

Aslihan Demirtaş

Aslihan Demirtas is the founder of Aslihan Demirtas Design and Research Studio and co-founder of KHORA, interdisciplinary design studios based in Istanbul and New York. Her practice purposefully crosses territories and boundaries of disciplines in the forms of buildings, landscapes, installation projects, exhibitions and art projects, as well as research and activism.

Aslihan Demirtas received a Master of Science degree in Architectural Studies from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT, 2000) and Bachelor of Architecture degree from the Middle East Technical University (METU, 1991).

Prior to establishing her own practice, Demirtaş worked for Pritzker Laureate I.M. Pei as the lead designer for the Museum of Islamic Arts in Doha, Qatar and the Miho Chapel in Japan.

Demirtaş started her own practice in New York in 2007. In 2010 she partook in Blind Dates Project curated by Defne Ayaş and Neery Melkonian which culminated in a group exhibition at Pratt Manhattan Gallery. In collaboration with Silva Ajemian and with the moderation of Lebbeus Woods, she co-produced work articulating architectural, geographic and political narratives in the archeological city of Ani in Kars, Turkey and the broken bridge at the Turkish-Armenian border in. Same year, she designed, curated and produced an exhibition at the Arnold and Sheila Johnson Galleries at New School, collaborating with activist community groups in Brooklyn to turn Williamburg's Engine 212, a defunct FDNY building, into a community and arts center.

In 2011, Aslihan Demirtas founded her Istanbul office to oversee her projects in Turkey and Europe. In May 2012 at SALT Galata, Istanbul and September 2013 at SALT Ulus, Ankara, she designed and curated the exhibition *Modern Essays 5: Graft* which investigated the role of water dams in Turkish modernization as well as the larger question of modernity's relation with nature. In 2013, Demirtaş received a *Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts Grant* to continue her research and to produce the e-publication *GRAFT* in collaboration with SALT. The e-publication will further disperse her investigations on the philosophical and physical rules of engagement between humans and our planet.

Beginning in 2016, Demirtaş started to work with performative sculptures made with rammed earth. *Plinth*, installed and exhibited at first at TÜYAP, Istanbul and then invited to collectorspace, Istanbul, propagated responses by poets, artists, farmers and among others by invitation. Her work has been exhibited at SALT Galata, Istanbul and SALT Ulus, Ankara; collectorspace, Istanbul; Sharjah Biennial 13, Istanbul; Pratt Manhattan Gallery; the Aronson Gallery in New York.

Her office recently completed the Winter Garden, a rammed earth space composed of 30 tons of soil on a fourth floor of a building--SALT Beyoğlu, Istanbul and is working on the schematic design phase of the adaptive reuse project of the ex-Yugoslav Lumbardhi Cinema in Prizren, Kosovo. Demirtaş is also working on two special projects: a set design for a one person theatre performance in Istanbul to start

in April, 2019 and the spatial setting of an art and research project to be launched in Stockholm in May, 2019.

Aslihan Demirtas is full-time faculty at Kadir Has University, Faculty of Arts & Design, Istanbul where she currently teaches graduate classes revolving around the subjects of the Anthropocene, nature and aesthetics of research. She has lectured at GSD, Harvard, MIT, The Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Parsons and American University in Beirut among others. She has authored a chapter in the book *Landscapes of Development: The Impact of Modernization on the Physical Environment of the Eastern Mediterranean* published by Harvard University. Demirtas is an active member of the Initiative for the Protection of the Historical Yedikule Urban Gardens and an avid gardener.

www.aslihan-demirtas.com

<http://www.grahamfoundation.org/grantees/4985-graft>

<http://saltonline.org/en/623/modern-essays-5-graft?q=graft>

<http://graftonline.org/>

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Curriculum Vitae

Education

- 1998–2000 Master of Science in Architecture Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, MA
- 1987–1991 Bachelor of Architecture, Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Turkey

Selected Projects

Aslihan Demirtas Design and Research Studio in New York & Istanbul
KHORA Office
<http://aslihan-demirtas.com/>

