

# Works of Art in the Turkish Grain Board (TMO) General Directorate Building

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## Abstract

Turkish Grain Board (TMO) General Directorate Building was designed by Vedat Özsan, Cengiz Bektaş and Oral Vural (Özsan-Bektaş-Vural Architects) in 1964 and constructed between 1964 and 1968 in Ankara. One of the significant aspects of the building is the involvement of works of art. One percent of the building cost was allocated to the works of art. Moreover, the architects get inspired by some artists during the building design. Such kind of art and architecture synthesis was common in modern architecture between 1950 and 1980 both in Turkey and in the world. However, this aspect of the TMO building is not known enough in the literature. The aim of this study is to analyze the works of art in TMO General Directorate building in terms of art and architecture synthesis. The research method was mainly based on the analysis of the building on site and the evaluations of existing artworks with the literature about art and architecture synthesis, individual writings of architect Cengiz Bektaş and some artists (Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, Burhan Alkar etc.). These works of art vary from wall ceramic to stained glass, and after 1988, a monumental sculpture was added to the building via competition. Moreover, after this sculptor competition, TMO established a plastic arts application center in 1989.

**Keywords:** Art and Architecture Synthesis, Modern Architecture, Turkish Grain Board (TMO), Cengiz Bektaş, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu.

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## INTRODUCTION

Turkish Grain Board (TMO) was established in 1938 in order to support farmers and consumers, and its first settlement was in Sıhhiye in Ankara. While the institution and Ankara were growing, it was decided to build a new building for the general directorate in the ministries area in Kızılay. The new land was in the corner of Milli Müdafa Street and Kumrular Street. Hence, TMO organized an architectural competition for this general directorate building in 1964. A project, designed by Vedat Özsarı, Cengiz Bektaş and Oral Vural (Özsarı-Bektaş-Vural Architects), won the competition. The construction of the building completed and opened in 1968. TMO General Directorate Building is one of the significant modern buildings of the 1960-1970 period for the architectural history of Ankara and Turkey. It is a significant example of buildings whose every detail was designed by architects from urban scale to every furniture details. It is also a pioneering building in which some innovations were applied for the first time in Turkey, from new construction techniques to flexible function solutions. Moreover, as Özsarı et al. (1968) stated, one percent of the building cost was reserved for works of art, and the building was decorated with these works of art.

It is known that "art and architecture synthesis" was common in modern architecture between 1950 and 1980 both in Turkey and in the world. In the literature, the most mentioned example of the synthesis of art and architecture seen in Turkey is the İstanbul Manifaturacılar Çarşısı (İMÇ) building, which was completed between 1959 and 1966. In addition, the buildings of Vakko Factory, Divan Hotel, Marmara Hotel, Ankara Ulus Business Han, Anafartalar Bazaar, Hacettepe University Children's Hospital and Büyük Efes Hotel İzmir are among the known examples of architecture and art synthesis (Bozdoğan, 2008; Yavuz, 2008; Erkol, 2009). Since the interior spaces of these buildings, which are open to the public and have functions such as hotels, bazaars and hospitals, are widely recognized, they have been able to taken place in the literature with their works of art. However, this feature of the TMO General Directorate building is remained hidden and could not be included in the literature comprehensively.

The aim of this study is to analyse the works of art in TMO General Directorate building in terms of art and architecture synthesis. The research method was mainly based on the analysis of the building on site and the evaluations of existing artworks with the literature about art and architecture synthesis, individual writings of architect Cengiz Bektaş and some artists (Bedri Rahmi Eyübođlu, Burhan Alkar etc.). The steps of the research could be summarized as follows: 1) all the existing art works in the building were found and documented, 2) they were examined in terms of their position and function in the space, 3) their visual narratives were examined in terms of the mission of TMO, 4) its architects' writings and open achieves were examined in the focus of TMO building, 5) the artworks of the similar buildings designed in the same periods were scanned in the literature and compared with the ones in the TMO building.

## ART AND ARCHITECTURE SYNTHESIS BETWEEN 1950S AND 1970S

The cooperation of artists and architects in building design was a trend that spread to the world in the 1950s. According to Erkol's (2009) statement, modern architecture, which became anonymous and ordinary after the transition to rapid production after World War II, began to be criticized aesthetically and socially, and the synthesis of art and architecture emerged as a tendency. Bozdoğan (2008) stated that the synthesis of art and architecture offered a creative solution in those years for young architects of Turkey and similar countries, who were caught between their belief in international modernism on the one hand and their search for national identity on the other. It was

effective in “nationalizing modernism”. Yavuz (2008) expressed this synthesis as the integration of a universalized modernist architecture with works of art, that contain folkloric elements and have traces from the local. While all techniques were rapidly becoming universal, emotions became national. Bozdoğan (2008) defined this synthesis as an attempt to give life to modernist spaces, that were thought to have been sterilized until then, with sculptures, wall panels and paintings.

In the architectural literature of this period, some buildings were written with their art works as well as their architecture. In the example of Büyük Efes Hotel İzmir, designed by Paul Bonatz and Fatih Uran, the construction was completed in March 1964 and the decoration and furnishing works were completed towards the autumn of the same year. The building was published as a paper in *Arkitekt* (Bonatz and Uran, 1965) and a list of works of arts and their artist were also written. The main subtitles of this list were artistic oil paintings, moulage works, artistic glass mosaic works, artistic ceramic works, artistic glass works, artistic copper works (Bonatz and Uran, 1965). Unfortunately, such kind of information could not be found about the artworks in the TMO building, neither in 1968 nor in the following periods. Therefore, questions related to the total number of artworks, their qualifications and their artists, remained unanswered in the literature.

