

Forgotten for over half a century among the industrial plants along the Golden Horn, the Feshane has reemerged from obscurity. The decision to clean the coast from all the industrial plants, almost inadvertently, resurrected the Feshane, whose main workshop was the only building allowed to stand by the sea in the district.

Since an alternative exhibition organized in 1989 by a group of artists in the decrepit building, Feshane became a major source of attraction for fashion shoots, concerts and big parties.

Feshane stands as the symbol of two important movements in the modernization of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. First, it was a part of the Ottoman response to the challenge of industrial revolution in Europe. Second, it was built to produce the Fez, the symbol of Ottoman dress reforms.

The young Turkish Republic turned the Feshane into the flagship of Sümerbank, the main state owned industrial/commercial/banking conglomerate which was one of the symbols of the etatization policies of the 1930's.

Since 1990, a steering committee for the creation of a contemporary art museum in Istanbul organized by the Municipality of Istanbul and Turkey's leading sponsors, architects and people in the arts, could not help but discuss the possibility of restoring the Feshane and using it as a Museum.

The Dr. Nejat F.Eczac›bafl› Foundation in collaboration with the Municipality of Istanbul, undertook the the project to convert the Feshane into a contemporary art museum.

The Feshane as an industrial plant was a particular challenge for Gae Aulenti who had previously created superb museums from long standing buildings. She found the building highly appropriate for use as a contemporary art museum, and took charge of the project.

The Feshane will be inaugurated as the Greater Istanbul Municipality Dr. Nejat Eczac›bafl› Contemporary Art Museum with the 3rd International Istanbul Biennial to be held between October 16 - November 30, 1992.