2007–present

- National Museum of Fine Arts, Tirana, Albania, Garden
Ongoing, 2019, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
- Kino Lumbardhi, Prizren, Kosovo, Outdoor Kitchen
Completed, 2019, LUMBARDHI FOUNDATION, CHWB, UNDP
- Kino Bahçe, Prizren, Kosovo, Outdoor Cinema Landscape Design
Ongoing, Completion 2019 October, LUMBARDHI FOUNDATION, CHWB, UNDP
- 'Maldoror' Stage Set, Culter Theatre, Istanbul
Completed, 2019, FULYA PEKER
- Winter Garden & Visiting Scholar/Artist Wing, SALT Beyoğlu,
Completed, 2018-, SALT/GARANTİ KÜLTÜR AŞ
- Kino Lumbardhi, Prizren, Kosovo, Renovation & annexes
Ongoing, Schematic Design phase, 2016-, LUMBARDHI FOUNDATION
- House on Mount Ida, Hacıarslanlar Köyü, Edremit,
Ongoing, Completion 2019-, IDAMERA COLLECTIVE
- Istanbul Historical Eyüp Sultan District Strategic Planning, Invited Competition
Completed, 2016, EYÜP MUNICIPALITY
- MIO SB Industrial Zone Green Life Landscape, Invited Competition,
Completed, 2016, MIO SB
- Uşak Mosque, Design of a 1000 people mosque with 17500 m area for urban agriculture,
Schematic Design, project cancelled, 2015, UŞAK MUNICIPALITY
- Antalya Internationale Architectural Biennial, Exhibition design for the Biennale
Completed, 2015
- Gallipoli Peninsula Historic National Park Focus Areas, Invited Competition
Honorable Mention, 2015, Gallipoli Peninsula Historic National Park Administration
- Çevre Theatre, Istanbul, restoration and renovation project,
Schematic design, 2014-, SEMAVER KUMPANYA
- Restaurant, SALT Galata, Istanbul
Completed, 2014, SALT/GARANTİ KÜLTÜR AŞ
- Halep Passage, interior renovation of entrance and corridor, Istanbul
Construction drawings, 2013, project cancelled, HALEP PASAJI VE HANI YÖNETİMİ

Knit wall at SALT Beyoglu, Istanbul, Turkey
Completed, 2013, SALT/GARANTI KÜLTÜR AŞ

Suyurdu Thermal Baths and Physical Therapy Hospital, Karahayıt, Denizli, Turkey
Design Development phase, 2011, ÇIRALI GRUP

Eco Retreat, Canar, Spain
Schematic Design 2011-, On hold, MAURA O'DONNELL & DAVID ROMAN

Erika's Garden, Brooklyn, NY, design and construction of a permeable moss & slate
landscape,
Completed 2008, ERIKA JAKUBASSA

Miho Chapel, Miho Institute of Aesthetic, Kyoto, Japan 2007-2009,
Chief Design Consultant to I.M. Pei for schematic design and design development
phases, Completed, 2013, SHUMEI

Selected Exhibitions, Research and Artwork 2010-present

'Boş Bir Oda Kendi Fonksiyonunu Yaradır', Kiraathane İstanbul Edebiyat Evi
Istanbul, 2019, *artist/architect*, drawing, exhibition

Sharjah Art Biennial, Bahar, Istanbul, 2017, *artist/architect*
'It is always spring', installation

collectorspace, Istanbul, 2017, *artist/architect*
'Plinth', installation
<http://collectorspace.org/?p=5343>
<https://www.artforum.com/words/id=68409>

Artist 2016, Artist 2016, Terra Incognita, TÜYAP, 2016, *artist/architect*
'Plinth', installation

1st, 2nd and 3rd Istanbul Design Biennials, 2012-2016, *co-curator and designer for
weaving project*
Knotations: 'Instructions/Interpretations'; 'Alterations: Weaving an Exception' and
'Transcriptions', exhibition and product in collaboration with DHOKU Kilims

