

TRANSIENCE AND THE MODERN TURKISH INTERIOR

Deniz Hasirci*
Izmir University of Economics
Zeynep Tuna Ultav**
Yasar University
Umut Sumnu***
Baskent University

Abstract

Despite the expansion of research in modern interiors around the world and a more inclusive dialogue with regards to geography, ultimately, the field is still lacking theory and methods derived from its own specific needs rather than being adapted from architectural research, and a focus on its transient nature that is likely to lead to more impactful research and preservation results. Modern Turkish interiors research have also expanded greatly with individual, as well as projects or research groups like docomomo_tr interiors and DATUMM (Documenting and Archiving Modern Turkish Furniture) that create awareness through various forms of scholarly (documentaries, archival work) and popular (public exhibitions, popular books and magazines, newspaper pieces, and films) output. Although transience and thus a race with time is at the core of modern interiors research and several struggles are common worldwide, socio-cultural and economic reasons result in a faster pace in Turkey, creating an urgency to implement innovative methods and approaches fitting contemporary prerequisites of the field.

Keywords: interior space, interior design, design history, modernity, modern architecture, modern furniture.

Transience as a Challenge in Modern Interiors in Turkey

This paper focuses on the significance of transience as a challenge and merit in research and documentation regarding modern interiors in Turkey. Despite the expansion of research in modern interiors around the world and a more inclusive dialogue with regards to geography, ultimately, the field is still

*E-mail: deniz.hasirci@ieu.edu.tr

**E-mail: zeynep.tunaultav@yasar.edu.tr

***E-mail: sumnu@baskent.edu.tr

lacking theory and methods derived from its own specific needs rather than being adapted from architectural research, and a focus on its transient nature that is likely to lead to more impactful research and preservation results. Modern Turkish interiors research have also expanded greatly with individual, as well as projects or research groups like docomomo_tr interiors and DATUMM (Documenting and Archiving Modern Turkish Furniture) that create awareness through various forms of scholarly (documentaries, archival work) and popular (public exhibitions, popular books and magazines, newspaper pieces, and films) output.¹ Although transience and thus a race with time is at the core of modern interiors research and several struggles are common worldwide, socio-cultural and economic reasons result in a faster pace in Turkey, creating an urgency to implement innovative methods and approaches fitting contemporary prerequisites of the field. The products of modern Turkey are transient in that they are disappearing rapidly, as well as its communal significance as not only a contribution to national and international history of interior design, but also in terms of the social life it explains.

Thus, it is to be expected that the study of modern interiors may benefit greatly from expanding the work done on discussing, documenting and preserving the modern heritage by focusing on the scale of the interior and creating a more pluralistic discourse. This paper focuses on aiming to establish the relationship of historic interior spaces with contemporary context through the exploration of the challenges related to the field, specifically in terms of; historiography, design, and culture. It is proposed that, challenges lead to opportunities in approach and methodology that might not arise otherwise. This is proposed to be done historically, culturally, geographically as well as thematically in order to explain the importance of understanding and preserving the role of interior spaces within the scope of the Modern Movement and to present interior space as a research area where numerous disciplines meet.

Transience is an issue situated at the core of the interior architecture/design profession. The very nature of interiors is that they are the most fragile feature of design due to their temporality and ephemerality², and that they are most subject to change depending on the changing necessary functions and trends in the lifetime of a building. The experience of buildings' interiority and the interior space being a host space mentioned in Graeme Brooker and Sally Stone, Fred Scott, and Ellen Klingenberg opens interiors up to host functions different than their original, continuing to change over time within the building.³ Bie Plevoets and Koenraad Van Cleempoel have mentioned this as a "generous quality" (pg. 72) in recent discussion on interiors.⁴

