

**"BECOMING ISTANBUL"
INTERPRETATION PACK**

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INTRODUCTION TO SALT

SALT explores critical and timely issues in visual and material culture, and cultivates innovative programs for research and experimental thinking. Assuming an open attitude and establishing itself as a site of learning and debate, SALT aims to challenge, excite and provoke its visitors by encouraging them to offer critique and response. SALT hosts exhibitions, conferences and public programs; engages in interdisciplinary research projects; and maintains a library and archive of recent art, architecture, design, urbanism, and social and economic histories to make them available for research and public use.

An essential part of SALT's programming is developing ongoing, collaborative partnerships with schools, community and civic organizations through its Interpretation Program. SALT Interpretation is free, and seeks to engage young people through exhibition tours, film screenings and artist-led collaborative projects. SALT also creates online curriculum guides (Interpretation Packs) for schools and youth organizations, which feature discussion topics, activities and educational resources to accompany each exhibition.



SALT's activities are distributed between two landmark buildings located in walking distance to each other, and also shared via www.saltonline.org. The first building, SALT Beyoğlu, whose program and circulation interiors are dedicated to exhibition and event spaces, opened April 9 on Istiklal Avenue. The second building, SALT Galata, is the former 19th century Imperial Ottoman Bank headquarters designed by Alexandre Vallaury. SALT Galata will open in fall 2011.

"BECOMING ISTANBUL"

Aiming to comprehend contemporary İstanbul through current debates, urban dynamics and their outcomes, *Becoming Istanbul* is a project made up of an exhibition and several publications. The exhibition consists of an interactive database prepared with contributions from various cultural institutions, media archives, artists, architects, caricaturists and researchers. The database continues to expand with contributions from architects, artists and researchers, while the exhibition has travelled to meet urban enthusiasts in Frankfurt, Al Manama, Berlin – and now, finally, İstanbul.

Describing İstanbul is neither the intention, nor the claim of this project. It is more an attempt to provide access to the problematics, phenomena and processes that play a crucial role in the city today. Surrounded by stereotypical references to its “rich historical heritage” and “multicultural background,” İstanbul has been widely perceived as “the place where East and West meet” or “a model of cultural and religious dialogue,” both in Turkey and abroad. The *Becoming Istanbul* project’s purpose is to reveal how restricted these perceptions are, and to dismantle such typical discourses in order to render visible the countless ignored phenomena – and the numerous actors victimized by discursive tools. Moreover, the project aims to nurture a platform for critical discussion with the data provided.

The first publication prepared within the scope of the project, *Becoming Istanbul: An Encyclopedia*, has been published in English, German and Turkish. In a dictionary-like A-Z format, the book dwells on current changes to the city with articles written by numerous authors from diverse fields of expertise. The second publication, *Tracing Istanbul [from the air]*, continues this exploration through aerial images, dating from 1992 to today, and accompanying texts. The project’s latest edition, *Mapping Istanbul*, complements its former publications by providing concrete data on the city.



Pınar Gediközer, *Mobility*, 2008

TO EDUCATORS

HOW TO USE THESE MATERIALS

This SALT Interpretation Pack has been designed as a resource for you and your students as you explore the themes of the *Becoming Istanbul* exhibition. It is our hope that — as a resource with the objective of stimulating dialogue — the following materials will not act as an authority on the concepts they introduce, but rather will encourage students towards further exploration and study, towards active discussion, and towards critical thinking about the exhibition and its themes.

Included in this Interpretation Pack are:

- *Opening Discussion: Becoming Istanbul*
- *Unit One: What Makes a City?*
- *Unit Two: The Art of Branding*
- *Research & Discuss: Public vs. Private Space*
- *Closing Discussion: To the Streets!*
- *Additional Resources*



Pınar Gediközer, *Mobility*, 2008

Each unit includes classroom activities, multi-media resources, terminology and opportunities for discussion; we encourage you to adapt, shape and build upon these materials to best meet the needs of your students and teaching curriculum.

*Please note: While the exhibition and its themes are specific to İstanbul, all activities and discussions in this Interpretation Pack can be adapted for students living outside of İstanbul, focusing instead on current issues and transformations in their own cities.

OPENING DISCUSSION: BECOMING İSTANBUL

The database prepared within the scope of the Becoming Istanbul project is a comprehensive archival study that brings together an extensive collection of materials on İstanbul. Consisting of architectural projects, artists' works, videos, photographs, caricatures and news clips produced since 1999, the project aims to record and share İstanbul's current transformation. Accessed through an interface that organizes these media by themes, the database facilitates a multi-layered understanding of the social actors and conditions that shape today's İstanbul.

