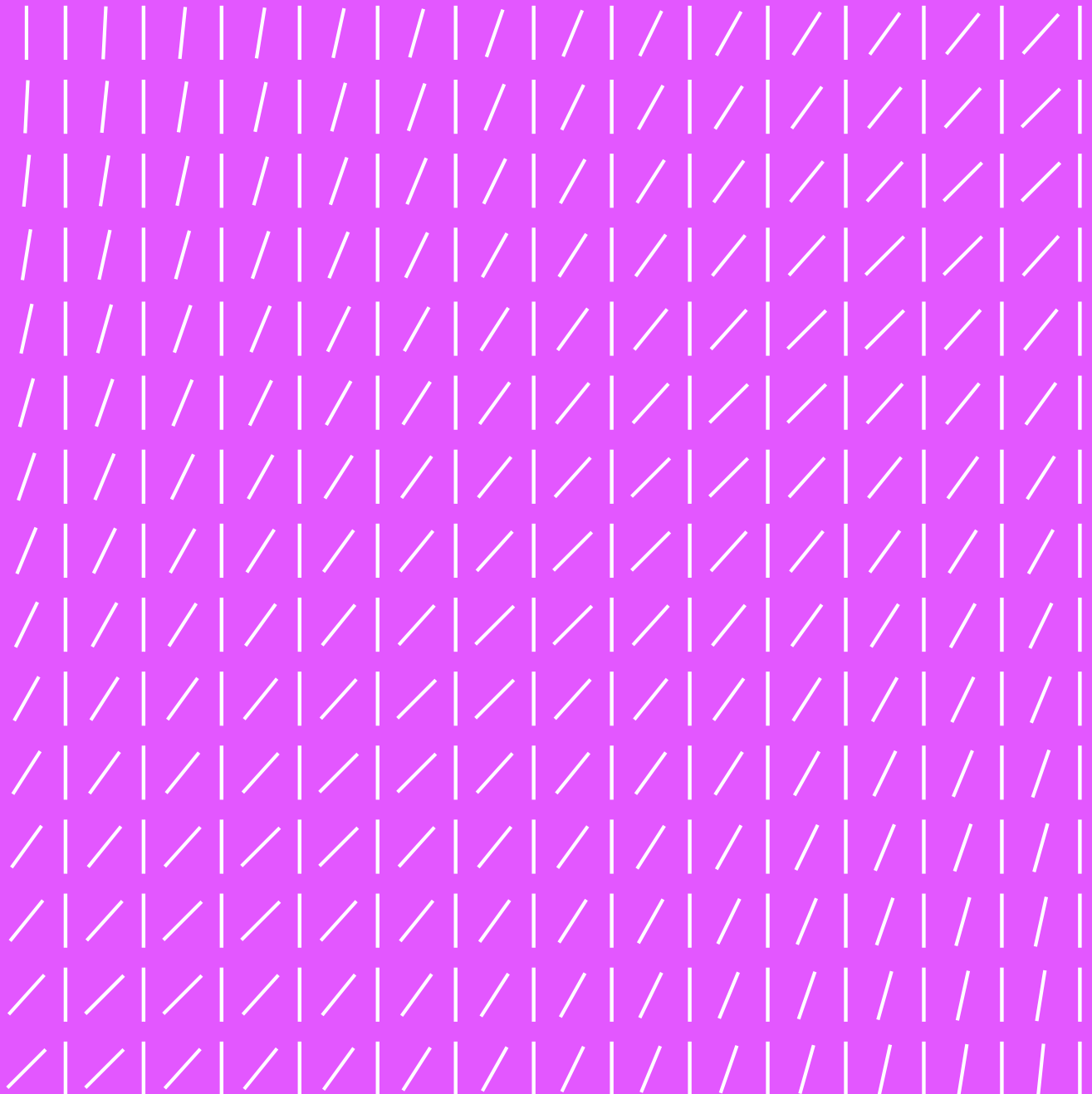


Film in Turkey

Version 2019

Written by Melis Behlil and Senem Aytac



Film in Turkey

Version 2019

In 2011, SICA (the predecessor of DutchCulture) produced a comprehensive mapping of the Turkish cultural field. This mapping was written by local experts and edited by Teike Asselbergs and Chantal Hamelinck. The mapping was produced as a means to promote cultural exchange between the Netherlands and Turkey and as a starting point of the year 2012, which marked 400 years of Dutch – Turkish diplomatic relations. The mapping was supported and produced in close co-operation with the Dutch public funds.