In that sense, during a building's single lifetime, the interiors might change a multitude of times, resulting in adaptations of lifestyles within the interior, in addition to the function. This potential for multi-layered and interdisciplinary interpretations and aspects combined with the lack of documentation of specifically modern interiors in Turkey, creates a difficulty in the area, as well as challenge that obliges scholars to search for original and

interdisciplinary resources and methods, making use of oral history, literature, film, and popular magazines of the day among others.⁵

Interior interventions also take place at varying levels of ephemerality and flexibility, and thus are also more fluent compared to their architectural counterparts. While interiors shift and adapt to changing functional needs as well as aesthetic trends and movements, architectural interventions are less in number and may often be more noticeable. The interior may be more “poetic” in this sense, represented through the physical interior characteristics such as, furnishing, but also the more ephemeral “original spirit”, and being based on the memory of the building.⁶

Although this characteristic of interiors makes historiography challenging, the connection to impermanence enables the analysis of these nuances as well as what they represent in terms of social life, trends, changes in style, and needs and desires of users. Moreover, the recent earthquakes in Turkey that took place at the scale of disasters have brought to surface the fact that these events can be devastating in terms of loss of life as well as culture. Turkey is known as an earthquake country and although earthquakes take place continuously, on 6.2.2023, two major earthquakes occurred, originating from Kahramanmaraş center with magnitudes of 7.7 and 7.6. 1 cities were affected, which were; Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, Gaziantep, Malatya, Diyarbakır, Kilis, Şanlıurfa, Osmaniye, Adıyaman, Adana, and Elazığ.⁷In addition to the immediate effects of earthquakes, several measures have been taken to structurally strengthen buildings, which urges owners and municipalities to demolish and rebuild certain parts of the cities, at the same time destroying interiors and fixed interior furniture and fittings.⁸

Modern buildings dating back to the 1940s, but especially between 1960-1990 are the ones particularly at risk. Therefore, the aim is to discuss transience as a political challenge as well as a historiographic challenge, as a design challenge, as a cultural challenge, and as a methodological challenge from varying points of view, focusing on design as a common feature and with a focus on the modern Turkish interior.

On Transience

Transience not only refers to the interior, but also to the current transitory time as the world is gradually emerging out of the COVID-19 pandemic, weighing losses and gains. Moreover, the war in Ukraine (2022), as well as disasters such as the Turkey-Syria Earthquake (2023) that cleared cities to its foundations, have emphasized transience in a variety of contexts. The theme invites participants into a deeper philosophical discussion focused on design than what one is commonly accustomed to, and one that focuses on words, definitions, and revisited boundaries.

Sparke, Hummon, Greider and Garkovich, and Williams and Stewart have discussed the interior in terms of space and place and the differentiation of the two in terms of being more objective in the former and more imbued with

symbolic meaning in the latter.⁹ Massey discusses the role of histories of interior design strengthening the architectural tradition and meaning, while Rice mentions the double existence of the interior, both two and three dimensional, as a more objective space and also as a theatrical image.¹⁰ Tuan incorporates meanings into his definition of place as a “center of meaning or field of care.” Thus, paces become “places” through transient lived experience.¹¹ Ryden adds that “a place... takes in the meanings which people assign to that landscape through the process of living in it.”¹² These authors suggest that sense of place is not intrinsic to the physical setting itself, but resides in human interpretations of the setting, which are constructed through experience with it. Rice has spoken about the emergence of the interior and its extensions that refer to identifying characteristics of modernity, including subjectivity and experience.¹³

Therefore, this paper also stands on this approach, discussing transience, alongside challenges related to impermanence, a conversation with the past, and reflections on historiography of the modern interior having to be voiced more fully through people and experiential accounts, using verbal accounts and oral history, distinguishing itself from other fields in this sense. Definitions of transience comprise numerous descriptions that are also essential and shared regarding the nature of interior design and interior space.

Definitions of transience that may contribute to the discussion include, ‘passing especially quickly into and out of existence’, ‘passing through or by a place with only a brief stay’ ephemerality, evanescence, fleetingness, fugitiveness, impermanence, momentariness, temporariness, transiency, transitoriness, with antonyms such as endurance and permanence.¹⁴ However, interestingly, the word transient also involves ‘affecting something or producing results beyond itself’.¹⁵ Thus, interior transience is not exhaustive, but contributing to regenerating new meaning.