There are various theses which focus on artworks in the buildings of this period and analyse comprehensive examples from Turkey. For instance, Tulum Okur (2018) focused on art and architecture synthesis in Turkey from 1950s to 1970s, and she examined 84 buildings. However, TMO building was not written among these buildings. Yavuz (2015) studied the dialogue of architecture with the arts in post-war Turkey, and she attempted to comprehend the formation of the idea of “collaboration” between arts and architecture. In her study, TMO building (with her translation as “Agricultural Products Office Headquarters”) was written among the 31 buildings in the list of selected works performed in post-war Turkey. Yavuz (2015) wrote the names of three artists, Erdoğan Ersen, Turan, Erol and Eren Eyüboğlu with the TMO building in the list. Moreover, in her interviews with Cengiz Bektaş and Tural Erol, the TMO building was mentioned in some sentences. However, the information specific to the TMO artworks has remained superficial. Except the monumental sculpture in the garden, only one photograph was found about the artworks in the TMO building in the literature. In the thesis of Can (2018), which focused on ceramic murals in public spaces in Ankara, a photograph from 1978 illustrates a wall ceramic in TMO building and it is written as the work of Erdoğan Ersen. Since these theses were not focusing mainly on the TMO building, the total number of art works, their qualifications and their artists, are still unknown for the TMO building. Özyıldırım’s research about the architecture of TMO building was published in 2010 and 2011; however, these publications were not focusing on the artworks of the building. If the TMO artworks could be well examined and documented, the TMO building might be discussed in more detail in the related research studies.

### **ARCHITECTS’ AND ENGINEERS’ INTERACTION WITH ARTISTS DURING THE TMO BUILDING DESIGN**

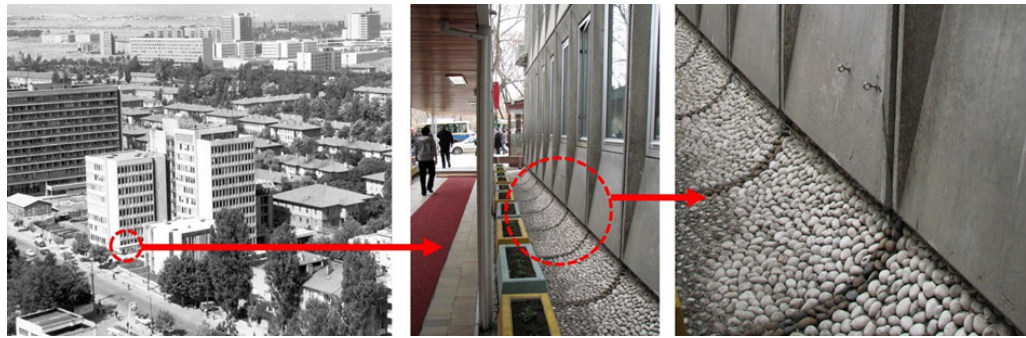
In 1959, Cengiz Bektas graduated from Munich Technical University and Oral Vural graduated from İstanbul Technical University. After their graduation both of them worked in architectural offices in Germany. When they returned to Turkey, they first met in the Middle East Technical University (METU) in 1962. They were both working in the construction office of METU. One year later, they left the work at METU and opened their own architectural office with Vedat Özsan called “Özsan-Bektas-Vural Architects”. They took part in five architectural project competitions and received awards from all of them. In two of these

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competitions, they won the first award and their projects were applied; Turkish Republic Embassy in Bonn and TMO General Directorate building in Ankara. Both competitions were held around 1964 and their constructions completed around 1968. Hence, in the following texts, Embassy in Bonn will be also mentioned.

TMO General Directorate building has the common architectural features of 1960s; its form is made of square planned prisms surrounding a court, and spreading to the land according to its functional needs. Besides its common design approaches of its time, it also pioneered some construction techniques, such as precast façade and open office systems. In this building, architects considered everything from urban analysis to the design of all furniture details. There are hundreds of detail drawings for this building with the signature of Bektas-Vural Architects. They designed every detail of the building sensitively so that some structural solutions for some structural problems (such as insulation, drainage etc.) also looks like works of art (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** Architects' design considerations from urban design to small structural details for TMO General Directorate building; a) a general view of the building with its closed surroundings in Kızılay (TMO Press and Public Relations Directorate archive), b) a human scale view of the building entrance (Photographed by the author, 2008), c) a detailed view the same façade (Photographed by the author, 2008).



Since TMO building pioneered some construction techniques, such as precast façade and open office systems, the contribution of engineers (civil engineer, mechanical engineer and electrical engineer) also became significant. Moreover, their works corresponded the designs of the architects' inspiration from artists and the expressionist movement. Bektaş (1987) explained how they work together as follows:

“In the work areas there is a cassette ceiling, in the service block there is a beam that looks like Piet Mondrian's paintings. Static engineer Ali Terzibaşoğlu was the only one in his field in Turkey today, whom I respect, love, believe in... With his efforts, wherever there was a current of power, we tried to arrange the beam in its proper place and to show the work it was doing with its thickness and measurements. It was a reflection of the expressionist movement in us” (Bektaş, 1987) (Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** One of the ceilings of the service block in the TMO General Directorate building; a) general view with the wooden elevator doors and black marble floor (Photographed by the author, 2008), b) a closed view of the same ceiling (Photographed by the author, 2008), c) schematic representation of the beam plan of the same ceiling part (drawn and colored as a Mondrian painting by the author, 2022).

