

# Istanbul: A landscape in-between virtual and real

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## Abstract

Istanbul as a landscape... We are experiencing the city through an imaginary forest. That landscape which in flux in-between virtual-real is reproduced in the personal memories again and again.

This paper discusses Istanbul as a landscape. It offers to approach through micro scale that discovery begins to understand that Istanbul is defined as a landscape that consist of virtual-actual folds. It is mentioned in this paper that a new layer which has begun to exist on micro scale in Istanbul.

A new micro-creation has started in the city state in Istanbul. A new interface, a virtual layer which actualizes place to place. This layer which extends in between the real- virtual, is a transition space where people can freely express themselves, can encounter and can create temporal spatiality on the city.

‘The new layer’ that has begun to exist in city on micro scale and in-between virtual- real is author’s own reality as a new view to notion of ‘palimpsest’, it’s a future projection. The expression of the text should be evaluated by taking into consideration this personal reality, the state of being in virtual-real. The streets of the mental city of person and the streets of the physical city start to intertwine. New layer covers on the city, penetrate of the city and correlate antagonistic relations with physical, virtual and other layers, so it is open to discovery.

## Keywords

Inbetween space, Landscape, Microgeography, New media, Virtual-real.



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## 1. Introduction

Istanbul as a landscape... Along the folds of a geography which consists of imaginary forests, we walk through a landscape which is created by an urban memory. As we walk in the landscape, which is in flux constantly by historical, cultural, sociological, economic, technological dynamics. We are on a topography which occurs of animate, inanimate, virtual and real folds, heights and hollows. When we are walking, urban memory accompanies our individual memories. Overlapping, palimpsest Istanbul... A forest, which is full of images...

If we look at landscape from above, we notice some defined regions on macro scale where the effects of different dynamics become dense on. The plots which are splitted by sterile line, aren't sufficient to give us information about the meaning and memory of place. It will be needed to lean closer. When we converge increasingly to micro scale, we are faced with a more complex pattern. Layers nested like a spiral pattern which constituted by a complex record, recorded during centuries, interrelate with each other on different ways. Unexpected reactions occur by these spontaneous encounters. Surprising and amazing structure of Istanbul comes out of it. We face with different perspectives, when we look at pattern which consists of overlapped brought by palimpsest structure. The depth formed by overlapping as slide of each layer is important and is understood as enter into, as roam in streets of it. Not predictable by planning, relations established as a result of unexpected juxtapositions are one of the key points which create the city landscape. When you decrease to micro scale more, the details will proliferate more. It must be dug to understand. It is necessary to take care of sounds, surfaces, smells, people, conversations as well.

When some cells of a living tissue are proliferate and form new folds in the tissue, some cells will die. An organic renewal is experienced on the scale of cell, on microscale. Results will be recognized on the macro scale in time. Istanbul that we mention as a landscape is an organic city because of

its intertwine tissue. In time, damaged tissues renew themselves, also tissues which have new features are designed and added to system on micro scale.

Changes in the city occur no longer by a decision of a certain authority. Each person is effective in this regard. The transparent layer added to city, creates corridors on streets, some of it wraps of building surfaces, the others inflates like a balloon when it rises towards the sky and creates a volume. This transparent layer manipulates the city's existing pattern by a virtual one. This manipulation is created as a result of the encounter of a digging in the city's existing pattern and the memories of people. A new interface is created in-between the city and people. Also, this interface is a new space in between the physical city and virtual world, space of hologram, space of multi-dimensional image, space where the image of people's own memory gained public visibility momentarily. The new interface is a new meeting space, a new type of encounter in between the city and people. The environment, belongs neither to virtual nor to real, it is the space of transition.

Through the corridors, surfaces and big volumes of that transparent layer, unpredictable encounters and poetic spaces come out. The new layer that comes on the interrelated pattern, which constitutes the city, and manipulates it, place to place changes the method of seeing and perceiving of people. The streets of person's imaginary city and the physical streets of city start to interrelate. New habits begin on the flow of daily life. These habits effect administration and decision methods of city, communication between people, person's way of thought production and the way to express himself. The new layer covers the city, interpenetrates and opens to discovery.

