1. **MUHATAP**

In the second half of the 20th century, Istanbul became a city growing fast and informally. Although the discipline of planning was at work behind closed doors, thorough implementation of large-scale projects was not possible, as resources—both time and money—were scarce. The urban developments underway in the city today are extensive and without precedent. Many people are aware of official planning activities and want to participate in decision making, but are confronted with a system not yet equipped for their participation. Often those that suffer the negative consequences of urban projects are not considered to be the MUHATAP—they are not part of the conversation.

**Ambition:** Make city planning a matter for everybody in the city. Make everyone participate, but first define who the MUHATAP are and how to involve them.

2. **RE-FRAME**

Cities seem to have a never-changing core, but are in fact subject to constant change and re-framing. Istanbul has a long history, with many of its layered structures standing today as iconic reminders of the past. Hagia Sophia, for example, brings to mind the Byzantine Empire, while Topkapi Palace recalls the heyday of the Ottoman Empire. All of these powers created symbols of their presence in the city, like the Venetian and French palaces in Beyoğlu. Every new authority has the power to reshape the city by implanting new structures to represent a relationship with the organization of the state, or by manipulating existing ones.

**Ambition:** Re-frame the city according to today’s Republic, or design symbols to provoke a renewed organization as you would prefer it.

3. **JUST BE YOU IN BEYOĞLU**

All over the world, cities do their best to market themselves with smart slogans and new names. New York may have been the first, with its now well-known “I (heart) NY” slogan. Today, we can ride through the canals of IAMsterdam, dance in Capital of Tango Buenos Aires, or travel to Toronto: The World Within a City. Of course, these marketing slogans try to show the “nice” aspects of the cities they are selling—the exciting sides and not the questionable ones. In the end, they are designed to attract the tourists, investors and opportunities that will bring recognition (and revenue) to their cities.

**Ambition:** Write a slogan for Beyoğlu and think of a campaign to promote it.

4. **SOUVENIRKÖY**

Beyoğlu has long been a district of trade and merchants. Beginning in the 19th century, specialized commercial areas were developed. Şişhane, for example, became famous for its lighting shops, while Perşembe Pazarı, near Galata Bridge, is known for its hardware stores. With new trends and regulations, however, has come the move of trade and production out of the city center. In place of these traditional shops are the trendy cafés and fashionable boutiques of Galata, and today’s Beyoğlu is peppered with generic souvenir shops promising tourists a memento for home. In the future, souvenirs may be the only “original” products sold in Beyoğlu.

**Ambition:** Make a plan to optimize tourism in Beyoğlu that would help the “living city,” keeping in mind the needs of the people who live there, as opposed to its temporary visitors.

5. **PEOPLE OR PROPERTY**

Beyoğlu aims to be the center of Istanbul, with the highest reputation of all the city’s districts. This ambition promises a future for private capital and undoubtedly attracts investors. Beyoğlu is valued for its architectural heritage, and authorities wish to preserve its run-down buildings. However, when buildings are set to be restored for better use, real estate prices skyrocket. Former residents of those neighborhoods are left no choice but to leave for other destinations. Eventually, both the buildings and the residents are replaced.

**Ambition:** Make the city better, but choose whether to put people or property first. Decide when your renovation will be declared a success.
**PHENOMENA**

1. **UNMISTAKABLY OURS**
   Authenticity is a concept misinterpreted and manipulated. It is never fixed, but rather constantly evolving. If you were to decide what is “typical” of Beyoğlu, you would discover many different layers of history, and many stances within these layers to choose from. Each member of a society takes part in the debate that works to redefine authenticity. It is a living, not static, concept. Authenticity isn’t something of the past – it is NOW!

   Phenomenon: Use in your proposal the DNA of Beyoğlu. All the aspects of your proposal should be unmistakeably “typical” of it.

2. **FEST**
   It is timely and fashionable to celebrate all sorts of achievements today. There are festivals to raise awareness of issues that matter, to enjoy contemporary cultural products, or to merely have fun. They may all be temporary, but speak to ever-present cultural desires and concerns.

   Phenomenon: Turn your proposal into an event in order to make people aware of it.

3. **COMPROMISE**
   No lone soldier can influence powers to change their ways. Only ideas supported by groups of people succeed in doing that. No matter how hard it is to shape an idea into a product within a crowd, one must learn to convince and compromise in a smart way, and to make larger groups comfortably take a stand for the proposal at hand.

   Phenomenon: Use your powers of persuasion to make as many people as possible agree with your proposal.

4. **SELF INVESTOR: DO IT YOURSELF**
   If you want it done right, you must do it yourself! The best way to get things done is not by depending on other people or groups, like the government or big investors, but by rolling up your sleeves to do what it takes. Self-reliance and the willingness to take risks are qualities that are needed to make projects succeed.

   Phenomenon: Find a way of realizing your ambition yourself, independent from big investors.

5. **ŞİŞHANE’DEKİ GİBİ**
   The relationship between the lighting shops that have filled Şişhane since the end of the 19th century is neither characterized by rough competition, nor pure capitalism. Rather, it has many social qualities. Shop owners try to build relationships with each other by providing honest advice to their customers, even when that means telling them they can find the same product, cheaper, somewhere else. If one shop doesn’t have a product on-hand, it is not uncommon for the shop owner to send an employee to another shop to retrieve the wanted item, and to serve tea or coffee to the customer while he or she waits. This system builds a relationship between different shops and workshops: at the end of the day, employees often go from one shop to another to collect the products that another shop borrowed, or the money from products sold. This system is particularly unique to Şişhane, as so many shops sell the same products within a very small area. As land in this neighborhood is bought for commercial development, these shops have begun to move away. Soon, this system may be a thing of the past.*

   Phenomenon: Use the interdependent network society that is typical of Şişhane.

