



# mahalla

August - 2021

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## Mission

*The Title, Mahalla, as a word is used in many languages as a term for neighborhood or location*

*Mahalla is a space of diversity and inclusion in the field of arts and culture.*

*The base of the independent art platform is Istanbul*

*Real and remote events are performed around periodical Festival activities involving initiatives and actors globally*

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## Murmuration

The next Mahalla Festival will take place under the title is “Murmuration” in September 2021 at the *Yeldeğirmeni* districts, (engl.: The Windmill), in Kadıköy on the Anatolian side of Istanbul, and on the European Side in Galata-Beyoğlu and at the Atatürk Oto Sanayi Sitesi in Maslak.

Mahalla is a platform initiated by the Istanbul based association Diyalog Derneği in association with partners worldwide. Activities started in 2017 in the parallel program of The Istanbul Art Biennial with the first Mahalla Festival. In December 2020, the Festival reached 250,000 people with online events. We are expecting to double the outreach this year.

The Mahalla Festival 2021 will establish a neighborhood with various independent art spaces in Kadıköy and Yeldeğirmeni:

A historical school building in the back of Yeldeğirmeni Art Center in Iskele Sokak Numer 43 is the main Venue. The coffee shop Wanderlust, Koli Sanat, Nadas Istanbul and the workshops of the artisans of the district will take part.

At the Atatürk Oto Sanayi Sitesi „Otonom Art Events“ is the partner of the Festival.

## Istanbul - Sep 8 - Sep 26, 2021

Approx. thirty international and local artists will work together. The Festival will be held between September 8 and September 25<sup>th</sup> as a series of events.

Main Locations: Yeldeğirmen and its surroundings

## Conceptual Framework

The global pandemic crisis challenges the ways to practice transnational, but also opens doors to innovations in the field of digital communication.

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## History

2017 Mahalla Istanbul-  
Parallel program of the  
15. Istanbul Art Biennial

2018 Mahalla Malta-  
Valletta European Capital  
of Culture

2019 Mahalla Erbil-  
cancelled due to armed  
conflicts

2020 Mahalla Cyprus-  
Cancelled due to the  
pandemic crisis

2020 Mahalla real-remote.  
The Wandering Tower

2021 Mahalla Istanbul  
Murmuration

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Murmuration refers to the phenomenon that results when hundreds, sometimes thousands, of birds fly in swooping, intricately coordinated patterns through the sky. Scientists found out that the mostly small sized birds are protecting each other from cold, hunger and attacks by enemies by interacting together and communicating passionately.

Twittering as a motive is most present in digital communication on Social Media: Murmuration is used as a metaphor for engagement and solidarity in the frame of Mahalla 2021. The Festival forms a platform for artistic discourse around different spheres in our globalized world: urban and community-life, sharing, creativity, movement, communication, the air, the sky and other relatable entities are parts of the metaphorical frame of the theme.

Murmuration looks also back on the migration movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the interplay of international relations.

Using the life story of early 20<sup>th</sup> century migrants Traugott Fuchs and Erich Auerbach as an example, the philosopher Martin Vialon reflects in a talk during the Festival on the mutual effects of migration, exile and homeland.

The main venue is a historical school building in the back of Yeldeğirmeni Art Center in Iskele Sokak Numer 43 Kadıköy district, the place, where German engineers, who helped to build the Haydarpaşa train station of the Baghdad Railway, used to lived.

Yeldeğirmeni had been a diverse quarter for centuries, the military and business relations at the brink of WWI added a German quarter to the district.

## The Location

Civil society initiatives have settled in the Yeldeğirmeni district in recent years. Especially ecologically and artistically oriented people have studios, independent meeting places and exhibition spaces and cafés emerged here.

Accordingly, the Dyalog Association will use the fourth edition of the Mahalla Festival (Murmuration) to link history and current references. In addition to Apartman 52, various cultural initiatives such as Koli Art Space and Nadas as well as various retailers are involved.

The Istanbul based curator Tuba Kocakaya is organizing a public art tour to these vibrant locations within the Festival.

Further more, the first and oldest settlement in Istanbul was in the Kadıköy district. Excavations behind the historical Haydrapasha train station bear witness to this. During the Art walk we exemplarily experience how the new and the newcomers can enrich the old structures.

Mobilistan is an art project by Manaf Halbouni and Christian Manss, who will drive from Berlin to Istanbul. The artists will be welcomed by local and international artists working in different locations in Istanbul in September. For example, Atatürk Automobile Industry Site in Istanbul Maslak is quite fascinating with its newly established artist studio spaces. Mahalla Festival is in collaboration with Otonom Art Events there. At a central place in

Kadıköy, the Mahalla Festival will end with a performance by the Mobilistan Team.

