ÇİNİLİ HAMAM
ZEYREK

Zeyrek Çinili Hamam's Contemporary Art Program Begins With British Artist Anousha Payne





Zeyrek Çinili Hamam is pleased to announce a new cycle of contemporary art exhibitions within its Byzantine cistern in 2025. Curated by Anlam de Coster, this series invites international artists who have never exhibited in Istanbul for a residency, culminating in an exhibition of site-specific works that engage with the history, architecture, and symbolism of this unique landmark.

Taking place from May 16 to August 15, 2025, the first exhibition features London-based artist Anousha Payne, who is presenting her new body of work created during her residency in Istanbul, *Murmurations*. The second iteration of the series will be dedicated to French artist Juliette Minchin with a solo exhibition running from September 18, 2025, to January 18, 2026.

Anousha Payne (b. 1991) lives and works in London and graduated from Camberwell College of Arts with a BFA in 2014. Working between sculpture, painting, text, and sound, Payne's work explores the human pursuit of spirituality in object form as a mode of cultural expression distinct from religious symbolism while navigating the liminal space between personal experience, fiction, and myth.

The exhibition title, *Murmurations*, encapsulates multiple interpretations—whispers, quiet repetitions of sound, the synchronized movement of a flock of birds in flight, and the evolving patterns perceived within these formations. In response to the cistern's storied walls, Payne's work explores how personal histories and perceptions influence how we read and interpret imagery.

She "murmurs" her interpretations of the marks of the cistern's textured walls back to us, creating fictional characters whose forms are taken from the information gained by reading the walls – visually and physically. By taking castings from the space—

hollows in the stone, watermarks, and erosion patterns—she transforms these traces into fictional characters that embody the memory of the site.

Anousha Payne scratches through the layers of Istanbul, a place that does not erase the past, but builds over it, on top of it, around it and beside it. Beneath the skin of immediate perception, she is revealing new identities and stories—much like the discovery of the frescos in the cold sections of Zeyrek Çinili Hamam and the cistern underneath. Payne pursues this investigative process of scratching, building, editing and adding in ceramics and other material explorations throughout the exhibition

Drawing from an intuitive approach, Payne offers a poetic reading of the archaeological process and fills in the gaps of history by creating sculptural drawings that suggest imaginary narratives around unearthed yet incomplete fragments.

Her material explorations include hammered metal, echoing the craftsmanship of traditional hammam bowls, alongside found objects and sculptural materials. These figures emerge from the architecture, imagined as ancient or mythical inhabitants of the cistern—beings shaped by water and time. By inhabiting the Byzantine cistern with these spectral forms, Payne reanimates the space, inviting viewers to reconsider its layered histories through a contemporary lens.

About Zeyrek Çinili Hamam

Zeyrek Çinili Hamam, located in the Zeyrek neighborhood of Istanbul, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was reopened with its main function in 2023 after thirteen years of meticulous restoration undertaken by The Marmara Group.

Commissioned in the 16th century by Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha and built by Mimar Sinan, Zeyrek Çinili Hamam is considered to be one of the masterpieces of Ottoman architecture and the building today serves as both a historical bath and a cultural complex. Taking its name from the tiles (çini) specially produced in Iznik and decorating the interior, Zeyrek Çinili Hamam takes its visitors on a cultural journey with Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman artifacts unearthed during the excavations carried out during the restoration process. The museum building exhibits objects and tiles belonging to the bath culture, and the Byzantine cistern hosts contemporary art programs. It also carries Istanbul's rich historical heritage into the future with a contemporary approach with its store, featuring bath-specific products by contemporary designers.

Selected by TIME magazine as one of the “World's Greatest Places” in 2024, Zeyrek Çinili Hamam stands out as a unique cultural heritage to be discovered. It offers a unique hammam experience with separate sections for men and women from 08:00 am to

22:00 pm, six days a week except Mondays. The complex also includes a garden that hosts special events and overlooks the majestic domes of the bath.

About Anousha Payne

Anousha Payne (1991) is a London-based artist. Working between sculpture, painting, text, and sound; Payne's work explores the human pursuit of spirituality in object form as a mode of cultural expression that is distinct from religious symbolism, whilst navigating the liminal space between personal experience, fiction, and myth.

Often deploying reptile skin and intuitive mark-making, her ceramics are intended as hybrid objects, a reminder of the fluidity and shared qualities between humans, animals, the natural world, and inanimate objects. Using found objects as memory-archives and as metaphorical narrative aids, sculptures are often adorned with jewelry and textiles, acting as cultural signifiers whilst questioning material hierarchies and values. This process seeks to establish an aesthetic dialogue and personal visual language as a meditative interaction.

Informed by Indian folktales and personal fiction, Payne's work plays with ideas of the performative power of objects and chance, the combination of moral dilemmas and magic alongside characters with transformative qualities.

Anousha Payne graduated from Camberwell College of arts with a BA in 2014. Recent exhibitions and fairs include *The Small Things from the lowest land* at Newchild Gallery, Antwerp, a solo presentation at Liste with Sperling gallery, and a sculpture commission for York Art Gallery's permanent collection. She will be based in Paris for the next 9 months for the Cité Des Arts residency.

About Anlam de Coster

Curator, writer, and art consultant Anlam de Coster has curated exhibitions such as *The Volcano Lover* at Galerist (2025) as well as *Healing Ruins* (2023) and *Alekos Fassianos: Sailing to Byzantium* (2024) at Zeyrek Çinili Hamam, where she serves as artistic director. With over 18 years of experience in arts management and communications, Anlam has worked at major institutions such as Istanbul Modern, SALT, and Musée des Arts Décoratifs, and coordinated international projects for the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV). She has collaborated with art fairs including PAD London, NOMAD, ARTINTERNATIONAL, and FIAC. Before founding *Fairplay*, her arts and design consultancy, she led global strategic partnerships at Artsy and played a significant role in the digital transformation of art fairs. Anlam holds a BA from Galatasaray University and Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, and earned her MA in Art and Media Management with *Cum Laude* honours from Sciences Po Paris. She is currently based in Paris.