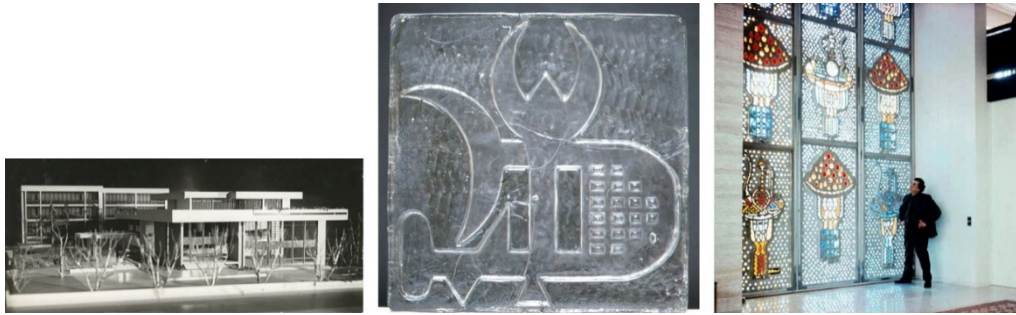


Not only the engineers but also the artists searched innovative techniques in order find compatible solutions with the architects' designs. For the example of the Embassy building in Bonn, Bektaş said:

“We worked with Bedri Rahmi (for the glass blocks of the Bonn Embassy) in



*Paşabahçe for two years. They could not cool the 7 cm thick glass here. We were determined to do it. So Bedri Bey went to Germany. He went to a workshop there. A man-made glass coloured by putting something inside the concrete. Bedri Rahmi has a figure with a fruit saddle, which could be used in this technique very well. Then he did it.” (SALT, 2020) (Figure 3).*



**Figure 3.** Turkish Republic Embassy in Bonn; a) scale model of the building (SALT Research, 2019-b), b) a glass block designed by Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu for the building (SALT Research, 2019-b), c) a stained glass designed by Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu for the building (Yazman, D., 2011).

Bektaş explained why he worked with Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu so close in his works as follows: “Bedri Rahmi is a person who paints with the motifs of my culture in my country as opposed to the people who try to create Turkish painting by working only with Western techniques” (SALT, 2020). For the TMO building, Bektaş also mentioned the contribution of Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu:

*“Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu added the colours of the interior. From the beginning, I always included artists (painters) in my work... Because I know they love colour more than we do. We architects are afraid of everything. We are especially afraid of colour. Everything is scratched in grey from our cowardice... However, they know how to warm welcome people by using beautiful purples, greens and reds. I believed in the rightness of making use of this long before the post-modernists” (Bektaş, 1987).*

Bektaş's (1987) criticism about architects' colourless designs and his support of artists' (painters') contributions to the architecture seem parallel with Bozdoğan's (2008), Yavuz's (2008) and Erkol's (2009) statements about “the art and architecture synthesis between 1950s and 1980s”.

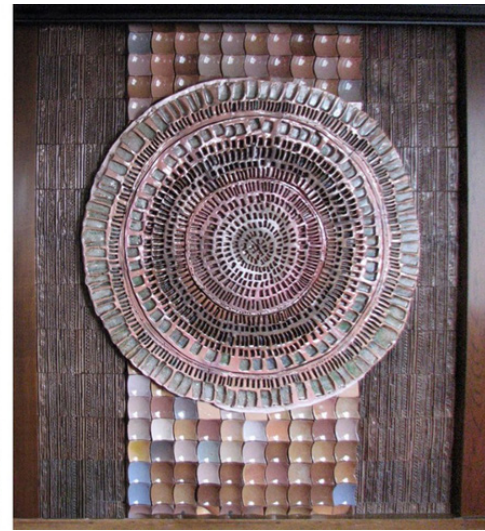
### WORKS OF ART IN THE BUILDING FROM 1960s

As mentioned above, Özsan et al (1968), stated that one percent of the cost of TMO General Directorate building was allocated to the works of art. However, the details about these art works, such as their numbers, names, their artists etc., were unwritten in the literature. Moreover, there was no accessible written information about them in the archives of the institution. In the site analysis in 2008, five types of works of art were found and photographed in the TMO General Directorate building. These were a wall ceramic in the meeting room, a wall ceramic in the old cafeteria, a wall mosaic with stones in the conference hall foyer, three skylights with stained glass over the conference hall foyer and a stained glass on a corridor window.

#### Wall Ceramic in the Meeting Room

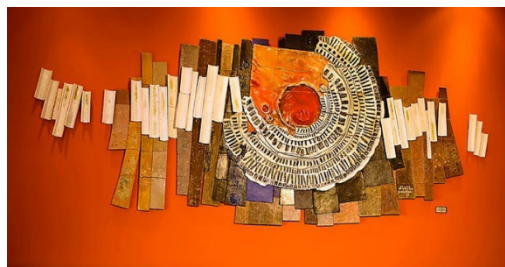
In a rectangular planned meeting room, the wall in the short side is covered with dark brown wooden panels. In the middle of these panels, there is a wall ceramic from ground to ceiling (Figure 4). Unfortunately, there are not any accessible old photographs and writings related to this wall ceramic. The first furniture, which was designed with the building, and the wall colours might be changed in the period of time. Hence, it is hard to understand the relation of this wall ceramic with its original surroundings in the room. However, it is clear that this wall is an attractive background for the head of the meeting table and the wall ceramic is the focus of the room.

**Figure 4.** A wall ceramic on the background of a meeting room in the TMO General Directorate building;  
 a) general view of the whole wall,  
 b) closed view of the wall ceramic (Photographed by the author, 2008).

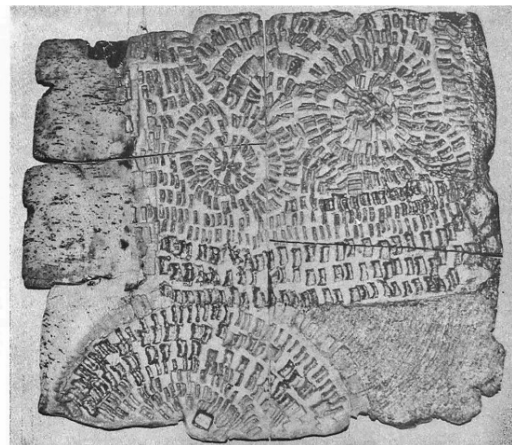
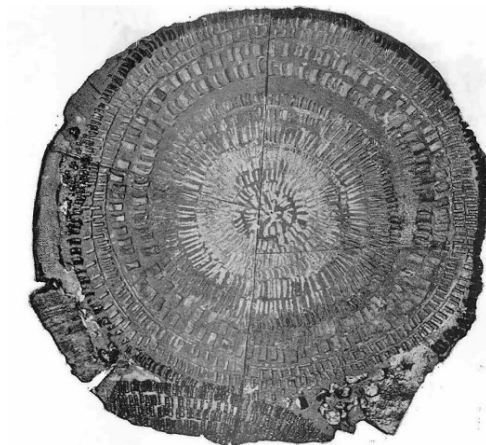


