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Reading Interiors in 1980s Ankara: Transformation of Gallery Art Production and Private Art Galleries

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Abstract

This study examines Gallery Sanat Yapım, one of the first private art galleries in Ankara, as a representation of urban transformation in the 1980s. Gallery Sanat Yapım is analyzed using qualitative longitudinal research and document analysis. This process highlights its spatial and temporal transformations. To provide an understanding of the gallery's role in Ankara's art scene, the research incorporates data collected through interviews in addition to an analysis of written, visual, and audio materials. The evaluation includes an examination of these sources to reveal the impact of galleries on Ankara's cultural scene. In contrast to government-supported art galleries, this research emphasizes the distinctive characteristics of private galleries, such as Gallery Sanat Yapım, which played a pivotal role in shaping Ankara's cultural identity. Thus, as a cultural and urban setting, the importance of gallery spaces is emphasized through the evaluation of interior space and spatial context. Furthermore, a comprehensive understanding of the spatial components offers crucial insights into audience engagement with artworks. In conclusion, the findings shed light on the opportunities and challenges faced by both private and state-supported art galleries during the period. This research contributes novel perspectives on the intersection of space, art, and society within Ankara's evolving urban landscape, thereby enriching scholarly discourse. Ultimately, the study underscores the crucial role of private galleries in preserving and shaping the city's cultural heritage, paving the way for future academic investigations in this field.

Keywords:

Art gallery, Memory, Modern interiors, Oral history, Private art gallery.

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INTRODUCTION

Art exhibitions are typically organized in specific spaces such as galleries or museums, based on particular selection criteria or thematic focuses (Eczacıbaşı, 1997, p. 1642). In other words, art exhibitions involve showcasing art pieces to audiences in a specific location for a set time, enabling meaningful experiences (Üstünipek, 2017, p. 13). In the early years of the Republic, displaying and accumulating art, supported by the state, aimed to promote a fresh ideology by providing artists with tangible opportunities. A vibrant art environment was established, resulting in the creation of a diverse array of works, and artistic activities began demonstrating their impact on society. Art galleries, as institutional spaces, have become important spatial entities that influence modern urban life. In the 1980s, with the gradual withdrawal of the state from the public scene, a public void emerged, which was partially filled by private galleries (Artun, 2014, p. 251). These spaces fostered connections between art and society, solidifying their role as protectors of artistic expression.

In contemporary times, art galleries have evolved into standalone businesses, transitioning from simple exhibition venues to multifaceted platforms. By promoting artists and hosting events tied to exhibitions, they help artists highlight the significance and value of their works, establishing their presence in the art industry. What was once merely a medium to present objects has merged with visual communication design. Over time, interdisciplinary collaboration has increased, and the design of exhibition spaces has become integral (Groys, 2014, p. 96). Groys captures this shift in perception, stating: "Nowadays, the basic unit of art is no longer the object as the artwork, but the art space where objects are exhibited: the exhibition and installation space. Today's art is not the sum of specific things but the typology of specific places" (Groys, 2014, p. 96).

This study aims to uncover the spatial and historical background of Gallery Sanat Yapım, an art gallery that made a lasting impact on Ankara in the 1980s. Within this context, the study, classified as a 'case study,' employs a qualitative data analysis pattern drawing from multiple sources. Particularly, verbal data was obtained through interviews, examining the social and cultural context of the period. The goal is to explore the symbolic value of the periodical art scene in Ankara, the galleries' importance for the city and artists, and their spatial counterparts.

The limited literature concerning gallery spaces and Ankara's recent history has shaped the study's scope. The use of audiovisual materials has been incorporated through semi-structured interviews to obtain in-depth insights, examining urban space on a macro level and the gallery as a case study on a micro level. This study contributes to the literature through a methodology rooted in interior space history (Küçüktaşdemir, 2018) and its content. In tandem with the development of the art scene

in Turkey, the rise of exhibitions, curatorial forms, and actors has followed a global trend since the 1980s.

The 1980s marked a shift in socio-cultural, artistic, and political dimensions. Aligning with these shifts, art galleries, which became more common due to the cultural industry, continue to thrive and interact with urban culture in the present. The historical dimension of the cultural and artistic scene, along with gallery spaces, has played a significant role in Ankara's growth as a capital city and its modernization process. Although the Republic aimed to establish Ankara as a model city, its development was envisioned not only as a political center but also as a cultural hub. The goal was to disseminate this cultural context to all urban residents. Consequently, the cultural and artistic atmosphere primarily reflected government-shaped urban culture.

The scope of the study develops in the context of Ankara. Within this contextual structure, the micro-scale view focuses on the art gallery as an exhibition space, with the case study of Gallery Sanat Yapım shedding light on a cross-section of this period. This study, which contributes to the literature, also examines the historical physical components of the gallery, which still preserves its original structure.

The scope of the study develops in the context of Ankara. Within this contextual structure, the focus is on a micro-level analysis of the art gallery as an exhibition space. Particularly, the case study of 'Galeri Sanat Yapım' sheds light on a temporal cross-section of the period. This study, contributing to the literature, also examines the historical physical components of the place which has preserved its original structure.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method of the study is defined as a qualitative longitudinal case study. It involves real-life data, focusing on a limited context including space, environment, and users (Yin, 2009, pp. 34-56). Although case studies are considered a sub-type of qualitative research in the literature, this study adopts a qualitative longitudinal approach with multiple data sources evaluated over an extended period. Multiple data evaluation strategies encompass visual, written, and verbal materials. Oral history testimonies serve as a data collection tool to obtain spatial narratives.