As an entry point for your students to engage with the *Becoming Istanbul* exhibition at SALT Beyoğlu, we suggest building a discussion around one theme outlined in the Becoming Istanbul database, examining the connection of this theme to students' perceptions of the city.

1. On a computer connected to a projector, with your class visit database.becomingistanbul.org and choose one theme (for example, COMMODIFICATION) on the page.
2. Discuss with students the meaning of this word, asking how they think it relates to İstanbul and its residents today.
3. Click through the media associated with your class' chosen theme. Note that each theme is connected to other, related themes, creating a web-like set of relationships in the database. You and your class may choose to explore one theme in-depth, or branch out into other themes as your discussion develops.



Pınar Gediközer, *Mobility*, 2008

DISCUSSION

- *How did preconceptions around your chosen theme compare to the theme's corresponding media? Did any media surprise you, or contradict your expectations?*
- *What other themes did yours link to in the database? Do you agree or disagree with these associations?*
- *If you were able to choose a new theme for the Becoming Istanbul database relating to current developments in İstanbul (which is not already included), what would you choose? Why?*

UNIT ONE: WHAT MAKES A CITY?

INTRODUCTION

What is a contemporary city? What defines it – and what differentiates one city from another? İstanbul is frequently referred to as a “bridge” – between East and West, Europe and Asia. It is a city represented, and often limited, by orientalist imagery and romanticized preconceptions. Despite these simplifications, however, there exist countless phenomena and histories not voiced in popular discourses on İstanbul. Among the many definitions explored in *Becoming İstanbul*, İstanbul is:

- A city hosting 29 universities
- A city with 89 Starbucks, 88 Mavi Stores and 27 Levi’s Original Stores
- A city that singlehandedly shoulders Turkey with its economy
- A city where approximately 11 million journeys with motorized vehicles take place daily
- A city that produces 90% of the books published in Turkey

These are not the taglines we see in touristic brochures; they are not generalizations. Examining İstanbul from a broad range of perspectives, the *Becoming İstanbul* project seeks not to present a single portrait of İstanbul, but rather to stimulate discussion around the concept of cities; to criticize stereotypes surrounding cities and their inhabitants; and to act as a catalyst in reconsidering urban development, culture and processes of change.



İstanbul Welcomes You, İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality promotional video, 2011.

In **WHAT MAKES A CITY?** Session 1, your students will envision a multi-dimensional definition of the contemporary city that looks beyond existing representations of İstanbul in the media and popular culture, instead reflecting their individual experiences, usage patterns and perceptions. In Session 2, students will photograph those people and places that best embody this definition, which may be submitted for consideration in the *Becoming İstanbul* What Makes a City? Contest.

OBJECTIVES

- *To use media literacy skills to critique and dissect mass media*
- *To deconstruct representations of cities in popular culture*
- *To use photography as a tool to creatively communicate an idea*

TERMINOLOGY

City — an inhabited place of greater size, population, or importance than a town or village

Mass Media — media of communication (as newspapers, radio, or television) designed to reach the mass of the people

Media Literacy — a repertoire of competencies that enable people to analyze, evaluate, and create messages in a wide variety of media modes, genres, and forms

Nostalgia — a wistful or excessively sentimental yearning for return to or of some past period or irrecoverable condition

Orientalism — a term used for the imitation or depiction of aspects of Eastern cultures in the West by writers, designers and artists

Popular Culture — the totality of ideas, perspectives, attitudes, images and other phenomena that are deemed preferred through an informal consensus within the mainstream of a given society

Urban Planning — integrates land use planning and transportation planning to improve the built, economic and social environments of communities



Pınar Gediközer, *Mobility*, 2008

WHAT MAKE A CITY?

SESSION 1

1. To launch this activity, engage students in a discussion around media literacy, the ability to critique messages in the media. Looking at media through a critical framework can mean considering who the author is, his or her point of view, and what, if any, biases he or she may hold.

2. Click the image on p. 7 to watch a promotional video for İstanbul, produced by the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality. How is the city of İstanbul depicted in this video? What, if any, stereotypes do students believe are present in this representation of the city?

3. Now, show students the image to the right of the cast of *Küçük Sırlar* [Little Secrets], featured in *Vogue Türkiye*. Again, what aspects of İstanbul, the setting for this popular television series, are highlighted? What, if any, generalizations are made about the city and its inhabitants?

4. Draw a line down the center of the blackboard. On the left side, write keywords or phrases that students associate with the media's representation of İstanbul. Next, on the right, ask students to brainstorm the specific places, landmarks, services and organizations that define their own experience of the city. (Examples may include public parks, cafés, shopping malls or markets.)