## Objectives of the Festival

Mahalla is a traveling Festival of Contemporary Art, Music, Theatre, Film and Literature, with several ancillary events running alongside it.

The Festival is a platform that invites local and international participants to events that combine contemporary art with Music, Film and discussions, and invites visitors to take action to discover communities from a new perspective.

The general vision of the Festival is to question a dystopian reality of excluding “the other” in the form of the migrant, the poor, the opposite sex, the animal, the environment, and the unknown. The Title, Mahalla, refers to the word mahalla used in many languages and countries meaning neighborhood or location originated in Arabic mähallä. from the root meaning ‘to settle’, ‘to occupy’ derived from the verb halla (to untie), as in untying a packhorse or camel to make a camp.

30 Years after the “East-Block” dissolved and the wall in Berlin was demolished, we have other blocks, borders, fences and walls imprisoning people. The Mahalla Festival is questioning these realities and picks out the sources of migration. The artistic program and the discourse platform explore the potential of art and culture to blow up chains in the mind. The Festival is building up a network and an infrastructure in the locations it performs to fight dystopian realities with utopian visions and to trigger transformative change for a sustainable one-world-future.

## Provisional Events

*from where to where?* 08.-22.09.2021

The Turkish artist group **Sub** from Çanakkale will create an alternative and safe space where young people can find inspiration, motivation and freely reflect at a historical building. The installation, which will take place on an inverted world map with the participation of the audience, will map inner Turkish migration movements.

Location: Historical school building in the back yard of Yeldeğirmeni Art center, Iskele Sokak 43

*Private Woe*, 08.-22.09.2021

Enstallation and Video by **Ilaria Boffa** and **Esin Aykanat Avcı**. Italian poet Ilaria Boffa’s poem “Private Woe” speaks of a space where living and non-living beings in this Anthropocene can meet and share with tolerance and compassion. Language, culture, nature, the environment, objects & subjects, their ecosystems are all part of an ongoing transformational process.

Location: Historical school building in the back yard of Yeldeğirmeni Art center, Iskele Sk 43

***The Tapestry of M.A.*, 08.-22.09.2021**

Installation of a collectively produced Tapestry on Iskele Sk. Concept-development and Production is directed by artists **Mathilde Melek An**.

Location: Iskele Sk.

**Performance: *Murmuration - an Attempt*, 08.09.-10.09.2021**

Two performers - Milenko Lazić and **Myriam Perrottet** - interact playfully with each other. The performance is interactive, the audience can join in. It's about tracking down the confluence of single individuals within a collective. The different levels of a social fabric are explored. A temporary, imaginary and reciprocal dependency is created using simple utensils.

Location: Iskele Sokak

***Antibody, Suitable Citizens*, 08.-22.09.2021**

The Video Installation *Antibody* by Maltese artist **Raphael Vella** uses hundreds of drawings to tell a brief tale mixing historical and contemporary narratives. It is about a small island, a pandemic and its effect on the community. The "Suitable Citizens" was a 50 hours workshop-program on photography, screen prints, collaborative fashion, stenciling at the University of Malta. A collectively produced tapestry is part of the exhibition. Made by Raphael Vella, with Habtom Tsigehans, Tesfay Simon, Helen Adhanom, Edith Flore, Precious Orogun and Daniel Okoegwale. Supported by artists Giola Cassar and Sarah Maria Scicluna and fashion designer Luke Azzopardi.

Location: Historical school building in the back yard of Yeldeğirmeni Art center, Iskele Sk 43

***Stems*, 08.-22.09.2021**

Istanbul based American Artist **Nora Byrne** invites for an interactive performance. She will draw portraits in Yeldeğirmeni, which are going to be installed later on in the main exhibition space.

Location: Historical school building in the back yard of Yeldeğirmeni Art center, Iskele Sk 43

***Searching Traces*, 10.09.2021, 19:00**

Since the beginning of the pandemic the Istanbul based intercultural association diyalog in cooperation with the Syrian/Canadian filmmaker **Kutaiba Hajira** was running an international platform for experimental Video-production on Zoom with participants from Canada, Eritrea, Germany, Iraq, Malta, Syria, The Netherlands and Turkey. Subject of the short movies created with mobile phones are migration, mobility, exile and life in times of the pandemic. The highlight of the screening during the festival will be the movie *Taxi Malta*, a short movie about a Maltese Taxi driver from Eritrea who is *twittering* with his clients about his journey to Malta, exile and the desire to be mobile.