When the wall ceramic is examined in more detail, the circular form in the middle is the dominant figure. It is made up of concentric circles with radial lines. Although the general geometric shape can be clearly defined, all the lines have amorphous forms in detail like an ancient work of art. This type of art work reminds Atilla Galatalı's art works. In the Büyük Efes Hotel İzmir, Galatalı has two different art works using this type of ceramic in around 1964 (Figure 5). Moreover, he derived two art works with this circular ceramic and attended the 3th International Vallauris Biennale, which was directed by Picasso in France in 1972 (Galatalı, 1972) (Figure 6). In this biennale, one of his works won the international first prize and was taken to the permanent collection of the Ceramics Museum in Vallauris (Figure 6-a). Galatalı's these circular ceramics is said to be inspired by the sun and the Hittite art. By considering these similarities, it can be inferred that the wall ceramic in the TMO building might belong to either Galatalı or another artist who has an interaction with Galatalı. For the surrounding square elements of the wall ceramic, similar things can be inferred when comparing with the Galatalı's work in TPAO building in 1980 (Figure 7).

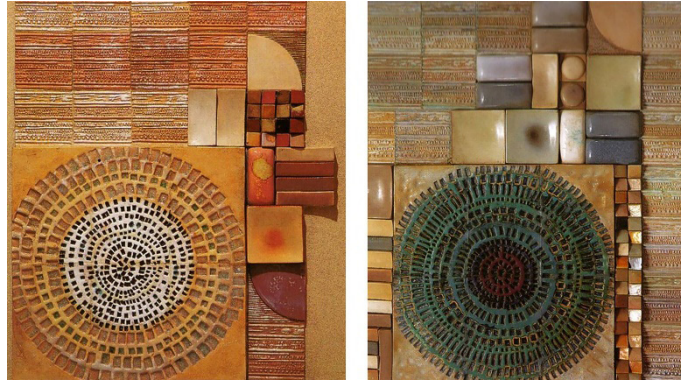
**Figure 5.** Atilla Galatalı's two ceramic works in Büyük Efes Hotel İzmir from 1964;  
 a) the building was completed in 1964 with its works of art, however some resources dated this art work to 1985, b&c) 1964 (Büyük Efes Sanat, 2022).



**Figure 6.** Atilla Galatalı's two ceramic works in the 3th International Vallauris Biennale in France in 1972;  
 a) Galatalı's work which won the international first prize and was taken to the permanent collection of the Ceramics Museum in Vallauris,  
 b) Galatalı's another work from the biennale (Galatalı, 1972).







**Figure 7.** Two small parts of Atilla Galatalı's wall ceramic in TPAO head office in Ankara from 1980 (Bakla, E., 2022, Pinterest collection).

### Wall Ceramic in the Old Cafeteria

The upper floors (8, 9 and 10) of the building were designed for special working functions, such as library and archive, in the preliminary project. However, in the application, these three floors were designed as cafeterias; tenth for a la carte service, ninth for tabldot (ordinary) service and the eight for official service. The kitchen was in the middle of these floors, in the ninth one. In the site analysis in 2008, a wall ceramic covering a partition wall was remarkable in one of these upper floors (Figure 8). Since the application plan of the related floor could not be reached, it is not clear whether this ceramic wall was first designed for a library or cafeteria. In 2008, it was seen that the cafeterias were moved to the appendix building in the west and these upper floors were used as offices as seen in Figure 8-b.



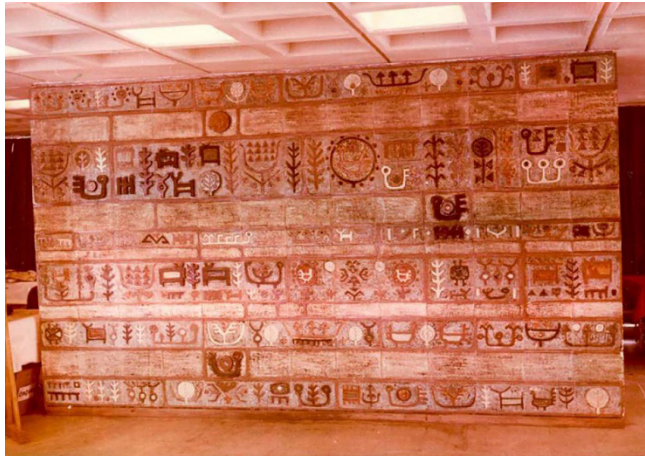
**Figure 8.** A wall ceramic on a partition wall in the TMO General Directorate building; a) a black white photograph from early periods of the building around 1969 (SALT Research, 2019-a), b) a colored photographed from 2008 (Photographed by the author, 2008).

The ceramic wall consists of brown lines parallel to the ground from edge to edge (Figure 8). The intervals of these lines are not equal. It is seen that they are thick in some rows and thinned in others. The background colour of each row changes between blue and white respectively. The rows with blue background are full of abstract figures as reliefs. Exceptionally, there is a figure in three of the white rows. Only three colours are used in the figures; black, white and orange. From these abstract figures, various plants, birds and horned animals, such as deer, are the ones which can be easily understood at first sight. These figures resemble the figures in Anatolian ancient arts. Moreover, they also resemble the motifs in rugs, calicos and other works in Anatolian culture.

