

# Revisiting Çömlekçi





Çömlekçi is a city district in Trabzon, between the main square and the Trazon harbour.



Trabzon is the Eastern hub of trafficking to Turkey. The cheap hotels along the Çömlekçi Cadde are the main concentration wherefrom women are traded to elsewhere in Turkey, often just for a holiday season.





Cleaning of Çömlekçi has been the election promise of many local politicians and the area has been on the drawing board of the urban planners for a long time.

The second-hand market 'Russian bazaar' was destroyed many years ago. But still the name remains in everyday language about the Çömlekçi Cadde, as if the market was still there.





A total demolition is planned with the exception of three churches, one mosque and a couple of other historical buildings.

Trafficking happens in only a number of hotels on the edge of the neighbourhood, but altogether in Çömlekçi live some 200 - 300 families. They have nothing to do with the trafficking and it doesn't affect their everyday life. Also they don't believe that with demolition of the area, trafficking will stop, it will just move somewhere else.



The regeneration project is called the 'Liman Kent Projesi' and the example is taken from similar transformations in Manchester and Barcelona. Old residential houses will be replaced by office towers, luxury hotels and recreational areas.

The demolition of the area was planned to start in 2011. In the end of 2010 residents of Çömlekçi still didn't know where they would be relocated. At that time I installed a neon text on the motorway wall above the area. It was planned to stay there permanently.











The funds for the reconstruction of the area were supposed to come from Japanese investors. Then came the Fukushima-accident and economic setback in Japan.







In February 2014 I returned to ömlekçi to  
see what is left of the work.  
And of the area.



The houses were still standing.  
The work was gone.  
New graffitis had emerged.



By artist Feriðan Hürri in Trabzon, Turkey with funding from the British Council. This work of art was funded by the European Union

### Aşık olan doğru söyler\* Minna Henriksson, Ekim 2010

Neon harflerle yazılmış "Aşık olan doğru söyler, hakkımda şikâyet etmeme" yazısı, Finlandiyalı sanatçı Minna Henriksson'un 2010 yılında Trabzon'da yaptığı projenin bir parçasıdır. "Aşık olan doğru söyler" aynı zamanda, kentin genç sakinlerinin, sanatıyla birlikte kent araştırmasına katıldığı projenin genel adıdır. Bu süreçte sonuçta, Trabzon'a ilgili bir de kitap yayımlandı.

\*Bu cümle, Feriðan Hürri tarafından bestelenen ve Üç Hürri tarafından 1976'da kaydedilen "Ben Geçerim Gönlü Geçmez" adlı şarkıdan alınmıştır. Eser sahibinin izniyle burada röportajla birlikte Minna Henriksson'un Trabzon'daki işi, Benim Kentim projesi için gerçekleştirilmiştir. Anadolu Kültür ve Platform Trabzon Güncel Sanat Merkezi işbirliğiyle British Council tarafından tasarlanan ve yürütülen Benim Kentim projesi, Avrupa Birliği Kültür Köprüleri programının bir parçasıdır.

### Aşık olan doğru söyler\* Minna Henriksson, October 2010

This text written in neon light, "Aşık olan doğru söyler, hakkımda şikâyet etmeme" [The one who loves speaks the truth and complains about injustice] is part of a work created in Trabzon in 2010 by artist Minna Henriksson, from Finland.

"Aşık olan doğru söyler" [The one who loves speaks the truth] is also the title of the project as a whole, which involved groups of local youth in researching the city together with the artist. A book about Trabzon was made as a result of this process.

The phrase is a line from the song "Ben Geçerim Gönlü Geçmez" [I get over it but my heart won't], composed by Feriðan Hürri and recorded by the group Üç Hürri in 1976. It is reproduced here with the kind permission of the author. Minna Henriksson's work in Trabzon was commissioned for the My City project. Devised and managed by the British Council in partnership with Anadolu Kültür and Platform Trabzon Contemporary Art Centre, the My City project forms part of the European Union's Cultural Bridge programme.

\* "The one who loves speaks the truth".





I approached two ladies doing housework underneath the wall where my work used to be. They said they don't know about any neon-text and they don't understand what I try to say. I then asked another lady walking past. She remembered the text, and knew to tell that one year earlier the Municipality came and took it away. She also told that no demolitions have yet been done in the area, but they will start in five years, after which the area will be rebuilt by TOKİ. She didn't know where the residents of Çömlekçi will then be relocated. A third group of ladies also remembered the neon text, but didn't know where it had gone. They said there is no justice in this country, and the Prime Minister is a dictator, so it was necessary for it to be taken away.



Minna Henriksson

2014