In the essay titled, ‘On Transience’ by Freud in 1915 during the First World War (1915), a dialogue is presented between the author and Rainer Maria Rilke who was mentioned as the ‘poet’ throughout the text. The essay is structured around a partly imagined walk the authors went on two years before it was written, and the conversation is about different views on the issue and connotations of transience. While Rilke believed that transience was depressing in a sense, Freud found it to be a foundation of value and beauty creation. The timing of the essay is revelatory in terms of the reflections on the horror of humanity, fleetingness of human lives, memories attached to spaces, feelings of belongingness, and in general in terms of the human condition.

Rilke mentions a deep sorrow and melancholy reflected in this fleetingness. Time and worth are also bound in a relationship. The fleeting nature of what is beautiful does not involve any loss of its worth, states Freud, referring to Rilke’s work. In contrast, he mentions an *increase* in value. Just as rarity and scarcity on an object or happening bring value in other contexts, one might infer that the transience of an interior space with the lives and social construction that it contains.¹⁶ Freud also mentions an emotional factor, which may be compared to architecture, more inherent in interiors due to the closer

connection to human life. This ‘ancient conversation’¹⁷ between past and present points to shaping the spirit of place, or the *genius loci*. This quality may induce a feeling that is not related to religion, however, can be described as an elevated connection with the senses. The interior is much more than a collection of objects, but can best be comprehended as a holistic entity. This is also the belief of Gestalt psychologists who state that psychological phenomena could only be studied as a whole, and that the whole is more than the sum of its parts.¹⁸ Gestalt theory explains that the grouping mechanism of the brain reduces the number of items that need to be processed, creating meaning through users’ experience and communication with the space.¹⁹ The holistic theory of ‘Gestalt’ may be stated to be parallel to an understanding of ‘gesamtkunstwerk’, that relied on an strengthened connection and constant communication between all interior elements and architecture²⁰ supporting the interconnected nature of interior experience.

This essential communication is an ongoing conversation with space itself and all of its inherently short-lived components. In this sense, the interior may be described as one of the most human-like of cultural inventions. Within this light, modern interiors are even more elusive in the sense that, despite the improvement in awareness around the world, there is perhaps no other era that is in need of such defence and protection, that can only be results of historical and multi-faceted documentation, as well as knowledge of this significant time.

The word, ‘conversation’ dates back to the mid-14th century, and interestingly defines a ‘place where one lives or dwells,’ as well as a ‘general course of actions or habits, manner of conducting oneself in the world’.²¹ These two definitions join the ‘place’ with the ‘experience’ in a way that can be done quite eloquently by an interior space. This may help explain why the ‘déjà vu’ experience is a spatial one. In addition, this may enable a more poetic and descriptive language to be introduced in interiors literature.

In this regard, as an admirer of the idea of modernity, Charles Baudelaire’s 1863 definition stating that; ‘By, ‘modernity,’ I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent; the half of art whose other half is eternal and the immutable’, is valuable.²² The definition offers a programmatic and social engineering perspective of modernity on the one hand, and on the other, it emphasizes the revolutionary and continuous state of being. This duality can also be related to the positioning of modern interior space in the history of architecture and its positioning in the history of design. While the history of architecture treats the modern interior as a frozen, finite, completed value that does not allow transformation into any change, the history of design always treats it with a manner that emphasizes its openness to change and intervention. Scott has discussed the nature of all interior interventions being one of translation from the past to a present state, also comparing it to the translation of poetry which requires inspiration and a connection to the original space and artistic approach.²³ Baudelaire was able to see the unique quality of modernity, questioning which artistic techniques would be appropriate for the new age.²⁴ The societal and cultural changes as well as the artistic transformations were so

multi-layered that it was easier to reject or adopt a reductionist attitude rather than delve into the richness of potential. Thus, how the modern interior was being redefined as a cultural production at the time, still necessitates a similar stratified approach requiring redefinitions and questioning of repeated and reproduced truths of the past.

