

# REPRESENTATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH ARTS AND DESIGN: ARKAS ART CENTER AND ARKAS MARITIME HISTORY CENTER EXAMPLES

Sanat ve Tasarım Yoluyla Kültürel Mirasın Temsili: Arkas Sanat Merkezi ve Arkas Denizcilik Tarihi Merkezi Örnekleri

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## ABSTRACT

This paper explores the historical and cultural traces in arts exhibited by the company Arkas and the representation of social responsibility identity through graphic design products. Arkas is a company that has been in existence since 1902 and currently operates in many different fields, including, agency services, ship operations, port operations, logistics services that integrate sea, land, rail and air transportation as main fields. As corporate social responsibility, the company has Arkas Arts Center, Arkas Maritime History Center and Arkas Trio in İzmir. The geographical location, socio-cultural structure and historical periods of İzmir have always been used in arts by local and foreign artists (especially European artists). The company's collections of arts and historical elements are exhibited periodically throughout the year. Related to visibility and staging of a heritage and arts, the exhibitions and collections held in Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center will be investigated throughout this study. The company's social responsibility has been an identity element of the organization. In this context, the graphic design products (corporate identity, poster) of the exhibition space, event information will be analyzed with descriptive method. The graphic design products are obtained from the website of Arkas, Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center. The graphic design products of exhibitions and exhibition venues are crucial in terms of integrity. As being reflections of historical periods, cultural traces of a city, the themes of the exhibitions are generally related to İzmir, panoramic views of the city, the relations with European countries, shipping, the objects related to marine, daily life practices in city during the Ottoman period. Throughout the study, The Fundamentals of Creative Design (Gavin Ambrose and Paul Harris), The Datafied Society (Mirko Tobias Schäfer and Karin van Es), Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination (Jan Assmann) will be used as the main reference bibliography.

**Key Words:** arts, corporate identity, graphic design, culture

## ÖZET

Bu bildiri, Arkas firmasının sanatta sergilediği tarihi ve kültürel izleri ve sosyal sorumluluk kimliğinin grafik tasarım ürünleri üzerinden temsilini araştırmaktadır. Arkas, 1902 yılından bu yana varlığını sürdüren ve şu anda acentelik hizmetleri, gemi işletmeciliği, liman işletmeciliği, deniz, kara, demiryolu ve hava taşımacılığını ana alanlar olarak birleştiren bir şirkettir. Kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk kapsamında İzmir'de Arkas Sanat Merkezi, Arkas Denizcilik Tarihi Merkezi ve Arkas Trio bulunmaktadır. İzmir'in coğrafi konumu, sosyo-kültürel yapısı ve tarihi dönemleri yerli ve yabancı sanatçılar (özellikle Avrupalı sanatçılar) tarafından her zaman sanatta kullanılmıştır. Şirketin sanat koleksiyonları ve tarihi unsurlar yıl boyunca periyodik olarak sergilenmektedir. Bu çalışmada, bir mirasın ve sanatın görünürlüğü ve sahnelenmesi ile ilgili olarak Arkas Sanat Merkezi ve Arkas Denizcilik Tarihi Merkezi'nde düzenlenen sergiler ve koleksiyonlar incelenecektir. Şirketin sosyal sorumluluğu, organizasyonun bir kimlik unsuru olmuştur. Bu kapsamda sergi mekanına ait grafik tasarım ürünleri (kurumsal kimlik, afiş), etkinlik bilgileri betimsel yöntemle analiz edilecektir. Grafik tasarım ürünleri Arkas, Arkas Sanat Merkezi ve Arkas Denizcilik Tarihi Merkezi'nin internet sitesinden temin edilmektedir. Sergi ve sergi mekanlarının grafik tasarım ürünleri, bütünlük açısından önemlidir. Tarihi dönemlerin, bir kentin kültürel izlerinin yansımaları olan sergilerin temaları genel olarak İzmir, panoramik kent manzaraları, Avrupa ülkeleriyle ilişkiler, denizcilik, denizcilikle ilgili nesnelere, Osmanlı döneminde kentteki gündelik yaşam pratikleri ile ilgilidir. Çalışma boyunca The Fundamentals of Creative Design (Gavin Ambrose ve Paul Harris), The Datafied Society (Mirko Tobias Schäfer ve Karin van Es), Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination (Jan Assmann) referans kaynağı olarak kullanılacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** sanat, kurumsal kimlik, grafik tasarım, kültür

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The historical and cultural traces in arts exhibited by the company Arkas in Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center, the representation of social responsibility identity through visual communication design products are the main problems of this study. "While some psychological processes are universal, some are shaped by the culture we live in" (Aronson&Wilson, 2012, p. 113). Transferring the historical and cultural traces of a city to the audience through art gives clues about the background of the city. Since Arkas is a century-old firm in İzmir, the social responsibility projects Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center is both located in İzmir and the collections are generally linked to the historical and cultural background of the city.