In this context, oral testimonies were collected directly from the property owner, the space, and its spatial extension, serving as primary sources of information, with voluntary participation and permissions obtained. The scope of this study, therefore, focuses on the capital city Ankara. In this framework, the sample of the study is the art gallery 'Galeri Sanat Yapım,' examined for its historical and temporal significance. The selected case study, continuing its existence to the present day and not widely covered in the literature, has been included due to its spatial preservation of historical elements.

The methodology of the study is two-fold. The method primarily involves analyzing the study universe. The research universe and boundaries have been aligned with the socio-economic dynamics of the 1980s, a period marked by intensified neoliberal economic processes.

Understanding the period is crucial to interpreting the art and cultural environment, its spatial transformation, and its impact. By employing a qualitative longitudinal case study approach, this research aims to uncover the gallery's role within the broader context of Ankara's cultural industry and its urban development over time.

The microcosm of the research focuses on relationships between space, time, and users. The selected example was chosen for its representation of its period and its underrepresentation in existing literature. It includes qualitative data analysis with oral interviews focusing on interior space interpretation. Documentation also serves as a key sub-objective of the study.

The integrated use of multiple research methods in social science studies is important for increasing the reliability of the information collected (Bryman, 1988, p.131). The longitudinal aspect of this study allows for examining changes and continuities in the gallery's spatial and social role, providing insights beyond the scope of a single-method approach. A literature review was conducted as part of the initial stage. Approaches and preliminary data pertinent to the case study design were reviewed during the preparatory stage. This literature review emphasizes the limited publications on Ankara's galleries and spatial development, especially in the 1980s, positioning this study as a novel contribution to understanding and documenting this era.

The first section of the study discusses the culture and art environment in Ankara in the 1980s. The study identifies a limited number of publications addressing galleries and spatial development. This research adds to the existing literature by examining and analyzing the cultural and artistic scene in Ankara in the 1980s, providing new perspectives on these aspects. Thus, it provides content that diverges from the literature by understanding the cultural and artistic environment in Ankara during this period.

The secondary perspective of the research details the gallery space and its components through the 'white cube' problematic. Semi-structured questions prepared to observe space, user, and memory were posed to the interviewees. Thus, the obtained verbal data were synthesized and utilized as tools in spatial analysis. Semi-structured questions started with the acquisition of self-life information with ethical approval and included a question group diversified according to the sub-themes explored by the user or property owner.

Accordingly, a question group was organized on the artistic environment of the specified period, participation status, gallery space, usage situations, and the status of gallery spaces in the present timeframe. The symbolic nature of the gallery space, its position on the city scale, its role in the art market, and the sense of belonging with the artist emerged in this context.

The scope of the study encompasses a process extending from the 1980s to the present day, with the location specifically set as the capital city Ankara. A gallery that has been in the same place for several years

was selected to study changes in space over time. Art galleries without archives or those lacking direct communication with their owners were excluded from the study sample selection. Gallery Sanat Yapım exemplifies connecting urban socio-cultural practices to interior space through memory.

The founder of this gallery space, operating within the same structure since 1982, is İbrahim Demirel. The socio-cultural approach, technological possibilities, and space are intertwined dynamics within a system. These dynamics influence the architecture of a space, giving it a variable characteristic (Asar et al., 2018, p. 123). The research problem stems from the need to understand how the intensified activities and vibrant art scene in Ankara during the 1980s shaped its socio-cultural evolution. The changes in the socio-cultural life of Ankara from the 1980s to the present, the factors influencing this change, and the impact of art galleries on artists, artworks, and society are analyzed. The components and qualities forming the interior space of the gallery, as well as the formation of Gallery Sanat Yapım's interior space, have been examined. The oral history method informs a secondary objective of the study, which is to examine the changes in societal dynamics over a long period. During this period, cultural and artistic activities, largely carried out by the state, played a nurturing role in everyday social life by being transferred to private companies (Artun, 2014, pp. 247-255). The intellectual bridge formed by galleries between society and art emerges as a key factor in this transformation.

The Cultural Environment During 1980s

Within its designation as the capital on October 13, 1923, Ankara gained a new image as the country's diplomatic and administrative center and entered a period of rapid transformation (Soyluk et al., 2017, p. 259). The role assigned to Ankara as a cultural and artistic hub in the early Republican era encouraged initiatives (Artun, 1998, pp. 24-65). The journey of art in Ankara has been a developmental process influenced by changes in residents' social lives, state policies, and economic programs (Adatepe, 1991, pp. 55-66). During the early Republican period, cultural policies aimed to foster a supportive environment for both intellectual and artistic pursuits.

The 1950s marked a transitional period that reflected the multi-party system and economic liberalization. Ankara witnessed the establishment of the first private art galleries. Helikon Society's Gallery, Art Lover's Society Gallery, and Gallery Milar diversified and enriched Ankara's art scene (Önsal, 2006, p. 91). Private galleries provided artists with greater freedom, allowing them to explore new opportunities for artistic expression. During the 1960s and 1970s, Ankara developed further as a cultural hub, with state-funded and privately owned galleries contributing to a varied cultural landscape. The State Fine Arts Gallery in Zafer Passage hosted significant exhibitions and offered various courses. Nevertheless, due to socio-political and economic changes and a lack of

funding in the 1980s, the impact and efficiency of publicly funded galleries declined.