A narrative written from the inside: Transience as Historiographic Challenge

In his seminal paper, D. J. Huppertz suggests the ‘cave’ as the first interior, rather than the ‘hut’, ‘a foundation that is not an architectural container’.²⁵ This seemingly minor shift in perspective proposes a change in description of interior space as well, rejecting its ‘supplemental position’²⁶, and extending to origins and boundaries of the field of interior design and ‘open[ing] up further possibilities for interior design as a distinct practice’.²⁷ Thus, as the interior evolves, it also sheds light on the story of human beings and how they strive to continuously improve their immediate surroundings as well as their complete experience of the world.²⁸ Comprehension and interpretation of this essential connection of interior space with the human body and human beings’ need to exert an element of control over it for safety and delight, brings with it the potential to enable progress in the theory and practice of interior design.²⁹

The ‘ancient conversation’ that is inherent in the interior begins with the body, its movement, relations to other beings, slowly creating the space from the inwards to outwards. Language may involve divergence, and when the story is written not from literally the outside, but from the inside, the narrative becomes more nuanced.³⁰ Sensitivity to the human needs, scale, as well as connotations required by interiors enable interiors to help define space not only with physical boundaries, but also with meanings. Tuan states that space becomes a place with the introduction or creation of particular meanings.³¹ This necessitates a more flexible approach to boundaries of the field that can be observed in placemaking.³² This flexibility involves not only the boundaries, but also the research methods in the field. Interior design historiography needs to include actual, visual, and written documentation on all interior components, such as materials, lighting, textiles, detailing, and graphic design. Moreover, research methods will need to include mixed methods, both quantitative and qualitative instruments³³, as well as rigorous archival research that involves analysis of documents, books, social outputs of the time, artifacts, fixed and mobile furniture, film, and oral accounts. As there cannot be one approach, the range of materials and research methods enables an enriched database that is inherently interdisciplinary. This also brings about a challenge in that the credibility of research is often contested and in need of proof and objectivity.

Part of the discussion surrounding credibility of research on interiors also arises from the definitions of the field being framed around distinguishing itself from architecture as well as interior decoration.³⁴ The issues regarding terminology continue today. Moreover, when one looks to the past, this leads to

information becoming fragmented and perhaps much effort is spent on definitions and little on theory, understanding, and essentials of the field, resulting in insufficient documentation.

This need for the search for boundaries may be arising from a unique quality of interiors; one that distinguishes it from other design disciplines including fashion, industrial design and even architecture is the fact that interior design is the only one that relies on the shaping of negative space rather than creating a positive space or object. Thus, the abstract qualities that define the void which represents identity, creates character and atmosphere, necessitate an interdisciplinary understanding.³⁵ This unique character may be the reason that definitions surrounding the interior are, historically and universally, continuous and problematic. At the same time, this also may open the door to a variety of multidisciplinary interpretations enriching the field. This is the issue that researchers in the field may need to focus on; how else we can understand space, how meanings were constructed, and how the fluidity and transient quality of the interior can shed light on human life.

The Interior Components: Transience as Design Challenge

To be conscious of the fleetingness of life coincides with what it means to be aware of the fleeting nature of the interior. The nature of the interior space is one of constant change and adaptation in addition to adaptive reuse. The added aesthetic quality and experience of the interior space coincides with the melancholy that one feels when one sees something beautiful which is transient; in that it is beautiful because it is transient.