For an effective and permanent social responsibility identity, a well-organized advertising, communication process is essential. For Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center by using of print and multimedia, communication channels have been multiplied. "The splashes in the field of transportation and communication in the 20th century have changed our perception of eternity and boundary expression in a great way. Now no corner of the world is far from us or undiscovered" (Acar, 2011, p. 60). Today reaching to public by physical and virtual media is very common and useful to announce the new exhibitions, concerts, interviews, workshops, etc. On the other hand, it is possible to see the war scene from past on a model in Arkas Maritime History Center. The history can be seen in art pieces or models in the centers. Through infographics on exhibition walls, a visitor can easily perceive the life of an artist, or the historical process of the existing exhibition.

The study consists of the titles "The Representation of Social Responsibility Identity, Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center, Analysis of Exhibition Space and Event Information". Visual communication design products, virtual and physical communication, and exhibition spaces will be discussed through the study.

## 2. THE REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IDENTITY

With existence in many different fields, including, agency services, ship operations, port operations, logistic services that integrate sea, land, rail and air transportation as main fields and bunkering, automotive, insurance services, information systems and tourism since 1902, Arkas has been recognized in İzmir with its corporate responsibility and social responsibility identity. Despite the recent establishment of Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center, they are well known with the exhibitions, collections and activities carried out within the framework of arts and historical maritime.

As corporate social responsibility, the company has Arkas Arts Center, Arkas Maritime History Center and Arkas Trio in İzmir. For this study, especially Arkas Arts Center, Arkas Maritime History Center are examined within visual communication design.



**Figure 1.** Corporate Social Responsibility Projects  
[http://www.arkas.com.tr/en/social\\_responsibility.html](http://www.arkas.com.tr/en/social_responsibility.html)

In the collections and exhibitions of the centers it can be seen the geographical location, socio-cultural structure and historical periods of İzmir. Those artworks and collections are organized to be shown to tourists, people living in İzmir. To be recognized and known among people, visual communication design products such as poster, brochures, signboards, infographics on exhibition walls, orientation sheets, cards describing artworks and collections, e-mail information documents, social media advertisements are used for Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center. Taking advantages of both the virtual and real environment, an effective communication way is organized for both centers.

### 3. ARKAS ART CENTER AND ARKAS MARITIME HISTORY CENTER

Use of historical materials and socio-cultural values is the common feature of Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center. Cultural border between Europe and İzmir in Ottoman and Turkish Republic period is especially performed in art pieces with daily life reflections of intercultural background. "The cultural border idea is attractive. It can even be said it is very attractive; because the term encourages people to shift original meaning to a metaphorical meaning with geographical boundaries, for instance without discrimination between social classes, sacred or not, serious and ridiculous, history and fiction" (Burke, 2004, p. 165). Aronson and Wilson also frame that "intercultural work is a challenging subject, but it is necessary to understand people's thoughts about others and how culture influence their interaction with each other (Aronson&Wilson, 2012, p. 113).

With reference to the analysis of social image of societies and social remembrance, that is, the relationship between history consciousness in Assmann's "Cultural Memory", it can be said that social and historical remembrance through images and collections lead people to think more detailed about their past, their city, their national values and tangible and intangible inter-country exchanges. On the other side, today's postmodern and eclectic art is considered Acar's pretentious words are generally accepted: "The links that concept (contemporary art) carries with everyday, the enthusiastic attitude about the 'new', prefer the living soul to the crusted culture" (Acar, 2011, p. 69). Due to exhibiting collections of modern art in general in Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center, it can be said that the culture is still predominantly preferred in both centers.

The building of Arkas Maritime History Center is in the center of Bornova. This old house has a garden where different maritime activities are organized with the visitors such as primary, middle school students. The building of Arkas Art Center is in Alsancak. There is no garden due to location of gulf side. Here, in the building a room is used for organizations like interviews (photography, exhibition presentation), concerts (Arkas Trio also gives concert in this room). "For measuring the degree of reliability of our knowledge of the past and the present, we need to add to the contemporary phenomena such as the existence of official and informal secrets. It measures the degree of reliability of our knowledge of the past and the present, public relations being used in every field and every subject" (Mills, 2007, p. 240). With the activities realized in past of İzmir and relations between European and Turkish cultures, it is intended to comprehend the public relations with everyday life.

