Body, experience, sense, and place: Past & Present Sensory mappings of Istiklal Street in Istanbul.

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An attempt to recognize the undiscovered bounds of Istiklal Street in Istanbul between its sensory experiences (intangible qualities) and physical setting (tangible qualities) could be taken as the first inspiration point for this study. ‘The dramatic physical changes’ and ‘their current impacts on sensory attributions’ of Istiklal Street have directed this study to consider the role of changing physical layout on sensory dimensions and created the challenge of this research.

The public places have always been subject to transformation, so in the last years, the changing socio-cultural structure, economic and political movements, law and city regulations, innovative transportation and communication activities have resulted in a controversial modification of Istanbul. And, as the culture, entertainment, tourism and shopping focus of Istanbul, Istiklal Street has witnessed different changing stages within
the last years. In this process, because of the projects being implemented, many buildings such as cinemas, theatres, and bookstores have restored, moved, converted, closed and demolished which have been significant elements in terms of the qualitative value of this area. And, the multi-layered socio-cultural, and architectural structure of Istiklal Street has been changing in a dramatical and controversial way. But importantly, while the physical setting of Istiklal Street has changed, the transformation has not been spatial, socio-cultural, economic, but also the sensory qualities have begun to lose its distinctive features. With the help of the method of ‘Sensewalking’ which is an efficient research tool to generate knowledge on sensory dimensions of an urban settlement, this research mainly tries to understand how do ‘changes of physical setting’ (tangible qualities) play role on ‘sensory qualities’ (intangible qualities) of Istiklal Street. For this reason, the comparison between ‘sensory mapping of Istiklal Street in present’ and the ‘sensory mapping of Istiklal Street in past’ will be pictured, interpreted and criticized.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Asiye Nisa Kartal is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Nottingham, Architecture and Built Environment Department. She qualified as an architect at Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul and holds two March degrees firstly from ‘Yildiz Technical University, Architectural History and Theory Department’ and secondly from ‘Istanbul Technical University, Architectural Design Department’. Her present research investigates how do ‘changes of physical setting’ (tangible qualities) play role on ‘sensory qualities’ (intangible qualities) through picturing, interpreting and comparing the ‘sensory mappings of Istiklal Street, Istanbul in present and past’.