Christopher Alexander, in his seminal work, *The Timeless Way of Building* (1979), states that great buildings carry the quality of reaching to eternity, rather than being constructed according to unchanging principles and lasting beauty. Alexander describes 'the quality without a name' as 'There is a central quality which is the root criterion of life and spirit in a man, a town, a building, or a wilderness. This quality is objective and precise, but it cannot be named'.³⁶ This quality enables one to create places with this nameless and almost divine characteristic, approached with descriptions such as; 'alive', 'whole', 'comfortable', 'free', 'exact', 'egoless', and 'eternal', eternal not necessarily referring to the permanence of the material, but communicative and experiential value of a space which is the focus of interior space. The modern interior was perhaps an expression of openness to change, adaptable conditions, and not endurance and the idea of 'forever'.

Due to this ever-changing characteristic, interior design historiography is challenging and there is an urgency for innovative methods. The means by which these changes can be followed are not seamless. The story may need to be written from a variety of viewpoints, using different sources of documentation depending on the function, use, and chronology. Among other methods such as archival research and oral history, documentation via mainstream films is significant. For instance, as the Turkish films shot at the Hilton Hotel (a clear example of a

modernist interior in Turkey) document the transformation and changes within this hotel over time, analyses could be made on numerous aspects of the interior space. Particular limitations are posed in terms of standardization of the material and limitations of the recording process. Nevertheless, popular films provide invaluable information that cannot be accessed in any other way. In this regard, authenticity could be introduced as an ongoing discussion. When we look at the concept of transience (or translation), what does ‘authentic interior design’ mean? Can one talk about the ‘aura’ of an interior? Or does this aura correspond to a non-stationary state of motion, which is continuously re-established? These are critical issues related to the modern interior that need further discussion that are not exclusive to the Turkish context.

The Turkish Context: Transience as Cultural Challenge

The existing lack of documentation and preservation of modern interiors that comes from the constantly evolving nature of the interior is strengthened by the fact that Turkish folk literature is rooted in Central Asian nomadic traditions. Past wisdom is passed onto generations through folklore, followed by poetry and prose in the Ottoman era. Although modernization in Turkey started during the Ottoman Empire, the paper focuses on the period that corresponds with the foundation of the republic.



Fig. 1. *Modern Turkey and Life Journal Covers (1930s-1970s) (DATUMM Archive, 2023).*

Predominantly in the 1920s-1950s, contemporary literature, poetry, and prose in the Republican era partly corresponded to modern Turkish interior design.³⁷ With regards to the modernization, it can be stated that Turkey followed its own particular path, which was distinct from Western counterparts in terms of adopting the modern architecture as a representative and vehicle for the modernizing agenda of the Turkish Republic.³⁸ With the foundation of the

Turkish Republic in 1923, modernization required questioning tradition which led to a steering away from the past. The Bauhaus approach which cut ties with the past, understood and valued tradition as the artisans' labor, however accepted art that was part of the present. Thus, the spirit of the age or 'Zeitgeist', aligned with the cultural politics of the Turkish Republic.³⁹



Fig. 2. Photographs, Illustrations and Advertisements of Modern Devices and Furniture that Define Interiors Could be Found in the Modern Journals (*Modern Turkey* and *Life* Journals, 1930s-1970s) (DATUMM Archive, 2023).

Modern industrial and economic advances depended more on personal benefit, gain, and happiness. However, in the establishment of the Turkish Republic, more value was placed on strengthening the identity of the nation, and thus, the individual was led to focus on the nation's benefits rather than his/her own, lessening the significance of personal privileges and aligning oneself with national values.⁴⁰ A 'one voice, one heart' approach was taken that highlighted the definition of an identity in line with international developments.⁴¹ A sensitivity on art and design could also be seen in popular cultural journals such as *Yeni Adam* (*New Man*) published between the years 1934-1978 by İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu despite representing a unique conservatism, *Modern Türkiye* (*Modern Turkey*) (popular in the 1930s-1940s) or *Hayat* (*Life*) (1956-1979) journals, increasingly depicting modern women with partial representations of

interiors, including furniture or lighting and other public documents such as advertisements showcasing modern devices for daily use (fig. 1 and 2).⁴² Other journals widely discussed focal points of the characteristics that constitute modern Turkey, defined spatial representations with the modern interior and furniture and the modern house, as well as the modern family and etiquette regarding the use of modern furniture, equipment, and utensils. These effects were reflected upon interior spaces that ranged from public buildings such as government interiors, banks, institutions, and other public spaces, as well as domestic interiors in terms of their common and different adaptations. In these interiors, transience takes place at comparatively different speeds, according to the specific needs.