5. Once both sides of the board are filled, give students the opportunity to compare their perceptions of the city with images of İstanbul perpetuated by the media. What conclusions can students make about differences between their relationship with İstanbul and the city's representation in mass media and popular culture?

6. Finally, challenge your class to create a new, multi-layered definition for the contemporary city, taking into consideration both the power of generalizations and nostalgia in identity making and the role a city can play in residents' daily lives.



Cast of *Küçük Sırlar* [Little Secrets], *Vogue Türkiye*, August 2010

DISCUSSION

- *What do you think are the greatest misconceptions about İstanbul? Are these misconceptions reinforced or undermined by the municipality's promotional video for the city?*
- *Who do you think is the target audience of İstanbul Welcomes You? How powerful a role does tourism play in the construction and branding of a city's identity?*
- *Do you believe it's possible to reconcile history, culture and tradition with your class' definition of the contemporary city? If you were charged with the task of producing İstanbul's promotional video for 2012, how would you convey the many diverse perspectives, cultures and individual experiences of the city?*



Pınar Gediközer, *Mobility*, 2008

WHAT MAKES A CITY?

SESSION 2

MATERIALS

Cameras, projector, computers with Internet access

1. With their critical definition of the contemporary city in mind, as a homework assignment, ask students to photograph the people and places best embodying the city as it relates to their own experiences and daily life. These can be the places they pass every day on their way to school, the store where they buy their groceries, or the café where they meet their friends, for example. The only criterion is the image in some way defines the student's relationship with İstanbul. Images can be captured with digital or disposable camera, which students may share for this activity if need be.

2. Students will each select one image for presentation.

3. Collect students' digital images, or scan printed images, and create an online slideshow. Students will take turns speaking about their images for the class, discussing how each relates to his or her experience of the city.

4. For a chance to be featured on the Becoming İstanbul database, submit your students' images to the *Becoming İstanbul* What Makes a City? Contest by e-mailing them to yorumlama@saltonline.org.

DISCUSSION

- *Would you consider the subject of your photograph a "typical" representation of İstanbul? Why or why not?*
- *Which of your classmates' images did you find most interesting? Which related most closely to your own experience of the city?*



Laleper Aytok, *Fastfood*, 2008

UNIT TWO: THE ART OF BRANDING

INTRODUCTION

The only sort of government that can afford to ignore the impact of its national reputation is one which has no interest in participating in the global community, and no desire for its economy, its culture, or its citizens to benefit from the rich influences and opportunities that the rest of the world offers them.

– Sayyid Faisal Al Said, Minister of Heritage and Culture, Oman

Today, the concept of “place branding” has become of unavoidable importance for nations and their cities. Hiring marketing firms to design logos, websites and slogans (examples of country slogans include “Sri Lanka: A land like no other,” “Israel Wonders,” and “Latvia: The land that sings”), like companies, today’s countries invest substantial resources into fabricating an image. This image is often based on extensive market research and is strategically designed to target specific audiences. In a world that is increasingly connected – where a country’s image plays a direct role in the number of tourists it will welcome, foreign business it will attract and opportunities it will have to participate on the global stage – branding is both a norm and an expectation.

In **THIS BRAND IS YOUR BRAND***, students will research branding campaigns for cities and countries worldwide, dissecting their marketing messages, target audiences and underlying strategies. In **SELL YOUR CITY**, students will have the opportunity to put their research into practice – as they design their own branding campaigns for İstanbul.

* The title of this activity comes from the article “This Brand is Your Brand” in *Bidoun’s* Summer 2010 issue, which examines nation branding campaigns.



Solmaz Shahbazi, *Perfectly Suited for You*, 2005

OBJECTIVES

- *To critically examine the way nations and cities brand themselves*
- *To dissect and analyze the effectiveness of marketing strategies*
- *To use design as a tool to reach a target audience*

TERMINOLOGY

Branding — the promoting of a product or service by identifying it with a particular brand

Guerrilla Marketing — an unconventional system of promotions that relies on time, energy and imagination rather than a big marketing budget. Typically, guerrilla marketing campaigns are unconventional, interactive and target consumers in unexpected places.

Market Research — research into the size, location, and makeup of a product market

Nation Branding (also, *Place Branding*) — a field of theory and practice which aims to measure, build and manage the reputation of countries

Nation Brands Index (NBI) — developed by Simon Anholt as a concept of measuring the global perception of a country in several spheres. The criteria underlying the NBI ranking are: People, Governance, Exports, Tourism, Culture & Heritage, and Investment & Immigration.



