

A Question of Permanence: Future Plans for my Work

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Long-Term Plans:

One of the secret desires motivating artistic production is the wish to leave an eternal trace, to have one's ideas and artifacts live on after they have perished. This is not an easy task. Especially in Turkey, permanence, in any field or form, is extremely difficult to attain, and the future is twice as chaotic as in the civilized world. Digitization offers many challenges, as well as opportunities in this age-old quest.

To this end, my long-term plans include:

- Producing catalogues of my painted works every five years and distributing them to major libraries around the world.
- Donating all my physical works: original paintings, hand-made sketches, etc. to a person or institution outside Turkey, ensuring long-time survival.
- Collecting a digital archive of all my photographs, paintings, sketches, writings, films, etc. and sustaining it permanently online.
- Against natural or man-made disasters, producing one or more "backup physical archives" of *printed* reproductions, of all aforementioned photographs, paintings, sketches, and writings, in another location, preferably in a different continent from the initial archive of original works.
- An artist's archives and sources of information are just as important as his or her own works. Personally, I draw creative sustenance from my private library, and my carefully organized archive of digital images, documents, sounds, etc. For these sources, my plans involve donating my private library to a person or institution outside Turkey, or failing that, donating them to a high-ranking local university or high school. I plan to host my digital source archive online in a similar manner to the way I hope to share the digital copies of my works.

These are my long-term plans, which I hope to start implementing in the next decade. *Extreme* long-term plans are more difficult.

Extreme Long-Term Plans

The long-time survival of civilization in its present-day form is disputed. Pessimistic estimates even predict the extinction of the human species after a couple of thousand years. In these time scales, the artist's concern of preserving his or her works may seem absurd. But as seen in countless archaeological museums, extreme-long-term survival of artwork is a possibility. The inevitable processes of fragmentation, decay and context loss surround past artworks with a delicious aroma of mystery and as an artist, I would like to have a shot at attaining this degree of preservation for my works.

For the extreme long term, my plans include:

- Using recently developed digital encoding techniques on nanostructured glass¹, preserve the entirety of my work and my source documents in “memory crystals,” and have them buried at strategic locations across the world.
- Etching the copies of a certain number (depending on the available budget, 10, 20, 100 or more), of my “best works,” on metal, and against potential scavenging of metal, marble plates and establishing a “relic set” of selected works.
- Burying copies of this “relic set” in my future grave plot, and resources permitting, several other areas, including caves, alluvial sites prone to fossilization, and other areas.
- Creating sculptures out of marble (an easily obtainable and non-recyclable material) as a separate body of work.

I hope to start implementing these plans *after* the next two decades of my life. Of course, I do not yet possess the resources to start acting on them. Until then, one can never know if, or when life may deliver a nasty surprise.

¹ “Eternal 5D Data Storage By Ultrafast Laser Writing In Glass”
Retrieved from <http://www.orc.soton.ac.uk/962.html>, <http://spie.org/Publications/Proceedings/Paper/10.1117/12.2220600>

A Personal Dimension

In these early years of my artistic adventure, one of the key facts I have realized is the importance of interaction, kindness, and the strength of human memory. Following these insights, I take care to produce “occasion-only” postcards whenever and wherever I have an art-related talk, exhibit or other event, and distribute them freely to attendants. I also print and carry “gift prints” on my person at all times and hand them out to people I meet in daily life. Finally, I make tiny free sketches for some of my friends, and in other cases hand out inkjet print-outs of my digital works as gifts.

I realized that these works retain a strange permanence of their own in the abodes of their recipients. Some of them will likely outlast some of my “real” artworks. The way they are displayed in such homes also adds them a new set of interesting visual characteristics. They can be considered the most valuable artifacts in my body of work, for they stand as reminders of people’s love, belief and support.