SALT Ulus, Ankara, Turkey, 2013, *curator, researcher and designer*
'Modern Essays 5: *Graft*', exhibition & database
<http://www.saltonline.org/tr/#!/tr/623/modern-essays-5/> and graftonline.org

SALT Galata, Istanbul, Turkey, 2012, *curator, researcher and designer*
'Modern Essays 5: *Graft*', Exhibition & database
<http://www.saltonline.org/en/363/> and graftonline.org

Aronson Gallery, Parsons School of Design, New York, 2010, *curator and designer*
'Engine 212: Activist Interiors', exhibition & event

Northside Town hall at Engine 212, Williamsburg, New York Installation, 2010,
artist,
'Projected: Engine 212', art installation & event

Pratt Manhattan Gallery, Blind Dates Project, 2010, *artist/architect*
'Remains Connected', artwork

I. M. Pei – Architect, Lead Project Designer 2001–2008

Museum of Islamic Arts, Doha, Qatar, completed November 2008, *Lead Designer*

Louvre Museum – “From Córdoba to Samarkand: The Future Museum of Islamic Art, Doha” exhibition, *design and coordination of IM Pei section*

Athens Modern Art Museum, Athens, Greece, *designer*

Embassy of the People’s Republic of China, Washington, DC, completed 2010, *designer*

Rogers Marvel Architects, Project Designer 2000–2001

Dartmouth College, Hopkins Center Performing Arts and Hood Museum Master Plan Studies

Çinici Architecture and Planning Office, Lead Project Designer 1991–1998

Written and Published Work

‘Tiyatro sahnesinde mimari deneyim’, interview by Bahar Türkay, VBenzeri, 2019
<https://www.vbenzeri.com/konuklar/tyatro-sahnesinde-mimari-deneyim>

“Kendinize Daldığınız, Gittiğiniz, Nefes Aldığınız, Sessiz...” , interview by Burcu Bilgiç, Arkitera, 2018
<http://www.arkitera.com/soylesi/1040/kendinize-daldiginiz-gittiginiz-nefes-aldiginiz>

‘Aslihan Demirtas Architecture, Design & Research Studio | KHORA’, interview by Amber Niksarlioğlu Eroyan, Mimarizm, 2018
http://www.mimarizm.com/mimarlik-ofisleri/aslihan-demirtas-architecture-design-research-studio-khora_129606

“毛泡桐/桐 / Paulownia tomentosa / Princess Tree / La Vigie”
Istanbul: collectorspace, 2017
<http://collectorspace.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/cs12-210917.pdf>

ArtForum, 2017
‘Aslihan Demirtaş’
<https://www.artforum.com/words/id=68409>

"Dünyadaki Yapma Pratiklerini Yeniden Düşünmeye Çalışıyoruz", interview by Burcu Bilgiç, Arkitera, 2017
<http://www.arkitera.com/soylesi/988/aslihan-demirtas-ali-cindoruk-khora>

‘Lumbardhi: What It Means To Evolve’, 2017
<http://dokufest.com/lumbardhi-what-it-means-to-evolve/>

‘Dünyevilik ve kutsallık arasında’ (Between sacred & profane) by Ezgi Tuncer, manifoldpress, on Plinth, 2017
<http://manifold.press/dunyevilik-ile-kutsallik-arasinda>

Infrastructure: Water issue, Guest editor for Betonart, 2014

“Rowing Boats in the Reservoir: Water Infrastructure as Transplanted Seascape,” chapter in *Landscapes of Development: The Impact of Modernization on the Physical Environment of the Eastern Mediterranean*, (ed. P. Pyla), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, August 2013

“Modern Aşı”, article about the exhibition Modern Essays 5: *GRAFT*, Betonart, 09, 2012

“Silence of the Land,” (ed. by Hakan Topal), Silence, *ArteEast*, 12, 2010
<http://www.arteeast.org/pages/artenews/Silence/470/>