An update of these mappings was commissioned in 2018 by DutchCulture while working with the same editors. The existing mappings were revised and several new mappings were added. The updated mappings are focusing more on giving Dutch cultural practitioners an insight into the Turkish cultural field and its infrastructure, and helping them get in contact with colleagues.

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Contents

Summary	4
Introduction	5
Short History of Film in Turkey	7
Main trends and topics	10
Popular	11
Audiences	13
Sub-disciplines	14
Professional groups and organisations	16
Educational institutions	18
Non-professionals	19
Youth and Film	21
Venues	22
Festivals and events	23
Prizes and grants	25
Financial situation	27
Critics and researchers	28
(Social) media about Film	29
Resources	30
Facilities	31


| Summary

The film industry in Turkey is quite a developed one, especially when one also takes into account the television series industry, with Turkish dramas sold to channels around the world, from the Middle East and the Balkans to Latin America. The market share of local productions in theatres is more than 50% and the local film production numbers have been growing consistently for the past 10 years or so, reaching 180 films produced in 2018 (boxofficeturkiye.com/turk-filmleri/). Yet, the box office success is reserved for only a handful of popular films every year and distribution and exhibition are monopolised. Many local art-house films that face distribution and exhibition problems in Turkey are featured at festivals around the world, winning various awards. Especially after the 2000s, the cinematic climate developed with a new cinema law – although with vast shortcomings – passing in 2004 and the distribution of public funds from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2005. However, after 2014, the oppressive and polarised political environment began to be strongly felt by the industry, revealing itself especially in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism’s funding decisions and various censorship cases. With a rise in the number of Film and TV Departments of private universities during these years, the number of young scholars and film professionals is growing as well, resulting in a rise of short film production. Despite its size, the industry is not very well structured, and it is always necessary to find a local contact to obtain information or conduct business in Turkey.

| Introduction

Due to its size and success at the local box office, national cinema in Turkey is for the most part viable as a commercial cinema. The popular films (mostly comedies, some historical dramas and, to a lesser extent, cheap horror flicks) that make up the bulk of the box office do not travel to international film festivals and are not popular internationally, except for countries with significant Turkish diasporic populations such as Germany or the Netherlands. Conversely, the films that do represent Turkey around the world at festivals are not popular with domestic audiences.

For a film professional from abroad, the important thing to keep in mind about Turkey is that the country has been going through turbulent times, and it is always a good idea to check the latest news since conditions are apt to change even on a daily basis. After the coup attempt on July 15, 2016, a state of emergency was declared. It was extended seven times and finally lifted officially in July 2018. Yet, many of the precautions and practices are still in use, so it is necessary to check the latest news or consult people you can rely on, before taking any further steps. Another development in Turkey is the economic crisis that started in 2018. Although the film and TV industry has been growing on a regular basis for approximately the past 10 years, the effects of the economic crisis have become visible since the second half of 2018, and economists foresaw that it was going to be more severe in 2019. (Ironically, because the Turkish lira is losing value, it becomes advantageous for foreigners to conduct business in Turkey. It is also important to keep in mind that because the industry is not properly structured, exploitation of labour is commonplace.) Turkey is a large country and the conditions, and political and cultural atmosphere differ from region to region. Therefore, it is also a good idea to understand the demographics of the region before you go.



