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AIEMA - Türkiye is a research center that aims to study, introduce and constitute a data bank of the mosaics from the ancient times to the Byzantine period. The best presentation of the mosaics of Turkey is the ultimate goal of this center functioning depending on AIEMA. A data bank of Turkey mosaics and a corpus including Turkey mosaics are some of the practices of the center. Additionally, this center also equips a periodical including the art of ancient mosaics and original studies namely JMR.

The JMR (Journal of Mosaic Research) is an international journal on mosaics, annually published by the Bursa Uludağ University Mosaic Research Center. The aim of this journal is to serve as a forum for scientific studies with critical analysis, interpretation and synthesis of mosaics and related subjects. The main matter of the journal covers mosaics of Turkey and other mosaics related to Turkey mosaics. Besides, the journal also accommodates creative and original mosaic researches in general. Furthermore, together with articles about mosaics, the journal also includes book presentations and news about mosaics.

JMR is a refereed journal. The manuscripts can be written in English, German, French or Turkish. All authors are responsible for the content of their articles.

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The abbreviations in this journal are based on German Archaeological Institute publication criteria, Bulletin de l'Association internationale pour l'Etude de la Mosaïque antique, AIEMA - AOROC 24.2016, La Mosaïque Gréco-Romaine IX and Der Kleine Pauly.

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AIEMA - Türkiye, Antik Çağ'dan Bizans dönemine kadar uzanan zaman süreci içerisindeki mozaikler hakkında bilimsel çalışmalar yapmayı, bu mozaikleri tanıtmayı ve söz konusu mozaikler hakkında bir mozaik veri bankası oluşturmayı amaçlayan bir araştırma merkezidir. AIEMA'ya bağlı olarak, Türkiye mozaiklerinin en iyi şekilde sunumu, bu merkezin işleminin nihai hedefidir. Türkiye mozaik veri bankası ve Türkiye mozaiklerini de içeren bir Corpus hazırlanması çalışmaları, merkezin faaliyetlerinden bazılarıdır. Ayrıca, merkezin, antik mozaikler hakkında özgün çalışmaları içeren JMR (Journal of Mosaic Research) adında bir süreli yayını vardır.

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JMR hakemli bir dergidir. Makaleler İngilizce, Almanca, Fransızca ve Türkçe dillerinde yazılabilir. Dergide yayınlanan makalelerin sorumluluğu makale sahiplerine aittir.

JMR, 2009 yılından itibaren EBSCO tarafından tam metin olarak, 2014 yılından itibaren TÜBİTAK - ULAKBİM Sosyal Bilimler veri tabanları tarafından ve 2016 yılından itibaren ise Clarivate Analytics (Thomson Reuters) - Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) tarafından taranmaktadır. Makaleler, Crossref'ten alınan DOI numarası ile yayınlanmaktadır.

JMR, her yıl Kasım ayında yayınlanmaktadır.

Mozaik Araştırmaları Merkezinin izni olmaksızın JMR'nin herhangi bir bölümünün kopya edilmesine izin verilmez. JMR'de makalesi yayınlanan her yazar makalesinin elektronik ve basılı halinin yayınlanmasını kabul etmiş, böylelikle telif haklarını JMR'ye aktarmış sayılır.

Bu dergideki makalelerde kullanılacak olan kısaltmalar Alman Arkeoloji Enstitüsü yayın kuralları, Bulletin de l'Association internationale pour l'Etude de la Mosaïque antique, AIEMA - AOROC 24.2016, La Mosaïque Gréco Romaine IX ve Der Kleine Pauly dikkate alınarak yapılmıştır.

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## *José María Blázquez Martínez in memoriam (1926-2016)*

José María Blázquez Martínez (Professor of Ancient History and Fellow of the Spanish Royal Academy of History) passed away on March 26, 2016, in the city of Madrid (Spain) after a full life devoted to teaching, scientific research and the spread of antiquity; and leaving all of us -who have had the immense fortune to enjoy his mastership and overwhelming personality-, with an immense sadness.

Prof. Blázquez graduated in Philosophy and Letters from the University of Salamanca in 1951 and defended his PhD in the Complutense University of Madrid in 1956. During the next decade, Prof. Blázquez continued his training under the supervision of Prof. Pallottino at the University of La Sapienza in Rome and, granted by the DAAD, at the University of Marburg, under the supervision of Prof. Matz and Prof. Drerup. Subsequently he made other successful research stays at the University of Tel Aviv, the British Academy of Rome, the University of Catania, and in the German Archaeological Institute branches at Istanbul, Damascus and Riyadh. In this regard, Prof. Blázquez always defended the importance of international networks that, through academic contact with other schools and colleagues, conceived as essential for personal development and the progress of scientific research.



