

## Representation of the Loft in Istanbul

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### ABSTRACT

*With the onslaught of the Industrial Revolution, purpose-built industrial buildings were constructed that were large enough to accommodate the machinery and to compensate for the steam generated. Loft is an architectural concept, which was created with the conversion of these industrial buildings in city centers from mid-20th century onwards. It emerged as a social dynamic in industrialized Western countries. Today it has become a globally demanded type of housing. Since late industrialized regions of the world lack industrial building stock suitable for loft conversion, lofts are built from scratch in these regions as simulacra of their originals in the West. In İstanbul, industrial buildings were not accumulated during the historical development of the city due to various reasons. Therefore, loft buildings have been constructed from scratch in recent years. These are marketed as lofts, although they do not reflect loft characteristics. İstanbul imports loft architecture as detached from its historical development, and fails to generate lofts by conversion due to the lack of suitable building stock, but uses loft architecture as an aesthetic element in the new constructions. In İstanbul, the loft concept is used purely as a marketing tool, and the concept is hollowed out of its substance.*

**Keywords:** Istanbul, Loft, Postmodern Architecture, Marketing

### INTRODUCTION

As one of the most unique types of urban housing architecture, loft architecture is as contemporary and innovative as it is closely connected to the past, in form and structure. The historical background of loft architecture spans over multiple periods, which makes it appear as a timeless concept. However, loft is a byproduct of certain historical conditions, and it can only emerge when various historical developments coincide during a certain period of time. Lofts emerged in cities, and particularly in city centers; therefore, it is an urban concept. However, it is not a form that has been generated in every city, and it can only come into existence when the right historical conditions overlap with each other to give rise to the emergence of lofts. Nevertheless, lofts are reproduced synthetically in cities which do not have the right historical conditions through imitation, due to the demand generated by the market economy. These imitation lofts are not faithful to the original loft concept, and the loft concept is merely utilized as a marketing strategy.

Loft requires a certain type of physical structure, which finds its form in buildings designed to house steam-powered machinery and manufacturing activities in urban centers, and built during a certain period in history. (Zukin, 1982,32) Early industrialized regions possess the most qualified examples of these manufacturing lofts and warehouses at the highest rate, as these structures are manifestations of the Industrial Revolution.

Following the introduction of the steam engine, the emergence of the Fordist mode of production in 1914 signified a breaking point in the course of the Industrial Revolution, leading to the opening of a new era. A new type of building structure became necessary for industrial production, as steam-powered production was replaced by assembly line production. Consequently, the need for bigger indoor space increased, and it became next to impossible to find land or real estate large enough to accommodate the new type of manufacturing plants and warehouses. Where such land or real estate was available, the prices were overwhelming. The period of time during which buildings suitable for loft conversion were constructed is the 155 years between 1760 and 1915. The Industrial Revolution occurred mainly in the West, and geographically concentrated in and around North America and Western Europe. Therefore, the rest of the world had less than 155 years to construct buildings which could then be converted to lofts, since the Industrial Revolution was experienced much later in these regions. This delay lagged as late as 1915 in some of these regions. After 1915, the dominant mode of production became Fordist, and small manufacturing plants and warehouses moved out of the buildings in city centers to areas outside the cities in order to stay competitive.

The abandoned buildings in city centers were then embraced with a postmodern approach by gentrifiers, who brought about a brand new perspective on this architectural style instead of altering its essence. As a result, these buildings were taken out of their original purpose to be converted into housing units and artists' ateliers. All regions around the world where the concept of loft was not imported but developed as a consequence of socioeconomic conditions, followed more or less the same trajectory, and New York was the leader of this trend as the most industrialized city of the period. Today, loft has turned into a type of housing that is recognized and demanded on a global scale.

The development of the loft in late industrialized regions of the world followed a different trajectory. This difference comes from the fact that regions that have industrialized late did not develop the modes of production which would then lead to the construction of lofts, as well as the fact the few buildings constructed with loft architecture were not abandoned or did not become dysfunctional, and finally, from the lack of social classes which could gentrify such abandoned buildings, if there were any. In contrast to early industrialized countries, late industrialized countries did not experience the physical, economic, social and cultural developments that are prerequisites for the emergence of lofts. Loft architecture did not present itself in late industrialized countries as the consequence of a series of historical developments, but instead as a cultural code or a symbol of the market economy, as part of Westernization efforts. It was not an outcome of production, but an import. Therefore, the history of the loft in late industrialized countries is merely a process of imitation.

Late industrialized countries and regions have imported loft architecture as a postmodern concept, and have only constructed lofts, as replicas of their representation in the West due to their failure to experience modernism sufficiently and to construct buildings pertaining to modernism and the Industrial Revolution. Thus, late industrialized regions have been unable to convert industrial buildings to lofts, which is an essential prerequisite for lofts, due to the lack of industrial buildings. This process was experienced exactly in the same manner in Istanbul.