The effect of the political developments on filmmaking in Turkey is mostly demonstrated in increasing censorship. The criteria for censorship are very vague and based on the current conjuncture of the country, and hence self-censorship is also at play. “Risky” issues include opposition to the current regime, the Gezi uprisings that took place in 2013, the conditions of immigrants in Turkey, or topics related to the Kurdish population, but also LGBTI+ content (the Governor of Ankara banned the LGBTI+ Film Days in November 2017, organised by the German Embassy, Kuirfest and Büyülü Fener Theatres). A few days later, the Beyoğlu district in Istanbul also banned the screening of Queer Shorts, which was organised by the British Council and KuirFest). On the other hand, since the Ministry of Culture and Tourism’s funding decisions have also become politicised, it is of utmost importance for independent filmmakers to find international partners to be able to continue their productions. Considering the oppressive conditions of the country, co-productions, funds from Europe and international connections are more needed and necessary.

| Short history

Short History of Film in Turkey

As with many other parts of the world, the history of cinema in Turkey (then the Ottoman Empire) begins with the first public screening of the Lumière Company's films in Istanbul, in a brewery called Sponeck in 1896, along with the Lumière Company's operators visiting Istanbul (then Constantinople) to shoot their travelogues during that period. Public screenings started in Istanbul and continued almost only in the Beyoğlu district for a considerable amount of time, which later became the heart of the film industry up till the 1980s. Unfortunately, there has been a lot of disputed information about the early cinema during the Ottoman Empire. Yet current scholars, historians and archivists have been paying special attention to the early period to shed some light on this more-or-less unknown history, going through Ottoman archives, discovering new information and new perspectives.

The Central Military Office of Cinema

The first cinema institution that was founded during the Ottoman rule is the Central Military Office of Cinema (CMOC). Established in 1915, the institution had an ideological aim, producing news mainly from the fronts. The institution had a central ideological role in the formation of the newly founded Turkish Republic in 1923. One of the prominent figures in early cinema, Sigmund Weinberg, along with his student Fuat Uzkınay, worked for CMOC producing films. For a long period of time, the official history recorded Ayastefanos'taki Rus Abidesinin Yıkılışı (The Demolition of the Russian Monument at St. Stefano) as the first Turkish film, directed by Fuat Uzkınay in 1914. One of the controversies around this film is the fact that there is no actual evidence of the film since there are no historical accounts or sufficient archival materials. The "first film" discussion is also a problematic one in Turkey since earlier examples such as Manaki Brothers' films which were realised under the Ottoman rule in the Balkans were much earlier and could be considered as part of the country's history.

The 1920s-1950s

Starting from the 1920s, stage actor and director Muhsin Ertuğrul became the most prominent (and the only) figure shooting feature films. *Leblebici Horhor* (1934), *Aysel Bataklı Damın Kızı* (1934) and *Şehvet Kurbanı* (1940) are a few of the films that survived and can be viewed today. As elsewhere, many of the early films produced were either lost or destroyed. The earliest feature film (partially) available today is *Binnaz*

(1919), directed by Ahmet Fehim. Film companies such as Kemal Film and Ipek Film, which also owned cinemas and imported films, were established during the 1920s. However, up till the 1950s, very few local productions were made: one film per year on average. From the 1950s, a fairly fruitful production phase began. *Vurun Kahpeye* (1949) by Lütfi Akad can be noted as a key film, in terms of developing film language and storytelling.

Yeşilçam

Between the 1950s and 1980s, the Turkish film industry was termed Yeşilçam (Green pine), taking its name from the street in Beyoğlu where many of the production companies were located. Until the 1970s, the industry was extremely prolific, churning out an average of 150-175 productions a year, which were enormously popular with audiences. A few directors that gave Turkish cinema its unique quality in the 1960s and 1970s are Ömer Lütfi Akad, Atıf Yılmaz, Metin Erksan, Halit Refiğ, Osman F. Seden and Memduh Ün. Along with these auteur directors, the dominant local production blossomed during the 1960s and 1970s. A few films made their way to international film festivals such as *Susuz Yaz* (Dry Summer, 1963), winning the Golden Bear in the Berlinale and Biennale Award in the Venice Film Festival, and *Sürü* (The Herd, 1979), winning the Golden Leopard in Locarno and awards from the Berlinale and BFI London Film Festival. These were the only major international festival successes until Yılmaz Güney's *Yol* won the Palme d'Or in Cannes in 1982.