In the 1980s, variables linked to political tensions led to a period where intellectual life became active. The decision to close the Contemporary Stage Culture Center in 1981 significantly impacted the lives of the residents, leading to a quest for alternative spaces. In this context, galleries emerged as spaces for breaking away from the macrocosm, presenting new experiential venues (Ali Artun Personal Website, <https://aliartun.com/>, Access Date: August 2023). During this period, cultural and artistic activities, largely conducted by the state, played a nourishing role in everyday and social life by being transferred to private companies (Artun, 2014, pp. 247-255). The formation of an intellectual bridge between society and art through galleries emerged as one of the key factors in this transformation.

The transformation of Ankara's cultural landscape during the 1980s can be seen as a response to socio-political challenges. With state-supported galleries becoming more limited, private initiatives, such as Galeri Sanat Yapım, began to fill the void, offering a platform for intellectual and artistic expression. Despite the vibrancy of Ankara's cultural climate, the prominence of metropolises in the context of globalization has positioned Istanbul as the leading art center. Ankara, on the other hand, has maintained its identity as a university city with a strong tradition of nurturing students (Artun, 2014, pp. 247-255). Thus, an art migration from Ankara to Istanbul began.

The departure of significant figures raised in Ankara to Istanbul has created a void for the city. Demirel, indicating that Galeri Sanat Yapım was the only private gallery in Ankara when it opened in 1982, emphasized the mutually nourishing nature of the relationship between galleries and audiences (Artun, 2014, pp. 247-255). He added the following about the galleries of the time (Personal interview with I. Demirel on December 9, 2021):

"Before Galeri Sanat Yapım, there were no private galleries in Ankara. There was only the state's gallery for fine arts. Vakko had a gallery; they turned the middle floor of their store into a gallery, and I used to go there. Then İş Bankası had a gallery, but there were not many private galleries. I opened this place as the first private gallery. Then Galeri Nev and Galeri Siyah Beyaz opened; private galleries increased gradually, and as private galleries increased, so did the audience. When people visit galleries worldwide, they feel the need for them in their own places too."

The emergence of these art galleries, especially Galeri Sanat Yapım, became a significant marker of the developing art scene, intellectual discourse, and flourishing artistic approaches in Ankara. Since the early 1980s, the role of art galleries has not only been to define spaces for exhibiting artworks. The gallery space also provides a socializing and meeting environment for urban dwellers. While maintaining vibrancy in the cultural and artistic environment through various activities, it

established itself as an intellectual platform where artistic trends are discussed. Beyond being a place, the gallery space became a symbol of artistic significance for urban inhabitants (Figure 1). The following words of İbrahim Demirel demonstrate the significance of its spatial existence while embodying the characteristics associated with his galleries. According to Demirel, gallery spaces across the geography differ from international examples, particularly in terms of their volumetric dimensions.



Figure 1. At Galeri Sanat Yapım; Necmi Erol, İbrahim Demirel, Filiz Otyam, Fikret Otyam ve Yenal Ansen (Hazırlayan, Ayla Demirel, Galeri Sanat Yapım 30. Yıl Sergisi, Sanat Yapım Yayıncılık, 2012, p. 67, İstanbul)

He emphasizes the readability of the balance between art supply and demand:

"Artistic activities were intense in Ankara after 1980. Galleries multiplied, and galleries began to open in cities outside Ankara and Istanbul. People need to see, experience, and later realize the purpose of art for galleries to be important. The mission of galleries is to bring art together with society, that's why they exist. The artist will create, and people will share. This is possible with a good space. For example, when a guest from France visited my gallery, he was surprised. He said, 'I've seen all the galleries in France, but I haven't seen one like this.' He showed the size of his gallery like this (drawing a line with his hand to indicate half of the room) (Personal interview with I. Demirel on December 9, 2021)."

Demirel's experience emphasizes the impact of gallery spaces in Ankara, specifically Gallery Sanat Yapım, on the local art scene and its international perception. The rise of private galleries has started to create a challenging atmosphere. Gallery owners who aim to establish long-term relationships with their audiences have been influenced by this environment (Ağlargöz et al., 2015, p. 49).

While İbrahim Demirel acknowledges the presence of competition, he added that he personally does not support the rivalry of spaces that exist

for the same purpose. Additionally, he shared notable observations regarding urbanization and urban duality in the context of Ankara and Istanbul. Ankara is considered a focal point where artists are educated, but its recognition becomes significant in Istanbul:

"Istanbul had an advantage in terms of population density. In the 1980s, there were three fine arts faculties. One was in Ankara, Gazi Education, which trained music and art teachers; the Fine Arts Academy in Istanbul trained artists and was a very important school. Another was in Istanbul and represented the Turkish branch of Bauhaus in Germany. Therefore, Istanbul had an advantage in terms of education. However, many writers and poets in Istanbul were still raised in Ankara. For example, at the Ankara Art Theater, which is an extremely important theater, actors like Rutkay Aziz come to mind. Many individuals, including Rutkay Aziz, received their education in Ankara and then moved to Istanbul (Personal interview with I. Demirel on December 9, 2021)."

This statement highlights the urban dynamics that influenced the cultural shift from Ankara to Istanbul, shaping the art scenes of both cities in unique ways. İbrahim Demirel emphasized his dedication to presenting artworks in an ideal gallery environment during a personal interview on December 9, 2021:

"I am against competition. I have my gallery, but I also go to others and help. What matters is support and assistance. My space is different from others. The more artworks we present, the more beneficial it is to society. Why do artists open exhibitions? So that the public can see. I do not hold back my words when I go to other galleries. For example, if I see inadequate lighting, I mention it. When I was a consultant for Halkbank, they worked with their own architects for the gallery they were going to open on Cinnah. One day I went, and I could not believe what they had done! Plaster moldings, mirrors on the ceiling... Is that how a gallery should be? I called the director and said, 'This is not how a gallery should be.' Later, we tried to put the gallery in order."