“Watching Tankers Go By,” *In-Transit: The Bauhaus – In Between Local and International*, Verlag der Bauhaus-Universität Bauhaus, Weimar, Germany, 2009

Artificial Nature: Water Infrastructure and its Experience as Natural Space, unpublished Master's Thesis, Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2000

"Winding Ankara," *ANYTIME* (ed. C. Davidson), Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999

"10 Francs," *Thresholds 18*, Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999

"Turkish Grand National Assembly New Public Relations Building," publication of the competition entry and text in *Arredamento/Mimarlık*, 11, 1997

Lectures, Talks & Conferences

2019

- "The Beauty of Residue"
Lecture organized by Lumbardhi Foundation and Kosovo Architecture Foundation, supported by US Speakers Program Kosovo. Kino Armata, Pristina, Kosovo

2018

- 'The Rural' panel organized in collaboration between Istanbul Biennial and White Chapel Gallery as part of Istanbul Biennial Learning programs, IKS
'Learning from the Rural' panel, *Panelist*
- Public in the Making Conference-Gathering, İTÜ Taşkışla, İstanbul
Relais Culture Europe, Paris, Horizon 2020 as part of "Trans-making: Art / Culture / Economy to Democratize Society. Research in Placemaking for Alternative Narratives" <https://trans-making.eu/>
'Green Commoning' session, *Panelist*
- Heritage Lab, Letnicë, organized by CHWB Kosovo <http://chwb.org/kosovo/>
Lecturer and Workshop Leader
- Watershed Symposium, organized by the Circle, İTÜ Taşkışla, İstanbul
Panelist
- İyi Tasarım İzmir 3, İzmir Akdeniz Akademisi İzmir Fuar
'Geleceği Karşılama' panel, *Panelist*
- 'Graft or What good is a river without a dam?', Bilgi University, Department of Architecture, *Lecture*
- Açık Radyo Programs
Yararlı Sanat Arşivi (Arte Util Archive), 'Yedikule Bostanları', *Program guest*
Açık Mimarlık, 'Alfred Heilbronn Botanik Bahçesi', *Program guest*
Açık Mimarlık, 'SALT Kışbahçesi', *Program guest*
- '2000-2008, New York-Doha: İslam Sanatları Müzesi Katar', Akbank Sanat Mimarlık Seminerleri, *Lecture*

2017

- L'Internationale Dialogues
'What needs to change? Preservation of the Commons', Conversation with Amy Franceschini and Aslihan Demirtas
<http://www.internationaleonline.org/dialogues/>
- Harvard University, Graduate School of Design, The Harvard-Mellon Urban Initiative
New Food as Urban Agent Conference, *Panel organizer & moderator*
'Lettuce or Rubble?: Yedikule Urban Gardens'
http://mellonurbanism.harvard.edu/hmui_event/new-food-as-urban-agent/