With its official population approaching 15 million people, Istanbul is the most crowded city, not only in Turkey, but also in Europe and the Middle East. According to statistics by the

İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the number of residential housing units in the city is 2 million and 291 thousand. 308 thousand of these housing units are empty. (Karabacak, 2014) According to these figures, the number of people per housing unit is as high as seven. This average shows that there is a serious shortage of residential housing in İstanbul. According to calculations, an additional shortage of 130 thousand housing units is accumulated every year. (Erdoğan, 2012) The construction mobilization in recent years which generated thousands of new residential housing units is fuelled by this shortage in residential housing. In this atmosphere, real estate prices in İstanbul are rising with an increasing impetus each year, as real estate gains prominence as an investment tool, beyond its function as an instrument for meeting the need for shelter. Real estate prices in İstanbul increased 127 percent between 2003 and 2014. (Turan, 2014, 53)

Luxurious housing projects are being unveiled one after the other in recent years, but most of these housing projects are constructed outside the city center. With each housing project, a new block is added to the city, and each new block carries different architectural tones and structures. It is as if new parts are being glued on to the city constantly, with no disregard for maintaining a harmony between individual parts. Buildings in İstanbul are detached from their context, copied and pasted from different urban tissues. İstanbul is increasingly becoming a pastiche from an architectural perspective, as cultural objects of pop art are copied within the context of contemporary architecture. Architecture in İstanbul was consciously detached from its roots during the Republican era, while construction and architectural forms floated in a modernism without any roots. (Bozdoğan, 2002, 52) This rootlessness does not arise from architecture being rootless, but from the fact that the transitional phases leading up to modern architecture were not experienced in İstanbul, and modern architecture was imported in an abstract fashion, without the existence of underlying social and cultural developments nurturing modern architecture. After the Industrial Revolution was experienced in the West, an amalgamation was created by fusing the requirements for the Industrial Revolution with the cultural heritage of the past, and this amalgamation was supported by grand political transformations. The public space and private spaces were shaped through a natural process during these transformations. However, the fact that all processes of Westernization in Turkey were dictated from top down, instead of emerging from the base, have imposed the deployment of abstract patterns without material foundations. Significant elements are lost when only the morphology is copied. The production of residential lofts in İstanbul is the result of such a process. Loft architecture and structures in İstanbul are nearly completely independent of the past and historical elements, and loft architecture is merely an imported copy of a conceptual outcome, similar to many other elements of the Turkish Westernization process. This copy does not have a base that supports it.

In early industrialized regions, loft architecture was brought about by the overlapping of certain historical elements and various differences in social class. However, when it reached İstanbul, it transformed into a type of architecture that was no longer shaped by various requirements, but instead reproduced as a commodity which functions as a sign, and turned into a type of housing that has lost its essence.

The post modernization of architecture in İstanbul, the most cosmopolitan and outward looking city of the country, which did not experience modernism in full, has been carried out by importing various types of architecture that have been reproduced abroad with a

postmodernist approach (a selective copying from abroad is at work here and the role model has been the US in general), despite the fact that İstanbul did not possess the economic, social and cultural background that is associated with these types of architecture. In contrast to the trend of importing modernist architecture during the Republican era, the attempt to import postmodernist architecture to İstanbul during the post-1980 period was not accompanied by an expectation or objective based on the assumption that importing these commodities would somehow bring about the generation of the economic, social and cultural background possessed by the countries that have produced them. Westernization is the common objective during both periods, but Westernization during the post-1980 period is only based on the goal to adopt a Western appearance by consuming Western architectural images and commodities. Since 1980, being westernized has become a sign of reputability, without any philosophical implications. In the post-1980 postmodern period in Turkey, the reputability associated with the West does not originate from its breadth of knowledge in philosophy, literature and science, but from the fact that it is capable of manufacturing better quality products at more quantities, in comparison to the rest of the world.

The recent demand for lofts in İstanbul as a type of architecture is directly related with its presentation as a Western commodity. With its ability to bring together hip artists from SoHo and people following a bohemian lifestyle with cool stockbrokers from Wall Street, the loft has attracted the attention of business people, professionals and the artistic community in İstanbul. Buildings constructed with loft architecture, which emerged as a new type and were scarce in supply have become objects of desire as commodities for the privileged. All images implicated by lofts are desired identities in the postmodernist sense, and in this respect, this architecture became rapidly popular.

The main reason as to why the supply of lofts is limited in İstanbul is based on the fact that lofts are a conversion project in essence, and this conversion requires the construction of old industrial buildings during the period between the Industrial Revolution and the Fordist Revolution, meanwhile very few such old industrial buildings have survived to date in İstanbul. According to the Industrial Census carried out in Turkey in 1927, 46 percent of 237 thousand workers were employed in businesses with 4 or less employees. The number of industrial establishments was around 65 thousand, out of which only 155 employed more than a 100 workers. 36 percent of these industrial establishments had only one employee. Out of these 65 thousand establishments, only 2,822 utilized engine power, and the remaining businesses were dependent on manual labor for energy. (Sahin, 1998, 39) In other words, it is not possible to talk about a process of industrialization. Manufacturing was performed with traditional workmanship, using manual tools. (Alpay, 2008, 33)

Majority of the factories established in Turkey during the period of statism in 1930s were constructed in small Anatolian towns along the railroads, instead of İstanbul, with the vision to integrate the country. (Tekeli, 2013, 110) This is another reason for the existence of very few industrial buildings in İstanbul which have the potential for loft conversion. There were only a total of 256 industrial buildings in İstanbul in the early 20th century, corresponding to 55 percent of the total number of industrial buildings in the Ottoman Empire. (Köksal, 2005) These buildings were also not constructed in industrial regions established in city centers, with convenient transportation means, like their counterparts in the US and Europe; but instead, they were built along riverbanks or seashores, often lacking any spatial planning.

During the final quarter of the 19th century, northern and southern shores of the Golden Horn, the area between Beykoz and Kandilli on both sides of the Bosphorus, Üsküdar and İstinye bays and the area between Yedikule and Zeytinburnu were filled with industrial buildings. (Köksal, 2005) During this period, the Golden Horn became the most prominent historical industrial region of İstanbul. Buildings constructed along the shores of the Golden Horn are close in scale to their counterparts in the US and Europe.