Gallery Space with Its Components

Interior components play a central role in the creation of the gallery space. In this context, gallery spaces and their components are crucial to the aesthetic and functional values of the space. Reflecting on her experience, curator Ayla Demirel remembers how the gallery was curated thoughtfully aesthetically to create a smooth visitor flow. This enhanced visitor interactions with the space and artwork.

Evaluating the gallery space and its components through Brian O'Doherty's concept of the 'white cube,' one can find a representation of the relationship established with contemporary art galleries (Duncan, 1998). The white cube focuses on the space and viewer perception, strengthening the relationship between art and society (Brian O'Doherty, 2010, pp. 9-36). In O'Doherty's book, the ideal gallery space excludes any element that hinders the perception of the artwork, isolating it from

anything outside itself during the process of being evaluated as an artwork (O'Doherty, 2010, p. 30). This idea is evident in the layout of Gallery Sanat Yapım, where the focus is on simplicity and eliminating external distractions to showcase the artworks effectively. The perception of the artwork within the space is designed to limit contact with the outside world. The filling of windows and other transparent volumes serves this purpose. These spaces emerge as effective exhibition centers, combining the sanctity of a church, the formality of a courtroom, and the mystery of a research laboratory.

The wall is the most crucial component of the gallery, framing and presenting the artwork to the viewer, and imparting aesthetic value to an object that is not an artwork. The wall does not have a mere aesthetic; it is a necessity within the space (O'Doherty, 2010, p. 33). Lighting is as important for gallery spaces as the wall component.



Figure 2. First Exhibition held at Galeri Nev: representing a 'shadow-free,' 'sterile' gallery space - 1984 (Şenyapılı, Önder, Sanat Yapım Yayıncılık, 1980'lerden Bugüne İbrahim Demirel, 2011, p. 69, Ankara)

Without any shadow, a 'sterile' image of the gallery space is integral to its structure and serves as a metaphor for the exhibition (Figure 2). This phenomenon is reflected in the words of İbrahim Demirel regarding the structure of the gallery space. İbrahim Demirel stated the following (Personal interview with İ. Demirel on December 9, 2021):

"The space should not overshadow the artwork. It should be quite simple; there shouldn't be an art exhibition within complexity. Of course, not all artists exhibit paintings on the wall surface in the same way; there are also artists who incorporate the space into the exhibition. It is necessary to open the exhibition according to the space. Businessmen see this place and say, 'Wow! How beautiful,' and they inevitably become owners of paintings. They hang one painting on one wall and another on another wall at home, but it doesn't harmonize. When they see this place, they say, 'So this is how paintings should be hung,' and take it as an example."



Figure 3. The interior space of Vakko Art Gallery, known for its multipurpose design and functionality, was one of its most intriguing features, Ankara – 1984 (Şenyapılı, Önder, Sanat Yapım Yayıncılık, 1980'lerden Bugüne İbrahim Demirel, 2011, p. 40, Ankara.)

At this point, the interaction between domestic space and gallery space is intriguing (Figure 3). Demirel's positioning of the public space as a reference point, maintaining the gallery as a landmark, is significant:

"What is learned comes with new potential spatialities along with a cultural background. Visual comfort, comfort, and aesthetics are fundamental qualities in the formation of art galleries. When created according to their subtleties, the gallery space can transform from a space merely exhibiting ready-made artworks into a unique aesthetic space."

Gallery Sanat Yapım demonstrates how a gallery space can be utilized as a 'tool' for spatial analysis. Considering the context, Gallery Sanat Yapım stands out as a platform that transported art from public to private spaces in 1980s Ankara.

FINDINGS

Gallery Sanat Yapım, opened by İbrahim Demirel in 1982 at Alparslan Türkeş Street Number 7 (Figure 5), continues its activities to this day. Born in 1941 in Malatya, İbrahim Demirel received a good education and opened the first private gallery in Ankara. In the opening period (Figure 4), Cumhuriyet Newspaper mentioned not only the gallery's role as an exhibition space but also highlighted its function as a workshop (Artun, 2014).

Figure 4. Gallery Sanat Yapım Opening Ceremony Exhibition Invitation 'We are waiting for our opening' (Source: Gallery Sanat Yapım)