- Kadist, Paris in collaboration with Lumbardhi Foundation, Prizren, Kosovo
Europa Enterprise: On Commoning, *Panelist*
'For the Love of Earth'
<http://kadist.org/program/prizren-seminar/>
- Parsons School of Design, School of Design Strategies, 'Graft Forecast' with Evren Uzer, Hakan Topal, Ali Taptık, *Lecture*
<http://sds.parsons.edu/urban/graft-forecast/>
- YEM, Istanbul
Conversation with Wolf Prix
- 15th Istanbul Biennale, *Mahalla Festival*
'Perspective & Duties', *Moderator*
- 'Nehri ve tarlaları görmek için pencereyi açmak yetmez', Design Encounters Series, MEF University, *Lecture*
- 2016 International Federation of Landscape Architects, Unfolding Middle Eastern Landscapes Conference, Beirut
'Yedikule Urban Gardens: Since 422', *Panelist*
- In Conversation with Aslihan Demirtaş & Ali Taptık
<http://collectorspace.org/?p=4966>
- 2015 Açık Radyo, Açık Mimarlık, interview
'Architecture's Female State'
- Middle East Technical University, Faculty of Architecture, *Seminar*
'Graft'
- Istanbul Bilgi University, Faculty of Architecture, *Lecture*
'Did you carve the stone? Be stoned by the stone, not your carving.'
- 1st Istanbul Design Biennale, 2012, *Panelist*
'Instructions/Interpretations'
- 2013 AESOP, Istanbul
Becoming Local, *Workshop leader, Advisory Board member and moderator*
- 2010 Pratt Manhattan Gallery, Blind Dates Project,
'Remains Connected', *Panelist*, Moderated by Lebbeus Woods
<http://blinddatesproject.org/>
- Brown University, Arts in One World Conference
'Remains Connected', *Lecture*
- 2009 MIT, Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, History and Practice: Exploring Role of History in Contemporary Architectural Practice
'Negotiations', *Panelist*
<https://akpia.mit.edu/history-contemporary-architectural-practice>
- Bauhaus Universitat Weimar, Germany, Seminar: In-Transit
"Watching Tankers Go By", *Lecture*
- 2004 Harvard University, Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, MA, Symposium:
Landscapes of Development: Modernization and the Physical Environment in the Eastern Mediterranean
"Rowing Boats in the Reservoir: Water Infrastructure, Nature and Imagination",
Lecture

- 1998 ANYTIME, Ankara, Conference: Anytime
Presented two projects and conceptual work under the title “Winding Ankara” in the Beginnings session (text published in ANYTIME, 1999)
Designed and installed the exhibition “Winding Ankara,” the visual complement to the lecture.

Awards & Prizes

- 2014 Honorable mention, Gallipoli Peninsula Historic National Park Focus Areas Competition
2013 Recipient of Graham Foundation Award, Individual category for Graft, e-media
<http://grahamfoundation.org/grantees/4985-graft>
2013 Honorable mention, Kemal Kurdaş Memorial Grave Competition
Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey
1999 Recipient of the Aga Khan Travel and Research Award, MIT, Cambridge, MA
1998 Aga Khan Tuition Award for Graduate Study, MIT, Cambridge, MA
1995 Honorable Mention, Ankara Opera House, Theatre and Congress Center Competition (Ministry of Public Works), Ankara, Turkey (with H. Zelef and C. Cinici)
1993 Third Prize, ‘Gateway to Ankara’ Competition (Ankara Metropolitan Municipality), Ankara, Turkey (with F. Geveci)

Teaching Experience

- 2015–present Full-time Faculty, Kadir Has University, Faculty of Arts and Design
Courses: Nature, Landscape & Infrastructure
Architecture design studio
Small Interventions
Aesthetics of Research in Architecture & Urbanism
- 2015–present KHORA Workshops on Spatial Experimentations (with Ali Cindoruk)
‘KHORA!’: Critical Urban Practices Workshops, 2016
‘KHORA II: Why Not?’: Bademlik Design Festival, 2017
‘KHORA III: Rastgele!’, REK Workshops, SALT, 2019
- 2011–2015 Adjunct Faculty, Bilgi University, Department of Architecture, Graduate Program, Istanbul
- 2008–present Adjunct Faculty, Parsons School of Constructed Environments, AAS Interior Design Studio II & Principles of Design
- 2008–2009 Studio Co-Leader, Fordham University + Pablo Neruda Academy, as part of Bronx River Crossing, Workshop, organized by SLO Architecture, recipients of the Van Alen Institute Prize.
- 1998–present Guest reviewer and lecturer for architectural and landscape design studios and courses: Yale, Parsons, RISD, City College, NJIT,
- 1997–1998 METU, Ankara, Turkey

Memberships, certificates

LEED AP, US Green Building Council
Member, Yedikule Historical Gardens Protection Initiative
Member, Slow Food Convivium Turkey
Northside Townhall Community and Cultural Center, Arts Council Board Member, Brooklyn, New York
Chamber of Architects, Turkey

Languages

Turkish (native), English (fluent), Italian (fluent), French (intermediate)