After the mid-70s

Following a sharp decline from the mid-1970s due to a combination of reasons such as the spread of television, economic crisis and social unrest, as well as a "sleeper" period through the 1980s and most of the 1990s, the industry slowly recovered in the 2000s. Independent filmmakers of the 1990s emerged at a time when Yeşilçam, which had produced 250 films a year during its apex in the 1960s and 1970s, ground to a halt in the 1980s. The revival, if not regeneration, of Turkey's cinema was characterised by two seemingly different approaches: one deriving from earlier filmmaking habits, themes and styles and the other introducing new visions, aesthetic concerns and a critical treatment of Yeşilçam. By the mid-1990s, directors such as Yavuz Turgul with *The Bandit* (*Eşkiya*, 1996) and Mustafa Altıoklar with *Istanbul Beneath My Wings* (*Istanbul Kanatlarımın Altında*, 1996) were working on reinventing certain Yeşilçam formulas, the melodrama and the historical drama, respectively. When Turgul's *The Bandit* became a box office success with more than two and a half million tickets sold, it was heralded as the revival of Yeşilçam.

Nineties and noughties

In the meantime, Derviş Zaim excelled in low-budget guerrilla filmmaking with his first film, *Somersault in a Coffin* (*Tabutta Rövaşata*, 1996), encouraging newcomers, particularly with its success in international film circles. In 1998, Zeki Demirkubuz's *Innocence* (*Masumiyet*) garnered attention both within and beyond the festival circuit with its self-reflexive structure, looking back at Yeşilçam with a melodramatic gaze. Independent film production, along with the revival of film and TV productions at the beginning of the 2000s, was prolific.

Arthouse cinema benefited from funds provided by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism starting from 2005, while popular cinema rode on the wave created by the impetus of the blooming television sector.

After 2000

Some major films with major awards from the 2000s are as follows: *Uzak* (2002), *İklimler* (2006), *Üç Maymun* (2008), *Bir Zamanlar Anadolu'da* (2011), *Kış Uykusu* (2014) and *Ahlat Ağacı* (2018), all directed by Nuri Bilge Ceylan, who became a key director in Cannes and received many major awards. *Uzak İhtimal* (2009) by Mahmut Fazıl Coşkun won Best Film in Rotterdam, *Pandora'nın Kutusu* (2010) by Yeşim Ustaoglu won Best Film and Best Actress in San Sebastian and *Bal* (2010) by Semih Kaplanoğlu won the Golden Bear in Berlinale. *Çoğunluk* (2010) by Seren Yüce and Küf by Ali Aydın (2011) both received the feature-debut prize, "Lion of the Future" in Venice. Emin Alper's *Tepenin Ardı* (2012) won the Caligari Award in Berlinale and Best Film in the Asia-Pacific Screen Awards (APSA), and his *Abluka* (2015) received the Special Jury Prizes in Venice and APSA. *Sivas* (2014) by Kaan Müjdeci won the Special Jury Prize in Venice.

Growth market

In addition to the presence of Turkish films at international festivals, in 2014 the Turkish theatrical market became the second-largest European growth market and the seventh-largest European theatrical market, only superseded by the big five EU markets and the Russian Federation.

<https://rm.coe.int/168078354a>

| Main trends and topics

One of the recent advancements in the industry has been the launch of Netflix in Turkey, along with two other Turkish online streaming services, BluTV and PuhuTV, all in 2016. Especially at a time when television and cinema are under strict censorship laws and the hegemony of monopolisation, the online viewing platforms have provided an important alternative for professionals working in the field. Seren Yüce's *Masum* for BluTV and Onur Saylak's *Şahsiyet* (Personality) for PuhuTV opened the way for independent filmmakers to produce TV series. *7Yüz* by BluTV (Tunç Sahin, Umut Aral, Alphan Eşeli, Ceylan Özgün Özçelik) is another example. Following its Turkish counterparts, Netflix Turkey ordered its first local production, *Protector* (directed by Umut Aral, Can Evrenol, Gönenç Uyanık), which was released in December 2018.