Can (2018) mentioned this wall ceramic in her master thesis about "Ceramic Murals in Public Spaces in Ankara". A coloured old photograph of the ceramic wall was illustrated by referring the undergraduate thesis of Zeynep Yasa Yaman from 1978 (Figure 9). She cited that the photograph was from the TMO cafeteria in 1978. However, she also emphasized that the existing place and the situation of the ceramic were not known. In that photograph, some dining tables were partially seen near the both sides of the wall (Figure 9). She also stated that the

wall ceramic was Erdoğan Ersen's work of art. When one of Ersen's work from Büyük Efes Hotel İzmir in 1964 is analysed, similarities with the one in the TMO building can be identified (Figure 10). This similarity supports the statement of Can (2018).

Can (2018) defined the composition of the ceramic panel wall as clear, abstract and stylized quality. It was made by creating square-shaped tiles. The artist designed motifs by interpreting the archaeological and folkloric design elements. These motifs were placed as reliefs on horizontal stripes on the surface of the ceramic panel wall (Can, 2018).



**Figure 9.** A photograph of the wall ceramic on a partition wall in the TMO General Directorate building from 1978 (Can, 2018).



**Figure 10.** Erdoğan Ersen's one of the wall ceramics in Büyük Efes Hotel İzmir around from 1964 (Büyük Efes Sanat, 2022).

Erbay Aslıtürk (2014) asked Ersen his materials, methods and colour preferences for his ceramic works. His answer was as follows: "I like colours a lot. But as Özdemir Asaf said white comes first. First of all, I would dream of making a white form. Colour comes in the secondary plan, even though I like colour". And he emphasized that he preferred technically high-quality cooked ceramics and loved terra rosa as earth (without being glazed) (Erbay Aslıtürk, 2014). These explanations also clarify the technique used in his art work in the TMO building (Figure 8).

### **Wall Mosaic with Stones in the Conference Hall Foyer**

One of the qualified art work in the TMO building is the wall mosaic with stones in the second basement (Figure 11&12). This art work is covering the retaining wall of the conference hall foyer. Not only does it break the monotony of the blind wall, but it also creates a focus for those waiting the conference in the foyer. With the natural colours of the stones used in the mosaic, the wall has colours ranging between beige, taupe and yellow. In its composition, a steppe landscape attracts attention. The first impression of the composition, reminds the landscape of the Middle Anatolia with its small hills. Same composition also resembles wheat fields with haystacks. However, a black tree branch is the clear and dominant figure of the composition due to its size and colour contrast. Why the branch has no leaf is in question. The artist might want an autumn



composition, the harvesting season, and emphasize it with a leaf-fallen tree. Another purpose might be to emphasize the aridity of this steppe land.



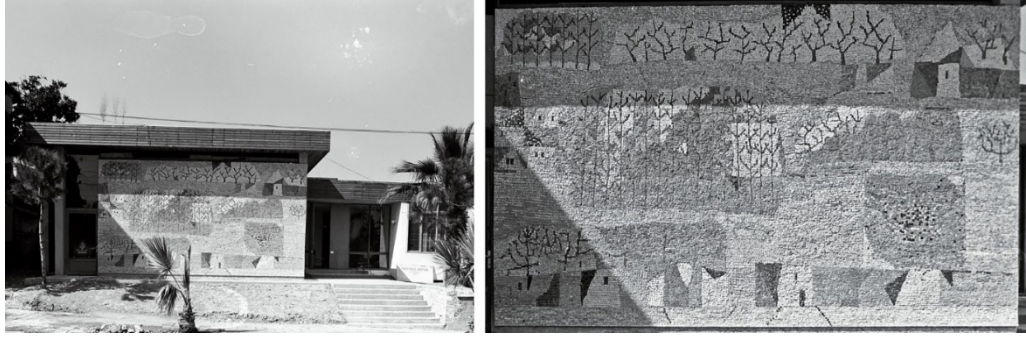
**Figure 11.** General view of the wall mosaic with stones in conference hall foyer, in the 2nd basement floor of the TMO General Directorate building. (Photographed by the author, 2008).



**Figure 12.** Detailed view of the wall mosaic with stones in conference hall foyer in the 2nd basement floor of the TMO General Directorate building. (Photographed by the author, 2008).

As in the case of other art works in TMO, there are not any accessible old photographs and writings related to this wall mosaic. In order to find an information, Cengiz Bektaş's achieve in SALT Research was searched in detail. In Denizli Halil Bektaş Primary School, one of his projects in 1968, a wall mosaic with marbles was remarkable (SALT Research, 2021) (Figure 13). Both the technique and the composition have some similarities with the one in the TMO building. In some of its photographs, following explanation was written: "marble mosaic work made by Tural Erol". Bektaş explained more information about this mosaic wall in one of his final interviews in his life (SALT, 2020). In around 1968, he said to his father (Halil Bektaş, the donor of the school); "If you allow me, I will ask my friend Turan Erol to make this wall a marble mosaic for 75 thousand liras". After his approval, he invited Tural Erol from Ankara. Moreover, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu and Ahmet Berk also attended to the work. Bektaş stated that they made a mosaic by laying marble shards (SALT, 2020). The composition is composed of some group of trees and small one-floor houses which are also mostly used subjects in children's drawings. In general, the composition is an abstracted representation of a pastoral scene like a village. The perspective distortions resembles both the traditional miniature drawings and Picasso's modern cubist paintings. The construction dates of this wall mosaic were very close to the construction of the TMO Building (1964-1968) and it has some similarities with the wall mosaic in the TMO building. Hence, by considering the effects of the same architect, Bektaş, the participants and the technique of the wall mosaic might be similar in both buildings (Figure 11&13-b).

**Figure 13.** Denizli Hacı Bektaş Primary School, around 1968; a) front façade of the building with marble mosaic wall, b) closed view of the marble mosaic wall designed by Turan Erol (SALT Research, 2021).



