Zeyrek Çinili Hamam to Present Brazilian Artist Alex Červený's First Solo Exhibition in Istanbul this September

Coinciding with the city's art week, the show at the 16th century landmark will feature newly commissioned works together with pieces created after the artist's first visit to İstanbul, shown publicly for the first time.



Portrait of Alex Červený © Di Ioia Gianluca; pages from the *Astronomy Notebook* series, various dimensions.

This fall, Zeyrek Çinili Hamam presents *Atlas of Encounters*, Brazilian artist Alex Červený's first solo exhibition in Turkiye. Curated by Anlam de Coster, the exhibition brings together over 30 works mapping connections between astronomy, architecture, and the body. Set in the Byzantine cistern, beneath the 16th century hammam, the exhibition includes newly commissioned works alongside pieces created after the artist's first visit to Istanbul over 15 years ago, shown publicly for the first time.

The works conceived in response to the hammam's cistern include interventions on historical manuscripts and engravings, paintings on canvas, embroideries on traditional towels, and parchment sculptures, articulated across the space like a codex. De Coster describes the subterranean cistern as the "Hammam's subconscious": a concealed space beneath the building whose layered histories resonate with Červený's exploration of memory, allegory, and the permeable boundary between the conscious and the unconscious.

The hammam also speaks to another central concern of Červený's practice: the relationship between body and mind. Its historical and aesthetic weight, together with the unexpected presence of the Byzantine cistern, makes it, in the artist's words, "an ideal space to house my reflections."

A major new work is Červený ’s intervention on a facsimile of a majestic engraving of Istanbul by Dutch artist and traveler Cornelis de Bruijn (c.1652–1727), after an original copy of the book from the artist’s own collection.

The Astronomy Notebook series constitutes another central body of work in the exhibition. It began when Červený found pages from two Ottoman astronomy compendia in an Istanbul vintage books store in 2009. This series, which serves as the core of *Atlas of Encounters*, was created during his stay in Pera, directly intervening on the book’s pages containing Ottoman, Turkish, and Persian scientific texts. Červený layered new constellations of images over diagrams and fragments of writing, as a support for palimpsests.

Červený approaches historical materials as porous structures, capable of holding multiple systems of knowledge at once, true encounters between different orders of seeing and knowing. Astronomical diagrams, manuscript traces, and cityscape records are transformed into new visual constellations, sustaining a rare harmony between the autobiographical and the universal: private memory in conjunction with systems designed to describe the world.

The exhibition also establishes a dialogue between Červený's practice and the site's material and symbolic legacy. Commissioned by Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha, the Grand Admiral of the Ottoman Navy, and designed by the imperial architect Mimar Sinan, the edifice belongs to a world in which astronomy shaped both navigation and power structures. The recently uncovered ship graffiti etched into the walls of the cistern attributed to the galley slaves of Barbarossa generate their own mythology.

Alex Červený's palimpsests echo this logic of inscription: images layered onto historical supports, where meaning remains suspended between knowledge, memory, and speculation. His interventions resonate as acts of orientation: readings of the sky, the city, and the archive through a shared visual language.

Alex Červený (b. 1963, São Paulo) is internationally recognized for his singular practice that fuses history, mythology, literature, and autobiography into richly imagined visual worlds. His work has been presented at major institutions including Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Gwangju Biennial, Pinacoteca de São Paulo, and Moderna Museet in Stockholm.

Alex Červený : *Atlas of Encounters*
Curated by Anlam de Coster
Zeyrek Çinili Hamam, Istanbul
24 September 2026 – 31 January 2027

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Opening Hours
Cistern: Tuesday-Sunday 10.00-18.00. (Free admission)
Bathing: Tuesday-Sunday 08.00-22.00.
Museum: Tuesday-Sunday 10.00-18.00. (Free admission on Thursdays.)
The complex is closed on Mondays.

About Zeyrek Çinili Hamam
Zeyrek Çinili Hamam, located in Istanbul's historic Zeyrek neighborhood—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—reopened in 2023 as both a traditional bath and a vibrant cultural complex, following thirteen years of meticulous restoration led by The Marmara Group.

Originally commissioned by Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha and designed by Mimar Sinan in the 16th century, the hammam is recognized as a masterpiece of Ottoman architecture. Its name derives from the exquisite Iznik tiles (çini) that once adorned its interiors, specially crafted for the space.