The Law on Evaluation, Classification and Support of Cinema Films

A major issue concerning the future of the film sector is the new cinema law, which has been on the agenda of film professionals for almost 10 years. The law (No. 5224 on Evaluation, Classification and Support of Cinema Films 21) regulates film certification and national support for film production and cultural events such as film festivals. Film professional organisations such as Se-Yap (Film Producers Association) and Film-Yön (Film Directors Association) have been actively working on the process, organising workshops and releasing reports and recommendations on the draft since 2011. The new cinema law has been passed by Parliament in January 2019. However, this new law does not seem to be solving some very important problems of the sector, such as the monopolisation in distribution and exhibition or the mechanisms of censorship exercised by the state.


Tobacco Law

Another recent development is the new tobacco law that passed in November 2018 regarding the presentation of smoking in films screened at theatres. The law bans onscreen presentation of smoking tobacco products. It is yet to be seen how the law is going to be implemented, especially for exported films.

| Popular

When considering popular films, high-grossing films are taken into account and box-office numbers are used as the main data. The Turkish film market stands out in the pan-European landscape as the only market in which national films regularly outperform US films (<https://rm.coe.int/168078354a>). A quick glance at the box office numbers from 1989 up till the present reveals that Turkish audiences prefer local productions to internationally distributed films (boxofficeturkiye.com/tumzaman/?tm=1989). Out of a list of 100 films that sold the most tickets over these 30 years, only 16 are international (mostly Hollywood productions). In the top 50, there are only four films that are Hollywood productions. The highest-grossing Hollywood film (Fast and Furious 7) entered the list only in the 25th spot.

The highest-grossing film of all time is the fifth film of a Turkish comedy series entitled Recep İvedik with 7,437,050 tickets sold, followed by the fourth of the same series. (It should be noted that there is no collective, reliable data from the Yeşilçam period, when the audience numbers for local productions were even higher.) The Recep İvedik series have become a phenomenon in Turkey. This success alone points out to a strong mainstream trend in popular comedy films. Mainstream Turkish comedies are always at the top of the box office, with a tradition that can be traced back to Yeşilçam, popular Turkish TV series and comedy shows. Figures and characters from TV series, comedy shows, or even YouTube channels, with whom the audience is already familiar, seem to be a major factor in attracting people to these films. Recep İvedik started as a TV show, its most popular clips were viewed widely on YouTube and then became the most popular film series of all times. Similarly, comedians such as Yılmaz Erdoğan, Cem Yılmaz, Ata Demirer and the stars of the third highest-grossing film Düğün Dernek, Ahmet Kural and Murat Cemcir all came from television.



Some of the other popular genres in the box-office lists are dramas, action-adventures and historical epics. Horror films (both local and international) are always popular with audiences as well. Low-budget Turkish horror films are a popular trend in mainstream Turkish cinema. Although their box-office numbers are often not that high, this is offset by the small production budgets.

For a comparative view, it might be useful to take a look at the box-office numbers of the internationally acclaimed award-winning director Nuri Bilge Ceylan's Golden Palm-winner *Winter Tale* (2014), which was his most successful film at the box office with ticket sales of only 304,782 (released on 132 screens, whereas *Recep İvedik 5* was released on 394).

Film festival attendance numbers can also provide useful data. The main film event in Istanbul, the Istanbul Film Festival, for instance, screens almost 200 films (including features, classics, festival films, shorts and documentaries), lasting around 10 days with 463 screenings and an audience number of approximately 100,000.

Audiences

Turkey has a population of approximately 80 million, with more than 15 million people living in Istanbul. The average age of the population is 31, which means that it is a fairly young country. The largest section of the population is aged between 25 and 45 years old. In 2017 and 2018, yearly ticket sales hovered around 70 million, which is still less than one ticket per person per year (<https://boxofficeturkiye.com/yillik>).