After this intense formative period, José María Blázquez obtained a position as Professor of Ancient History at the University of Salamanca (1966-) and shortly after at the Complutense de Madrid (1969-), where he was designated as Professor Emeritus. At the same time, he was an active member of the former Institute of Archaeology "Rodrigo Caro" (CSIC), that he directed during more than ten years (1973-1985). Finally, in recognition to his academic trajectory, Professor Blázquez was elected as a Fellow of the Spanish Royal Academy of History. In all these institutions Prof. Blázquez developed a brilliant contribution to the promotion of Ancient History in Spain, especially important was his capacity for mentoring (he supervised more than 40 PhDs during his academic life) large teams of teachers and researchers, that obtained several tenured positions in different universities and academic institutions. He was also a prolific author publishing many handbooks and monographs that are authentic milestones in history the Spanish scholarship (i. e. *La Romanización, Historia social y económica. La España Romana. Economía de la Hispania romana*, Bilbao, 1978, *Historia de España Antigua, I. Protohistoria*, Madrid, 1980; *Historia de España Antigua II. Hispania romana*, Madrid, 1978). Largely influential was also his leadership in the direction of the scientific journals as *Archivo Español de Arqueología* (1973-1987) and *Gerión* (1983-2010). In addition, Prof. Blázquez directed numerous archaeological excavations at Caparra (Cáceres), Cástulo (Jaén), La Loba (Fuenteovejuna, Córdoba), and in the Monte Testaccio (Rome).

By virtue of its training and its wide perspective, Prof. Blázquez's research trajectory was the reflection of the scientist dedicated to the study of antiquity, with a masterful management of

diverse written and archaeological sources, always connected with current intellectual debates of all social and human sciences. During his career published more than 37 books, acting of editor in other 9 monographs. He also published 234 articles in the most prestigious, both Spanish and International, scientific journals and several chapters in collective volumes. His research interests covered multiples areas on the study of antiquity: the Phoenician and Greek colonization of the Western Mediterranean, the Late Iron Age communities of the Iberian Peninsula, the study of Pre-Roman religions, the Impact of primitive Christianity in the Late Roman Empire, and, of course, the ancient economy of Roman Spain, with an special focus on the exports of *Baetican* olive oil.

Finally, we would like to highlight his research on Roman mosaics, whose first publication dates from 1975 - "Arte y Sociedad en los mosaicos del Bajo Imperio" [Art and Society in the mosaics of the Late Roman Empire] *Bellas Artes* 75, 1975, pp. 18-25 -soon followed by- "Mosaicos romanos del Bajo Imperio" [Roman mosaics of the Late Empire], *Archivo Español de Arqueología* 50-51, 1977, pp. 269-293., In this regard, Prof. Blázquez continued the a research line previously initiated by his teacher Prof. Antonio García y Bellido. Since 1976 to 1996, Prof. Blázquez promoted and directed the Corpus of Mosaics of Spain, within the framework of the international project sponsored by the AIEMA. Through this monumental labor, Prof. Blázquez contributed to establish the study of Roman mosaics as an authentic sub-discipline in the field of the Spanish Classical archaeology.

The obtention of several I+D Research projects, funded in competitive calls by the Spanish Ministry of Science (acting as Principal Investigator from 1976 to 1997) and an International Project of the Joint Hispanic-American Committee, with the University of West-Lafayette, Purdue (Indiana-USA), allowed Prof. Blázquez to create a permanent research team on the study of Roman mosaics. This team, which I (Prof. Neira Jiménez) am honored of have been part, managed the realization of the above mentioned *Corpus de Mosaicos de España* (CME), a work continued afterwards by its dear colleague, Dr. Guadalupe López Monteagudo (CSIC). In addition to the publication of 12 volumes of the CME, he presented numerous papers on the Hispanic, African and Near Eastern Roman mosaics in the most prestigious conferences on these topics, such as the International Congresses organized by the AIEMA or *L'Africa romana* conference, organized by the Centro di Studi sull'Africa Romana of the Università degli studi di Sassari, as well as in countless courses and seminars in other institutions and universities, such as the Roman Mosaic Seminar of the UC3M, to which he attended every year, without missing any of the 9 editions celebrated.

Prof. Blázquez was a firm believer in the work developed by AIEMA, having been named member of Honor of this scientific association. He also formed part of the editorial board of the Journal of Mosaic Research, where he published various articles, and presented papers in both the 11th International Colloquium on Ancient Mosaics, held in Bursa on 2009, and in the 5th Colloquium of AIEMA Turkey, held in Kahramanmaraş on 2011. Prof. Blázquez was a true lover of Turkey.