Figure 1: Industrial buildings along the Golden Horn

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The old industrial buildings along the Golden Horn actually provided a significant physical building stock for loft conversion in İstanbul. However, in 1980s, nearly all of these buildings were demolished by the Greater İstanbul Municipality within the scope of the project to clean up the Golden Horn from pollution that was launched by Bedrettin Dalan, the mayor of the time. (Akgüner, 1983, 5) More than 4,000 buildings within 50-100 meters from the shore were expropriated, and 696 factories and 20,000 buildings owned by small retailers were demolished as part of the urban renewal project that was carried with the aim to clean up the Golden Horn. (Erden, 2009) Also, warehouses along the shores of Eminönü and Üsküdar could not be saved from demolition. The Golden Horn Shipyard, Cibali Tobacco Factory, Silahtarağa Power Station, Lengerhane (anchor factory), İspirtothane (distillery) are the only monumental buildings that survive today.

At the beginning of the 20th century, there were only 256 industrial buildings in İstanbul, and over the last century, the majority of this building stock was lost due to a functionalist attitude, as a consequence of both insensible interventions, carried out under the name of urban transformation and with the modernist approach of the Republic. Instead of paying respect to buildings which have lost their functionality due to historical conditions, prioritizing conservation and proposing new functions for these buildings, they were replaced with functional contemporary buildings. Therefore, some of the buildings which could have been converted to lofts were not preserved, and they were eradicated from history, instead of being converted into lofts at a later stage.



The second hindrance to İstanbul's loft conversion comes from the fact that the city did not go through a comprehensive Fordist Revolution. Therefore, there was no pressure from a changing mode of production to shift the construction of industrial buildings suitable for loft conversion in the city center to outside the city. The relocation of the industry to outside the city was mainly caused by the rapid increase in land and real estate prices in İstanbul. İstanbul's late industrialization also meant that the industrial buildings in the city were not available for loft conversion. Therefore, industrial buildings abandoned by manufacturing companies which relocated to outside the city due to the increasing land and real estate prices were not converted to lofts.



Figure 2: An example of demand driven unplanned residential housing in the Golden Horn area in İstanbul.

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Finally, İstanbul's post-industrialization stage was also delayed as the city was late in going through industrialization. İstanbul cannot be deindustrialized completely, as it is very hard to generate employment in a city with a population of approximately 15 million people. Thus, there are very few real lofts in İstanbul.

Lofts were introduced in İstanbul as a concept through the same modernization rationale, where Turkey first extracts concepts from Western modernism and then strives to establish the infrastructure on which these concepts are grounded on. There is a certain demand for lofts among the middle and upper classes. Due to this demand, there are loft buildings that are modeled on the loft concept and built from scratch in İstanbul, despite its lack of an industrial background. This is a clear indication that modernism in Turkey is still active at the level of the superstructure, instead of the substructure.

Consequently, lofts produced in İstanbul diverge from those around the world. Mimicking the loft concept, they are completely estranged from the economic and social factors that lie behind its emergence, thus becoming commodities in the free market in a very postmodern manner. Building lofts from scratch instead of carrying out a conversion project negates a fundamental characteristic of the loft from the very beginning. However, this is not the only

deficiency of lofts in İstanbul. In order to determine deficiencies of lofts in İstanbul, we first need to assess which buildings can be named as lofts.

### **Main Types of Loft by Structural Criteria**

Based on the theme of transformation since its inception, loft architecture has also been going through a perpetual process of conceptual transformation. With each transformation, it moves further away from the characteristics it embodies, and follows a trajectory of becoming more comfortable and better aligned with the housing expectations of the middle class in general. The phases of this trajectory can be grouped under five headings. These five phases are ‘natural,’ ‘real,’ ‘intermediate,’ ‘fake,’ and ‘new’ loft periods.

#### ***Natural loft***

Late 19th century or 20th century steel frame buildings, also called raw loft or artist’s loft, were initially designed for industrial use as manufacturing facilities or warehouses. They are buildings with history and character. These building were either abandoned when their industrial or commercial function expired or used for both work and residential purposes by artists, who gave their name to the period. In general, these buildings did not go through significant restoration due to financial shortcomings or legal restrictions. Therefore, natural lofts are unfinished spaces which are not functional for residential use.

Natural lofts have an undivided indoor space varying between 185 m<sup>2</sup> and 1000 m<sup>2</sup>. The ceilings in this type of lofts are generally over 3 meters. This height can go up to 10 meters. Walls are often exposed brick or stone, and plastered walls are rare. Wooden poles and beams; stone, concrete or steel pillars and beams are exposed. Floors are wooden, stone or concrete. (Karagöz, 2007)



Figure 3: A building which evolved into a natural loft after the Industrial Revolution

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Structural elements and fittings are not concealed, but left exposed in natural lofts. Natural lofts are devoid of many auxiliary elements that are necessary to ensure suitable conditions for residential use. There is no heating in some of these lofts. Others have no allocation for basic amenities such as lavatories or sinks. They lack many functions of a residential housing unit of the 21st century and it is difficult to argue that they are suitable for quality urban living. (Karagöz, 2007)

### ***Real loft***

As natural lofts in essence, real lofts are generated by the rehabilitation of industrial areas and conversion of old industrial buildings, which may date back hundreds of years, for a different functional use. (Flerning, 2012) Most people do not differentiate between natural lofts and real lofts, accepting both as the same type.