Moreover, publications also felt responsible for educating the modern individual with didactic pieces on the interior; on what a home is and how it should be established (fig. 3). These pieces included detailed explanations of behaviour, intertwined with spatial characteristics and direction in terms of interior layout, furniture, and fittings.



Fig. 3. “What is a Home and How Should it be Established?”, *Modern Turkey Journal*, March 8, 1938, 16–17. (DATUMM Archive, 2023).

The identity of the individual also defined the social lives and relationships of the Turkish community. Women, in particular, were constantly redefined where women struggled to internalize their roles which swayed from

Alla-Turca to unchaste⁴³, as they danced in ballrooms outside of the home and were back in more traditional roles of raising their young in an enlightened and intellectual manner in the domestic interior.⁴⁴ These varying roles and adaptations in individual identity and relationships greatly affected interior spaces, and reflections could be read especially in domestic interiors as they also shifted parallel to these alterations. The ‘modern Turkish individual’ who had the awareness of a national identity, lived in that respect and aligned her/his social and cultural life accordingly, was the first and foremost aim of the reform and interiors can be stated to be among the most significant areas where the transformations could be perceived, especially due to the adaptability of interior spaces. The responsibility of both inhabitants of modern Turkish interiors and their designers (decorators) was for a redefinition of characteristics via the government agencies, to reach a common national design language, and continually research and adapt⁴⁵ which placed progress and fluidity at the heart of interior spaces.

Combined with a reliance on oral culture, and with a lack of documentation and archives, the continuous progress and change invariably makes Turkish interiors and related components difficult to trace, and scholars utilize any piece of information they come across to be able to write more integral histories. Various resources are consulted, such as film, magazines, and elements of popular culture, however, these bring with them their own language, shaping the way the story is written as well as its content.⁴⁶ Coming from this past, the significance of research methods such as oral history which involves active process of creating meanings and identities, often utilized in design history studies are therefore a bit nuanced, which enriches the field as well as pose certain challenges.⁴⁷

The Turkish Context: Transience as Methodological Challenge

Rigorous studies supported with effective methodology requires great effort in the race against time regarding the ever-evolving interior. The interior necessitates consideration concerning changing needs of users, layers of utility and constantly changing trends. At this point, architectural preservation methods may not be sufficient. Moreover, the definitions of preservation are several with regards to the interior space. There are several grey zones with regard to definitions of components of the modern interior during its evolution, negligible components in terms of affecting the definitions and meanings, especially when one considers fixed and mobile furniture, lighting, and surfaces such as walls and floors.

With regards to preservation, there is also the issue of documenting or recreating whole or parts of an interior as a museum that might be almost frozen in time. The Eames’ Case Study House or Adolf Loos’ American bar in Vienna, the furniture designs of Louis Kahn in Salk Institute and Seyfi Arkan’s Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion in Florya, İstanbul may be presented as examples to this (fig. 4). Florya Atatürk Mansion’s interiors were designed by Seyfi Arkan

and Fazıl Aysu in 1935, forming a close connection between the building and its fixed and mobile elements.⁴⁸ This mansion was made as a resting location for Atatürk to support his health, and thus contains remnants of the day, such as Atatürk's sitting scale to measure his weight. In 1988, the building was turned into a museum, and several changes can be observed with regards to the location of especially the mobile features. Even in a museum that aims to preserve an initial state, interiors cannot always be maintained as true to the original.⁴⁹



Fig. 4. Modern furniture preserved, frozen in time, Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion (DATUMM Archive, 2023).

