events were organized over the year in the Russian cities of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan and Sochi. The events started on 8 April with concerts by the Turkish pop stars Tarkan, Sertab Erener, and Şebnem Ferah. In addition to “Literature Days,” lectures, panel discussions, and an exhibition of Ara Güler’s photographs of Russia and Istanbul

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were mounted. At the same time, in St. Petersburg an exhibition on the art of paper marbling and an exhibition of objects from Topkapı Palace promoted Turkey’s cultural heritage. 7

A year later, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized “2009-The Year of Turkey” in France, due to agreement with former president Jacques Chirac. However, Nicolas Sarkozy, the new president of France rejected the title of the program and shortened the duration of the organization due to his biases against the membership of Turkey in the EU. The title was turned out “Turkish Season in France” with a Letter of Intent signed by Turkey and France, and was carried out between July 1st, 2009 and March 31st, 2010 throughout the country as well as in Paris, Marseilles, Lyon, Strasbourg, and Bordeaux. Nearly 600 cultural, social, economic, scientific activities were organized within the context of “Turkish Season” (Cumhuriyet Hafta Sonu, 8 August 2009: 10). The season constituted the largest, the most comprehensive, and the longest serial events as well as the best promotion campaign compared to Japanese and Russian ones. A wide range of activities such as contemporary and classical music, performing arts, contemporary arts, cinema, theatre, dance, sports, education, and fashion introduced cultural characteristics, dynamism, and creativity of Turkey to French society. 2013 was proclaimed as “Year of Turkey in China” with a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Republic of Turkey and People’s Republic of China on June 16, 2010.

The “Turkish Season in France”, organized with the close collaboration of İKSV and the Culture Ministry of France, is an indication of alternative formation of cultural diplomacy and promotion in EU countries. After the first years of the 2000s, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism have preferred to collaborate with non-profit private public organizations to realize more successful festivals and organizations. One most important Turkish Culture and Art Festivals was “Stuttgart Now” held in Stuttgart between 22 and 29 November 2005. During eight day long Festival, over 30 cultural activities were organized in 14 different places. 8 One of the most influential events in this program the Ensemble Resonanz Orchestra, led by Fazıl Say and İbrahim Yazıcı, who performed an opening concert in the Congress Center altered by 1300 people.

Another festival organized through the collaboration of the Kulsan Foundation in Netherlands and İKSV was, “Turkey Now”, held between 29 and January-21 April in the Netherlands. Over 20 activities were organized within the framework of this festival, ranging from classical to world music and from traditional to pop music, with dance and theatre performances as well as film sessions and exhibitions. 9 In addition to these activities, the “BOZAR Turkey Festival” was organized through the contributions of Belgian and Turkish Ministries of Foreign Affairs as well as İKSV and held at the Center of Fine Arts in Brussels between October 6, 2004 and January 16, 2005.

“Turkey at One Glance: Excerpts from Life and Culture” took place from November 4, 2008-February 1, 2008 in Vienna. Apart from, “Turkey Now,” “Stuttgart Now,” and “BOZAR,” “Vienna 2008,” was based on a special topic of culture that derives from the daily life of a young

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and considerably critical generation and, thus, the festival dealt with issue of social change and transformations. The festival was curated by Daniela and Deniz Ova and organized by the Ministry of Education, Art and Culture of Austria in cooperation with the IKSV and the Embassy of Turkey in Austria. The festival was supported directly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The festival program also included a series of exhibition and performances on diversity, challenge, and change in Turkey. Art festivals’ programs mostly included popular public art event, concerts of pop stars, music and dance shows, and cinema days, which were organized to attract the masses and foreign audiences. The aim of “art for the public” rather than the motto of “art for art’s sake” was the basic framework of the Turkish Festivals abroad.

CONCLUSION

This study clarifies how and which ways Turkish culture and art are represented in the last thirty years. In addition to, analyzing communication activities of Turkish art and culture in international scale exhibitions lead to negative consequences in terms of false description and oriental identity constructions. In order to deconstruct prototypical image of Turkey, the exhibitions provided a site of nation seeing in a global art scene in a common ground. The basic question is that how national representation is changed in the last thirty years in intercultural communication in terms of self-representation and identity construction.

Under the effect of globalization, the theme and structure of the Turkish international exhibitions shifted from national to international. This study aimed to show the transformation in the presentation of the cultural identity of Turkey, reconstructed in accordance with the tension between the global and local cultural concerns. The role and status of Turkey within the EU membership process also should be viewed in terms of this overall process. Turkey’s new visual representations in international exhibitions are related to the new social, economic, and political formations in which the country finds itself. Being contemporary (i.e, European) and being culturally different (Turkish, Muslim) still seem to be the guiding principles of cultural representation in Turkey.

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