Named among National Geographic's "Best of the World" wellness experiences for 2026 and TIME Magazine's "World's Greatest Places" in 2024, Zeyrek Çinili Hamam stands as a landmark of cultural preservation and innovation. It offers a refined hammam experience with separate sections for men and women. The complex also includes a tranquil garden for special events, overlooking the majestic domes of the bathhouse.

Today, Zeyrek Çinili Hamam offers more than a bathing experience. It houses a purpose-built museum that guides visitors through time, featuring Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman artifacts unearthed during the restoration process. Objects and tiles related to bathing culture are exhibited in the museum building, while the site's newly revealed Byzantine cistern hosts a dynamic program of contemporary art exhibitions, offering visceral encounters that resonate with the hammam's enduring ethos of community.

The series began with the group exhibition Healing Ruins (2023), followed by solo shows dedicated to Alekos Fassianos (2024), Anousha Payne (2025), Juliette Minchin (2025) and Margaret R. Thompson (2026) curated by Anlam de Coster.

Bringing heritage and contemporary design together, the hammam's shop features exclusive collections by leading designers and artists inspired by the site's architecture and rituals.

About Alex Červený
Alex Červený (b. 1963, São Paulo) is one of Brazil's most singular contemporary artists, whose meticulously composed works fuse historical references, mythologies, autobiographical narratives, and fantastical iconographies. His practice spans drawing, engraving, painting, sculpture, and illustration, creating visual universes that blur the boundaries between the real and the imagined.

A meticulous calligrapher, Červený employs a wide range of writing systems and graphic symbols. These textual elements often take the form of personal glossaries or moral commentaries, extending the narrative dimension of the work and deepening its layers of meaning. His practice consistently probes fundamental dualities: life and death, heaven and earth, body and mind, the material and the ethereal, the conscious and the unconscious.

Defined by an incomparable visual lexicon in which drawing and writing intricately blend into a single narrative field, his work draws from medieval illuminations, Renaissance altarpieces, ex-votos, popular culture, and surrealist traditions. His compositions function as imaginary journeys in which biblical, mythological, autobiographical, and pop-cultural references coexist with literary quotations, song lyrics, and figures from film and television—inviting the viewer to look closely.

Červený's works have recently featured in major institutional group exhibitions including *Exposition Générale* at the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain (2026), *House of Nisaba: News Stories of Painting* at Moderna Museet in Stockholm (2026), the 15th Gwangju Biennale (2024), *Siamo Foresta* at Triennale Milano (2023), 23rd Biennale of Sydney: *rīvus* (2022), and *Nous les Arbres* at the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain (2019). In 2023, his solo exhibition *Mirabilia* was held at the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, showcasing more than 100 works created over his 40-year career, including paintings, engravings, ceramic tiles, and bronze sculptures.
His works are held in numerous public and private collections, such as the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Pinacoteca de São Paulo, São Paulo Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro Museum of Modern Art, and Iberê Camargo Foundation.

About Anlam de Coster
Anlam de Coster is a curator, writer, and consultant, and currently serves as the Artistic Director of Zeyrek Çinili Hamam. With over 18 years of experience, she has shaped curatorial and strategic visions across museums, art fairs, and cultural institutions in Paris, London, and Istanbul.

Her recent exhibitions include *The Volcano Lover* at Galerist (2025), as well as *Temenos: The Inland Sea* by Margaret R. Thompson (2026), *Juliette Minchin: Where the River Burns* (2025), *Anousha Payne: Murmurations* (2025), *Alekos Fassianos: Sailing to Byzantium* (2024), and *Healing Ruins* (2023), all at Zeyrek Çinili Hamam. She is also the founder of Fairplay, a strategic consultancy operating at the intersection of art and design.

Previously, de Coster worked with leading institutions such as Istanbul Modern, SALT, and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, and managed large-scale international projects for the Istanbul

Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV) in collaboration with Christie's and the Institut de France. She has also regularly collaborated with galleries, publications, and fashion brands.

She has played a central role in the global art fair ecosystem, leading global strategic partnerships at Artsy and contributing to the digital transformation of major international fairs. Her past fair leadership and advisory roles include PAD London, NOMAD, ARTINTERNATIONAL, and FIAC.
Anlam de Coster holds a BA in Economics from Galatasaray University and Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, and an MA in Arts and Media Management with *Cum Laude* honors from Sciences Po Paris. She is currently based in Paris.