### 4. ANALYSIS OF EXHIBITION SPACE AND EVENT INFORMATION

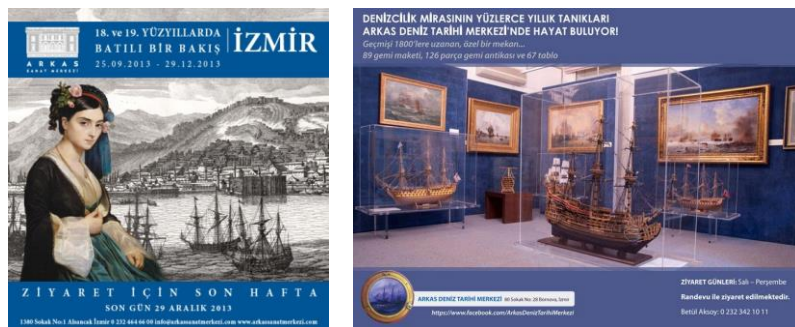
Exhibition space and event information of Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center have been examined with photograph examples and announcement documents obtained from mail information system. Beside physical arrangements of centers, technological communication aspects of audience needs to be fulfilled. In "The Datafied Society", Bunz underlines the importance of digital technology and people's interaction with virtual environment: "As digital technology has become part of our daily environment, as we leave data with every usage, we are all asked to make more of an effort of consciously interacting with technology, and in understanding it" (Bunz, 2017, p. 250).

"Culture and society are the foundation of human existence, that is, they constitute irreducible basic conditions. Human beings we know exist only in the context and basis of culture and society" (Assmann, 2015, p. 143). In the light of Assmann's words, Erll and Nünning define cultural memory in their study: "Cultural memory is a form of collective memory, in the sense that it is shared by a number of people and that it conveys to these people a collective, that is, cultural, identity" (Erll & Nünning, 2008, p. 110). Reflections of historical periods, cultural traces of cities can be seen in art pieces and collections. Those reflections are indicators that convey culture, identity, features of human living where the artwork or collections have been designed. Those indicators are exhibited together so that they can reflect a nation, a

group of people, or an artist's whole individual and career life. On the other side, those indicators are also gathered together to reflect collective memory to the audience. People comprehend what has been in history on their lands, or around their neighborhood. "The function of the indicator is to convey opinions by notifications. This transmission process contains an object, that is, a thing referred to or transmission, indicators and therefore a rule, a means of transmission and naturally a spreader and a receiver" (Guiraud, 2000, p. 21). Today transmission process is used very actively through virtual environment. "Computerized network technologies change all areas of society; they pose challenges and opportunities in a networked globalizing world" (Fuchs, 2008, p. 7). In addition to individual use, the virtual environment is actively used by corporations and institutions, just like the communication environment in everyday life. At the Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center, the online mail system keeps the audience from all around the world active through social media environments.

"Image usage is determined by many considerations including what the desired impact is, who the target audience is, the aesthetic of the project, the function the image will serve, and how adventurous or conservative the overall design needs to be. Image usage is perhaps the most exciting aspect of design as images can have a profound impact on the outcome and success of a piece of work due to the emotional reaction precipitated in the viewer. However, poorly used, images can detract from or counteract the message in the text" (Ambrose & Harris, 2003, p. 127).

As being, the themes of the exhibitions are generally related to İzmir, panoramic views of the city, the relations with European countries, shipping, the objects related to marine, daily life practices in city during the Ottoman period.



**Figure 2.** Communication in the virtual environment, Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center  
<https://outlook.live.com>

Both Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center reach to the audience via e-mail. In order to maintain communication, mail is shared on special occasions. Here, it is also announced that the center of the sanctuary is open on different special occasions. Arkas Art Center announces the last week of the exhibition "Western View in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries". Arkas Maritime History Center also announces the theme of the center: "Witnesses of hundreds of years of maritime heritage come to life in Arkas Maritime History Center. A private space dating back to 1800s. 89 ship models, 126 pieces of ship antique and 67 tables".