According to “Mastercard Film Habits Research”, moviegoers in Istanbul mostly prefer comedies. A total of 51% of the participants said they go to the cinema once a month, 24% once a week and 6% more than once a week. (<https://newsroom.mastercard.com/eu/tr/2017/06/08/mastercard-sinema-aliskanliklari-arastirmasi-aciklandi-istanbullular-sinemada-gulmek-istiyor/>)

The information, gathered from the cinema application “Sinemia”, reveals that students over 16 and young white-collar workers make up the bulk of the audience. Apparently, women go to the movies 1.5 times more than men. (<http://fintechtime.com/tr/2018/01/sinemia-turkiyenin-2017-yili-sinema-karnesini-cikardi/>)

Another interesting finding is that 94 percent of the audience prefer dubbed films, whereas the younger audiences between 18 and 24 years prefer subtitled films, according to research by Dailymotion. (<http://www.beyazperde.com/haberler/filmler/haberler-62570/>) Since almost all films – except for children’s animation films – are screened with subtitles in theatres, the finding might also point out one of the reasons behind the audiences’ choice of Turkish films.

It should also be noted that “unofficial” ways of watching films, mostly through the internet, is very popular in Turkey and dubbed versions of popular films can easily be found online. If there had been research that included the number of pirated films being watched, it would be a more accurate account of people’s viewing habits in general.

| Sub-disciplines

There is no film commission in Turkey where you can gather useful information about film production. The guilds may be a starting point, but usually networking is necessary when working in Turkey [especially Se-Yap (Film Producers' Association of Turkey) and Sinema-TV Sendikası (Cinema and Television Workers Union)]. It is necessary to apply to the Cinema Department of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to get filming permission for foreigners (<http://sinema.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR-143934/yabanci-yapimlar-icin-cekim-izni-filming-permit.html>). It takes approximately two or three months to get the permit, so it is important to apply well beforehand. It is also necessary to have a working permit from the Ministry of Labour. When shooting in a city, you should also get a permit from the Office of the Governor. Although the Cinema Department of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism states that there is a tax reduction, in practice this is not the case. Turkish below-the-line workers get paid weekly, unlike the European custom of getting paid daily. Overtime payments are not standardised across the industry.

Production and Production Offices

It is not always easy to find people to work with who speak fluent English in Turkey. So, it is always a good idea to work with a local co-producer you can rely on. Your local correspondent can be useful when finding crewmembers, since the sector is not institutionalised; networking is usually the only way to find people. It is also very important to trust your local producer since they will know how things work, since there are not always written laws, but many practical ways of doing or not doing things. For example, shooting in sensitive locations can have legal implications.

Producers who have done co-productions or have worked in international projects are Yamaç Okur, Çiğdem Mater, Nadir Öperli, Diloy Gülün, Ali Akdeniz, C. Aslı Filiz, Anna Maria Aslanoğlu and Alex Sutherland. It is highly advisable to work with a local producer and not try to contract individual crew members separately.

Film Directing

In Turkey, directors of commercial films often start their careers in television or in advertising. Some of the most popular directors, such as Yılmaz Erdoğan, Cem Yılmaz, Mahsun Kırmızıgül, and Özcan Deniz, are also among the biggest stars and leverage their star power to direct and produce their films. Many independent filmmakers have a background in short films and often have to finance themselves while making their features, or work with independent producers. Documentaries and short films are usually made by guerrilla methods since it is very hard to finance them. Short films are made usually by university students.

Camera and lighting

There is an Association for Directors of Photography (goruntuyonetmenleridernegi.org.tr), as well as an Association of Camera Assistants (kadyonkur@gmail.com).

Art department

In terms of textiles, decor and set design, Turkey provides a lot of options and things can be obtained easily, cheaply and with good quality. Practical solutions can be sorted out easily, except when props need to be obtained from outside the country.

Casting

Many of the leading casting directors also work as actors' managers. The following casting directors are the only ones working internationally: Harika Uygur (<http://www.harikauygur.com/>) Ezgi Baltas (<http://www.ezgibaltas.com/>), Şafak Binay and Yudum Erdem.

Animation and special effects

The leading animation and digital effects studio is Anima Istanbul (<http://vfx.animaistanbul.com/>), which is active mostly in commercials, but also in feature and short films.