Other ways of preservation may be to continue use or adaptive reuse. However, the interior cannot be a singularity on its own, and parts of an interior such as modern furniture retain a life on their own as well as within the context of its interior. The life cycles of various interior elements are different, and how frequently each component is changed by its user requires to be factored in as well. All of these possibilities require various means of documentation; oral history, ethnography, object oriented ontology are all interdisciplinary methods utilized for this purpose. In efforts to recreate a contemporary exhibition and functional spaces in the interiors of Atatürk Çubuk Dam Residence, Özgenel, Altan, Çağlar, Hasircı, Şumnu, and Tuna Ultav have utilized archival photography of Atatürk's work environments, while Gürel (2009) has utilized poetry as a means of information on the modern interior.⁵⁰

Creating awareness and iconizing Turkish modern furniture can only be defined as a developing field.

Each of the above-mentioned challenges also point to possibilities. Regarding possibilities, new online resources enable faster and more effective archival research and digital documentation methods and the ease of film enable widespread distribution of produced knowledge. The Muammer Karaca house frequently used in Turkish films is one example that provided ongoing and changing information regarding the interior space, adapting according to the narrative and use, as well as the stylistic necessities of the time. The Muammer Karaca house is a special case; the building is easily recognizable with its exterior, however, the interiors change from one film scenario to the other, always communicating the idea of wealth and prosperity, as a mansion, housing

a large staircase and permanent artwork (bird wall art on the staircase wall), and high end modern furniture.

Moreover, online platforms such as docomomo MoMove⁵¹ provide an active and growing archive of modern heritage around the world with locations, photographs, videos, and references, and recently with an added focus on interiors with the incentive of ISC-ID, the docomomo International Scientific Committee of Interior Design.⁵² Additionally, digital three-dimensional recreations are more readily possible for future reference and documentation. Altogether, the above-mentioned methods help facilitate awareness, as well as the lengthening of the life of the transient modern interior, which support one another and thus are equally significant.

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussions on transience are significant and open up new paths for research as well as preservation. The challenges put forward in this paper also invite the introduction of the opposite -the permanent. Permanence requires a constant struggle against the effects of time, as well as natural forces like wind and decay, and artificial forces like social, economic, political, and social orders.⁵³ The modern interior can be stated to be increasingly struggling against what may be called the artificial forces in this context. According to Harbison, at the end of their lives, modern spaces, compared to antique ruins, appear to be more vulnerable. While antique ruins appear to be left to their fate, modern ruins have actually been abandoned, with the human interventions being highly visible and its chronological closeness to today.⁵⁴ It may also be stated that lack of collective value derived from created meaning(s) are at play here. Thus, acknowledging the significance of modern interiors and its components is the first step in this direction. Awareness, followed by documentation of visual and textual information will result in the knowledgebase which is currently greatly lacking.

The motivation behind this paper arises from this need and involves a discussion of transience in relation to interiors in general, and to the modern Turkish interior in particular. Aiming to increase awareness on this issue and to create an enriched historiography. The questions posed around the transience of the modern interior space, origins of interiors, definitions of the interior design field, and methodology necessitate further elaboration and require ongoing discussions that are as flexible and adaptable as the interior spaces they strive to document.

For the modern interior, practical routes for future research may be to pursue new resources and methodology as mentioned above, but also to reframe existing definitions and stories, and experiment with new ways of communicating the research. As people think in stories, beginning from the interior rather than the opposite, will also enable a re-examination of the narratives. This may also enable connections with research that is not mainstream and enable accessibility of resources to the younger generations.

