

WORKSHOP

Expanding Agency

23 OCTOBER 2026

as part of the upcoming

EXHIBITION

“Expanding Agency: Women, Race, and the Dissemination of Modern Architecture”
(University College Dublin)

Exhibition opening: 23 October 2026

@METU Faculty of Architecture

Women and Other
Marginalized Actors of
Modern Architecture
in Turkey

24 OCTOBER 2026

SYMPOSIUM



METU Architectural History

CALL for PAPERS

Expanding Agency: Women and Other Marginalized Actors of Modern Architecture in Turkey

Symposium at METU Graduate Program in Architectural History

Who makes modern architecture? Who authors it, enables it, sustains it, finances it, mediates it, maintains it, or resists it? Whose labor remains uncredited in architectural histories structured around authorship and institutional power? What kinds of architectural agency emerge when we look beyond well-established canonical actors to women, different gender and sexual identities, ethnic and religious minorities, workers, philanthropic organizations, NGOs, materials, or environments?

This one-day symposium invites papers that rethink modern architecture in Turkey through expanded, distributed, and intersectional notions of agency. Canonical narratives of modernity have largely historicized architecture as a male-dominated, state-centered nation-building project, emphasizing rupture from the empire to the nation-state and foregrounding Turkish and western European émigré architects as the founding figures of architectural culture. This narrative has largely marginalized the agency of multicultural and multiprofessional architectural actors of the late Ottoman Empire, obscuring the continued practices of Armenian, Greek, Jewish, and Levantine architects of post-1923 Turkey. These narratives have also failed to adequately account for the agencies of women and queer actors in the production of modern architecture.

Against this framework, the symposium seeks to foreground the practices between the 1920s and the 1970s as an uneven, negotiated, and collective process, shaped by overlapping gendered, economic, political, and material forces that exceed both singular authorship, nationalist paradigms, and over-determined periodization of the Empire vs. the nation-state.

We are particularly interested in scholarship that challenges established hierarchies by centering marginalized figures and practices, including those whose contributions operated indirectly, informally, or outside canonical professional roles.

Possible themes include:

- Women and gendered forms of architectural labor
- Minority, non-Muslim, and migrant actors
- Construction, craftsmanship, and embodied expertise
- Philanthropy and humanitarian practices
- Institutions, patronage, and informal networks
- Media, exhibitions, publishing, and architectural discourse
- More-than-human actors: materials, climate, ecology, infrastructure

Format:

The symposium will take place on October 24, 2026, and consist of several panels, followed by a closing roundtable discussion. Selected papers of 15–20-minute presentations will be considered for a post-symposium proceedings e-book, alongside materials produced during the “Expanding Agency” workshop and mapping project. This symposium is planned in connection to the University College Dublin’s exhibition “Expanding Agency: Women, Race and the Global Dissemination of Modern Architecture” that will be opened in Middle East Technical University on 23 October 2026.

- Please send your abstract of 300 words and short bio to expandingagency.metu@gmail.com by 1 August 2026.
- The selection will be announced by 15 August 2026.
- Full papers are expected by 20 September 2026.
- A limited amount of funding is available for defraying travel expenses of a limited number of speakers.

Organization: Belgin Turan Özkaya, T. Elvan Altan, Pelin Yoncacı Arslan, Aslıhan Günhan, Ekin Pinar