



# Istanbul panorama

ORHAN PAMUK

A EXHIBITION SHOWING PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY THE TURKISH NOVELIST **ORHAN PAMUK** FROM HIS BALCONY EVOKES HIS CHARACTERISTIC SENSE OF MELANCHOLY AND NOSTALGIA

Between December 2012 and April 2013, the Nobel Prize winning novelist **Orhan Pamuk** engaged in a new activity: taking photographs of the view from the balcony of his apartment in Cihangir. The images were published as a photobook called *Balkon* (Balcony) in 2018 by the German publisher Gerhard Steidl. And now 600 photos from the book are being exhibited at the Yapı Kredi Cultural Center.

After deciding to become a writer in 1973, Pamuk stopped painting and taking photographs. However, in the winter of 2012, while depressed with writing, Pamuk temporarily shifted his attention to photography after purchasing his first digital camera.

“I recognized my own sorrow in the landscape; [...and] I was enthralled by the multitude of functions on my new camera, and they distracted me from my melancholy state,” writes Pamuk in the introduction to *Balkon*.

Taking a total of 8,500 photos in four months from the same spot, Pamuk showed his obsession with the views from his balcony, where a panorama between Cihangir mosque and Mount Uludağ can be seen. “[They are] the same kind of views enjoyed by foreign embassies from Ottoman times,” writes Pamuk.

Most of the photos were taken in winter, and the classic Istanbul scenes Pamuk captured through his lens—ferries and freighters crossing the Bosphorus, iconic skylines emerging in lights of dawn and sunset, surrounding hills looming in mist—echoes the melancholy, nostalgic tone in his narratives of the city.



Just as his novels ambitiously cover a wide range of topics and consist of intricate elements, Pamuk's photographs pursue an epic, panoramic view, yet also record specific details, from the changes of daylight to architecture.

Writing about painting in his book *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, Pamuk explained that his choice of subject was much more important to him than the style or technique, seeing his artwork as a spontaneous expression of something

inside him. Istanbul being Pamuk's ultimate subject, a similar expression can be found in his photographs, too. "There is something in this view which reflects my own state of mind and reveals the ineffable but profound emotions running through me," writes Pamuk.

**A:** Yapı Kredi Cultural Center,  
İstiklal Caddesi No.161, Beyoğlu

**D:** Until April 27