Professional groups and organisations

One of the main problems in the Turkish film industry is organising and syndication. Although there are many official guilds, few of them can be considered fully active. A partial list of guilds is available on the website of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism: <http://sinema.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR-145426/meslek-birlikleri.html>) Many of these guilds have offices in a single building in Istanbul's Pangaltı district (Ergenekon Cad. N:10 Ahmet Bey Plaza), so it can be considered as one of the places where professionals cluster.

Problems with unions and organising is not only limited to the film industry. To give a historical perspective, it is important to know that after the coup d'état in 1980 almost all unions and associations were shut down and they only starting being active again during the 1990s. The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey is one of the four major national trade union centres in Turkey. It was founded in 1967 and Sine-Sen (Filmmakers Union, <https://disk.org.tr/uye-sendikalar/sine-sen/>) is part of this confederation. Although the confederation is still active, it would not be unfair to say that it has a limited sphere of influence.

Many of the current guilds today have been established to deal mainly with copyright issues since the cinema law has not been sufficient in this regard. Because of the unstructured nature of guilds, there is more than one guild each for directors, producers or actors/actresses.

In order to be able to organise, especially for matters concerning the cinema law, they have formed a "union of forces", but the initiative is not an official one. And although this is a platform to combine forces, it does not have an official power of sanction, so its decisions are not binding.

SEK (Artistic Activities Commission, www.sek.org.tr/) is another commission that is composed of many guilds (BSB, BIROY, FIYAB, SINEBIR, SESAM, SETEM, SEYAP and TESİYAP). The commission decides which films will be sent to the US Academy Awards or issues opinions on national or international festivals organised in Turkey for the Cinema Department of Ministry of Culture and Tourism to give permits, and files reports on the festivals.

The younger generation formed a new union in 2015, called Sinema TV Sendikası (www.sinematvsendikasi.org), gathering workers in film, advertising and TV sets. They aim to ameliorate the difficult working conditions on sets, such as long hours and workers' safety. One of the main issues they have been working on is the definition and standardisation of professions (such as director, first assistant director, art director, etc.) since there is no standard definition of these professions in the law.

Founded in 2007, another active organisation is SE-YAP (Sinema Eseri Yapımcıları Meslek Birliği, www.se-yap.org.tr/), which is one of the producers' guilds, set up mainly to protect the rights of producers and films. They are especially active in trying to protect the rights under the Law of Intellectual Property Rights (5846) and to follow up the distribution of compensations and royalties. (It is a member of international associations such as AGICOA and FIAPF.)

A fairly young union is the Actors Union (Oyuncular Sendikası, www.oyuncularsendikasi.org). It is one of the more active organisations that are trying to improve the working hours and conditions of cast members, to protect the rights of the children on set and to speak out about instances of harassment or exploitation.

Social media plays an important role as a public tool in Turkey, where it is always problematic to cluster in big groups in physical spaces. It usually works around hot topic issues when a case is raised. Particular groups have also formed mail groups when there is a violation or censorship case.

Film festivals are among the few spaces where people gather, but because of recent controversies on censorship, many of them (such as the Antalya Film Festival) have experienced boycotts from the industry. Still, festivals with co-production markets are the main venues where film professionals meet.

Educational institutions

With the privatisation of universities in Turkey since the late 1990s, many private universities with film and TV departments around the country have sprung up. The quality of education, however, is debatable and most of them have a more theoretical curriculum. Hence, in order to be able to practise their vocation, young people usually either chose to join private courses (such as the Istanbul Film Academy: www.istanbulfilmakademi.com), shoot their own shorts or directly start working in the industry.

In terms of international connections, many universities – state and private alike – have Erasmus agreements with universities across Europe, allowing for student and faculty exchange. Connections with specific institutions can be obtained from their respective websites

State universities

Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University and Marmara University have the most established film and TV departments in Istanbul. Anadolu University, in a middle Anatolian city called Eskişehir, has the oldest film department; it has an animation department and is one of the few departments that gives students the opportunity to have extensive hands-on experience, as it hosts national television studios. Dokuz Eylül University and Ege University are two main film and TV departments situated in İzmir.