Regarding the history of Turkish modern interior design, lack of records and archives, the reliance on oral tradition and material being kept in private archives are challenges that need to be overcome. Due to the rapid loss of other resources, there has been a reliance in interior design history research on journals such as *Arkitekt*. This is known as the first architecture journal published in Turkey, in 1931 by Zeki Sayar, Abidin Mortaş, and Abdullah Ziya Kozanoğlu and continued to be published until 1981.⁵⁵ As the journal issues can be reached through its digital database, there has been a widespread use and issues have gained a key role in supporting and shaping research focused on interior design history in Turkey. There is a need for variation and a rigorous, multidisciplinary, multi-method approaches that feed from architecture and fine arts, as well as collaboration, flexibility, and openness to connect to larger communities, adapting to needs of interior design may provide reframing narratives through information that had not been discovered before. Examples produced by the docomomo_tr-interior committee involve, digital archives⁵⁶, documentaries utilizing the method of oral history⁵⁷, graphic novels on modern interior design history (fig. 5)⁵⁸, brief pieces of knowledge shared as stories on social media⁵⁹, which have proven highly effective in terms of reaching national as well as international audiences.

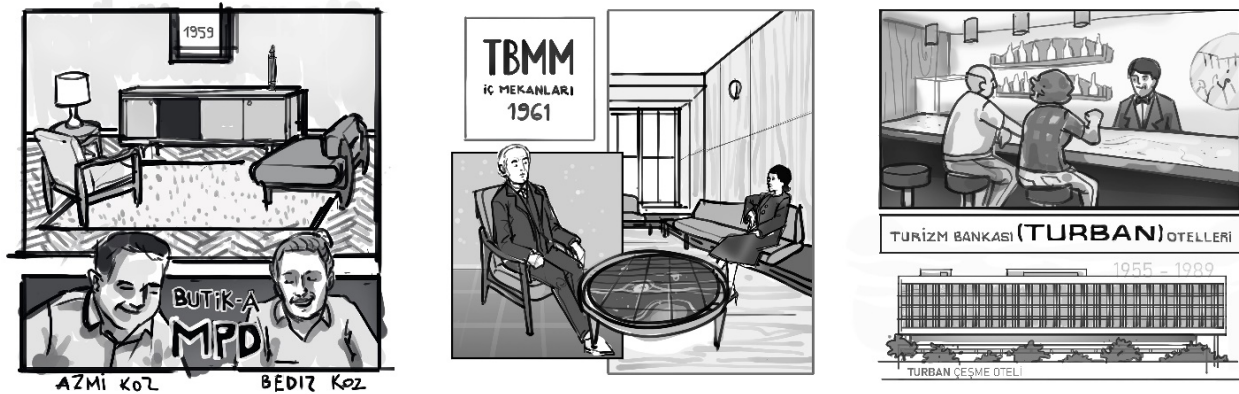


Fig. 5. Drawings by Ahmet Aslan for the docomomo_tr Interior, History of Turkish Interior Architecture Graphic Book.

Due to the multi-layered aspects of interiors and common issues related to the field that highlight challenges of the field internationally, there is a need for increased research, creative methodological approaches, as well as a variety of potentials for collaboration among related institutions around the world. The fact that interiors are also vulnerable to government policies such as ones taken after earthquakes needs to be at the core of these discussions. Research needs to embody various means of communication not only to scholars, but the public, as well as decision-makers. In this regard, an extensive understanding of the transient quality of interior space entails immediate active and rigorous research that is believed to help to gain a better understanding of spatial history

as well as inviting parallel truths and providing inclusive and alternative historiographies for the future.

NOTES

¹ “docomomo Virtual Exhibition,” <https://exhibition.docomomo.com/>, (accessed March 10, 2023); “docomomo_tr Interior,” <https://www.docomomo-tr-interior.org/>, (accessed March 10, 2023); “Sivil Mimari Bellek Ankara 1930-1980 [Civilian Architectural Memory of Ankara 1930-1980],” http://sivilmimaribellekankara.com/proje_ciktilari.html, (accessed March 10, 2023); DATUMM, <https://linktr.ee/datumm>, (accessed March 10, 2023).

² Vlad Ionescu, “*The Interior as Interiority*,” *Palgrave Communications* 4, no. 1 (2018), 33.

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