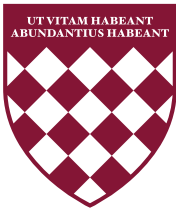




Âsâr-ı Nakşiye Inventory Logbook, first entry by Halil Edhem [Eldem], 1910



AMERICAN
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AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCES
Sheikh Zayed Chair for Arabic
& Islamic Studies

THE CULTURE OF THE COPY

SPEAKER **DUYGU DEMIR**

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2025 | 6:30 PM

NICELY 409 THE SKELETON - AUB

ABSTRACT

The “Culture of the Copy” locates late Ottoman and early Republican Turkish painting in a mimetic episteme. The suggested framework is intended to normalize imitation by looking at its varied results that depart from the ‘original’ --such as emulations, homages, facsimiles, appropriations, translations, and assimilations-- as modes of a necessary strategy. The talk will intertwine three stories as they relate to the copy that includes Ottoman soldier painters, the foundations of the state museum, and a mid-century scandal between painters and professors that spilled over the pages of newspapers. Through the interweaving of these three moments, mimicry becomes part of Turkish syncretic modernism’s pedagogic narrative, as well as the emergence of an internalized modernist ethos, signaling its striving for originality. While the line between imitation and invention gets blurred, a reconsideration of narratives of modernism and their stake and investment in originality emerges as a necessity.

BIO

Duygu Demir (b. Ankara, 1985) is an art historian and curator with a PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) focused on articulations of modern painting from Turkey. Before pursuing her graduate studies, she worked as a programmer at SALT in Istanbul. In addition to SALT (Istanbul and Ankara), her exhibition projects have been presented at MIT’s Keller Gallery (Cambridge, Massachusetts), Arter Space for Art (Istanbul), and Tate Modern (London).

She writes articles and reviews on contemporary art for magazines and online platforms in Turkey and abroad, alongside her academic research. Demir’s research interests include exhibition histories, transnational encounters, and moments of confluence between art and architecture, as well as contemporary artistic practice, particularly of the non-Western kind. She holds a combined BA in visual art and art history from Columbia University in New York.