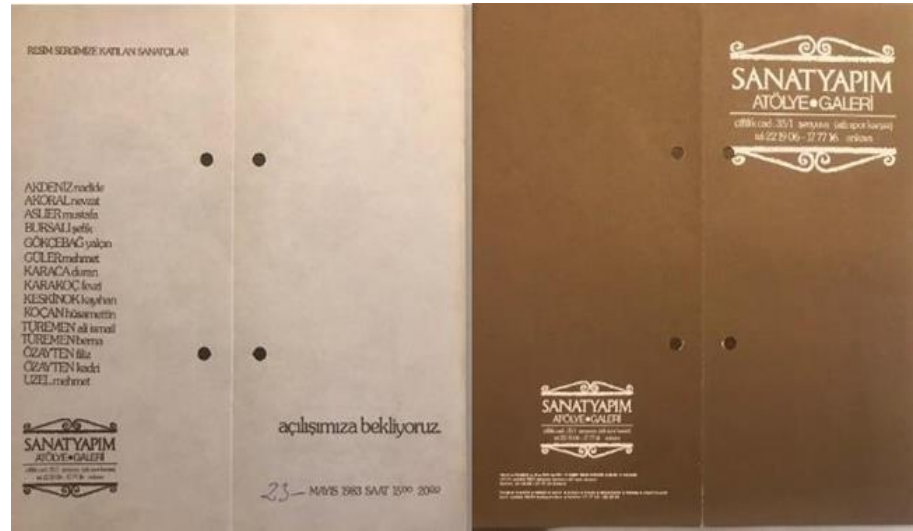
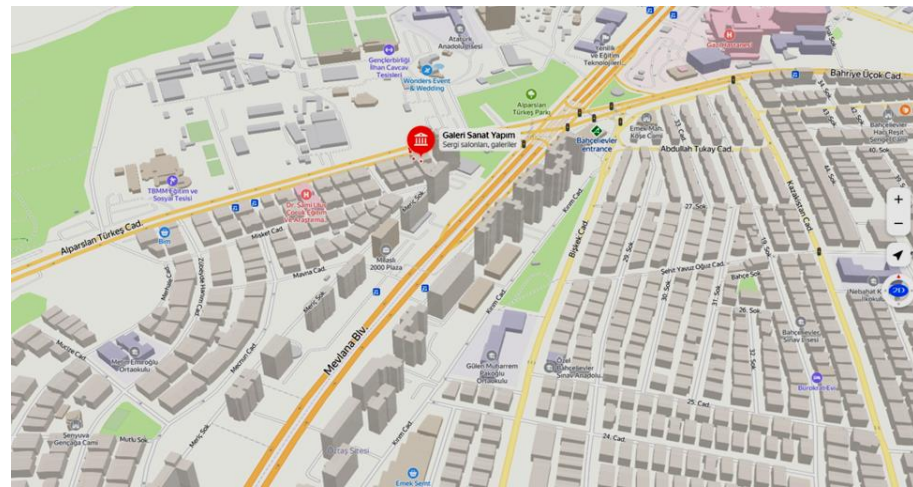


Figure 5. Gallery Sanat Yapım Streetview and Location (Source: Yandex Map; <https://yandex.com.tr/>)



The location of the Gallery and the layout, lighting of the Gallery have been designed to create a perfect setting for exhibitions. Ayla Demirel mentioned that the original layout of the Gallery Space was created in collaboration with architects. Despite the passing years, the authenticity of the inner space is well preserved.

The location of the gallery and its layout, as well as the lighting, were designed to create a perfect setting for exhibitions. Ayla Demirel mentioned that the original layout of the gallery space was created in collaboration with architects. Despite the passing years, the authenticity of the inner space is well preserved.

Ö.Ö. referred to the gallery as a motivating space for artists and students to exhibit their artworks. İbrahim Demirel frequently voices his dismay at the lack of enthusiasm from younger generations. Still, the gallery maintains a fruitful environment by hosting evening events.

As a guest, D.Ö. admired the ambiance established for a complete gallery visit. They observed the smooth connection between various themes, from contemporary to modern. The exhibition space to the Turkish house-inspired room was praised for its blended image of modernity and nostalgia (Figures 16, 17).

The prominent feature of the gallery is its role as a production space, a meeting point where everyday life and social relationships intersect, and an educational center for urbanites (Özsezgin, 1975). Thus, it communicates with its audience, nurtures new artists, and fulfills its mission (Turani, 1966). Demirel describes the gallery and its content, stating (Personal interview with İ. Demirel on December 9, 2021):

"Our distinctive feature was this: we were both exhibiting and providing art education. Kayıhan Hoca (Kayıhan Keskinok), one of Turkey's renowned painters, taught here for 30 years, nurturing thousands of students. I, too, was involved in education. While studying at the Faculty of Applied Fine Arts, I started teaching drawing from the first year with the educational background I gained from the teacher's school. Now, Sema continues to provide online education."

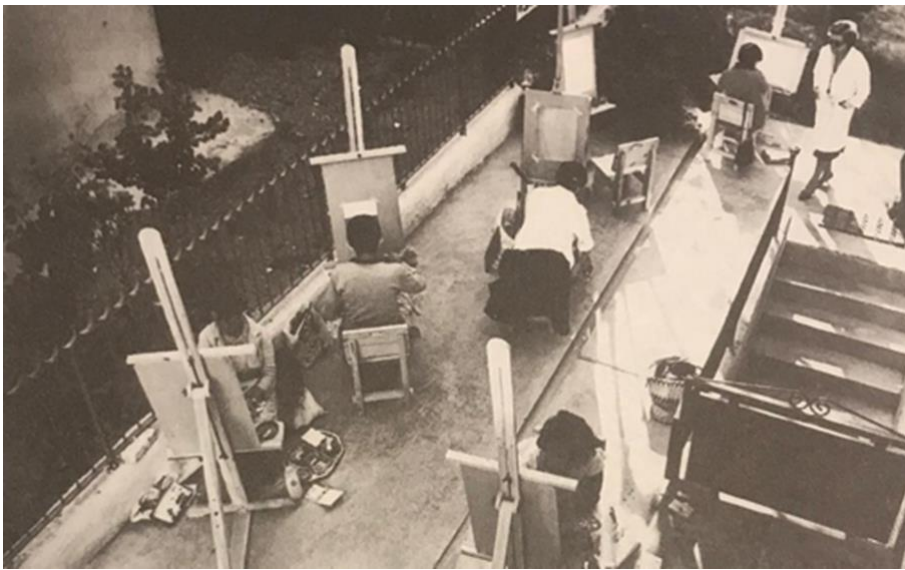


Figure 6. An expanded relationship between the gallery space and the street, Outdoor Teaching; Gallery Sanat Yapım, instructors and students at the green space in front of the art gallery (Şenyapılı, Önder, 1980'lerden Bugüne, Sanat Yapım Yayıncılık, 2012, p. 9, İstanbul)

At the beginning of the historical process of Sanat Yapım, the venue was relatively distant from the center of Ankara. Over time, the relationship between the gallery space and the street (Figure 6), influenced by the city's growing population and the resulting density of daily activities in the region, is explained by the following words of İbrahim Demirel (Personal interview with İ. Demirel on December 9, 2021):

"This place is not in the center of Ankara; it used to be calmer. Now, traffic is a big issue. People must park their cars in places other than in front of the door, and it becomes challenging. How they get here is just as important as the exhibitions. If people can come easily and comfortably, they visit more often."