Structurally, it has exposed poles and beams, and stone, concrete steel pillars and beams, similar to natural lofts. Walls are exposed brick or stone. Floors are wooden, stone or concrete. Structural elements and fittings are not concealed. Electricity cables, water pipes and ventilation ducts are exposed, and visible within the indoor space. Similar to natural lofts, the ceiling height varies between 3 meters and 10 meters. The free floor plan also similarly has an undivided floor area between 185 m<sup>2</sup> and 1000 m<sup>2</sup>. They feature wide cast-iron windows, and occasionally skylights.

In this type of loft, the ceiling is usually kept in its original condition. Most details are unaltered. In some conversions, structural elements in the ceiling and beams are hidden with a false ceiling. (Peterson, 2014) A real loft that has been converted as a residential unit has a free floor plan that includes a sitting area, a sleeping area, a kitchen and a bathroom. (Fleming, 2012) All areas other than the bathroom are undivided. However, separators can be used within the loft to ensure privacy for any of the subdivisions or only for decorative purposes.



Figure 4: A few images of real loft interiors

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Although it is possible to add new materials and new finishing elements to real lofts in contrast to natural lofts, it is essential that the space does not lose its industrial character completely after conversion in order to qualify as a real loft. In this sense, real lofts are very close to natural lofts, but they differentiate as a category with the adaptation of industrial materials to ensure a more comfortable use.

### ***Intermediate loft***

Intermediate lofts are located in converted industrial buildings, just like real lofts. However, an intermediate loft is different from a real loft which is produced by implementing certain arrangements on a natural loft. Although they meet the typical criteria for lofts, such as high ceilings, undivided floor plans, exposed structures and wide windows, they are different from real lofts with respect to certain architectural criteria, such as emphasis on the exposed structure and the finishing work. (Karagöz, 2007)

In contrast to real lofts, the industrial character of intermediate lofts have been eliminated to a great extent. Fixed architectural components which emphasize the industrial character of these spaces, have been concealed or removed, and new materials have been applied. Comfort oriented and minimalist outlines dominate the details in decoration. (Karagöz, 2007) Therefore, in intermediate lofts, the fundamental architectural criteria for lofts, such as conversion from an old industrial building, free floor plan, high ceilings and wide windows are emphasized, but exposed building structure is concealed.

### ***Fake loft***

The limited number of old industrial buildings cause a shortage of available buildings suitable for loft conversion today, despite the increasing demand for lofts. In this respect, new indoor spaces with loft features are being designed for building from scratch. Fake lofts are typical new concrete structures which have been designed by mimicking the industrial character and typical architectural components of real lofts. Fake lofts, designed to look and feel like real lofts, make use modern construction techniques and materials. (Dauksys, Pilipavicius, Daugeliene, 2014, 31) However, they do not have to be located in city centers where old industrial buildings are located since they are brand new structures, and in this sense, the location of fake lofts is indefinite. They can be located in city centers, as well as in areas outside the city.

Fake lofts are designed in adherence to the typical architectural criteria for lofts. Similar to natural lofts, they have high ceilings, a free floor plan, exposed structure and wide windows. Moreover, the industrial character of natural lofts is mimicked by the use of hard finishing materials such as stone, brick or wood. However, there is no conversion from an old industrial building. They are essentially 'new' lofts despite their similar appearance to real lofts.

In comparison to real lofts, fake lofts may have additional features which make them more useful, such as heating, electricity and plumbing, and these installations are not of an industrial, but residential type. They may also possess other comfort oriented features such as central ventilation and heating system, technologically enhanced kitchen and bathroom, windows with a view, terrace, gym, and 24-hour doorman service. (Dauksys, Pilipavicius, Daugeliene, 2014, 32)

### ***New loft***

New lofts are another loft variant, featuring high ceilings, large windows, a free floor plan and a spacious interior similar to real lofts, but they have not been converted from an old industrial building, and they can be located both within and outside the city similar to fake lofts. They represent a softer transition than fake lofts. They are much closer to contemporary residential housing units, and comfort is prioritized. (Prather, 2014) Functionally, they are more similar to today's comfortable residential housing units than an actual loft. Ducts and fittings are not exposed, and high-quality materials and workmanship are used in kitchens and bathrooms. Furthermore, authentic and industrial looking construction materials are not preferred.

### **Assessment of buildings constructed under the name of lofts in İstanbul with respect to ideal loft characteristics**

Industrial buildings in İstanbul range from large- and mid-sized facilities and plants to small workshops. In addition to these, there are warehouses, silos and workshops which are a component of the urban industrial production system, but not located on the same site with the main production facilities. For example, the Asian side neighborhood of Hasanpaşa is a district with small workshops, with the impact of the historical gas production plant. In addition, Galata housed small manufacturing shops as it was a commercial center in the past.

Such districts in İstanbul were cleared from small manufacturing shops, due to the rising demand for residential housing, deindustrialization and increasing rent prices. These manufacturing shops became the first lofts in Turkey, as designers and artists who were impressed by the loft lifestyle in the US were attracted to them. The city centers in İstanbul did not experience extensive industrial displacement, therefore lofts occurred as a stylish trend and remained very few and limited in number. There are few examples of loft conversions, such as the conversion of an old factory in Levent to what is now Leventloft, the conversion of the old repair shops to an architecture workshop in Hasanpaşa, and the transformation of the old electrical shops and lighting-fixture workshops in Galata to dance studios. Also, there are granaries and tobacco warehouses along the Üsküdar shore, which were once used for maritime commerce. The loft style has also emerged in contemporary İstanbul, with artists, designers and architects beginning to use these old manufacturing workshops and warehouses as residences and ateliers.