Tural Erol mentioned about one of his art works in TMO in a newspaper interview in 2011 (Bildirici, 2011). He said that “We didn't always live on a salary. I also earned from murals. Efes Hotel in Izmir is one of the first things I did. For example, I have a 27 square meter stone mosaic panel composition in the in the foyer of the meeting hall of TMO”. According to this description, the mentioned mosaic panel might be the one in Figure 11, which is around 3m x 9m. It is interesting that he mentioned this example after his first work on Büyük Efes Hotel İzmir. It might be one of his significant master pieces. It is also understood that the TMO, as an institution, valued the artists and was able to give the economic rewards of their works.

Erol's sayings about his paintings are also significant in order to understand the composition of the wall mosaic in the TMO building. He emphasized that he was not fond of accepted beauty in his pictures (Bildirici, 2011). He insisted that there was sadness in his paintings, and he added “If someone standing in front of my paintings feels calmness, silence, loneliness and sadness, I will have achieved my goal”. He explained this as follows; “There is sadness in this land. My paintings are the reflection of this land. What does the artist do? His life reflects the world in which he lives. That's what I do.” (Bildirici, 2011). This general description about his paintings also clarifies the yellowish and calm composition of the wall mosaic in the TMO.

### **Stained Glass over the Conference Hall Foyer**

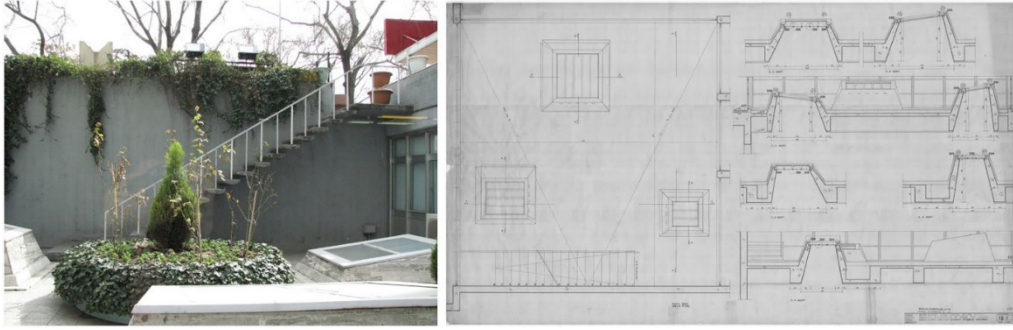
In the second basement of the TMO building, the wall mosaic is not the only art work but also the ceiling has an artistic reflection (Figure 14). Although the foyer is in the second basement, it has natural lighting from three skylights opening to the sunken courtyard of the first basement (Figure 15). Daylight coming from these skylights is filtered by stained glass (Figure 14). Moreover, the artificial lighting is also attached in these skylights and directed to the stained glass.

In the general design of the building, square forms are significant and the building is design with 12m x 12 m grids. In the preliminary project, it is seen that the sunken courtyard is also square shape in plan. There are three square planned skylights; however, their sizes and locations are designed free from each other (Figure 15). Their three-dimensional forms are truncated pyramids but symmetry was avoided in both plan and section planes. In the application project, these skylights were designed in the details of 1/20 and 1/1; however, stained glass was not drawn or mentioned in any of them (Figure 16). Hence, the stained glass might be designed after the building constructed in around 1968 or in late periods. There is not any other accessible written information about the stained glass in the TMO building.

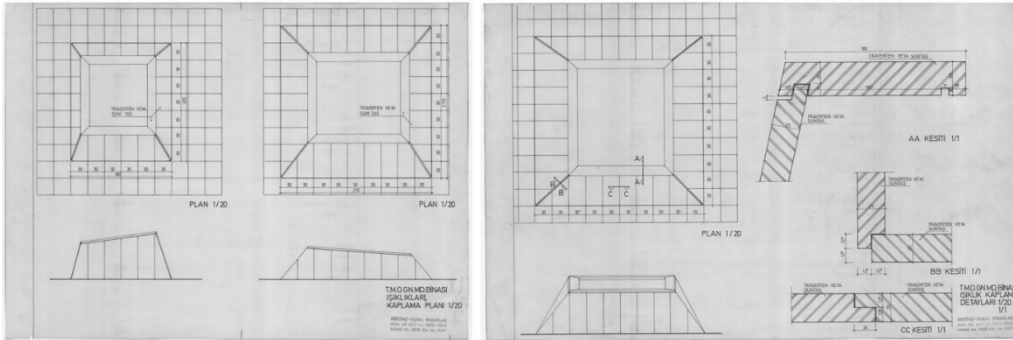




**Figure 14-** Stained glass in the skylight of conference hall foyer, in the 2nd basement floor of the TMO General Directorate building. (Photographed by the author, 2008).



**Figure 15.** a) Courtyard and the skylight of conference hall foyer (Photographed by the author, 2008), b) Plans and sections of courtyard and the conference hall foyer, in the 2nd basement floor of the TMO General Directorate building (TMO Technical Affairs Department project archive).



**Figure 16.** Application project details for the skylight of conference hall foyer, in the 2nd basement floor of the TMO General Directorate building (TMO Technical Affairs Department project archive).

### Stained Glass on a Corridor Window and Other Art Works

In the site analysis in 2008, when the works of art in the building were asked to the TMO Technical Affairs Department project, the above mentioned four works were illustrated. However, while walking around the corridors, a stained-glass window was appeared by coincidence (Figure 17). Likewise, there might be other existing works of arts in the hidden details of the building. Moreover, although all of the first furniture of the building were designed with the building, it was hard to find the old ones in 2008. Similarly, some works of art might be moved to other buildings of TMO or lost in the renovations in the period of time.