## 2. Why is Istanbul a landscape, How is it a landscape?

Landscape is alive, fluid and in-flux. Each fold it has is in relation with each other. It is four dimensional, one of which is time. Each fold that landscape has curl up into each other in time, fold open and a new species comes out. Landscape is a system which de-

velops horizontal, there is no hierarchy. Interrelates and meshes which have been created by these interrelations are more appropriate to describe this system. The motion dynamics like life that live and decay in each part of it and relations among these parts define the whole structure.

As a landscape, the fold of Istanbul is in motion from virtual to real and from real to virtual. Historical, cultural, economic and digital folds, personal and mass folds oscillate from virtual to real and real to virtual. Interrelations are experienced from place to place. New folds exist in between the folds.

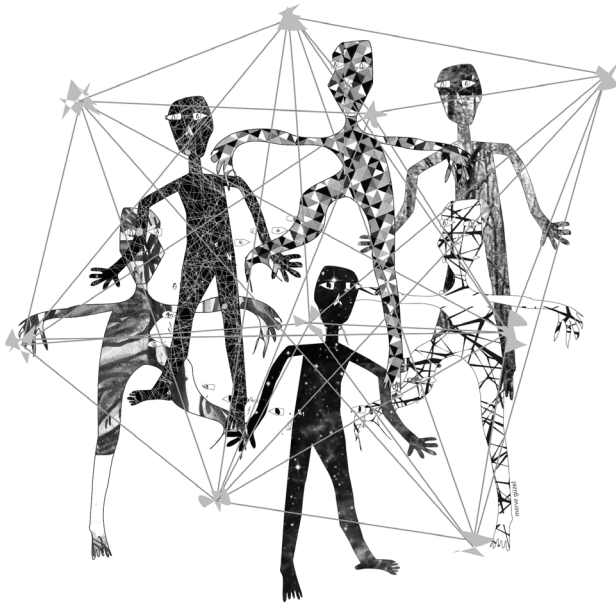
In fact, rather than considering the

existence as a superior existent that will establish the stability of the other perceived existents, we should consider it as a gap in which singular transformations play with each other in its transparency or a nonexistant, "an imaginary versicolor kaleidoscope" (Jarry, NA).

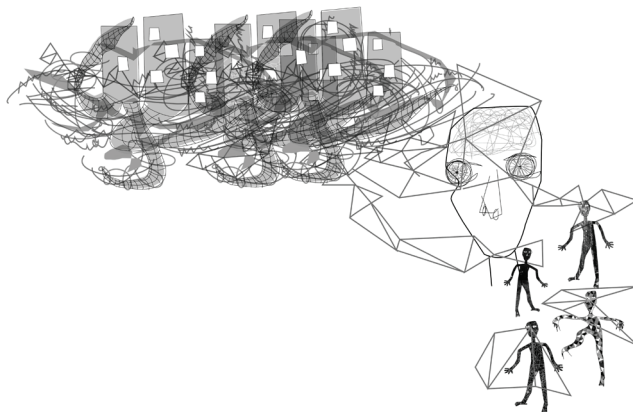
As a landscape, a city Istanbul can be thought as a gap which oscillates in-between virtuality and reality. That being which is in-flux is created in memories of each citizen by different images. It turns into personal realities by wrapped on each mind's own kaleidoscope. People create their own images out of their perceptions and generate new folds from these images on their own personal landscapes.

Personal landscape is virtual geography where its folds are created by transformation of sensations of images during personal experiences. It is the virtual space where people can perform their the most free and the most creative thinking free from authority. A person creates the boundaries of space by himself/herself. Freedom is also a state, which requires awareness, and people can unconsciously create walls on their microgeography. This person always carries his/her microgeography, perceives from inside of that landscape that surrounds him/her. "The fact that all the rich images, perceptions and ideas are underestimated, indicates the abilities of people to carry the burden of operating in an universe that shows great respect to the differentiations among real, imagination and virtual but at the same time contains their contradictory relationships." (Calvino, 1988). The person is in becoming, oscillates between different states according his/her movements in his/her landscape (Figure 1). The city is also in becoming through all its dynamics. The personal experience of the city is in the antagonistic knit which is created by the person's own microgeography and physical city.

