

DENİZBANK INTERNATIONAL ISTANBUL CHILDREN AND YOUTH ART BIENNIAL HAS STARTED

The Biennial of Happiness opens its doors

DenizBank 8th International Istanbul Children and Youth Art Biennial has started. With applications from 69 thousand children and young people from 47 provinces of Türkiye and 16 countries, the Biennial will bring the imagination and creativity of children and young people to all corners of Istanbul for a month through both its exhibition areas and workshops in different disciplines.

Istanbul has begun hosting one of the most inclusive art gatherings as of April 1, 2026. The DenizBank 8th International Istanbul Children and Youth Art Biennial curated by the painter Prof. Devrim Erbil and running until April 30, 2026 has opened its doors with the theme "Bringing Art Together with Happiness". Many important names attended the opening ceremony held in Müze Gazhane including Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism Batuhan Mumcu, Prof. Devrim Erbil, Biennial Founder Gazi Selçuk, Biennial Art Committee Chair Kader Akçay, DenizBank Executive Vice President Tuba Köseoğlu Okçu, and Nebil Özgentürk.

WE SHARE HOPE AND THE FUTURE

Speaking at the opening, state artist and painter Prof. Devrim Erbil described the biennale as "a gathering that reminds us of its unifying power." Devrim Erbil stated; "Art is one of the purest and strongest bonds a person establishes with their inner world. Today, along with these beautiful works, we are also sharing hopes, dreams, and the future. I believe that this gathering will carry young minds into the future with hope, courage, and happiness. I wish all participants an inspiring biennale."

INCLUSIVITY IS AT THE CORE

Biennial Founder Gazi Selçuk emphasized that art does not belong only to certain venues and stated that art encountered in the streets, squares, and daily life transforms accessibility from a privilege into a vibrant experience. He continued; "The biennale has participation from state and private schools across our country, as well as significant interest from NGOs. This year, we have created opportunities for children, who are victims of war, which is a global problem, including children from Gaza, Syria, and Ukraine, to express themselves within the scope of the biennale. Furthermore, hundreds of works on fundamental issues such as zero waste are included. The timing of the biennale is also no coincidence. This period, which coincides with meaningful milestones such as World Autism Awareness Day, World Art Day, and April 23rd, fosters a vision of a more sensitive future by centering on inclusivity. At the same time, we aim to make visible the imagination, curiosity, and courage behind these beautiful works."

WE SUPPORT THE ACCESSIBILITY OF CULTURE AND ARTS

DenizBank Executive Vice President Tuba Köseoğlu Okçu stated the following in her opening speech: "As DenizBank, we have embraced culture and arts as an important part of social development since day one, and we shape our approach in this area with a focus on

accessibility. We believe that making culture and arts accessible to wider audiences strengthens not only cultural life but also the future of societies. The International Istanbul Children and Youth Art Biennial is a meaningful and valuable platform that increases the accessibility of culture and art by focusing on children's creativity and production. Because the relationship established with art at an early age develops thinking skills, freedom of expression, and creativity. Thus, it contributes to the upbringing of productive and versatile individuals of the future. As DenizBank, we are happy to be the main supporter of this project, which opens a space for children and young people to meet with different disciplines of art; and I congratulate all the children and young people participating in the biennial, as well as the artists and educators who contributed to it.”

Within the scope of the biennale for which the Müze Gazhane has been designated as the main stage area; exhibitions, performances, video screenings, workshops, talks, and concerts have begun to meet lovers of art. With events stretching from Kadıköy to Üsküdar, from squares to city ferryboats, Istanbul is transforming into a vibrant open-air art space filled with the creations of children and young people.

5350 APPLICATIONS OUT OF 69 THOUSAND STUDENTS HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED TO THE BIENNIAL

The biennale is curated by state artist Prof. Devrim Erbil, directed by Gazi Selçuk, who is also its founder, and the art committee is chaired by academic and painter Kader Akçay.

The biennale received applications from 69 thousand children and young people from 47 provinces of Türkiye and 16 other countries. Following evaluation by a 29-member judging panel, 480 projects from 5350 children and young people were accepted. Of these projects, 430 are in visual arts, and 87 are in performing arts, music and dance performances.

Note to Editor:

DenizBank 8th International Istanbul Children and Youth Art Biennial in Numbers (2010–2024)

- **2.981 projects** joined from **46 countries** and **55 cities** of Türkiye.
 - **39.960** students took place with their art and performance.
 - **12.459** schools, NGO's and institutions were represented.
 - **8.479** teachers guided the projects.
 - **315.000** viewers visited the biennial.
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- **Advisory Committee:** Beral Madra, Faruk Ekinci, Fikret Toksöz, Maria Sezer, Prof. Dr. Sevda Bekman.
 - **Art Committee:** İsmail Acar, Zeynep Öztürk, Melis Babadağ, Nurdan Likos, Fırat Arapoğlu, Kader Akçay, Metin Özülkü, Özgür Zoral.
 - **Assessment Committee:** Adem Özsöz, Alev Cınbarcı, Arzu Özen, Gülen Aygül Doğan, Ayan Aylin Erenkaya, Ayşegül Karabulut, Delal Kazıcı, Esra Çelikkanat, Esra Banu Zorba Tuncer, Esra Yurttut, Gonca Akan, Gözde Tito, Gülhan Zafer Metin, Özülkü Mihriban Sezer, Melis Babadağ, Nur Bardakçı, Nilüfer Karakoç, Niyazi Selçuk, Nur Bardakçı, Nurcan Kurt, Özgür Boral, Özlem Akbal Doğan, Pınar Halıcı, Selvihan Özel, Özcan Sibel Telas, Tuba Burdurlu, Ümit Dizdar, Yasemin Güzel.

