Anglo-Turkish Society online lecture, 26 October 2021, 6.00 pm (UK time)
Speaker: Büke Uras
Platform: Zoom with link provided to those who register
Title: 'Balyans, Reinterpreting Ottoman Architecture through Sarkis Balyan's Archive'

The Balyans were a prominent family of architects who designed and built architectural works for the Ottoman sultans for three generations and achieved a unique interpretation of the Ottoman local architectural language, thereby shaping the architectural taste and preferences of the palace and marking the last century of İstanbul as an imperial capital. The Balyan architectural practice, participated by various family members, especially Krikor (1764-1831), his son Garabed (1800-1866) and grandsons Nigoğos (1826-1858), Sarkis (1831-1899) and Hagop (1838-1875), was formed by the personal histories intertwined with the Ottoman social life as well as the professional knowledge passed down through generations and the expectations of the palace.
The Balyans never wrote down texts revealing their architectural thoughts. In the absence of such texts, which would have helped us in understanding their design philosophy, the Balyan architecture was evaluated only in the light of their constructed buildings for a long time, beginning from journalist and author Viscount Alfred de Caston, who started the Balyan historiography. This book provides a comprehensive review and description of the drawings reflecting the design processes of imperial constructions, most of which belong to the Balyan Family Architecture Archive recently opened to research, and aims to introduce a new approach to the history of the Balyan practice through the unconstructed buildings, as well as the constructed buildings.
Among the achievements of the study are the identifications of architectural documentation in the Balyan Archive, such as the drawings of Beylerbeyi, Çırağan and Fer'iye palaces, the extension project for the Yıldız Palace's Büyük Mâbeyn Kiosk and the decoration project for the Şale Kiosk's Dining Hall, where the Çırağan Palace's doors with mother-of-pearl inlay were reused, the renovation proposal for Bâb-ı Âli, the plan of the Esma Sultan Mansion in Kabataş, an important plan for the Ottoman museum history about the repository of old weapon collections at Hagia Irene, projects for industrial facilities such as Dolmabahçe Gasworks and Imperial Fez Factory, and the drawings from the design process of the Aziziye Mosque, a little-known masterpiece of Sarkis and Hagop Balyan, which was the only selâtin mosque ordered to be built with four minarets after centuries.

Booking essential: https://buke-uras-lecture.eventbrite.co.uk
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Architect and writer Büke Uras was born in 1976, in Istanbul. He studied architecture at La Sapienza University in Rome. Following his studies, he lived in New York City, working for Daniel Romualdez Architects and Skidmore, Owings&Merrill. After moving back to his native Turkey, he started his own practice as an architect and taught at Bahçesehir University, and periodically contributed to various magazines and newspapers. Büke Uras currently lives in Paris.

Büke Uras has been collecting architectural drawings and documents from the Ottoman era and early Turkish Republican Period for over ten years. In time, his private collection has become one of the most comprehensive of its kind.

In 2013, the Istanbul Research Institute exhibited "Edoardo De Nari, The Architect of Changing Times, 1874-1954", where a long forgotten Italian architect's rightful place has been reinstituted in Istanbul's architectural past due to Uras' singlehanded discovery of a lost collection of architectural drawings and personal documents belonging to De Nari. Büke Uras worked closely with the institute in the curation of the exhibit and prepared the exhibition catalogue.

In 2016, he collaborated with the academic and art historian Prof. Dr. Baha Tanman on "The Şişli Mosque", a book about the first major Republican era mosque in Turkey. He researched and published the work of a major painter-decorator of Ottoman palaces; Bedros Sirabyan as a series of articles. In 2017, he curated his second exhibition "Nazimî Yaver Yenal: The Imaginary World of a Paper Architect", again writing the exhibition catalogue.

In 2021, he published his most comprehensive publication to date, "Balyans, Ottoman Architecture and Balyan Archive" - *review*.