### A MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE FROM 1988: AN ARTISTIC ATTACHEMENT OF THE BUILDING

Ankara, as a capital city, is the place where all public institutions have their administrative buildings. In the garden of these buildings, monumental sculptures support their corporate identity and gain urban landmarks. In the 50th anniversary of TMO in 1988, a significant art event started for the TMO building. TMO organized a monumental sculpture competition in order to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Burhan Alkar was also one of the participants of the TMO competition. He was the artist of the monumental sculpture called "Tarımcı Atatürk (Agriculturist Atatürk)", which won the first prize in the competition of Atatürk Forest Farm (AOÇ) in 1981 (Figure 18). Hence, he experienced the subjects of agriculture in his previous works of art.



**Figure 17.** Stained glass window in the TMO General Directorate building. (Photographed by the author, 2008).



AOÇ monument is located in an open area that can be viewed from all sides. The sculpture is composed of five figures standing back-to-back. Özcan (2009) explained these figures as follows: The front side of the monument (welcoming the garden gate) symbolizes the agriculture of current time (Figure 18-a) and the back side symbolizes the agriculture of old times (Figure 18-b). In the front side, there is the figure of Atatürk in the front, a female figure (the symbol of abundance and fertility) on the right, an agricultural worker with a pickaxe in his hand on the left, and an agricultural technician (with a book in his hand) next to him. In the back side, there is a peasant, a shepherd and sheep. In this sculpture, Atatürk is depicted giving the title deed of the Forest Farm in his hand to the public. He is satisfied with the result, smiling and happy, and other figures also experience this happiness (Özcan, 2009). The monument is in a sloping land, and in both side of the sculpture, there are open stairs climbing from garden gate to a hill of the AOÇ. As a part this monument, Alkar also designed reliefs (about agriculture in Anatolia) in the corners of these stairs (Figure 18-c).

**Figure 18.** Burhan Alkar's "Tarımcı Atatürk" monumental sculpture in Atatürk Forest Farm AOÇ, 1981. (Burhan Alkar Atelier).



After a great experience in the monument of AOÇ in 1981, Alkar studied a similar subject eight years later. However, at that time, the context, the surrounding built environment were different and the subject was more specified in the mission of TMO. Taking these into account, Alkar, designed the monument called "Hasat Sonu (The End of The Harvest)" and won the first prize in the competition (Figure 19).

While the mission of the AOÇ is to create an exemplary farm in all areas of agriculture, the mission of TMO is summarized as "the friend of the farmer and the consumer even in the black days (hard times)". Hence, the composition of the monument should be changed accordingly. Moreover, the place of the monument is more limited area and has its own characteristics. It is in the corner of the garden, in which two streets from north and east are intersecting. Hence, the monument has two significant directions perpendicular to each other. Moreover, the corner of the garden is significant because it faces to the Güven Park connecting to the Kızılay Square which is the centre of the capital

Ankara. And the governmental buildings start from this corner to the south and west. Hence, the monument is not only a symbol of TMO but also a landmark of Ankara.



**Figure 19.** Burhan Alkar's TMO 50th anniversary monumental sculpture called "Hasat Sonu (The End of The Harvest)" in the garden of the TMO General Directorate building, 1989. (Photographed by the author, 2008).

Sönmez (2015) defined the TMO monument as it presented a scene from the life of farmers in accordance with its location. When the figures are examined in detail, it represents the moment just after the harvest. The man is holding a pitchfork and the woman is holding a baby. They are tired and sit on the rock and lean their backs against the wall, since they made a handwork. However, they are proud of producing, and they are happy and healthy because they can get paid for their labour. Similar composition can be seen in one of Alkar's small sculptures in Figure 20. It seems like the figures are sitting on a rock and leaning to a (unseen) tree. However, in the TMO monument, the farmer family is sitting on the abstract cylindrical forms (like the silos of TMO) and leaning to the letters of TMO (Figure 19). Therefore, the supportive mission of TMO after the farmers' harvest is represented.



**Figure 20.** a&b) Burhan Alkar's 40x44.25cm small sculpture which has similar figures with his TMO monumental sculpture (Sanat Mezat), c) A wall of Burhan Alkar Aterlier and two hanging photographs of the TMO monumental sculpture (Burhan Alkar Aterlier, red marks were added by the author).

Rudolf Belling (the first foreign guest lecturer to train monumental sculpture in Turkey between the years of 1937 and 1966), emphasized the relations between "sculpture and architecture" and consider sculpture as "the synthesis of plastic and space" (Özyıldiran, 2021). In this point of view, the monumental sculpture of TMO has also significant aspects. The two main figures are facing towards the corner of the garden, which is directed to the Kızılay Square. Although their shoulders are touching each other, their sitting positions are perpendicular to



each other. While the man is sitting towards one street, the woman is sitting towards the other street. Hence, the monument is facing towards all the pedestrians coming from all directions. Similar angles are used for the TMO letters in the background. Letters are not in parallel lines, each of them turning to one of the two streets and the square, respectively. Although the figures of the man and woman (resting after hard work) are in static position, the position of the child adds dynamism to the composition. The child, sitting on mother's lap and looking at the different direction, is energetic and curious to play games. In general, the monument is telling that the farmer family worked hard and gain with the support of TMO, and their future is hopeful. Moreover, with its synthesis of plastic and space, this monument is one of the significant landmarks of the city.

#### **ART SUPPORTIVE MISSION OF TMO GENERAL DIRECTORATE: TMO DR. AHMET ÖZGÜNEŞ PLASTIC ARTS APPLICATION CENTER 1989-1994**

Burhan Alkar's TMO monument was appreciated by the TMO. Hence, the sculpture competition in 1988, inspired TMO to establish a plastic arts application centre. The details of this centre were written in Özcan's (2015) interviews with Alkar. After the competition, the general directorate of TMO, Ahmet Özgüneş, requested Alkar to establish an art centre to teach art to TMO staff and other willing people over the age of 18 in Ankara. As an emeritus educator from Gazi Institute of Education, Alkar gladly accepted the request. The centre established in 1989 with the name of "TMO Dr. Ahmet Özgüneş Plastik Sanatlar Uygulama Merkezi" in one of the hangars in the Güvercinlik campus of TMO in Ankara. The aim was to introduce the problems and basic concepts of art to people who love art but have not found any chance to practice and work in this field, to develop their constructive and creative features, to train artist candidates and art lovers for society. Alkar defined this centre as follows: "This Art Centre is the place where my dreams, even the possibilities and beauties that I could not even dream of, come true." (Özcan, 2015).

