

a short guide for artists of
the 2026-2027 program:
Failure is my favorite color

PASAJ

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PASAJ

PASAJ is an artist initiative that runs a project space used for various purposes (exhibitions, performances, workshops, talks) in the field of contemporary arts. PASAJ focuses on social context, knowledge, and memory of the space as well as connecting with the local community. It aims to facilitate skills exchange and to establish an environment where artists encounter each other and other inhabitants in the area. PASAJ invites artists to build up site-specific projects in communication with its surroundings.

PASAJ supports the artist, new collaborations that can be established between the artist and the audience, alternative venues and experimental approaches where art events can be held. It explores ways to enter public and semi-public spaces by associating art with urban spaces in various formats. By relocating art in frequently used spaces such as passages and haunts, it aims to meet not only those with an artistic background but also people from different segments of the public who have not yet had a relationship with contemporary art. It attaches importance to the construction of environments where the artist can meet different audience groups. It respects local knowledge, history and memory of a place.

PASAJ has changed places 5 times since 2010, has been reshaped by establishing a connection with the local of the neighborhood it is located each time. It is now in a historical inn called Barin Han, in Çemberlitaş, located on historical peninsula. Since 2017, it has been running AIR Bayrampaşa artist residence in partnership with Ramada Encore Bayrampaşa. PASAJ creates curatorial works and international projects as a team.