Initially, İbrahim Demirel rented an apartment on the top floor of a building. He mentioned that he acquired the current structure through personal connections. He explained the multi-disciplinary and enriched nature of the art realm:

"I obtained this opportunity through a friend named Necmettin Ökten, a carpenter I knew from my previous work in decoration. We

became friends, and I taught him photography. When he learned about my profession, he showed me this place. The entire building belonged to him. He showed me this place to help me. It had two rooms; here was the bathroom, and there was the kitchen." (Personal interview with İ. Demirel on December 9, 2021)

As the collection of paintings grew and engagement with the audience intensified, the initial spatial formation became insufficient. The expansion process began by renting half of an apartment and continued with the acquisition of a shop and another apartment, resulting in a total floor area of 400 m². Demirel mentioned that he facilitated the expansion process by sequentially acquiring properties:

"Necmettin Ökten also lived here. Over time, he noticed that the place was getting cramped. 'This place feels small for you,' he said. He rented out half of the house and moved to Kuşadası. One day, he came from Kuşadası and said, 'This place is also getting small, come, I'll give you this.' There was a shop and an apartment. I asked, 'How can we settle the deal? I have an apple orchard; I can give you that.' He agreed, and I got the title deed. That's how I became the owner here. It's 400 m² now, but still not enough." (Personal interview with İ. Demirel on December 9, 2021)

Figure 7-8. (Left) Gallery Sanat Yapım Exhibition Hall in 1983 (Galeri Sanat Yapım 1. Yıl Sergisi, Sanat Yapım Yayıncılık, 2012, p. 13); (Right) Gallery Sanat Yapım Exhibition Hall in 2024 (Gallery Sanat Yapım Digital Archive, Ayla Demirel)



Figure 9-10. (Left) The gallery space and its interaction with the exterior in 1995 (Galeri Sanat Yapım 1995 Yılı Sergisi, Sanat Yapım Yayıncılık, 2012, s. 59); (Right) Seating space arranged according to the changing needs of the space, located in front of the open-air area in 2022 (Source: Author's Archive)



In the current context, the gallery operates with its entrance door opening onto a pedestrian path, with two openings on the street interface (Figures 7, 8). These openings have been reduced to prevent issues with natural light perception in exhibitions (Figures 9, 10). A counter, where İbrahim and his daughter welcome guests, is elevated two steps from the exhibition hall. Adjacent to the counter, steps lead down to a large collection storage area. Behind the counter is a corner dedicated to Kayıhan Keskinok. The ceiling of this space corresponds to the building's opening and has been covered with frosted and stained glass to integrate with the interior (Figure 11).

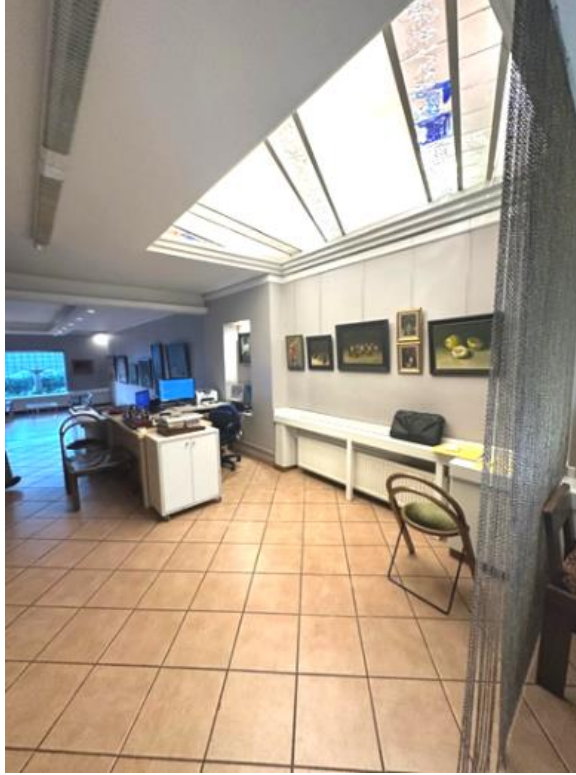


Figure 11. Ceiling of the gallery space corresponding to the opening of the building (Source: Author's Archive)

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The painting studio is located along the continued line of the reception counter corridor. Some necessary materials are arranged for educational purposes. The fixtures are ergonomically designed according to user functions. A door from the studio leads to the garden.