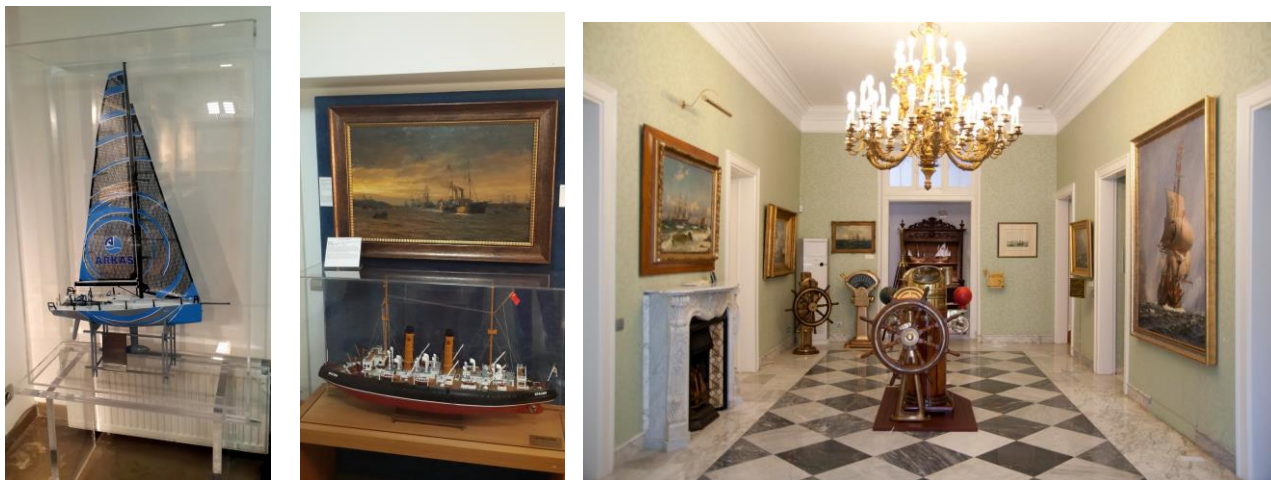
**Figure 3.** Entrances to Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center have signboards

Entrance from the street to Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center are designed in harmony though the buildings are in different places. To be recognized, remembered, to be corporate requires a common design understanding. The logo, center names, other information writings have been applied with low and high reliefs on brass plates.



**Figure 4.** Organization of contents on the wall, Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center

Organization of contents on the wall in Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center are placed within the context of the exhibition. In Arkas Arts Center, the infographic of Victor Vasarely's life are designed with his images of works, his portrait, career life, short explanations of his works year by year. On Arkas Maritime History Center, the wall is designed with contents of the collections. Shipping materials are placed on the table, framed plates from different years, ships, countries are decorated on blue velvet covered wall. With a brief overview, one can perceive that modern traces of Vasarely's art career, and also traces of maritime on the plate designs, wall of Arkas Maritime History Center.



**Figure 5.** Exhibition of works, Arkas Maritime History Center  
<https://arkasdeniztarihimerkezi.com/>

In Arkas Maritime History Center exhibition of works are collected room by room according to different timelines, purposes, themes. Unlike Arkas Arts Center, the products in Arkas Maritime History Center are constantly exhibited pieces. Similarly, the rooms in Arkas Maritime History Center are all designed to show, introduce the collections with the best view, background. Some ship antiques are exhibited with the paintings of the same period that the ship was used. Ship models of Arkas recently designed and used are also introduced in Arkas Maritime History Center. For instance, the "Flying Box" was created in 2011 and this model has finished different races as 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 5<sup>th</sup> in 2014, 2015 and 2016. Every hall and room are designed with different pieces of maritime: tables, different materials used on board, ship models and antiques.

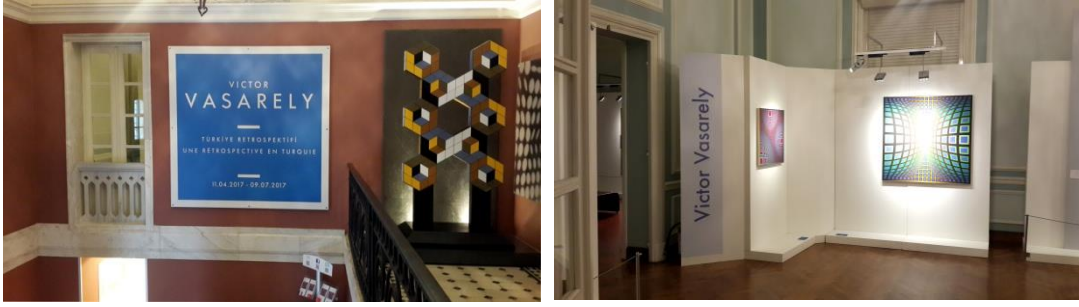


Figure 6. Exhibition of works, Arkas Art Center

Exhibition of artworks in Arkas Art Center is redesigned in every theme. For instance, the last exhibition was the collection of artworks of Victor Vasarely. Inside of the building exhibition rooms, halls were designed to introduce life, art career and works of Victor Vasarely. As the visitors go upstairs, Victor Vasarely exhibition poster and his work confront them. Inside of the exhibition, every room is designed with appropriate color, background, lighting system, etc.