When loft conversions in İstanbul to date are taken into consideration, we can observe that they were not converted from large manufacturing facilities, but instead from small warehouses and industrial structures. This presents a divergence from the industrial buildings around the world. (Taner, 2011) Lofts in İstanbul emerged when artists and designers who travel abroad were impressed by the loft lifestyle, and real estate marketing and construction companies offered it as a stylish commodity to appeal high-income clients. The loft lifestyle in İstanbul finds its reflection not in the demand for cheap and multi-purpose residential housing, but in the demand by high-income users who are influenced by the most current trends, and are attracted to luxurious lofts and loft living, as a byproduct of popular culture. (Pamukcu, 2009) In this respect, most of the loft buildings in İstanbul were constructed anew, due to the very limited number of industrial buildings suitable for loft conversion. However, it appears that although these new buildings are presented as 'lofts,' they do not actually possess loft characteristics. Residential housing and office building construction companies

in Turkey utilize loft architecture as a marketing instrument, rather than fully embracing it as an architectural style. For this reason, loft does not exist structurally in Turkey, but not only appears in name. Recent construction projects in İstanbul which claim to be offering lofts will be evaluated below one by one to see whether they possess loft characteristics or not.

## **Loft projects in İstanbul**

### ***Micro-loft projects***

Micro-Loft projects are construction projects which include small residential units, and imitate the loft style, although the structure itself does not adhere to the original loft characteristics. Having completed three different loft projects within a short period of time, Micro-Loft underlines the increased recognition of the loft concept in İstanbul and the demand for loft as a reputable and desired type of architecture among the middle high income groups in İstanbul. Nevertheless, these loft projects are only 'lofts' in name, and architectural characteristics of the loft have not been incorporated in these projects due to physical restrictions.

#### ***Micro-Loft Yarasa***

The Micro-Loft Yarasa project was constructed as a single apartment building in Gümüşsuyu in 2014. The apartment building contains only four apartments: one duplex penthouse, two studio apartments and one entry-level duplex. These apartments range between 50 m<sup>2</sup> and 100 m<sup>2</sup> in size. Suffice to say, it is a very small project, both in terms of the number of apartments included and total floor area.

Although named as a loft project, the Micro-Loft Yarasa project does not actually present most of the architectural characteristics of lofts. First of all, the apartments do not offer a spacious interior, as their size is quite small. They do not have large windows receiving abundant daylight. Indeed, most apartments have windows only on one side of the building, and in order to overcome this problem and to move closer to the ideal loft definition, no bricks were used on the façade, which was instead covered completely in glass to allow for more daylight. High ceilings, one of the fundamental characteristics of lofts, are not provided in non-duplex apartments, and ceiling height is similar to that of a standard apartment.

The lack of these three main features distances Micro-Loft Yarasa project from loft architecture in terms of its structural qualities. The lack of these features, along with the fact that the building was not converted from an old manufacturing shop or warehouse, but constructed from scratch, adds an abstract difference to the existing material differences.

Micro-Loft Yarasa strives to make up for its deficiencies in comparison to an ideal loft by imitating various industrial characteristics possessed by original lofts. In this light, walls and floors are unfinished concrete and fixtures, and fittings and furnishings delivered with the apartment were carefully selected to reflect an industrial feel. The ceiling is similarly shaped to evoke an industrial feel.

Possessing none of the fundamental loft criteria, this project does not correspond to 'natural,' 'real,' 'intermediate,' 'fake' or 'new' loft categories. There is an attempt to establish an association with lofts, but due to insufficient physical features, the building does not correspond to any of the loft categories. The structure can only be referred to as a 'loft' in

name. In other words, it is likened to a loft and named as such solely for marketing purposes. However, it does not possess any of the loft features intrinsically.

After completing the Micro-Loft Yarasa project, the same construction group started the construction of the Micro-Loft Bulut project, at a close location between Gümüşsuyu and Cihangir. The building is planned for delivery in 2014.

#### *Micro-Loft Bulut*

The Micro-Loft Bulut project is composed of a single apartment building similar to the Micro-Loft Yarasa. The project includes six apartments: one 90 m<sup>2</sup> duplex penthouse, four 55 m<sup>2</sup> studio apartments and one 67 m<sup>2</sup> entry-level apartment. Micro-Loft Bulut reflects nearly the same characteristics with Micro-Loft Yarasa in terms of construction materials, technical specifications and details such as the facade, windows and the amount of daylight received. The only difference between the two projects is that apartments on the top two floors of Micro-Loft Bulut have a view of the Bosphorus, which is not one of the ideal loft features.

Therefore, this project neither fits into the 'real' loft category nor any of the other diluted loft categories. Loft is only used in name here as well for solely marketing purposes.

#### *Micro-Loft Palaska*

The next 'loft' project by the same construction group is Micro-Loft Palaska, which will be constructed in Cihangir, with a similar mentality and the use of very similar structural forms. The apartments included in this project will have an interior size of 46 m<sup>2</sup>. Just like Micro-Loft Yarasa and Micro-Loft Bulut examples, Micro-Loft Palaska does not carry any of the ideal loft features. It does not fit into any of the loft categories. To be more precise, other than the name itself, it does not possess any of the fundamental characteristics of lofts.