**Raphael Vella** is participating personally, Martina Camilleri, Major Sium we Search for traces workshop participants will attend Online

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Location: Wanderlust Café, Karakolhane Cd. No:55, Yeldeğirmeni

## Organizer

Diyalog Derneği  
Istanbul

## Screening: *Salomé For Three Women* Dance Performance, 11.09.2021

*Salomé for three women* is an adaption of the theatre play by Oscar Wilde. The choreography, which **Erdem Gündüz** developed this year, creates a space, where the biblical story merges with the narrative of Oscar Wilde. Three female Polish dancers take part in the screening: **Elzbieta Milczenko, Julia Adamczyk, Kasia Pałanka-Kałużska.**

Location: Yeldeğirmeni Art Center, İskele Sk.43

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## Supported by



Federal Ministry  
Republic of Austria  
Arts, Culture,  
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## *My Hand Is Your Hand Is My Hand*, 14.-19.09.2021

The Austrian artist in residence **Barbara Eichhorn** invites the audience to linger, to ask questions, to reflect and to participate. The intended groups are not only residents, but also passers-by, regardless of language, age, gender or cultural background. Drawing is explored as a collective social practice. It creates a situation for opening up, producing, challenging and enables the participants to be part of an act of creating.

Location: in front of Yeldeğirmeni Art Center, İskele Sokak 43, different spaces tba

## *All Jewish*, 14.09.2021

Concert by **Lucian Plessner**, Solo Guitar  
Referring to the anniversary of 1700 documented years of Jewish History in Cologne, the Musician will perform a Concert of Classical Jewish Composers from Salomone Rossi until John Williams.

Location: Yeldeğirmeni Sanat Merkezi, İskele Sk 43

## *The Earth is looking itself through me*, 16.09.2021 - 10.10.2021

Exhibition of Datça based artist **Özge Horasan.**

Koli Art Space, Yurttaş Sk. No:14/A

## *Mobius Art Tour*, 17.09.2021, 15:00

The Istanbul based curator **Tuba Kocakaya**, will conduct an Art Walk in Yeldeğirmeni. Giant murals, thematic bookstores, artist workshops, local design shops, artisans and the audience with the map prepared in this comprehensive adventure that includes the exhibition areas. During the tour, she will visit 16 different points in Yeldeğirmeni.

Locations: Kadıköy/ various districts, Meeting point: Yeldeğirmeni Sanat merkezi, İskele Sk. 43

## *Migration and Exile*, 22.09.2021

Prof. **Martin Vialon** from Germany reflects in an online talk on the mutual effects of migration, exile and homeland using the life story of early 20<sup>th</sup> century migrants Traugott Fuchs and Erich Auerbach as an example.

Location: online talk

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## Mobilistan

Mobilistan is a state declared in Berlin on 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2021 by Syrian German and German artists **Manaf Halbouni and Christian Manss** in a Limousine venue. The artists will depart from the city of Berlin and will go to Istanbul as an artistic intervention in public space. There will be different stops and activities to be shared virtually on the way: state acts, public interventions, meetings and exchange of views with colleagues and applicants for visa or citizenship for Mobilistan. Local and international artists will welcome the Artists as part of the Mahalla Murmuration on September 24-26.

Locations: Kadıköy/ Atatürk Oto Sanayi Sitesi

The Festival will take place with the participation of **Mathilde Melek An**(FR/TR), **Melih Aydemir** (TR), **Mahmut Aydın** (TR), **Esin Aykanat Avcı** (TR), **Ilaria Boffa** (IT), **Nora Byrne** (US/TR), **Yağmur Çalış** (TR), **Martina Camilleri** (MT), **Gökhan Deniz** (TR), **Barbara Eichhorn**(DE/AU), **Dinçer Eşgel** (TR), **Banu Germenli** (TR), **Berçem Gözde Ölmez** (TR), **Erdem Gündüz** (TR/PL), **Manaf Halbouni** (DE/SY), **Mustafa Horasan** (TR), **Özge Horasan** (TR), **Tuba Kocakaya**(TR), **Milenko Laziç** (CH/BA), **Christian Manss** (DE), **Orhan Mert** (TR), **Myriam Perrottet** (CH), **Lucian Plessner** (DE) **Barbara Repe** (DE/HR), **Major Sium** (MT/ER), **İlayda Tunca** (TR), **Derin Uludağ** (TR), **Raphael Vella** (MT), **Martin Vialon** (DE) and others.

## Communication

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Depending on the development of the COVID-19 pandemic, all events will be carried out in compliance with Turkish hygiene rules. If, contrary to expectations, the situation of the pandemic in Turkey worsens and there are again greater restrictions in Turkey, all events can also be held online with a comparable response.

Please check out the Mahalla Festival for updates and dates:  
<http://mahalla.inenart.eu/>

Concept: Thomas Büsch, Sabine Küper-Büsch, Co-Curator of the Mahalla Festival, Istanbul