

KØS Museum of Art in Public Spaces
Køge, Denmark

4th of June, 2020

RE: Application for the Curator Position

Dear Selection Committee,

I am delighted to apply for the Curator position at the KØS Museum of Art in Public Spaces, which I believe, a unique institution focusing on public domain.

I am a curator and writer based in Istanbul. With a specific emphasis on art in public domain, I have been curating exhibitions and social engagement programs for more than 15 years on the issues in relation to politics of space, urban transformation and how to organize the urban public spaces to represent the multitude. My aim is to initiate public forums on the major social, economic and spatial as well as political topics that are common interest in the society at large.

My personal history in public domain started with the "Istanbul Pedestrian Exhibitions" that I initiated and curated in 2002, the first large-scale urban public space exhibition in Turkey that centered on the pedestrian as the human scale, and the second edition was realized in 2005. This experience of intervening in the urban public spaces and confronting with the "unintentional" audience / passer-byes on the streets radically shaped my thinking and had a vital impact on my curatorial practice.

I had the chance to continue my research on the spatial organization of the built-environment and how such urban public spaces aid or abet the circulation, gathering and socialization of diverse publics. I co-curated with Danae Mossman the 5th Scape Biennial of Art in Public Space in Christchurch (NZ), with the title "Wandering Lines: Towards A New Culture of Space" in 2008. Through the art interventions, we reclaimed the city with the understanding of public space as "what the eye can take in". Thus, the projects facilitated the facades, streets, parks, commercial vitrines, sky and even underwater. We employed different curatorial and artistic strategies (from the Situationist International to the Vito Acconci's concept of "de-design") to open up new avenues of experience in understanding the city.

During our research trip for Scape Biennial to Amsterdam, we visited the SKOR (Stichting Kunst en Openbare Ruimte) Foundation Art and Public Space, and I was invited to apply for the director position there. Between 2008 and 2012, I served as the director of SKOR, which provided me with an extensive knowledge and experience of the long-rooted tradition of public art in the Nordic countries as a part of social welfare state's mission of distributing art and culture horizontally.

Through developing diverse national and international alliances and collaborations (i.e. De Appel Curatorial Programme Amsterdam, Witte de Witt Rotterdam, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, BAK basis voor actuele kunst Utrecht, Goldsmith College London, the 11th Istanbul Biennial Istanbul and documenta 12 Kassel), I aimed at enlarging the interface between the SKOR and the multiple publics to contribute to the debate on art in public domain. To this end, I worked on the public programming and revised the communication tools including the social media and publication policy. The research and social engagement programs include: ENPAP, The European Network of Public Art Producers (Baltic Art Center Visby, Consonni Bilbao, Mossutställningar Stockholm, Situations, University of the West of England Bristol, Vector Association Iasi and SKOR Amsterdam) 2009- 2011, a research, comparative study and symposium series, "Artists in Public" 2011, a series of talks initiated by SKOR in collaboration with the Stedelijk Museum, and "Actors, Agents and Attendants 1: Speculations on the Cultural Organization of Civility", Amsterdam, 2010, & "Actors, Agents and Attendants 2: Social Housing - Housing the Social", Amsterdam 2011, an international symposium and publication series initiated and organized by SKOR that researched the fields in which SKOR was traditionally active such as health care and social housing.

In 2012, I was selected as the curator of the 13th Istanbul Biennial (2013) and it became a site to concretize the research and ideas I developed at SKOR and earlier. Taking the public domain as a political public forum, we asked how multiple publics can come to gather, co-exist and act collectively. I developed the concept under the title "Mom, am I barbarian?", a quote from a female Turkish poet Lale Muldur. As the antonym of the citizen in ancient Greece, the barbarian directly refers to the urban context and citizenship: the most invisible, repressed and excluded. Taking the city as the spatial component of democratic apparatus, we looked at the potentiality of urban public spaces for equality, representation of the multitude and collective action.

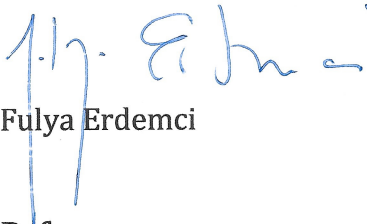
After the biennial, I was privileged to be invited to curate the Cappadox Festival Contemporary Art Programme in 2014. The first one was realized in 2015 and three subsequent editions followed in springtime in Cappadocia, where is an interesting juncture of rural and urban, agriculture and mass tourism. So, for the first time, I had the chance to research on site the relation of rural and art: how art can function in such a context. Making exhibitions in this loaded geography required long-term observations, diverse research methods and engagements to understand these complicated structures, situations, people and communities. Thus, the Cappadox exhibitions were composed step-by-step parallel to our process of understanding. Together with my assistant curators, I curated four site-sensitive and context-responsive exhibitions in different towns and valleys of Cappadocia: "Cappadocia Struck" 2015, "Let Us Cultivate Our Garden" 2016, "Ways Out From The World" 2017 and "Silence" 2018. Through these exhibitions, I gained invaluable experience through researching and curating art projects in rural contexts, the first exhibitions cultivating the relationship between art and rural in Turkey and a rising research field around the globe.

When I read your post for the curatorial position, I am very impressed by the scale, aim and structure of KØS Museum of Art in Public Spaces, especially, its focus and dedication to art in public domain, its research and history. Having read the strategy paper, I found many common threads with my ideas and practice. I got very excited about this opportunity of working in such a solid institution whose goals and programme, I believe, overlaps with my curatorial experience, agenda and aspirations.

I am very enthusiastic to continue my research and practice in your museum and I believe that I can contribute to your goals of creating art projects and social engagement programs that foster sociality, debate and active citizenship for a better Future.

Should you have any further questions, I would be happy to talk to you in detail on my possible contributions to your institution.

Warm Regards,



Fulya Erdemci

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P.S. I revised my portfolio to include only the selected projects, majority of which are new commissions I curated / co-curated in public domain (it doesn't include the ones under my directorship). Attached you can find it. It has links of the publications and short films. Though I didn't include any art historical collection exhibition in my portfolio, I would like to inform you that I curated two large-scale art historical collection exhibitions on the Modern and Contemporary Art in Turkey: "Modern and Beyond 1950-2000" (2007) for the Santral Istanbul, Bilgi University, Istanbul and "Art at Work, The QNB Finance Bank Art Collection at the Crystal Tower", Head Office, Istanbul (2019).