Prof. Blázquez was an unavoidable reference in the international scholarship on ancient mosaics, many colleagues who share our pain remember his vitality even in the XIII. AIEMA Congress held in Madrid on September 2015, where he gave the inaugural conference. As a testimony of his enthusiasm for the study of ancient mosaics, he was already thinking of traveling to the next AIEMA Congress scheduled for 2018 in Cyprus. Proof of his infinite generosity, he prepared

tirelessly until the end of his days a text on Diana in the mosaics of Roman Spain for X SMR, held in September 2016 at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.

His decisive contribution to the study of antiquity has earned him numerous recognitions from many international academic institutions and associations: Fellow of German Archaeological Institute (1968), Board member of the L'Association Internationale d'Epigraphie grecque et latine (AIEGL), Member of the Hispanic Society (1974); Fellow of the Academy of Arts and Archaeology of Bologna (1980), Fellow of the Spanish Royal Academy of History (1990), Fellow of the New York Academy of Sciences (1993), Fellow of the Academia Nazionale dei Lincei (1994), Fellow of the Fine Arts Academy of Santa Isabel de Hungría (Seville) (1995), Fellow of the Real Academia de Bones Letres de Barcelona (1997), or Fellow of the Académie de Aix-en-Provence (1999), among others. He also received many prizes as the Franz Cumont prize from the Académie Royale de Belgique (1985), the Great Silver medal of Archaeology from l'Académie d'Architecture de Paris (1987), or the Cavalli d'Oro prize from Venice (2003). Prof. Blázquez was named *doctor honoris causa* by the universities of Valladolid (1999), Salamanca (2000), Bologna (2001), León (2005), and Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (2015), and received the *Orden del Mérito Civil*, one of the highest recognitions granted by the Spanish govern.

He was a genius as scholar, but also a genial person. For both reasons, colleagues, students, and friends of many countries, that have the fortune of meet Prof. Blázquez during his life, feel a great emptiness for the loss of our dear teacher.

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Şahin  
Bursa Uludağ University

Prof. Maria Luz Neira Jiménez  
Universidad Carlos III de Madrid





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# The Modernization of Mosaic Art in Turkey

## Türkiye’de Mozaik Sanatın Çağdaşlaşması

Hülya VURNAL İKİZGÜL\*

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### Abstract

*In Turkey, improvement of the mosaic art started in the Republic period with the help of far-sighted Atatürk who has attached great importance to history and art. The first excavation and restoration works started with foreign archaeologists. During that period, local archaeologists were also trained in order to keep these excavations up and running. Again in this period, Architect-Painter Association was founded after the “Fine Arts law”. The philosophy of the Bauhaus school, which aims to integrate the fine arts with architecture, has influenced our 1960 artists by the mosaics brought to light by our archaeologists. With the introduction of this law, between 1955 and 1970, Turkish artists applied the first original modern mosaic works to architecture. The “applied fine arts” (Today’s Marmara University Faculty of Fine Arts) was established under the influence of Bauhaus Art School. This school has trained artists who produced very successful works in architecture. In the 1960s Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu transferred the Plastic Art to architecture through the mosaic, as a pioneer. In 1990s H. Vurnal İkizgül pulled out mosaic art from architecture and carried it to today’s art.*

*Today, mosaic art is re-experiencing and renewing itself with several new techniques and materials. Therefore we must aim to acquire the innovative mosaic education institutions that will pioneer in the world. The emergent artistic production and accumulation by the new generation will raise us on the international platform and underpin of our Contemporary Mosaic Museum.*

**Keywords:** Fine arts, contemporary mosaic, original art, mosaic training, Bauhaus School, architectural.

### Öz

*Türkiye’de mozaik sanatının gelişimi Cumhuriyetle birlikte, Atatürk’ün sanata ve tarihe verdiği önem ve öngörüsüyle başlamıştır. İlk kazı ve restorasyon çalışmaları, yurtdışından getirilen arkeologlarla başlatılmıştır. Kendi arkeologlarımızın da yetiştirilip çalışmaların sürekliliği sağlanmıştır. Yine bu dönemde çıkan “Güzel Sanatlar Kanunu” ile mimar ressam birlikteliğine yer verilmiştir. İtalyan Kültür Heyeti 1960 ve 1970’de antik ve modern olan iki Ravenna sergisini Türkiye’ye getirmiştir. Arkeologlarımızın gün ışığına çıkardığı mozaikler, güzel sanatları mimariyle kaynaştırmayı amaçlayan Bauhaus okulunun felsefesi 1960 sanatçılarımızı etkilemiştir. Bu kanun vesilesiyle 1955-1970 yılları arasında sanatçılarımız ilk özgün modern mozaik eserlerini, mimariye uygulamışlardır. Bauhaus etkisiyle “Tatbiki Güzel Sanatlar” (bugünün Marmara Üniversitesi GSF) kurulmuştur. Bu okul mimaride çok başarılı eserler üreten sanatçılar yetiştirmiştir.*