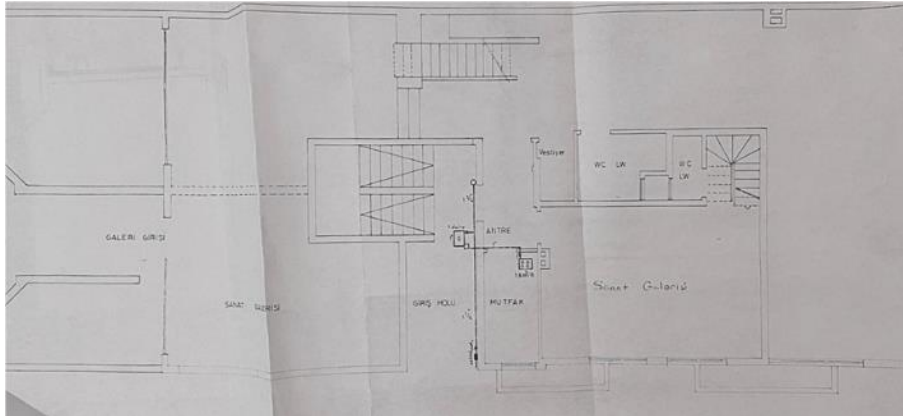
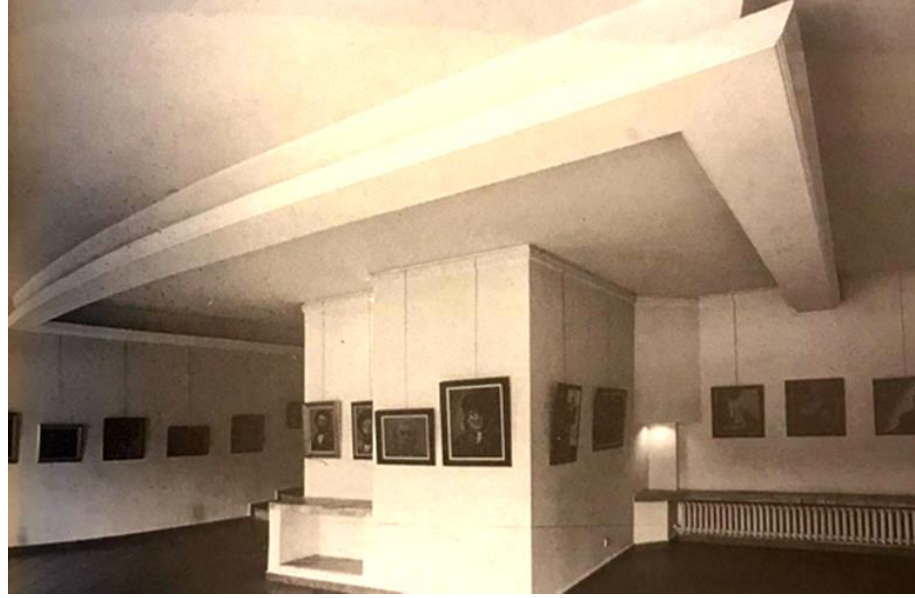


Figure 12. Gallery Sanat Yapım's Floor Plan (Source: Galeri Sanat Yapım,2022)

Figure 13. An exhibition at the Art Gallery (Source: Ayla Demirel, Galeri Sanat Yapım 30. Yıl Sergisi, Sanat Yapım Yayıncılık, 2012, s. 60, İstanbul)



The garden has also been incorporated into the exhibition space and serves as an open exhibition area where some artworks are displayed (Figure 14).

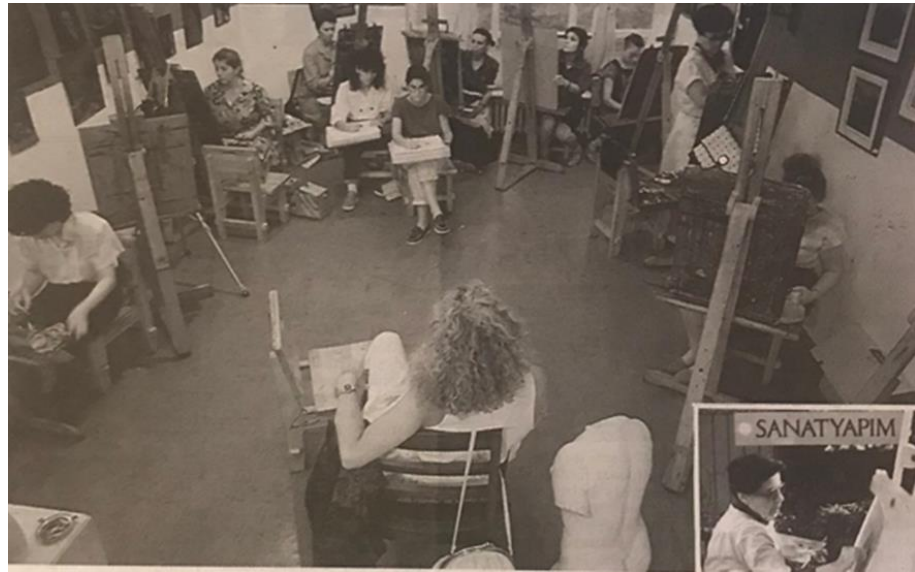


Figure 14. The Art Space in the Gallery in 1992 (Source: Zahit Büyükişleyen, Galeri Sanat Yapım 10. Yıl Sergisi, Sanat Yapım Yayıncılık)

Although there have been additions and transformations in the space, the fundamental goal has always remained the same: to create an 'ideal space' for exhibitions (Figures 12, 13). One of the crucial components for İbrahim Demirel in the gallery space has been the lighting of the space. Regarding the second theme mentioned in the field of closing window openings, he expressed the following about the practices in his own gallery:

"The physical structure of the gallery is crucial. In addition, the lighting of the gallery is very important; the light must be good. The front facade of this place was entirely made up of windows, one for the shop and one for the hall. I reduced the size of the windows. Natural light is the best, but how it comes in is important. There shouldn't be

any shadows on the artwork, so the windows had to be reduced in size. I added stained glass and frosted glass to some windows. The door's glass is also stained glass and frosted (Figure 15). I described it to my friend; he drew it and we had it made. To make the space suitable for exhibitions, you first need to see, understand what needs to be done and why it needs to be done." (Personal interview with İ. Demirel on December 9, 2021)

Every object in the gallery space, apart from the exhibited artwork, has the potential to become art. O'Doherty expressed this feature of the gallery space, stating that even an ashtray on the floor can gain the status of a sacred object (O'Doherty, 2010, p. 31). In *Gallery Sanat Yapım*, almost every object in the space holds a unique identity, becoming a part of its spatiality.



