

ODA: BİR SERGİ MEKANI (ROOM: AN EXHIBITION SPACE)
ODA PROJESİ (ROOM PROJECT)

In the may of 1997 Özge Açikkol, Güneş Savaş and Seçil Yersel rented a flat in Galata at Şahkulu Street. A flat in an apartment on the fifth floor that has been made about hundreded years ago.

In the year of 408 when Galata (Sykai) is described as the place "at the other side", for Constantinople; it still keeps the position of being the other since then. With its population of multi-language and ethnisk structure in Galata, lives mostly people, that has migrated from the east of Turkey living with low income and low social statue.

Özge, Güneş and Seçil rented this flat (1997) while studying art at the university, thinking of using this place as a studio and project making-meeting place. They wanted to know where and with whom they are going to live with, so at first it was time of getting to "know". If you are a stranger to a place, for knowing it, meeting with children living there, is the best way. They started to make pictures, little sculptures with children in the studio, outside in the parks, seaside or Galata Tower square and made walks around Galata area. Aside from drawing, they showed slides of famous artists works, of the photographs they took and talked about them, without giving any lessons. Also they read books, wrote stories, dreams, made meals together. They met with the mothers and families of the children, going to them or inviting them. A relation of a strange kind started, these three women with their different kind of life style started to be "one of them" being always the other.

In these years being in a neighbourhood, having a small puplic square, a "kahve", the Galata Tower, all meant something different and they used them as a "canal". In 1998 while leaving in Galata without financial support, they had to leave the flat and move to another place. All the neighbours helped them to find a place near. So they moved from fifth floor to a ground level flat with three rooms lined one after the other, having a courtyard, that will be very important for them and the projects and in the center a statue like stone. Until 2000 january they used the whole place as a home-studio mixed way but continuing with the projects. Joining Galata Festivals with children, joining to tea parties of the women in the courtyard, and drying pictures instead of clothes on the strings and doing a book with the help of a newspaper called Hürriyet, a book named "Pictures on the clothesline".

As the moving from place to place goes on, they thought of moving inside the flat, getting the room in the middle outside, by emptying it, separating it from the other two "leaving" rooms. So they wanted to share the room with puplic with artists with who wants to do something in the room and who is going to have the viewer as a participant. So **Oda: Bir**

Sergi Mekanı (Room: An exhibition space) opened it self on january 2000.

From 1997 till 2001 while doing projects named or not named, they had two kinds of participators; settled and migrating ones. Settled ones are the people living in the neighbourhood, migrating ones are artists, participators, the ones passing by the street and municipality workers. In all the room projects Gunes, Özge and Seçil used themselves as a corridor between the space and the people. Projects are not viewer centered but they had press announcement.

The first "named" project of Oda Projesi is made by Özge Açıkkol on january 2000, she exhibited the emptied room with the text of George Perec "Useless Space" as written on a paper that you can take with you. So this was the time of meeting with the place. Then Hale Tenger brought her "Heart Ache" video performance; a camera showing an electric fan and behind it a pillow with spine on it. Leonard Cohen's song *Teachers* goes with the performance. With this exhibition, Oda Projesi showed the depressed tension between personal fantasy and social control. The third project is called "Swing" made by Seçil Yersel; a swing taken from a park, in the empty room, near to ground level, no way to swing, and it is so close to the door that opens to courtyard. There are also photographs that Yersel took in the train stations, waiting rooms and amuzement parks. Then Selim Birsnel invited a music group called Replikas; they made "Invitation" on the may of 2000. They did music with all kinds of materials and with the neighbours and left the room with a video showing that day in the room, an armchair and a stool. After this project "One day in the room" project took place with Serkan Özkaya, Güneş Savaş, Aydan Murtezaoğlu, Özge Açıkkol and Seçil Yersel spend their one day in the room. Serkan danced with kids, Güneş let one kid do a spontaneous record with a video, Aydan made a slide show, sharing her latest works with children, Özge spent the day with children telling them to bring what they want to from their homes and put them in the room with a design that they prefer; if you have such a room what would you do?, Seçil celebrated Özge's birthday with the children, putting the cake on a mirror.

A little break took place Özge, Gunes and Seçil carried the room project to Ankara with the exhibition organization of Vasıf Kortun. Took all the photographs they have about the Oda Projesi and using a three walled space, they stuck them. And they put a sign to their place in Galata, " The Room Is In Ankara". After the room project in Ankara, they spend most of their time making voice records and shooting videos of women and children in Galata, asking them some questions; how would it be if there were on room project? What does room and room project mean to you? If you have such a room? ...

After this self discussing time, Nadi Güler did a project on 23 April 2001, Childrens Day. Letting the kids paint on a famous artists, Komet's, paintings and they all carried these

paintings, walking with them in the streets, to an exhibition space and a one day exhibition. After Nadi Güler, Eric Goengrich did a picnic with the women living there, in the courtyard and after the picnic a slide show of İstanbul, that has been shown on a white curtain of the neighbours houses. After all these Eric made a little book called Picnic City*. From July 2001 they had one or two hour performances; Denis Tricot and Fabrice Charles made a music and wood sculpture performance in the courtyard, Naz Erayda took the children to Galata Tower square, giving them hula hoops. With these hula hoops they did everything possible. Eric Goengrich one day, showed the slides he took on the picnic day and afterwards a melon eating all with the neighbours.

All these projects are recorded with video and photograph camera. So Oda Projesi turns itself to a project, mostly during the projects and once more afterwards.

Güneş, Özge and Seçil keep meeting with children, women and artists; being in Galata as the other. On July 2001 they had an invitation from İstanbul Contemporary Art Museum in Gültepe, from Vasıf Kortun; wanting Oda Projesi, to take part in the opening exhibition of the museum. Gültepe can be seen as a similar place like Galata; mostly people living in low economic situations and it was the first living place of working class with the "gecekondu"s they did by themselves. Özge, Güneş and Seçil started to be in Gültepe, started to look around, try to know better about the place. They don't want to be in the museum, decided to take the eye of the museum outside so get Gültepe inside and try to be at the edge. They wanted to rent a place in Gültepe and the museum rented them a three room flat. Galata and Gültepe are the two places that Oda Projesi lives. They are now at the beginning of a new place but continuing with Oda Projesi.

Güneş Savaş
Özge Açıkkol
Seçil Yersel