*1960’larda Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, mozaik aracılığıyla Plastik Sanatları mimariye taşımıştır. 1990’larda H. Vurnal İkizgül mozaik sanatını mimariden bağımsız günümüz sanatına taşımış, çağdaş mozaik resim ve heykel sergileriyle, bu sanatın “mimariyle bir bütündür” tabusunu yıkmıştır.*

*Bugünün mozaikçi birçok teknik ve malzemeye kendini sürekli deneyimlediği, yenilediği bir yeredir. Bu nedenle dünyada ekol olacak, yenilikçi mozaik eğitim kurumlarını hedeflemeliyiz. Yetişen yeni nesil ile çıkacak olan sanatsal üretim ve birikim bizi uluslararası platformda yükseltecek ve Çağdaş Mozaik Müzemi’nin tabanını oluşturacaktır. Ancak özgün eserler, bizi de gelecekte hatırlanır kılacaktır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Güzel sanatlar, çağdaş mozaik, özgün sanat, mozaikte eğitim, Bauhaus Okulu, mimari.

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We inherited mosaic as a form of art from the art of Mesopotamia. If we choose Alexandria as the starting point of mosaic development, then we can call Anatolia, Syria and Byzantium, the eastern branch, and Greece and Italy, the western branch. Mosaics were able to maintain their existence throughout the Byzantine period and pre-renaissance Italy. These developmental periods are made up of three stages:

- 1 - The stage from Justinian to the Iconoclasts which spans VI – VIII centuries AD.
- 2 - The stage matching the Macedonia and Ducas lineage (Middle Byzantium-the Macedonian Renaissance).
- 3 - The Paleologos Renaissance period from 1261-1453.

Christian art was heavily influenced by the Greek culture and later, Asian art. In addition, the art form was easternized by way of Syria and spread into the Levant, Europe and North Africa. The art of mosaic developed further through the education offered in mosaic schools in Africa, Gaul, Germany, Syria, Venice and Sicily. Renaissance artists saw the copying and reconstruction of previously made mosaics as sufficient. When this custom of copying continued at the mosaic school in Ravenna, it led to stagnation and loss of originality. Once the Ravenna school realized the importance of originality, it opened a division where original designs were encouraged and to this day it is considered as a school which contributed to the development of mosaic as a true fine art.

As Anatolia (Turkey) was under the pressure of Islam during the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> c. CE, coupled with the “Iconoclast” influence, it chose to separate from Eastern Byzantine art and formed a closer relationship with Greek art. It was in this period, due to their importance in architecture, that paintings and mosaics became the prioritized branches of Byzantine fine arts. It was a poor decision to cover up frescoes and mosaics during the Iconoclastic movement. Once the movement was defeated in the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> c. CE, Byzantine Art regained momentum.

Turkey, which is the eastern arm of the art of mosaic is very important because it contains the most valuable mosaics. The unearthing of these mosaics started with the work of specialist archaeologists who came from Germany and the USA under the orders of Atatürk. From the start of that period, our own archaeologists began to get educated and through their conscious efforts, the continuity of their work lasted until today. With the conquering of İstanbul, the mosaics of Hagia Sophia and Kariye mosque were covered with plaster after the two churches were converted into mosques. For the first time in 1932 significant restoration work was initiated in several buildings and the layers of plaster covering the mosaics were removed, thus bringing the mosaics to light. The Byzantine institute of America directorship assumed the task of cleaning the Hagia Sophia and Kariye mosaics. Hagia Sophia was converted into a museum in 1934 by the order of Atatürk. During the initial periods of the republic, a Fine Arts Legislation was passed giving priority to the cooperation between architects and artists. The mastery dominion of fine arts was to be allotted a big part in the great national economic development and construction effort. Thanks to this legislation, the practice of creating artworks and encouraging artists to construct them, as well as providing the freedom for the art to reach its own true personality was finally realized. Breaking established traditions and moving forward to new applications, this legislation aimed to integrate art with public and residential environments. The restoration of historical works was the result of the sensitive and enthusiastic interest the government of that time period displayed towards art; as

such, it became very significant for the artists of the time. The valuable mosaics brought to light after the plaster removal and cleaning, would influence many artists from then on, and mosaics became much appreciated by all people who valued art.