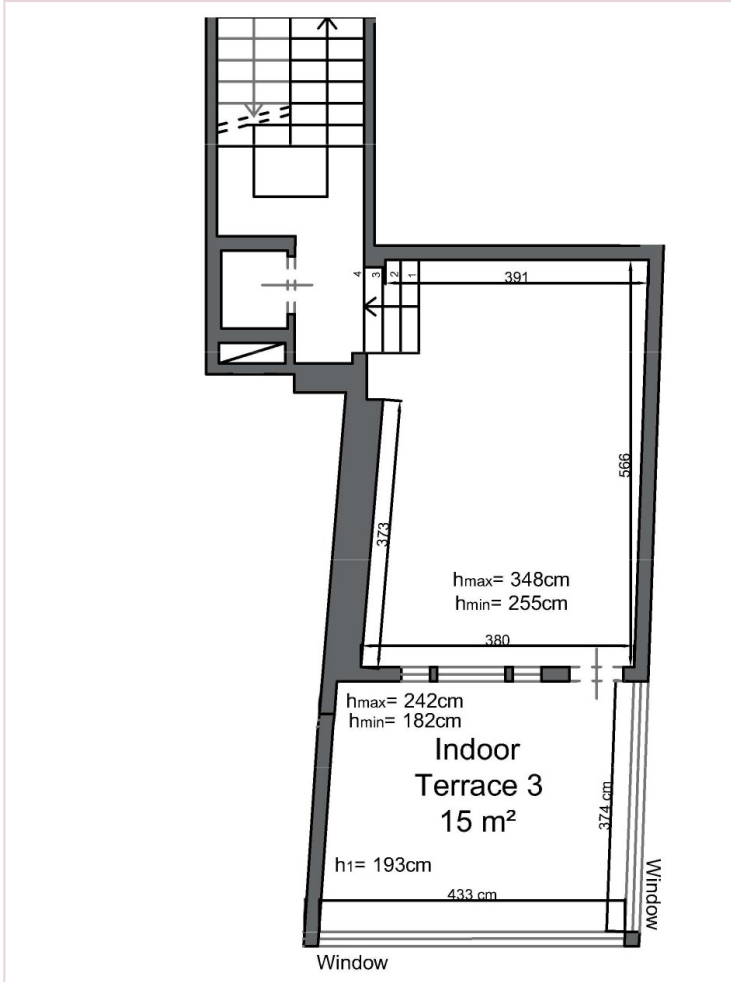
BARIN HAN

Since 2022, PASAJ operates in a room at 3,5th floor in Barin Han, Çemberlitaş. Barin Han is a five-storey building in Çemberlitaş, on Istanbul's Historical Peninsula. Having served as the atelier of Turkey's leading calligrapher and book-binding artist Emin Barın for decades, the venue has embraced exhibitions, artist workshops and meetings since 2019. Emin Barın was a pioneer of the art and discipline of calligraphy in Turkey, and trained many leaders of this field. Having graduated from Ankara Gazi Terbiye Institute's painting department, he studied Latin calligraphy and book-binding techniques at the best studios in Germany (1937-43). The new approaches he brought to his art, and the regular 'Thursday Meetings' held in his office with leading intellectuals of his time, have left a unique legacy of creative integration between tradition and aesthetic modernity. As in many of the buildings in the Historical Peninsula, beneath Barin Han sits an ancient cistern, while myriad layers of the city's past reveal themselves in a breathtaking panorama from the upper floors.

[@barin_han](#)



PASAJ's space plan in Barin Han



Click [here](https://301.tv/hQVaT) for additional photos and videos.
short link: <https://301.tv/hQVaT>



Failure is my favorite color*

concept for 2026-2027

PASAJ hosted Zafer Akşit and Abdullah Güler's event "39-Legged Centipede: Rejected Artists Gathering," where artists whose submissions to the 18th Istanbul Biennial titled "Three-Legged Cat" were rejected had the chance to share their projects. This encounter prompted us to reflect deeply on the nature of rejection and on how rarely we discuss our own experiences, even though we frequently face rejection from various funding bodies. Would speaking openly about being rejected make us seem weak or overly fragile, or would it instead reveal something honest and essential about who we are, and about the structures we move within?

These questions encouraged PASAJ to focus its 2026-2027 programme on the theme of rejection and to explore its layers in greater depth. Rejection can wound, but it can also expose systems of power, invite us to reconsider how we reject others, and place the rejected in unexpectedly courageous positions. Welcoming rejection and challenging the desire to be accepted becomes an act of resistance, reframing rejection as a generative force rather than a limitation, an opportunity to imagine different ways of being together.

Through this programme, we aim to approach rejection through vulnerability, to embrace difference, to allow ourselves to be outnumbered, and to discover forms of strength that do not rely on recognition or validation. Choosing other while allowing our vulnerabilities to remain visible, opens the possibility of transforming exclusion



exclusion into empowerment. Can we take pride in our vulnerability, recognise the value of difference, and understand rejection not as defeat but as a catalyst for reimagining our place in the world?

Let's work together to break the cycle of rejection, and perhaps even learn to inhabit it differently.

PASAJ encourages artists to collaborate with another artist, a collective, an academician, or a scientist. Through this program, we invite them to create site-specific and interactive works that respond to their surroundings and foster active public engagement. In doing so, we aim to reach beyond established art audiences and connect with the broader public.

*"Being an artist is not a job, it's a malfunction.

Art is a way to survive, not a way to live.

If I knew what I was doing, I would have stopped a long time ago.

Sometimes the best idea is the one you're too ashamed to say out loud.

Failure is my favorite color.

..."

(excerpt of Maurizio Cattelan's artist statement at Art Basel in Paris at Perrotin's Booth)



PASAJ's ongoing projects:

2017-...

A.I.R.BAYRAMPAŞA | artist in residency program in collaboration with Ramada Encore Bayrampaşa

pasaj.org/airbayrampasa

2019-...

small things | studio residency program

pasaj.org/small-things

2024-...

Once Upon a Time, Art and Life | podcast series

pasaj.org/art-and-life

2024-...

Small Pains Great Songs | mini artist books as art objects

pasaj.org/smallpainsgreatsongs

2024-...

Wunderkammer, Chamber of echoes | artworks matching inspirations

pasaj.org/wunderkammer

2025-...

Tipex me tipex you, Peekaboo | a blank wall filled with the contributions of artists and participants

pasaj.org/peekaboo



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