The space, that is created by intertwine situation of the personal landscapes and the physical spaces of city, can not be seen through eyes for now maybe, but it is still important, it is the city itself. The person who relates in-between the images which create



**Figure 1.** The subject who oscillates between his/her different existences, as well as experiences of different existence of the city, Merve Güzel, 2014.



**Figure 2.** The landscape of the city, multiplies and reproduces in landscapes of each mind, Merve Güzel, 2014.

the personal landscape and physical space, does translations in between these spaces when he/she perceives them, actually (Figure 2). He/she creates his/her own reality.

Istanbul, is not a single entity, it has more than one body which are created by different curves on each memories, it is a being. It creates different reflections in each mind. It gains new meanings in people's own memories. Therefore, Istanbul can be defined as the sum of all memories, digital bits and physicality, temporalities, interconversions and relations of them only.

The economic curves which show the inside of historical curves have been carried out in Eminönü. In Karaköy, cultural curves separates the historical and economic curves. Digital curves have been carried out in park. Spaces and people intertwine. Streets, full of images. The memory of city is different from temporalities which belongs to citizens and spaces. A knit is created by transition between memory of city-citizen. That is an imaginative knit.

"The final image of the imaginary is the tangling of a virtual image to real object and the real object's tangling to the virtual image. It is not enough that the real object, real view reminds of similar or close images; it needs to reveal its own virtual image, the virtual image at the same time, gets connected to the real by following a way through which each of the two factors follow each other and swap as a imaginary view." (Deleuze, 2002).

The person who moves in situation of historical, cultural, sociological, economical, a jungle that is charged with personal images, besides physical environment, when he/she walks in the city, oscillates between the images that fill his/her mind, images circulate in his/her mind and different states of his/her existence. That's because, the person is also a landscape, and when his/her body is roaming in-between the city's virtual-real curves, his/her mind is also scud on the curves of his/her own landscape.

While the city actually has much more layered structure, the person who walks through all memories and streets of city, still experiences on the physicality of city, in the reflection of virtuality of city to his/her own person-

al landscape. "When you get rid of rallying, integrative imagery of eye, you encounter a foreign, different aspect of daily life. This aspect of daily life doesn't rise to surface so much or its visible surface consists of a border area that forward a certain direction, it is a coastal area on the border of the visible." (Certeau, 2008). The streets, the places in the city where the encounters are taken are place of spontaneous surprises, actually have got many more virtual curves which have not been physically framed yet.

The imaginative knit formed by memory of city-citizen, the situation of intertwine is virtual. Here, during this intertwine, a new layer occurs in the city. That layer was inevitable for the discovery of virtual curves of city and trigger the exciting confrontations. The landscape has created that layer on its own. That layer revealed itself on micro scale at first, by the increase of curves, it evolved into macro scale by creating new folds on the city landscape and personal landscapes.

### 3. A drift from 'macro' to 'micro'

For an object, a city, a geography, a person, an essay, when viewed from macro scale, it will prevent to see its difference from any other 'thing'. It maybe be able to put it into some overall categories, to make comparisons. It may be possible to have observations roughly about shape, color of an object, general structure of a city – like to be answer for some questions such as, is it a coastal city?, does it have such a dense structure?- physical characteristics of a person, the length-shortening of the text.

Split parcels by sterile lines are not enough to give information about the meaning and memory of place. When we look closer, we can see the connection between the intertwined endless layers. These connections have details that can be explored in micro scale.

To be able to recognize the differentiations on macro scale requires a long time. Because, the confrontations and encounters that start transformations, occur on micro scale. Then it expands to the macro scale. Unlike the atoms constituting the object we consider as not moving, the particles constituting the atoms are in continuous move-



ment.