After studying Roman Byzantine mosaics at Hagia Sophia and Kariye in İstanbul, the artists of that period were given the opportunity to gain knowledge and information by viewing the Ravenna mosaic exhibition (copies of the antiquity pieces of Ravenna mosaics) brought to Turkey by the Italian Culture Committee. Exactly ten years later, they were faced with a mosaic exhibition once again opened by the Italians, now also including modern mosaics. The second Ravenna mosaic exhibition called for the much needed modernization of mosaic art, while at the same time, the Italians attempted to strengthen their links with Anatolia - the Eastern branch of Ravenna. With the cooperation of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education, the Italian Cultural Committee opened a mosaic exhibition at Little Hagia Sophia (Hagia Irene) on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1961; subsequently, the exhibition was presented to the public in Ankara and İzmir. This exhibition comprised copies of antique pieces of Ravenna mosaics which brought the mosaics from the golden age of the Eastern Roman - Byzantine Empire to the Western artists of the 1960s.

The modern and original works displayed in the second exhibition opened by the Italians in which antique works visibly influenced the artists' ideas in this subject area, showed that mosaic art could be elevated to contemporary modern values; taking a secure step forward from the past (which luckily prevented the extinction of this valuable art form) and comfortably going on to contemporary interpretation, these artists produced mosaics that influenced their peers - the artists of the 1960s.

Regarding the increase of artworks created by modernizing mosaic designs and techniques, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu wrote in an article for the Cumhuriyet newspaper saying "Wishing the same for my country which holds the best mosaics in the world". He passed his enthusiasm onto young artists, tutoring several of them as future masters. In the 1950s thanks to Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu people were able to see local mosaic art with an original language and a modern interpretation.

The Bauhaus School was established in 1919 by the German architect Walter Gropius. A new period had begun in architecture and in the fine arts. The Bauhaus School aimed to fuse architecture with the fine arts, and also aimed at mass production by way of master-apprentice relationships in a unification of art and technique. The school provided endless possibilities to architects and artists in which to conduct new experiments with the objective of keeping creative design in the foreground. Because aesthetics and functionality concerns were kept at the same level, a connection was established between art and technology, and this connection elevated the everyday living to an unprecedented aesthetic level; there was an increase in functionality in the fine arts, as well as an aesthetic level in architecture. Architect-artist togetherness was the agenda of the day. Fine arts became the can't do without component of the architectural whole and through its involvement in everyday life it acquired a new dimension. The architect-artist togetherness in Europe and USA started to spread at maximum speed resulting in excellent works of modern architecture being realized.

Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, an instructor at the State Fine Arts Academy, together with a team of his students (who together make up today's most important

artists), contributed to the forming of modern wall mosaics. It is through their work that Turkey encountered modern wall mosaics for the first time. Bedri Rahmi adopted the view that mosaics would be the best form of art to complement paintings which were non-existent in great buildings. Artists of that period adopted the Bauhaus school's philosophy that focused on architecture and plastic arts, defending the standpoint that the art of painting should be integrated with architectural structures. For years they pioneered the developments in this area in our country. Additionally, these artists were interested in every kind of tool that came along with the developing architecture when trying wall mosaics, using these new tools that were not even considered at that time in Turkey.

Between the years 1955 and 1970, Bedri Rahmi, together with his spouse Eren Eyüboğlu, his son Eren Eyüboğlu, his assistant Devrim Erbil, his students Teoman Sudor and Mustafa Pilevneli, the artists of that period Ferruh Bassag, Sabri Berkel, Nurullah Berk, Turan Erol, Neşet Gural, Nedim Gunsur, Fethi Arda, Mehmet Özel, blazed a trail in Turkey with their large size wall mosaics. They took on the art of mosaic by assigning new shapes to old techniques and made the art develop further again by establishing links to traditions in Turkish architecture. They unified art with the living environment, they proved that the integration of architectural structures and buildings with artwork was a necessity, especially with the addition of colorful mosaics to adorn plain "dead" walls. Therefore, Bedri Rahmi and the 1960s artists who gave meaning to words such as, beautiful, art, artisanship, High art - Low art (art majeur - art mineur) are the first representatives of our country who adopted the Bauhaus philosophy. In choosing this direction, they promoted the understanding that mosaic art blended with everyday living, and along with the mosaics, reliefs, skraffito boards, they also contributed to our architecture. This increased the public's appreciation level as well as their interest in mosaic art. Their innovating ideas and the grounds they prepared for us younger artists can't be overlooked.