Figure 15. The welcoming area of the Art Space in the Gallery (Source: Authors)

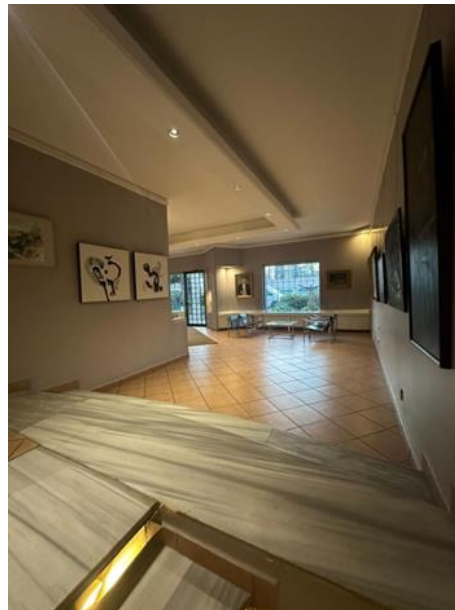


Figure 16. The view from the exhibition area through the entrance (Source: Authors)

İbrahim Demirel, who tells the story of the antique items in the room, shares a memory from the craftsman who made his furniture and became part of his memory (Figures 17, 18):

"I came to Ankara and met a craftsman named Ahmet in the Fire Station Square. He used to make old furniture and had worked with an Armenian craftsman before. He was involved in creating the Atatürk Painting and Sculpture Museum alongside those masters. We became friends, and I used to have my furniture made by him..." (Personal interview with İ. Demirel on December 9, 2021)"As people around me became aware of my interest in old furniture, they also began bringing their pieces to Ahmet Usta for restoration. Last year, during an art exhibition, a woman visited with her husband and children. She said, 'This place reminds me of my grandfather.' When I asked who her grandfather was, she replied, 'Ahmet the Craftsman!' I then told her that Ahmet Usta had made much of my furniture. It was a remarkable moment. These shelves, reminiscent of those found in Anatolian homes, were crafted by Necmettin Usta. As for this table, during one of my visits to Koç's vineyard house, I noticed this table (pointing to the middle one) discarded outside. When I inquired about it, they said they were planning to throw it away. I took the table, and I still use it to this day."



Figure 17. The Interior Space and the socializing area located in the Gallery in 1995 (Galeri Sanat Yapım 1995 Yılı Sergisi, Sanat Yapım Yayıncılık, 2012, p. 176); The Interior Space and the socializing area that has been preserved (Source: Author's Archive)



Figure 18. The Interior Space and the socializing area located in the Gallery in 1995 (Galeri Sanat Yapım 1995 Yılı Sergisi, Sanat Yapım Yayıncılık, 2012, p. 176); The Interior Space and the socializing area that has been preserved (Source: Author's Archive)

CONCLUSION

Urban transformations in Ankara since the 1980s have had a significant impact on the lives of its residents, shaping the city's cultural and artistic landscape. As the capital, Ankara, influenced by bureaucratic dynamics, witnessed a rise in private galleries following the tension between official and free art, particularly after the coup. The rise of private galleries, such as Gallery Sanat Yapım, signifies a growing trend toward alternative venues for artistry, moving away from government influence. These galleries played a role in the urban cultural landscape by establishing innovative opportunities for artists and viewers alike.

The formation of gallery spaces emphasizes the importance of both the quality of the artwork and the structural qualities of the space. By examining gallery spaces, it becomes evident that Gallery Sanat Yapım not only supports the development of artistic environments but also contributes to urban identity and social engagement.

It has the potential to create new public spaces within its own period, contributing to urban life. With its mixed functions, it has created a new spatiality beyond serving as an exhibition venue, fostering community engagement and creating a hybrid public space that bridges art and daily urban life.

As the urban realm changes, the accessibility of such art hubs has become more challenging. Due to changes in urban culture, the importance of galleries such as Sanat Yapım in promoting public interaction with art may decline. Nevertheless, the gallery's historical point of view provides important insights on how art spaces can still impact modern urban life.

All the elements and the transfer of history are framed by the memory of the subject, İbrahim Demirel. Thus, as a property owner and a direct information provider, the hidden actors in the formation of the space are

also revealed. Gallery Sanat Yapım, which has been actively contributing to urban life for 40 years, can be considered an indicator of the sustainability of private art galleries in the rapidly changing urban environment. The ability to preserve its physical existence further emphasizes the importance of such places in the cultural landscape.

The structure, with its design details in its ceiling specially designed not to cast shadows on the works, its openings arranged to bring in the right amount of daylight, and its walls, the most important component for creating exhibition space, continues its role as a bridge between the work it undertook 40 years ago and society. However, as cultural consumption behaviors change, galleries must develop ways to protect their assets when art is consumed through commercial or digital means. Future-oriented meaning and physical sustainability pose a problem in this context.

In the current period, İbrahim Demirel, who runs the gallery with his daughter, expressed concerns for them when he left it to his children as heirs, saying, "I have three children; will they understand? I have concerns about how they will manage." This research shows that gallery spaces are determined not only by their physical features but also by their social functions in society. The gallery's long-standing existence provides an important case study of how it contributes to cultural memory and urban transformation.

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Resume

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