The centre included many branches of art. Art experts from Gazi Institute of Education (such as Söbütaş Özer, İhsan Çakıcı, Vedat Can, Zeki Şahin, Sabri Akça, Erol Batırberk, Hulusi Sezer and ceramics teachers Banu Serim, Seçil Külahçioğlu and Ahmet Ünal) participated the centre as educators. Alkar said: "There were no obstacles for it to be an exemplary art centre. We acted accordingly." The workshops were open all days of the week between 09:00 in the morning and 22:00 in the evening, under the supervision of the gallery manager and the staff of the art centre. Classes were held at night, on Saturdays and Sundays. In the rest of the time, the trainees were able to do unlimited self-employment. Alkar emphasized that TMO gave all the required support for mandatory materials, technology or even technical personnel in workshops (Özcan, 2015).

Alkar stated that the garden of the art centre was equipped with mine, plastic, wood, cement, bronze and ceramic sculptures in a short period of four and a half years. They opened some exhibitions in and outside Ankara, and they aroused great interest in all branches; such as painting, graphics, stained glass, photography, ceramics and sculpture. In 1994, the art centre was closed due the changes in the circumstances in TMO. The art centre educated more than 200 students, and some of them (such as Erkan Ük, Güher Argın ve Adile Homan) continued their art works in a professional level (Özcan, 2015).

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this study, existing examples of art works in TMO General Directorate building were tried to be found and analysed. In this context, two wall ceramics and a wall mosaic were found from 1960s. However, almost nothing was written about



them in the literature. The owners of the art works were tried to be detected by comparing similar examples from same periods and writings about the artists. According to this research, the wall ceramic in the meeting room belongs to Atilla Galatalı (or another artist who has an interaction with Galatalı), the wall ceramic in the old cafeteria belongs to Erdoğan Ersen, and the wall mosaic with stones in the conference hall foyer belongs to Turan Erol. However, Bektaş reported that Turan Erol did not work alone in the wall mosaic in Denizli Halil Bektaş Primary School, Bektaş, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu and Ahmet Berk also helped for both the design and the construction of the work (SALT, 2020). In this regard, the art works in the TMO building might also be the products of collaborative works. According to published interviews, it is known that architect Cengiz Bektaş had a position that dominated all the details of the TMO building design and Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu inspired the overall interior design of the building as an artist. Moreover, Galatalı, Ersen and Erol were students of Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu from Academy. Hence, although mainly the names of the three artists were found for the three artworks, both Cengiz Bektaş and Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu might also have influence on these works. At least, they might determine what kind of art works was needed in which part of the building and who could design them.

When these three works are compared, an important common point draws attention. All of the art works have subjects related to Turkish Grain Board; sun, nature, agriculture and Anatolian culture. Since these are abstracted and interpreted representations, it is hard to understand the subject companion at first sight. However, the monumental sculpture produced in 1988, is clearly representing the mission of TMO with its figures of a farmer family. The comparison of Burhan Alkar's "Hasat Sonu (The End of The Harvest)" monument in TMO and "Tarımcı Atatürk (Agriculturist Atatürk)" monument in AOÇ is also significant. Although both of them represents the agriculture in Turkey, they differentiate in their focused subtopic. While the AOÇ monument addresses the agriculture in general (mostly by emphasizing the traditional old agriculture and the science-oriented new agriculture), the TMO monument focuses on the mission of TMO as the supporter of the farmers and the consumers. Moreover, both monuments were designed according to their place. This situation reflects the Rudolf Bellings' perspective of sculpture as "the synthesis of plastic and space" (Özyıldırım, 2021). Above all, the monument is not only a symbol of TMO but also a landmark of Kızılay in the centre of Ankara.

While searching about the monumental sculpture of TMO, the following story about the establishment of TMO Dr. Ahmet Özgüneş Plastic Arts Application Centre was also significant. This situation illustrated the general approach of TMO to the fine arts in the 1980s and 1990s. The institution was a pioneer in art education for both TMO employees and the people in Ankara. In this context, no written source could be found in the literature, except a written interview of Alkar (Özcan, 2009). However, this subject is so rich that might be a research subject in itself.

The limitations of this research were the detailed information about the stained-glass artworks and the missing artifacts, if any. Neither the dates nor the artists of the stained-glass artworks were able to be found in this research. At least, their places and forms are known. They are defined and illustrated for the future research. And existing wall mosaic and wall ceramics are documented as detailed as possible for the further research.

In conclusion, TMO General Directorate building is a significant example of art and architecture synthesis from 1960s. Similar to the Yavuz's (2008) definition about this type of synthesis, the TMO building is an integration of a universalized modernist architecture with works of art, that contain folkloric elements and have traces from the local. With this type of approach, Bozdağın's (2008) concept

called "nationalization of the modern", can be seen in the TMO building. This design and construction of the TMO building was the result of the collaboration of a large number of architects, engineers and artists who are experts in their fields. At this point, the approach of TMO, the employer institution, was also significant during the design and construction phases of the TMO building. Moreover, the institution's relationship with art did not remain in the 1960s, but it was also continued with the monument sculpture competition opened in 1988 in its 50th year. Furthermore, the establishment of TMO Dr. Ahmet Özgüneş Plastic Arts Application Centre seems a significant mission for art education in Ankara between 1989 and 1994. It is hoped that the TMO General Directorate building and its works of art become known in the literature in order to conserve the cultural heritage and shed light to the further research.

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In this research, the necessary permissions were obtained from the relevant participants (individuals, institutions, and organizations) during the survey and in-depth interviews.

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