The Applied Fine Arts School for further development of wall mosaics (today's Marmara University Fine Arts) was founded along the principles of the Bauhaus school, after the State Fine Arts Academy. This school trained many architects who created masterpieces in architecture. However, after being brought under Marmara University administration, the Applied Fine Arts School departed from its main aim, the Bauhaus principles, and the studies with academic potential continued to thrive while the interest shown to applied workshops decreased. The artists chose individuality, yet they created works of art connected to architecture for economic reasons.

Although the art of mosaic is treated with great respect in Turkey, because it requires skill and mastery of a difficult technique along with the idea that it can't keep up with today's contemporary mosaic art, it is less popular. For centuries, the art of mosaic that developed as part of architecture, has not been able to get out of its historical framework. And although our art historians have covered the artistic importance of this art, mosaic art has been unable to find the place it deserves in our current art forms.

We already mentioned the two Ravenna mosaic exhibitions by the Italians. Aside from these two exhibitions which were brought from abroad, we do not come across a mosaic exhibit by a Turkish artist in Turkey. This is the result of the belief that mosaic art should remain part of architecture and continue to develop along with it. The 1960's artists who were influenced by the Italian exhibits once again created their works for architectural purposes.

Therefore, my first personal contemporary mosaic exhibition that opened in 1992 in Hagia Sophia is the first of its kind in Turkey. In this exhibition I had large size wall mosaics and sculpture. As all were completely independent from architecture, were of monumental size, some with moveable parts despite being heavy, this exhibit surprised many viewers. These works totally separated from architectural features and characteristics, while proclaiming their individuality and independence, also demolished "This art is integrated with architecture" taboo.

My exhibition with its important historical value along with its artistic value, made a tremendous impact. Consequently, it travelled to the Marseille Istres Art Museum by special invitation from the French government. While our art critics still defend the idea that "the necessity of this art form to stay within the bounds of architecture", the French government not only acquired many of my works for the museum permanent collection, but also awarded me with the title "European Contemporary Mosaic Artist" (Figs. 1-2).

Figure 1  
Moving pendulum. Ayasofya Museum 1992.  
Size 1,55 x 1,55 m.  
Artist H. Vurnal İkizgül.



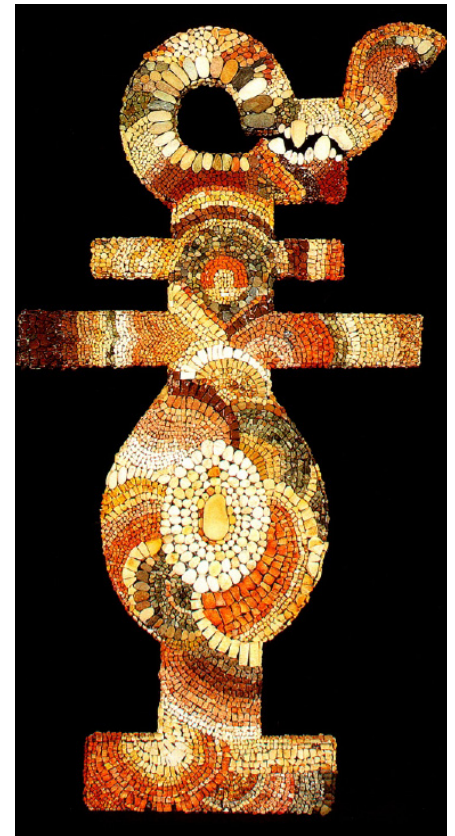
Figure 2  
Marseille Istres Archaeology Museum in  
France. Mosaic exhibition 1994.  
Artist H. Vurnal İkizgül.

Modernizing the art of mosaic (which was not considered to be separate from architecture) and bringing it to commercial art galleries was something totally foreign to Turkish Mosaic Art. I stripped mosaic from its classical technique and made it acquire new techniques which could keep up with today's international contemporary art. While introducing the art of mosaic at a modern art gallery, my aim was to give it independence and to make it world known that "mosaic is an art form independent from architecture but at the same time it can have a say in architecture"; this view was accepted in Turkey for the first time (Figs. 3-5).



Figure 3  
Vakko Art Exhibition in İstanbul 1996.  
Natural stone on wood. Size 1,50 x 1,50 m.  
Artist H. Vurnal İkizgül.

Figure 4  
Vakko Art Exhibition in Ankara 1997.  
Sculpture Crocodile. Natural stone on wood.  
Size 1,95 x 1,50 m. Artist H. Vurnal İkizgül.



The fact that mosaic exhibitions increased in number after my exhibition shows that I have achieved this difficult task; and although it is not enough by world standards, it brings hope to see mosaic exhibitions and mosaic artists increase in number when compared to the past.