As general characteristics of the features to be noticed on macro scale, the decisions which are taken on macro scale can only be general decisions. As the one mentioned is a living tissue, the city that we define as a landscape, a transformation that will be made should connect on micro scale. Micro scale is micro memory, micro space, micro time. It is a personal thing, point space, moment.

“Planning the city both by thinking of being plural even in reality, and to give effect to that plurality idea, so to know and to do articulation.” (Certeau, M. De, 2008).

Who plans the city? If production of space continues with experience of space, also city reflections occur on personal virtual landscapes and personal realities reflect from personal landscapes to the city is an example of re-production of urban space. On micro scale, person is the one who produces the city. Besides the macro scale of control mechanism, micro scale is important.

The walking action has the potential of confrontation. A linear section of city is received while walking. This section is the section of all intertwined layers of city (Figure 3). When body moves on physical section, the mind



**Figure 3.** In Istanbul on a section of a virtual walking, micro images which belong to personal landscape encounters and create perception of the city, Merve Güzel, 2014.

moves in imaginary curves which are created in the personal landscape by virtual curves of the city that the section passes through. "The relationship that person has with him/herself, leads internal changes in the space (games between of its layers) or the scattering (circulations and travels) of stacked stories by actions of pedestrians." (Certeau, 2008). Confrontations during walking are also virtual confrontations as well as physical confrontations. Movement speeds up encounters. It helps to connect relations which are not able to connect on state of immobility. There are the possibilities to experience spontaneous situations which have not been designed before.

Istanbul's surprising and amazing becoming comes from intertwined structure more than plurality of layers and sterile divisions. Although there are outstanding features of the region, defining and categorizing them in a word is not possible. But it has been tried anyways as generally the authority lays down rules on macro scale, works with sterile and clear lines more than intertwined things.

A layer starts to exist by spatiality occurs by micro behaviors in the city that is planned by authority. It creates 'metaphoric' city in a planned city (Certeau, 2008). As his dream, Kandinsky states Michel De Certeau (2008) in the last paragraph of 'Walking in The City', "A big city which is built according to all rules of architecture but suddenly shake from foundation by power which made upside down all calculations."

The new layer which occurs through the proliferation of micro creation will affect both the architect and the architectural practice as well.

#### **4. A new network: A new tissue emerges on micro scale, a geography in-between**

As a new layer the tissue which starts to become a new part of the city, is a geography in-between the virtual-real. It is in-between space, hybrid space, parallax space.

Andre Breton (2009), believes that, in dreams and reality, these two states seems very contradictory at first glance, in future, so to speak, integrates a kind

of absolute reality, and thinks that this state would be surreality. The new layer which starts to exist in city aims to create absolute reality that let to be intertwine of the virtual curves of personal landscapes and to actualize on points of city instantly.

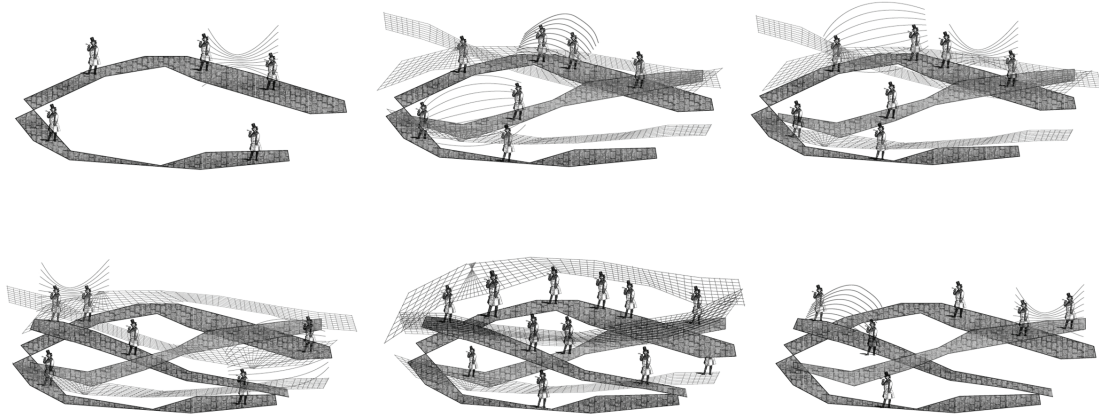
If perceptions of the city have different realities on each personal landscape, the new layer which is started its existence in micro scale is the sum of all personal realities, place-nonplace where these realities intertwine and create new realities. The micro scale that become on city, citizen scale, moment scale can actualize by new layer on the city.