#### ***İstanbul Loft***

İstanbul Loft is a project which envisions construction from scratch in Sefaköy, a popular site for recent construction projects. The completion date of construction is 2014. It is composed of a nineteen-story single apartment building and includes 200 residential apartments in total. (Genc, 2014) The apartment comes in two varieties; 55 m<sup>2</sup> 1+0 and 85 m<sup>2</sup> 1+1 apartments. The project includes twenty-four shops, in addition to the apartments. (Genc, 2014)

İstanbul Loft lacks most of the features found in an ideal loft. It is not converted from an industrial building, it is not located in the city center and it does not evoke an industrial feel. The windows are not large, but they are located on one side of the building, and the ceiling height is not more than that of an average apartment in the city. Apartments are not spacious and it is not possible to talk about an undivided indoor space. The advertised lofts are quite different from artists' studios and the bohemian lifestyle they inspire, and they pertain to the luxurious segment. The building includes a fitness room, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, Turkish bath, sauna, bar, café and restaurants, indoor parking garage and concierge services.

It appears that the loft is only used in name as a marketing strategy in this project as well, and the building in question reflects none of the fundamental features of the loft. Therefore, it does not correspond to any of the loft categories.



### ***Larus Loft***

Larus Loft is a new building that is planned to be constructed in Göktürk, one of the new settlement areas in İstanbul, and thus it does not possess the ideal loft quality of being converted from an industrial building. The building will be constructed from scratch. In the Larus Loft project, apartments are being sold before the construction commences and the planned completion date is 2016.

Despite using the word loft in its name, Larus Loft possesses none of the ideal loft features. The project does not include expansive and undivided indoor areas, giant windows, abundant natural daylight or high ceilings. Larus Loft not even contains any industrial references as indicated by other loft imitations constructed in İstanbul. The images and floor plans presented on the project web page shows that there are no common features between the architecture of the building and the original loft concept and architecture. Larus Loft does not fit into any of the loft categories.

### ***Loft Dragos***

Loft Dragos project consists of an 18-story, 55-meter tall building in İstanbul Dragos. It is estimated to be completed by 2016. The project consists of 100 housing units and a one commercial unit. (Karabağ, 2014) The housing units include 1+1, 2+1 and 3+1 apartments. The floor area of 1+1 apartments is fixed at 74 m<sup>2</sup>, while the size of 2+1 flats varies between 109 m<sup>2</sup> and 123 m<sup>2</sup>. The 3+1 flats have an area of 150 m<sup>2</sup>.

In contrary to original lofts, which are ideally located downtown and converted from old industrial buildings or warehouses, Loft Dragos is a construction project from scratch and is located slightly outside the city center. In addition, the housing units in Loft Dragos do not have undivided large interiors and high ceilings, which are the fundamental characteristics of lofts. The ceiling height of the apartments in Loft Dragos are designed to be three meters, which is slightly higher than that of a regular urban apartment. However, this is quite low in comparison to original lofts.

The project attempts to compensate for the lack of these ideal loft characteristics by its overall exterior appearance, which is designed to evoke an industrial feel, and large windows are provided to allow more natural daylight into the interior. Thus, the industrial character of lofts and their architectural structure which allow abundant daylight into the interior were imitated. Suffice to say, the project reflects a few of the characteristics of original lofts. However, Loft Dragos does not fit into any of the loft categories, and therefore, it is not possible to qualify it as a loft. Although the name of the project directly references 'loft' in name, it has been solely used as a marketing strategy, and not implemented in practice.

### ***Maritza Loft Sarıyer***

Maritza Loft Sarıyer is a two-phased loft project in Sarıyer, consisting of 330 apartments. The project is estimated to be completed by 2015. The project consists of 1+1, 2+1 and 3+1 apartments. However, these lofts are quite different than ideal lofts and do not possess many of the characteristics reflected by actual lofts. The appearance of Maritza Loft Sarıyer is quite far from being industrial, the design of the project is in line with the contemporary luxurious residential housing typology. Lofts, which are by definition converted from abandoned industrial buildings to artists' ateliers and alternative bohemian spaces, by preserving their legacy industrial design, have been completely domesticated in the Maritza Loft Sarıyer

project. Maritza Loft Sariyer is designed as a building estate, and evolved into a luxurious housing project for families, equipped with social facilities such as a swimming pool, sauna, steam room, fitness center, children playgrounds, walking track, exercise areas, recreational areas and indoor parking garage.

The apartments in Maritza Lofts Sariyer were not converted from an industrial building, but instead built from scratch. The apartments do not have free floor plans; but the interiors are divided into rooms just like a regular apartment. The design includes high ceilings and large windows; however they resemble the architecture of contemporary apartment blocks rather than lofts. Along with the interiors of the apartments, the building estate in general and the exteriors of the buildings do not evoke an industrial feel.

Maritza Loft Sariyer can be included under the 'new loft' category, due to high ceilings and large windows of the apartments. However, the apartments in the project do not have undivided interiors, which is one of prerequisites for the 'new loft' category. Consequently, it is not possible to designate the project under any of the loft categories, despite its proximity to loft categories in comparison to other examples evaluated above. In this respect, 'loft' is referenced in the name of the project solely for marketing purposes, and the project cannot be classified under any of the loft categories.

### ***Feriloft***

The Feriloft project is a loft project completed in Feriköy, İstanbul in 2012. The Feriloft building complex consists of 150 apartments and a hotel. The project offers 1+1, 2+1, 3+1 and 4+1 apartments, with an area varying between 52 m<sup>2</sup> and 217 m<sup>2</sup>.