Laleper Aytek, *Advertising*, 2004-2008

THIS BRAND IS YOUR BRAND

1. Divide students into groups of five.
2. Assign one of the following places to each group:
 - a. İstanbul, Turkey
 - b. Las Vegas, USA
 - c. Bali, Indonesia
 - d. Dubai, United Arab Emirates
 - e. Republic of Singapore
 - f. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 - g. Hong Kong, People's Republic of China
 - h. Kingdom of Bhutan
3. Either as an in-class activity or group homework assignment, each group will research existing branding initiatives for their place.
4. Groups will present their findings to the class. Students may organize information in any format they choose; however, presentations must include the following:
 - a. The city or country's slogan and logo
 - b. Analysis of website, media and promotional strategy
 - c. Evaluation of target audience – Who or what is this place trying to attract? How is it doing this?
 - d. Conclusions – Do you believe this place's branding strategy is successful? Why or why not?

DISCUSSION

- *Of the branding campaigns your classmates presented, which did you find most effective? Which was the least effective?*
- *How did you find logos related to an overall marketing strategy? In the campaigns presented do you believe logos contained underlying marketing messages? What were these messages?*
- *Do you believe it is possible to create a brand that attracts and resonates with tourists, foreign businesses and local populations? If given the opportunity to design your own city branding campaign, how would you approach this challenge?*



SELL YOUR CITY

MATERIALS

Computer or library access for research purposes,
Internet

1. Now that students have examined marketing strategies of cities and countries worldwide, it is time to design their own branding campaigns for İstanbul. Note that this activity can be organized as a longer-term in-class project or homework assignment.
2. Again, organize your students into groups of five. These can be the same groups used in the previous activity.
3. Taking on the role of a marketing firm, each group will prepare a campaign to present to its client, the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality. The municipality will be played by the rest of the class.
4. Group presentations must include the following:
 - a. Logo (can be drawn, or designed with Adobe Photoshop or InDesign)
 - b. Slogan
 - c. Explanation of target audience and how this segment will be reached
 - d. Media strategy - What media will your firm use to promote İstanbul? (For example, television commercials, newspaper or online advertisements, billboards or guerilla marketing)
 - e. Potential challenges and how they will be overcome
 - f. Expected results of the branding campaign – How will this campaign impact İstanbul’s identity, both locally and internationally?
5. Following all group presentations, your class will vote for the most effective proposal. (Note that no student may vote for his or her own group.)



Promotional material for “Bosphorus City,” a development project by SİNPAŞ GYO

DISCUSSION

- *What elements were present in the winning proposal that separated it from the others? What made it unique?*
- *What was the greatest challenge for your group in creating your campaign proposal? After watching your classmates’ presentations, if you had an opportunity to revise your proposal, what would you change?*
- *Go back and re-watch the İstanbul Welcomes You promotional video. How were the media messages proposed by your class similar to or different from this 2011 campaign?*

RESEARCH & DISCUSS: PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE SPACE

To the right are aerial images of İstanbul from 1946, 1966 and 1982, respectively - the dark gray areas represent the city's ever-expanding boundaries. From year to year, İstanbul's borders are erased and redrawn as it grows to accommodate influxes of people. With a population today of over 13 million, the effects of accelerated urbanization, migration and settlement in İstanbul are widespread, and include the formation and division of space for public and private use. In this activity, students will independently research the concepts below, then, with their own communities in mind, map out the boundaries between private and public domains.

1. Ask students to research the following terms:

- a. Urban Sprawl
- b. Urbanization
- c. Public Space
- d. Private Space

2. Each student should find a detailed map or aerial image of his or her own neighborhood. Places these can be found online include Google Maps, Google Earth and the İstanbul Şehir Rehberi [İstanbul City Guide] website.

3. As a homework assignment, students will label buildings, blocks, spaces, etc. as either "private" or "public" on their maps. Examples of public spaces may include transit hubs and parks, while private spaces may be office buildings, residences or businesses.

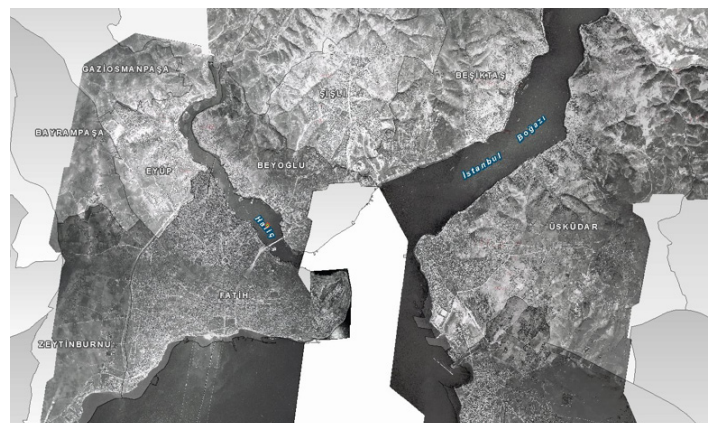
4. Students will return to class with their maps, as well as ideas to contribute to a group discussion around urban development and the division of public and private space in İstanbul.