Figure 7. Architectural reflection on Arkas logo, Arkas Art Center  
<http://arkassanatmerkezi.com>

Arkas Art Center is located in Alsancak, Kordon across İzmir Gulf. "Sea viewing side of French Honorary Consulate Building, which has been serving since 1875 in İzmir as one of the most beautiful works of its period, was assigned to Arkas Holding by the French Government for a period of 20 years to be used for cultural and artistic purposes. Following one year restoration works, the building was opened under the title "Arkas Art Center" in 2011" (<http://www.arkassanatmerkezi.com/En/article.aspx?pageID=64>). Front view of the building is drawn to be used in the logo of Arkas Arts Center. The use of the building both reflects the historical background and provides persistence of the location of Arkas Arts Center.



Figure 8. Communication via e-mail, Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center  
<https://outlook.live.com>

Celebration messages on special occasions is also another way of keeping contact with the audience constantly. Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center both celebrate The Festival of Sacrifice and share their open days and hours during the festival.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Arkas Art Center and the Arkas Maritime History Center, which are the two centers where Arkas has come up with a result of careful and planned work within the scope of social responsibility projects, not only reflect the historical and cultural history of Arkas, but also present the traces of a city's historical and cultural background to the audience. Arkas Arts Center has exhibitions that change with a few months timetable. At the Arkas Maritime History Center, maritime collections are mostly exhibited. Since Arkas is an institutional holding in maritime transport since 1902, The Arkas Maritime History Center is also seen to be in tune with the company. As a company carries out maritime business activities over a hundred years, it also presents its audience the social, cultural, artistic and sports activities of the maritime industry through the Arkas Maritime History Center.

Both Arkas Art Center and the Arkas Maritime History Center offer the visitors guidance services. Information giving to the visitors and getting their e-mail addresses for communication through virtual media is done during entry. In Arkas Art Center entrance, books of past exhibitions are sold. Brochures in different languages of the new exhibition are displayed at the stand. Posters of previous exhibitions are hung on the walls in front of the closets, toilets to inform the audience. The guest book in the exhibition area is also a kind of communication and recording tool.

The use of posters, physical media (walls, plates, etc.) is not enough for an exhibition to be visited by large masses. It is necessary that the complementary visual communication design products must be transmitted to the viewer in physical and virtual environments. When the communication established with the viewer through the exhibition and graphic design products is examined, it is seen that the products encountered in the exhibition area are poster, book, brochure, infographics applied on exhibition walls, directive signs, cards defining artworks, collections.

In the study, it is seen that the two buildings have been used for meeting with the audience with different activities such as interview, concert, workshop beside the exhibition activity. Such activities are very useful in terms of continuity of communication, increased visits, satisfaction of the audience of the diversity of the organizations. The exhibitions gain more meaning with face-to-face events, and these events provide positive results like persistence, the increase in the number of visitors.

To reach wider masses, exhibitions in Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center can be carried online. For each exhibition, it is possible to arrange the re-shooting for virtual visit and interactive browsing. Live broadcasts during the concerts of the chamber orchestra can be realized from the virtual environment. Thus, more audience participation is provided.

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### Image References

Figure 1. Corporate Social Responsibility Projects, Retrieved 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017, URL:

<[http://www.arkas.com.tr/en/social\\_responsibility.html](http://www.arkas.com.tr/en/social_responsibility.html)>

Figure 2. Communication in the virtual environment, Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center, Retrieved 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017, URL:

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<<https://www.facebook.com/ArkasDenizTarihiMerkezi/photos/a.232953896819647.53799.232932096821827/232953920152978/?type=1&theater> >

Figure 3. Entrances to Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center have signboards

(photographs taken at the centers)

Figure 4. Organization of contents on the wall, Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center

(photographs taken at the centers)

Figure 5. Exhibition of works, Arkas Maritime History Center

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Figure 6. Exhibition of works, Arkas Art Center

(photographs taken at the center)

Figure 7. Architectural reflection on Arkas logo, Arkas Art Center

<<http://arkassanatmerkezi.com/>> , < <https://outlook.live.com>> , photograph taken at the center

Figure 8. Communication via e-mail, Arkas Art Center and Arkas Maritime History Center

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