Interpreting the shadows of urban memory in Istanbul and reviving the ancient for a contemporary world: An evening roundtable discussion with Mahir Polat

Co-hosted by the Anglo-Turkish Society and British Association for Turkish Area Studies.

Tuesday 27 September 2022, 6.00pm to 7.45pm
At the Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy Street London W1T 5BT

Following decades of societal homogenisation and market-oriented urban expansion, Istanbul's millennia-old urban memory has been scarred. Since 2019, Istanbul has had a new local public administration under Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, and a new approach to cultural, artistic and urban perspectives. With a view to preserve the ancient heritage, while refunctioning it to adapt to contemporary needs, Istanbul is set to undergo a renaissance. Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality culture and arts management will discuss their recent work, the challenges they face and its implications for the world with experts. Their examples right from the ground will range from the 1,500 years-old Basilica Cistern, 180-year-old Fes factory, ancient city walls of Eastern Roman Empire to cultural re-purposing of old gasworks and the Moda Pier.

The format of the discussion will be a roundtable discussion with opening remarks by Mahir Polat.



Key speaker: Mr Mahir Polat, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality – Deputy General Secretary (culture, arts, education and social services)
Born in 1976 in Erzincan, Turkey. Mahir graduated from the Department of Archaeology and History of Art at Istanbul University Faculty of Letters in 2002. In the following year, he started his master's degree in Architectural History at the Istanbul Technical University. In 2008, he completed his postgraduate education with his thesis on the curatorial activities of museums at the Department of Museology - Department of Art and Design, Institute of Social Sciences, YTU. He lectured in the same department on cultural heritage legislation as a visiting lecturer between 2011 and 2015. He continues his doctoral thesis focused on religious cultural heritage, which he started in 2009 at the Istanbul University. In 2005, he started to work in the General Directorate of Foundations. He worked as the Museum Director at Akaretler Atatürk Museum between 2014-2016 and at the Turkish Construction and Art Works Museum between 2016-2019. During this period, he took part in numerous museum installations and restoration works. Mahir has worked in the fields of historical cultural environment protection, museum science, religious cultural social history, social memory and architectural history. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the History Foundation and a member of Europa Nostra Turkey, Foundation Experts Association and SODEV.



Chair: **Associate Prof. Nihan Akyelken**, University of Oxford; Official Fellow of Kellogg College of the University of Oxford

Nihan is an Associate Professor in Sustainable Urban Development at the University of Oxford. She obtained her doctorate in Economic Geography from the University of Oxford, and her undergraduate and master degrees from the London School of Economics and Political Science in the areas of Economics and Philosophy and European Political Economy. Nihan's research focuses on mobility, urban inequalities and access, infrastructure, labour and work.

DISCUSSANTS



Professor Jim Crow, University of Edinburgh, Classical Archaeology Centre for Late Antique, Islamic and Byzantine Studies; and Chair of Council of Management at British Institute at Ankara.

Jim teaches Roman and Byzantine archaeology at the University of Edinburgh. He first travelled to Turkey when he was a student at Birmingham, continuing his research at Newcastle and Sofia Universities. In the late 1970s he was based in Ankara, with a Leverhulme Studentship followed by BIAA Research Fellowship where he travelled with David French along the Euphrates and was part of the first season at Tille. He was the director of excavations for the National Trust on Hadrian's Wall from 1982-1989. He lectured at Warwick and Newcastle Universities before his current post at Edinburgh. In Turkey he has directed survey projects on the Black Sea and from 1994 in the west hinterland of Istanbul, surveying and documenting the Anastasian Wall and the Water Supply of Byzantine Constantinople.



İsmail Ertürk, Cultural Economist; Senior Lecturer in Banking | Head of Management & Organisation Studies Group at Alliance Manchester Business School, The University of Manchester

Ismail is the founding director of Cultura, an international advisory company on cultural industries that organised the first Gastro Economy Summit of Turkey in Istanbul. He has worked with the Creative Economy Programme of the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and UNESCO on various international projects. İsmail joined the University of Manchester in January 1987, having worked previously for a merchant bank in Istanbul. From 1982-1983 he was a research fellow at Hull University. He then continued his postgraduate studies at New York University. He has taught corporate finance, bank financial management and international finance on both the School's MBA and Executive Centre programmes.