*Rephrased from Istanbul Para-Doxa: Conversations on the City and Architecture, Ed. Pelin Derviş, Garanti Gallery, 2010

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Image credits:
1. FACADES
A square is a central place where people can walk, meet or demonstrate. It is an open space, but one usually defined by its outlying architecture and surrounding facades. When people go out with friends in Beyoğlu, often they will meet by the wall of the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) that borders Taksim, but what other boundaries does the square have? Maybe Taksim lacks truly defining boundaries, contributing to the ongoing debate of how better to define its existence.

Ambition: Re-think Taksim Square through its walls and facades. Which buildings define it now, and which could be added to define the square better in the future?

2. TAKSIM CHOREOGRAPHY
Taksim Square is the most prominent public space in the entire city. On a daily basis, it serves as a meeting place for friends in Beyoğlu, and as an important transportation hub, as the bus, dolmuş, metro and funicular all make stops here. During holidays and celebrations, Taksim becomes a giant stage—during international sports events, a giant screen. Yet, it also leaves a lot of room for improvement. This improvement begins with understanding how the square is used and by whom.

Ambition: Plan the choreography of Taksim Square for: 1) a normal day, 2) a holiday, and 3) a national celebration. How can this area be redeveloped to best facilitate these choreographies? Don’t limit your thinking to pedestrians, but also include cars, buses and motorcycles as well. Draw your own map of the square first.

3. RE-FRAME
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5. RE-ORGANIZE
A city does not only exist on the small scale of buildings, squares and the people using them. Rather, it functions on a large scale, with networks connecting all these smaller elements. Traffic is one of these connectors, as it is constantly moving through the city. It is most likely to see new developments planned and implemented on a small scale—new roads opened, licenses for new residential areas approved, a public square refurbished. It is always valuable to consider the network that connects all the pieces together.

Ambition: Think of the district at its largest scale. Make it work better.
1. WRITE HISTORY
History is defined by the moment you look back on the past. Our view of the past changes frequently, and is defined by prevailing trends, powers and opinions. Consequently, heritage is also constantly redefined. Even in our age of incredible technical possibility and global connections, there is a renewed need for a better grip on history. Even the newest things have a touch of the past in them. Although the early 20th century across Europe was marked by a radical disavowal of the past—an attitude embraced by Turkey—everyone has stopped throwing away historical elements and now seeks to reinterpret its cultural-historical identity. History is important to the inhabitants of the city, but it also sells in the tourist industry!

Phenomenon: Make your proposal according to your interpretation of the history of the place and the heritage that is a symbol for that. Limit your interpretation to what you judge to be the main historical elements.

2. IMPROVEMENTS THAT WORSEN
Societies tend to implement as many improvements as possible, thinking more technical support, more communication possibilities, more separation of functions, more exclusion of danger should all bring more happiness and a higher quality of life. But these improvements can also take away some of the qualities developed out of necessity, like networked social interdependencies. With ties lost, improvements can lead to a decline in the quality of life, making life worse instead of improving it.

Phenomenon: Be aware of all the things that weaken along the route to improvement and ask yourself if it’s worth it. Try to revive or reuse existing or almost-forgotten trends, customs, things or buildings.

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AMBITIONS

1. TEMPORARY
The world-famous Crystal Palace in London was built as a temporary construction for the 1851 World’s Fair. Paris’s iconic Eiffel Tower was, similarly, never meant to be a permanent structure. Some temporary buildings manage to out-live their temporary existences, while other permanent ones disappear much faster. At the time of their construction, both these structures served as windows to the future, hinting at the changes the Industrial Revolution would bring. Temporary buildings or events, through their impermanent natures, reveal a potential for change that society might not yet be ready to realize.

Ambition: Use your phenomenon to create a plan for temporary activities than can provoke change.

2. LAW 5366
Laws regulate a wide range of actions in both private and public life, including the practices of construction and conservation. Law 5366 was created in 2005 to define urban renewal areas for “the sustainable use of downgraded historical real estate through protection by renewal.” The law gives the local and national governments tools to act in areas “that have been worn down and are tending to lose their characteristics.” It integrates the possibility of expropriation and “repossessing” immovable objects without clear, lawful owners. Law 5366 is the basis for the highly-disputed urban transformation projects taking place throughout Turkey.

Ambition: Improve Law 5366 according to your phenomenon.

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4. KURNAZ
As urban transformation projects develop across the city, many citizens feel excluded from the process and feel they have no power through the official channels available. But, there is always an official way of doing things, and a smart way.

Phenomenon: Think of the right strategy to provide you with more influence in the situation—the official way or the smart way—and define how it differs from the current way of doing things.

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2. NEW MAHALLE
İstanbul has grown over time in an accumulation of mahalleler (neighborhoods), defined by law as “the (smallest) administrative unit, which show similarities in their needs and their priorities and harbor neighborly relations between its residents.” With an emphasis on the social relation of residents, the mahalle is perceived as a local framework even by the legal system. Today’s cities and citizens, however, are inspired by the wider global context. In a congested city like Istanbul, the need to reshape social practices and change the built environment has led to different examples of new and renewed neighborhoods—from far-away gated communities to gentrified historic areas. In any of today’s examples, the real value lies in the land, which defines its residents by socio-economic status. If all the land in the city were premium and available, how would the urban landscape take a new shape?

Ambition: Create your new neighborhood with affordable housing and long-lasting qualities on an empty plot of land in Beyoğlu.

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