

ATELIER BRÜCKNER

PRESS RELEASE

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ZEYREK ÇİNİLİ HAMAM IN ISTANBUL THE REBIRTH OF A CULTURAL TREASURE

The Zeyrek Çinili Hamam in Istanbul's historic Zeyrek neighbourhood is restored to its former glory as an architectural masterpiece and cultural centre. ATELIER BRÜCKNER has developed a new museum within this traditional bathhouse, built in the 16th century by renowned Ottoman architect Sinan. The hamam will be open to visitors starting September 30th. Initiated by the Marmara Group, this unique destination combines a traditional bathing experience with a museum exhibition and event spaces.

The bathhouse's name "çinili" refers to the magnificent Iznik tiles that once lined its interior, and while fragments of the tiles have long been displayed in the likes of the Louvre and the British Museum, they can now be admired in the new museum on site for the first time. Alongside several thousand of these fragments, the restoration work also uncovered an array of valuable archaeological finds dating back to the Byzantine period, which now also form part of the museum.

ATELIER BRÜCKNER's exhibition conveys the history, significance and workings of the Zeyrek Çinili Hamam as well as its role as a cultural hub since the Ottoman period. The exhibition is divided into four main themes. In the foyer area, visitors are introduced to "The Story of Hamam" – the building, its key features and its history, as well as the ambitious twelve-year restoration project. The "Journey of Water, Smoke and Steam" in the well courtyard presents the building's fascinating technical water systems, while a dramatic light sculpture conveys the position of the former water wheel over the deep wells.

"The Tiles Gallery", the main exhibition space on the ground floor, explores the discovery of the blue and white Iznik tiles from the 16th century, with a centrepiece of hundreds of fragments in a dramatic display. Finally, visitors explore "The Bathing Culture Gallery", the upper exhibition space, with an impressive scenographic wave of over 70 traditional bathing clogs from the client's private collection, alongside beautifully illustrated graphics about the "People of Hamam" and "Depictions of Hamam".

ATELIER BRÜCKNER's exhibition design has been kept simple in order to focus the visitor's attention on the architecture and the objects on display. In clear contrast to the historic building, the displays have a minimalist design; dark grey powder-coated steel, corten steel and regional Marmara marble are used.

ATELIER BRÜCKNER GMBH
KREFELDER STRASSE 32
70376 STUTTGART | GERMANY

PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

CLAUDIA LUXBACHER
T. +49 711 5000 77 126
PRESSE@ATELIER-BRUECKNER.COM

WWW.ATELIER-BRUECKNER.COM

Media is used to explore the beauty of the tiles and their unique patterns and geometry. This includes two large and impressive projection-mapping displays in which, by augmenting original fragments, the tiles suddenly become “whole again”, and return to their original positions on the hamam walls. An interactive app acts as a portal through which the visitors can travel back in time to when the walls of the hamam were still completely decorated with Çinili tiles. In “The Bathing Culture Gallery”, visitors are invited to participate with animated scenes hidden under steam. They are “uncovered” through motion-tracked interaction.

Throughout all spaces, meticulous use of lighting accents the key features of the original architecture and illuminates the beauty of the collections. Special effect lighting is also employed to create a “water” effect in areas which were formerly used as part of the hamam’s plumbing system. A custom soundscape, inspired by the hamam and developed with Youmna Saba, creates a unique, almost spiritual, ambiance throughout.

ATELIER BRÜCKNER was also responsible for the Çinili Hamam brand revamp, drawing inspiration from its distinctive architecture. This visual identity developed in collaboration with H5 Paris, spans all applications, including a website that takes visitors on a digital journey and sparks curiosity, exhibition graphics, signage and wayfinding and digital media. All feature vibrant blue palettes, a custom typeface, influenced by the Çinili tiles designed by TBWA, and Ottoman miniature-inspired infographics and illustrations, that transport visitors to a bygone era of the rich Ottoman bathing culture.

The opening will follow in two phases, with the bathing rooms playing host to a contemporary art exhibition from September, before returning to their original use as a working hamam in early 2024. Following twelve years of meticulous renovation works, the bathhouse now shines with renewed splendour. Its combined cultural offering, which gives visitors the chance to learn about the hamam in a museum-style exhibition, while also being able to experience the bathing ritual for themselves, will make the Zeyrek Çinili Hamam one of Istanbul’s must-see destinations.

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ATELIER BRÜCKNER is one of the world's leading exhibition designers. 120 employees contribute in an interdisciplinary way to the development of narrative spaces for museums, brand worlds and visitor centres. Current projects include the Ephesus Experience Museum in Ephesus and the Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza. The focus is on conveying content as a sustainable experience. Content and space are conceptualised together.

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INFORMATION

Photographs (jpg_300 dpi) and an isometry can be downloaded from the following link: <https://www.atelier-brueckner.com/en/zeyrek-cinili-hamam>

Exhibition "Healing Ruins"
30.9.–5.11.2023

Address:

ZEYREK ÇINILI HAMAM

Zeyrek, İtfaiye CD. No. 44, Fatih, Istanbul

info@zeyrekcinilihamam.com

<https://zeyrekcinilihamam.com>

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