The project meets the ideal loft criterion of being located in the city center. However, when we consider other criteria, we can observe that the project did not involve the conversion of industrial buildings or warehouses, does not offer undivided interiors and high ceilings in the apartments or abundant natural sunlight through wide windows. The interiors of all apartments are divided into rooms and both the exterior design of the housing estate and the interior design of the apartments fail to evoke any an industrial feel. In addition, the apartments and the landscaping is quite irrelevant to the artistic or bohemian lifestyle which was glorified by the loft architecture, and the project carries the characteristics of contemporary luxurious housing estates.

There is a leisure center in the project, offering an indoor swimming pool, cafe bar, TV lounge, game room, fitness center, pilates studio, Turkish bath, sauna, and steam and massage rooms. The estate is guarded for 24 hours, and there are surveillance cameras which cover the vicinity of the estate. In addition, the project offers details such as winter gardens, hot tubs and fireplaces.

All blocks in the Feriloft project can benefit from services such as dry cleaning, valet parking, room service and cleaning services. The receptions at the entrance of each building block in Feriloft, which consists of five detached blocks and a leisure center, provide concierge services on a 24-hour basis. Each block has car parking and storage areas.

A comparison of the project's characteristics with the criteria for lofts reveals that Feriloft cannot be grouped under any of the loft categories. Feriloft uses the 'loft' concept only for marketing purposes, and does not reflect any of the loft characteristics in essence.

### *Nef Projects*

Nef does not call its projects, which it claims to include loft apartments, as ‘loft’ projects, in contrast to other companies which claim to build loft apartments. Instead the company asserts that it is offering various loft apartments within the housing estates it builds. In other words, only a certain part of the project includes loft apartments.

Nef’s projects are also composed of buildings that are built from scratch, instead of converted buildings, in a similar fashion to most of the other projects in İstanbul, which contend to be loft projects. However, the building estates which contain Nef’s loft apartments are located in close proximity to the city center, while the apartments offer an undivided indoor space, receive abundant daylight through large windows and have a ceiling height compatible with the related loft criterion. The apartments evoke a luxurious and industrial feel at the same time. In this respect, loft apartments of Nef reflect some of the characteristics of ideal loft apartments.

#### *Nef Haliç 02*

Nef Haliç 02 project is two-phased project consisting of 370 apartments. (Tokay, 2014) The project was delivered in 2013. Apartments in the Nef Haliç 02 project are 1+1 and 3+1 type. The size of 1+1 apartments in the housing estate vary between 60 m<sup>2</sup> and 90 m<sup>2</sup>, while the size of 3+1 apartments are between 90 m<sup>2</sup> and 125 m<sup>2</sup>.

The housing estate is not entirely made up of loft apartments. Loft apartments, on the other hand, meet the ideal loft criteria of having an undivided indoor space, wide windows and a large glass facade, abundant daylight, high ceilings, an entresol and an industrial appearance. The apartments have an overall ambiance that is compatible with artistic and bohemian lifestyles. However, the apartments have not been converted from industrial buildings or warehouses, but instead built from scratch.

In this sense, loft apartments in Nef Haliç 02 do not conform to the typologies of ‘natural loft’ or ‘real loft,’ but they are aligned with the categories of ‘fake loft’ and ‘new loft.’ At least, they correspond to a certain loft type, although not at a high level, in contrast to the other examples reviewed above.

#### *Nef Kağıthane 11*

The Nef Kağıthane 11 project consists of 348 residential and office units. The project was delivered in 2013. Loft apartments in this project are located in the office section, and comprised of six stories in total.

The Nef Kağıthane 11 project deviates from the ideal loft criteria with the fact that the indoor area of office units are small in comparison to the total indoor area of the project, and that they were not converted from old industrial buildings or warehouses. Nef appears to have met quite a few criteria for the ideal loft concept in this project, as it did in the Nef Haliç 02 project. Indoor space is undivided, while the apartments have giant glass windows and receive abundant amount of daylight through these windows. Although ceiling heights in the office units are not as high as what would be expected from a loft, they reach a certain level. The industrial feeling is reflected strongly throughout the apartments. Thanks to these characteristics, Nef Kağıthane 11 finds a place within the categories ‘fake’ and ‘new’ lofts, just like Nef Haliç 02.

### *Nef Flats Levent 163*

The Nef Flats Levent 163 project is located in Kağıthane, İstanbul and consists of 308 apartments in total. The project was delivered in 2012. As in other Nef projects, only some of the apartments in the project are loft apartments. In other words, only a part of the residential units were designed as lofts. There are two different categories of apartments in the Nef Flats Levent 163 project, in the form of 1+1 and 2+1 apartments. These apartments have an area that varies between 59 m<sup>2</sup> and 112 m<sup>2</sup>. Among the two categories, 2+1 apartments were constructed as lofts. Nef Flats Levent 163 consists of a single building standing at 131 meters, and the ceiling height of normal apartments is 3 meters, while that of loft apartments is six meters.

Loft apartments in Nef Flats Levent 163 reflect some of the ideal loft characteristics. An undivided indoor space, a high ceiling, giant windows and abundant daylight correspond to the ideal loft criteria. Although Nef Flats Levent 163 lags behind other Nef projects in terms of evoking an industrial feel, the apartments present an industrial atmosphere and they are aesthetically stylish. Nevertheless, the size of the apartments is smaller than ideal loft measurements, and they were built from scratch, as opposed to being converted from an old industrial building or warehouse, and thus the project deviates from the ideal loft criteria.

Due to these overall characteristics, Nef Flats 163 cannot be classified under the categories of 'fake' and 'new' lofts.