The new layer, interface, has potentiality to drift people to hallucination. Hallucination, is a situation that develops by drifting of perception to an exceptional situation, is created in exceptional ways of seeing the reality. Hallucination drifts to virtual by the manipulation of reality. The space of hallucination is the in-between space. It causes mental bending. The person who experiences cognitive bending will start to bend her/his environment. This interface which can be thought as a cognitive kaleidoscope, lets people to develop exceptional perceptions about the city. The drift to an exceptional perception is possible.

In addition to being a kaleidoscope of the interface itself, it is also possible to design new kaleidoscopes on the interface. Architect designs kaleidoscope. Architect is who designs perception, creates algorithm. Spaces are algorithms. This algorithm is a kaleidoscope that can transform into a new space by the imaginative input of each mind. Bended cognition starts to bend the space.

The interface is the place of making connection among people and also spaces. It works with network logic. Now, when the architect designs the space, he/she thinks on to incorporating the space to network and to design the methods of actualization of flux instantly. In this way, space is becoming a part of flux and participating in the endless transformation.

The person who roams in the Istanbul streets creates new connection corridors in his/her cognitive by the



**Figure 4.** When flaneur is walking on physical streets of city and virtual streets of personal landscape, the spaces of hallucination in-between virtual and real appeared instantly as spaces, streets which belong to the new layer, Merve Güzel, 2014.

instant perspectives occur by overlaps which are created by interface on micro scale. Spontaneous confrontations go beyond the physical streets of city, In-between spaces that can exist in-between the virtual-real instantly, can occur on every time every place of the city (Figure 4). Thus, the micro encounters that will be experienced among people and situations will be enough.

The images belong to people who generate space and images of city's other layers, create new spaces by manipulation.

The dynamics that create the existence of city are the dynamics which continue horizontally and have so many participatory, in the truth of city, under the decisions of authority these dynamics are disregarded. The new layer aims to have a say of all dynamics which generate the city landscape on the instant spatiality.

At the tip of interaction in between the people and the layer, the whole city can be transformed into an organism which occurs from streets, virtual streets. Instant corridors can be existed in-between the people. The time can gain spatiality by folding. This can be possible by the actualization of temporal bends in cognitive citizen.

The tools through which people experience that interface might be glasses, lenses or any other technologies that can be improved over time.

Spaces are created algorithmically and instead of physically existing at any moment, they are potentially pending. On the interface the images that will be

created by a confrontation among people transformation spatiality instantly by the algorithm which is defined for the space.

The material of these spatial situations is generally immateriality. These instant spaces which will occur on the interface then can be blended to virtual curves of landscape and also can be transformed into reality in the physical environment by dressing up to materiality.

## 5. Conclusion

For a living landscape potentials are concerned more than rules and precise situations. On the other hand, to estimate that the future will not be same is not very difficult. When the city which is in development, the subject that is in development is discussed, the reality is fluid.

It is provided for the interface a geography in-between virtual-real, which is stated as a future prediction, would have to begin itself as a new layer on micro scale, transforms to a layer of city on a macro scale which is created by combination of micro scales.

Comments have been made on how it is an interface, how it is existed as this suggestion is generated by some particular encounters in the personal landscape of author and for now it is a reality that belongs to her.

Inside of that new layer which will connect all layers generates the city and all people live in the city, it is possible to produce new ideas, to re-think about production of space, to create new ex-

ceptions which is uncertain for now. It is open to curious minds to explore.

### Acknowledgement

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