In the 1960's the Plastic Arts were making an effort to enter the field of architecture with Bedri Rahmi; in 1990, Hülya Vurnal İkizgül with the art of mosaic was attempting to exit architecture and turn it into an individual form of art. Bedri Rahmi believed that he gave his mosaic art longevity by applying mosaic to architecture with mosaic technique; I defended my view that mosaic is a language of painting and it should keep pace with today's Plastic Arts by exiting the architecture realm. Bedri Rahmi became the first of his kind through the requirements of his time period, I became the first of my kind with my artistic attitude, naturally, taking into consideration today's conditions. The never ending change of conditions and requirements of time shape an artist's creativity.

When one supplies an ancient art with new techniques and adapts it to the current time period, it is difficult to change its contained point of view and its taboos.





Figure 5  
Devrim Erbil Modern Art Museum. Natural  
stone on wood. Size 1,50 x 1,50 m.  
Artist H. Vurnal İkizgül.

In mosaic, the technique has become the forefront in the language of the mosaic and therefore it has been questioned whether it is Art or Craft; there exists a conceptual confusion in this dilemma. Art? Craft? Usually the value of the art itself is known, nevertheless there exists a substantial concern with its skill or craft. Every artist chooses the material closest to his/her artistic preference and creates his/her work of art; thus, the attributes of the creative artistic method manifests itself in the choice of material used. The important aspect of the final result is the structural harmony and manual dexterity in the use of the material. Therefore, importance of the manual skill in the use of the material and the technical knowledge should be acknowledged without raising concerns about craft. Art should not be evaluated as a distinct and separate part of life, it should be evaluated as one that is integrated, complementary with and within life itself. The increase in new kinds of material along with the advance of technology, created exciting possibilities for researching unknown techniques. The artist has an original view specific to themselves in every time period. In order to keep up with the development of art in every era and art form, the artist should never lose his/her research interest and enthusiasm. In addition to that, the artist should develop his/her skill with new skills and applications of material. Art and craft are siblings. The art of mosaic is not a different field of art, it is a different discipline with its own technique. When one follows the international art scene from here, it is possible to see the rising importance given to mosaic art, the artists whose numbers grow and new modern applications. For the art of mosaic to keep pace with today’s painting discipline, its slow technique should be made more practical. We need to see more mosaics as individual art works independent from architecture exhibited in art galleries. It is my belief that only in this way can mosaic take the place it deserves in today’s art (Figs. 6-8).



Figure 6  
G-Art Modern Gallery 2007. “Anatolian  
Goddesses” mosaic exhibition.  
Artist H. Vurnal İkizgül.

The classical definition of mosaic: the coming together of different materials such as glass or stone pieces, large or small, in a formalized tradition which conveys the period’s language of painting. The artistic definition of mosaic in today’s art: the artist picks one or several different materials such as stone, nails, metal, wood, glass, leather, ceramic, cloth, etc., and places these together in a way that expresses his/her language in making art. Today, the art of mosaic has moved outside the strict rules of the past, and as such, is continuously renewing itself in both materials and technique. Today’s mosaic utilizes many languages.



Figure 7  
G-Art Gallery 2007. Anatolian Goddesses.  
Natural stone, concrete mosaic.  
Size 1,45 x 0,65 m. Artist H. Vurnal İkizgül.



Figure 8  
G-Art Gallery mosaic exhibition 2007.  
Concrete mosaic. Artist H. Vurnal İkizgül.

Figure 9  
Topkapı Museum Darphane-i Amire 2002.  
Natural stone tree Sculpture.  
Size 1,55 x 0,90 m. Artist H. Vurnal İkizgül.

We live in a period in which original works using new techniques and material are increasing in number. I believe that it is against mosaic's universal language to categorize mosaic strictly by material and technique. We should respect traditionalism but also keep pace with the new. What makes an artist an artist, is design! (Figs. 9-11).

The world places great importance on both ancient and contemporary mosaics. Turkey is a country rich in ancient mosaics and today, realizing that the rest of the world is now aware of our wealth, Turkey is learning to assess the situation correctly. The South East region of our country has a deep rooted history and culture, especially Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Hatay and Kahramanmaraş are at the crossroads with the historical Silk Road, as well as housing all of the civilizations that had existed in Anatolia. Thanks to this awareness, new cultural inheritance projects are being brought to life. These South East region projects have



Figure 10  
Cat Sculpture. İstanbul Modern Art Gallery  
2008. Natural stone 1,10 x 0,70 m.  
Artist H. Vurnal İkizgül.



