

santralistanbul Opens!

On 8 September 2007, santralistanbul opened with an exhibition entitled “Modern and Beyond” scheduled to run for six months. In addition to the exhibition, from September onwards santralistanbul will be addressing a wide audience with the Energy Museum, International Artists-in-Residence Program, workshops and educational programs associated with the 10th İstanbul Biennial, international culture programs and recreational areas. On the opening night, United Visual Artists, a world renowned sound and light performance group, staged a special performance designed in homage to the history of the power plant. The night also featured various DJs and musical groups.

santralistanbul’s opening exhibition “Modern and Beyond” covers the history of art in Turkey during the period between 1950 and 2000. Curated by Fulya Erdemci, Semra Germaner, Orhan Koçak and Zeynep Rona, the exhibition aims at presenting and discussing the process of transformation undergone by the artistic production in Turkey. The exhibition is designed as a selection rather than as an all-inclusive breakdown of the fifty-year period. Opening on 8 September, “Modern and Beyond” brings together some 450 works by more than a hundred artists and artist groups.

For the opening night, one of the world’s leading sound and light performance groups, United Visual Artists (UVA), prepared an unprecedented performance combining art and technology in homage to the history of the Silahtarağa Power Plant. Using sound and light to emphasize the history and architectural structure of the plant, UVA has also designed a permanent architectural lighting system for **santralistanbul**.

The Energy Museum, converted from the machinery houses of the Silahtarağa Power Plant, displays another feature put in place by UVA: interactive lighting systems which can be adjusted by the movements of the visitors themselves. Groups of turbine generators, which in a way provide a summary of the production process of the electricity in Turkey, as well as the Control Room from where the electricity used in İstanbul for 70 years was distributed, were both opened to visitors with a light performance by UVA on 8 September. The Energy Museum will be featuring workshops and guided tours which will enable school-age children in particular to learn about subjects like energy, electricity, current and magnetism through experiments.

Parallel to the opening of **santralistanbul**, the book entitled “The Silahtarağa Power Plant: 1910-2004” put together by specialist academicians and **santralistanbul** team, meets the readers in September. Published by the İstanbul Bilgi University Publications, the book deals with such topics like the life in İstanbul before the electricity arrived, the foundation of the power plant, the changes in İstanbul’s urban and social life with the advent of electricity, stages of production at Silahtarağa, social life in the housing units, and the power plant as a work of architecture. The book is illustrated throughout with photographs from personal and institutional archives, as well as with original plans and drawings of the power plant. Concluding with the **santralistanbul** project regenerating the Silahtarağa Power Plant, the book also presents a comprehensive selected bibliography.

With the aim of being a cultural, artistic and educational platform in İstanbul where different cultures meet and creative thinking and activities come together, **santralistanbul** regards the International Artists-in-Residence Program among its indispensable elements. Created through the renovation of the housing units at the Silahtarağa Power Plant, the artists-in-residence program initiates in September with the project entitled “Light, Illumination and Electricity” and carried out with the support of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation. Within the scope of the project, eight contemporary artists from the European and Mediterranean countries will be residing at **santralistanbul** to produce works on the theme of light and electricity.

Started in late August, the project entitled “The Public Turn in Contemporary Art” is another activity which links **santralistanbul** with the European Union (EU). In the scope of this project, numerous international actors of the art scene who have produced works in the field of public art will come together at **santralistanbul** during September and October. Furthermore, as an associate of the workshop and education programs of the 10th International İstanbul Biennial, **santralistanbul** will be hosting seminars, film screenings, artists’ workshops and exhibitions during the Biennial. Also, between 12 and 15 September, **santralistanbul** will be organising ArtExperience 2007 as a joint project with the İstanbul Culture and Arts Foundation together with the Milan Triennial which will be fostering an interdisciplinary environment to unite the worlds of design, art and business under the theme of “Local Modernity/Global Expectations.”

Embarking on its new life with the opening event on 8 September, **santralistanbul** offers a public space where visitors can interact with art, enjoy themselves and simply have a good time.

santralistanbul

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