### ***Levent Loft Projects***

Loft 1 and Levent Loft Bahçe are two loft projects constructed in Levent, İstanbul, as the first branded loft projects of İstanbul. Loft 1 was completed in 2007, while Levent Loft Bahçe was finished in 2010.

#### *Loft 1(Levent Loft)*

Levent Loft consists of two buildings that have respectively eleven-stories and seven-stories. There are a total of 144 apartments in the two buildings. One of the buildings is reserved for office use, and while the other is for residential use. (Taner, 2012) The office and residential housing units vary between 68 m<sup>2</sup> and 182 m<sup>2</sup> in size. There are twenty-one different types of apartments in Levent Loft. The project was completed in 2007. (McManus, 2011) It was first designed as a factory, and the construction commenced along this purpose. However, the project was later amended due to various reasons, and the building constructed as a factory was converted to office and residential housing space before the construction was completed. The initial form of the construction was not destroyed during this conversion, and in this sense, it became a factory conversion. (Binat, Sık, 2007, 25) In this respect, it stands out among the other projects.

Levent Loft won various international awards such as 'Cityscape Awards – Real Estate, MENA 2010, Abu Dhabi, Best Residential Built Development,' 'CNBC Arabia Europe & African Property Award 2009, Residential Category' and 'Cityscape Architectural Awards 2008, Residential Built.' (McManus, 2011)

Levent Loft appears to be a project that partially meets the ideal loft criteria in İstanbul. Although it has failed to meet the criterion of generating lofts by converting an old industrial building, it was at least converted from an industrial building during the construction phase. The approximate ceiling height of six meters meets the loft criterion in this respect as well.



The entresol reflects an undivided unity with the rest of the room, thanks to sharing the same ceiling, but the entirety of the apartment is not uniform and undivided. It is divided into various rooms, and thus, it does not fulfill the ideal loft criterion in this respect. The windows are large and wide, extending from the ceiling down to the floor. However, the building is too close to another building on one side, and the amount of daylight entering into the apartments is limited, despite the large size of the windows. Therefore, the windows fail to fulfill their intended function, although the ideal loft criterion for windows is met architecturally. Walls and floors are mostly left as unfinished concrete, and at times finished with wood. Ideal loft criterion is also not fulfilled in this respect. With its downtown location, Levent Loft meets the ideal loft criterion for location.

The project targets the luxurious consumption segment, as opposed to implementing the original loft concept. Levent Loft offers meeting rooms, restaurant, gym, SPA, swimming pool, massage rooms, hairdresser, Japanese garden, general security, ventilation-cleaning systems, underground parking garage and private storage for all residential units. (Taner,2012) In this sense, it has surpassed the original loft concept in meeting contemporary comfort standards.

Levent Loft possesses loft characteristics to a greater extent than Nef projects. Although its nature is debatable, it was converted from an industrial building. Despite that fact that its structural characteristics can fail to provide the intended function, as seen in the example of the windows, it is compatible with loft architecture in theory. Therefore, Levent Loft is included under the 'intermediate' loft category that is closer to the original loft design in comparison to the categories of 'fake' and 'new' lofts. In other words, it is possible to view Levent Loft as an 'intermediate loft.'

#### *Levent Loft Bahçe*

Levent Loft Bahçe was built right after the completion of the Levent Loft (Loft 1) project, in continuity with this project. The project was completed in 2010. Comprised of twenty two stories, Levent Loft Bahçe contains eighty-two apartments. The apartments in question vary between 100 m<sup>2</sup> and 210 m<sup>2</sup> in size, with sixteen different structural formats.

The Levent Loft Bahçe project conforms to some of the ideal loft criteria, while it displays a more innovative approach with respect to others. Nevertheless, the Levent Loft Bahçe project defines its own loft apartments as 'soft lofts,' confirming its status correctly. (Biçer, 2014)

Fittings, columns and beams are not hidden, but used as part of its design, while it has high ceilings, unfinished concrete floors and ceilings, and one-piece large windows extending from the ceiling down to the floor. It meets the ideal loft criteria in this respect. The apartments contain greater openings in comparison to normal apartments, but they don't have a single room plan with an undivided interior. Bedrooms are separated from the main living space by walls.

Levent Loft Bahçe distances itself from the ideal loft form marked by antagonism and a lack of comfort, by combining luxurious elements with contemporary residential comfort. In this project, each apartment is provided with underground parking garage, storage space, multi-purpose halls and meeting rooms, lounge and bar, concierge, 24-hour operating reception, 700 m<sup>2</sup> large SPA & fitness, indoor pool which can be converted to an outdoor pool in the summer, sunbathing terrace and bar, Turkish bath, sauna, steam, massage and personnel

training rooms. Levent Loft Bahçe directly appeals to the high income group with these features.

It can be observed that Levent Loft Bahçe is not a conversion project like Levent Loft, but a construction project from scratch. Moreover, the structural materials used are more comfort oriented than the materials used in the Levent Loft project. In this respect, Levent Loft Bahçe corresponds to the categories of 'fake' and 'new' to a greater extent.

## CONCLUSION

İstanbul has failed to generate the original loft form, due to particular reasons that has to do with its historical development. Residential housing or office units of the loft type, which have been derived from the conversion of old industrial building, as seen in examples from the US and Europe, is next to non-existent. It can also be observed that successive projects carried out under the name of loft in recent years in İstanbul lack most of the architectural characteristics of lofts. The marketing of such projects as lofts should only be perceived as a marketing strategy.

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