Figure 11  
International Cow Parade Exhibition  
2007. Size 2,15 x 1,45 m. Natural stone on  
fiberglass. Artist H. Vurnal İkizgül.



become the forefront with their mosaics increasing our tourism and presentation potential. Our only drawback is that we are living with a conceptual confusion caused by the lack of enough original artists. Confusing the copying and decorative ornamentation style - which repeats the old - with original attitude, placing the mosaic artists and the mosaic technicians in the same group, causes us to diverge from world standard mosaic art agenda.

Mosaic art is a branch of the fine arts division all over the world, yet it has its own schools. Just as the Ravenna school trains its own mosaic artists as an international school, just as Barcelona is a brand name with its mosaic city identity,

if we are in possession of the world's greatest ancient mosaic museum we have a duty to contemporise and renew ourselves. We should become aware and proud of our good fortune and realize that the rest of the world is observing us. In the past, mosaic art was indeed a branch of the fine arts department at our universities, but unfortunately, with the growing lack of interest in mosaic art and in new students, the departments were obliged to close. But now, newly growing attention and importance is being given to mosaics after the realization that the rest of the world is seriously pursuing the art of mosaic. In order to close this gap as soon as possible, I suggest that we open international mosaic schools as part of the Fine Arts departments at our universities. Our country possesses the world's largest ancient mosaic collection at the Zeugma Mosaic Museum, the most significant institution in world culture mosaic heritage. We should aim for educational institutions that will train progressive, dynamic, contemporary mosaic artists, who reflect the universal values we possess. Specialized educational projects aimed at young students could and should enrich visual memories of future generations. We should train not only citizens above a certain age as part of vocational training projects in the cities, but also the mosaic artists of the future, beginning with Fine Arts high schools where students would be encouraged to follow this direction. These locally trained artists using contemporary designs and techniques will infuse new life into the art of mosaic; they will become the bridge between the past and the future. If only we had realized this ten years ago at the time efforts were made to change the status quo, by now we would have succeeded in training two generations of students. In Turkey mosaic art has been until today perceived superficially, only as a craft, with conceptually confused educators and curators. For this reason, it has stayed behind world's contemporary mosaic art. Only the artistic production and experience in new educational institutions will enable us to compete on the international platform. These newly created contemporary mosaics by Turkish artists will form an admirable basis for the Contemporary Mosaic Museum.

Just like the mosaic examples in the rest of the world, the art of mosaic should escape its boundaries and flow into contemporary interpretations, original to living areas. The art of mosaic should not only remain in museums, in no interact zones, it should also be spread in cities, in public places where their colorful, modern images would be seen, touched and felt by countless fingers. However, I believe that in order for a city to be remembered as a mosaic haven and a pioneering example to other cities, it is necessary to make readily available to the public both ancient mosaics and contemporary mosaics. My wish is for our country to be remembered as a place where both ancient and contemporary works are exhibited from the past to the future (Figs. 12-14).

I started learning and creating mosaic art when I was nineteen years old. I devoted thirty years (six at the university) to this art, promoting its need to become a contemporary activity. Presently, I am still fighting this battle while acting as a guest lecturer at universities and other institutions. It makes me sad to see that mosaic is still perceived as a craft rather than an art form. Due to its ancient beginnings, it is not easy to demolish its archaeological and technical taboos.

Today, we have a miracle called the Internet; with all the instant information at our fingertips, we are able to move from the dated old customs and embrace the new. Having the chance to see contemporary mosaic work, it is sad and disadvantageous to produce repetitive works, void of design and creativity. The project we have started in south-east of Turkey called "Mosaic art education" is very crucial. Education is the only answer for the new generation. Naturally, we would also like to see people of all ages (be it as a hobby or as a vocational

Figure 12  
Four Seasons Hotel in Sultanahmet İstanbul  
1996. Natural stone. Size 2,50 x 1,40 m.  
Artist H. Vurnal İkizgül.



Figure 13  
Four Seasons Hotel İstanbul.  
Artist H. Vurnal İkizgül 2017.



Figure 14  
Four Seasons Hotel İstanbul 1996. Detail  
from the mosaic panel.



pursuit) to be attracted to mosaic making’s charm. Where there is no education there is no chance of raising the bar and catching up with the world standards. The apprentice-master relationship, which has continued for centuries, is significant. One can’t become a master without first being an apprentice; its most important aspect is the dedication and hard work on that required journey to become a master.

Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu once said “No cultural experience can be as effective, influential and shaping as life, which constantly changes itself and others”. Every artist harbors traces that belong to his/her time period and era. These traces form the basis for future artists and move us into the future. If we only repeat the past, we cannot keep up with today and thus, leave our mark for the future. We should get away from the repetitive copying of mosaic works, as that activity is an impediment to the development of mosaic; only original works will allow us to be remembered in the future.

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