Aerial Image, İstanbul Şehir Rehberi [İstanbul City Guide], 1946



Aerial Image, İstanbul Şehir Rehberi [İstanbul City Guide], 1966



Aerial Image, İstanbul Şehir Rehberi [İstanbul City Guide], 1982

TERMINOLOGY

Gated Community — a form of residential community or housing estate containing strictly controlled entrances for pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles, and often characterized by a closed perimeter of walls and fences

Private Space — a space designed for the exclusive use of its occupiers

Public Space — a social space such as a town square that is open and accessible to all, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or socio-economic level

Urban Sprawl — the uncontrolled expansion of urban areas

Urbanization — the physical growth of urban areas as a result of global change. Also defined by the United Nations as the movement of people from rural to urban areas with population growth equating to urban migration.

DISCUSSION

- *What is the most obvious indicator you've seen in İstanbul of its expansion? How do you think the city can best accommodate growth in its population?*
- *What do you believe are the advantages and disadvantages of defining and separating public from private space? Were you surprised by the concentration of public vs. private space in your community?*
- *Were there any spaces in your community that were difficult to categorize as either "public" or "private"? What made these a challenge to define?*
- *"Urban sprawl" is defined as the uncontrolled expansion of urban areas. Do you believe it is possible to expand a city in a controlled way? In a way that benefits current residents and newcomers, and that protects public spaces? What services are critical to ensuring this happens?*



Pınar Gediközer, *Belonging*, 2008

CLOSING DISCUSSION: TO THE STREETS!

After visiting the *Becoming Istanbul* exhibition at SALT Beyoğlu and engaging in some of the supplemental discussions and activities included in this Interpretation Pack, your students have explored what “makes” a city; analyzed the successes and failures of place branding campaigns; and taken to the streets to capture images of İstanbul as it relates to their own experiences.

As a conclusion to your students’ experience of the exhibition (and as an extension of Unit 1: WHAT MAKES A CITY?), we suggest students again look to their own usage of the city – to their perceptions, movements and activities – and design an İstanbul walking tour. Contrary to traditional tours of the city that highlight only specific monuments, bazaars and neighborhoods, however, these tours will feature the places most relevant to students’ daily lives.

1. As an individual assignment, invite students to explore their neighborhoods on foot, selecting 10 places as official “stops” on their İstanbul walking tours. (Note that students can photograph these locations and submit images to the *Becoming Istanbul* What Makes a City? Contest by e-mailing to yorumlama@saltonline.org.)

2. Once they have selected their stops, students should find a map, either online (again, with Google Maps, Google Earth or the İstanbul Şehir Rehberi [İstanbul City Guide] website) or in print, that illustrates their neighborhood streets in detail. On this map, they will “mark” their stops.

3. Give students the opportunity to present these maps – and, if applicable, photographs – to the class, describing the stops they have chosen, as well as recommended routes for best exploration of their communities.



Osman Bozkurt, *Post-It City*, 2007

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WEB RESOURCES

Becoming Istanbul Database
www.database.becomingistanbul.org

Bidoun | www.bidoun.org

Brand Oman | www.BrandOman.om

İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality
www.ibb.gov.tr/en-US/Pages/Home_Page.aspx

İstanbul Şehir Rehberi [İstanbul City Guide]
www.sehirrehberi.ibb.gov.tr/map.aspx

SALT Online | www.saltonline.org

BOOKS & ARTICLES

Becoming Istanbul: An Encyclopedia (2008)
Eds. Pelin Derviş, Bülent Tanju & Uğur Tanyeli

Mapping Istanbul (2009)
Eds. Pelin Derviş & Meriç Öner

Tracing Istanbul [from the air] (2009)
Ed. Meriç Öner

“The Right to the City,” *New Left Review* (2008)
David Harvey

“This Brand is Your Brand” *Bidoun* (Summer 2010)
Babak Radboy

FILMS

İstanbul Welcomes You (2011)
İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality promotional
video

Perfectly Suited to You (2005)
Solmaz Shahbazi



Laleper Aytek, *Public*, 2004-2008