Private universities

The leading private universities in terms of their popularity and the quality of academic staff are Kadir Has University, Bahçeşehir University, Bilgi University, followed by Nişantaşı University and Yeditepe University; they are all located in Istanbul.

Once again, a sidenote is necessary: In January 2016, more than 2,000 academics signed a “peace petition”, inviting the state to stop fighting in the southeast region. Many of these academics have since been fired from their jobs, many have been individually sued by the state for “supporting terrorism” and some have lost their passports. These include numerous academics in film and TV departments. For further information, please visit: barisicinakademisyenler.net/English.

| Non-professionals

University clubs provide film education as a club activity for university students but are not (always) affiliated with film departments.

Boğaziçi University in Istanbul

One of the most prestigious universities in Turkey, Boğaziçi University does not have a communication or arts department, but boasts award-winning directors as graduates, such as Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Derviş Zaim, Seyfi Teoman and Emin Alper. There is a film certificate programme within the Foreign Languages Department alongside the very active Mithat Alam Film Centre, with a broad archive, film screenings, talks with people from film industry, one of the oldest short film competitions and many other activities. One of the most important contributions of the centre to Turkish cinema is the “Visual Memory Project”, which includes lengthy video interviews with significant figures from the history of Turkish cinema. The acclaimed film magazine *Altyazı* also has close ties with the centre. The university’s film club, which predates the centre, is also active.

METU in Ankara

Another prestigious university without a cinema department is METU (Middle East Technical University) in Ankara, which has an Audio-Visual Systems Research and Production Centre (GİSAM, gisam.metu.edu.tr) founded in 1993 that is technically fully equipped and focuses mainly on video production.

Private courses

There are various, mainly small organisations that provide film seminars and workshops, especially in Istanbul, and many universities have active cinema clubs.

Founded in 1959, İFSAK (İstanbul Photography and Film Amateurs Association) is one of the oldest institutions with various seminars and a short film festival of its own. İFA (İstanbul Film Academy, istanbulfilmakademi.com/) gives an extensive education on filmmaking, with various seminars on scriptwriting, directing, acting, post-production, etc.

Cities outside Istanbul and Ankara

Aykırı Sinema (www.aykirisinema.com), a film club in Bursa, a city in northwest Turkey, supported by Nilüfer Municipality; Diyarbakır Film Club, which meets at Diyarbakır Arts Centre (www.diyarbakirsanat.org); and Ortadoğu Sinema Akademisi, also in Diyarbakır, are noteworthy examples from different cities in Turkey.

| Youth and film

The bulk of short films are made by young and aspiring filmmakers, often university students.

Netflix and other online platforms such as YouTube seem to be a growing trend for younger generations. In feature films, a more recent phenomenon has been comedies starring famous YouTubers and YouTube channels. In 2018, the most popular one was Enes Batur *Hayal mi Gerçek mi?* (2018) with approximately 1.5 million tickets sold. However, the quality of the films is quite low. Made with very small budgets, these films have a ready audience among children and teenagers.

Venues

Cinemas

Out of 81 provinces, seven have no movie theatres. There has been a noticeable increase in the number of cinemas in the past few years – from 987 in 2005 to 2692 in 2017, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute, TÜİK, in 2018. This is one of the results of the rise in shopping mall multiplexes with many small theatres instead of old theatres with large capacities.

Studios

In terms of studios, one of the largest facilities, especially for TV series, is located in Beykoz, along the Bosphorus in the North of Istanbul. Beykoz Kundura, the former site of one of the oldest shoe factories of the republic is one of the most popular locations, hosting eight to nine concurrent productions. It also has a brand-new movie theatre, opened in 2018 that screens curated film programmes. Individual sets are not open to visitors, but further information can be obtained via their website:

www.beykozkundura.com

Cinematheque

Turkey does not have a national film centre or a central archive, but there is no cinematheque yet. The original cinematheque that opened in 1965 was closed down after the coup d'état in 1980. However, Kadıköy Municipality on the Asian side of Istanbul is building a new cinematheque, which is slated for opening in 2019.

Archives

The most comprehensive archives in existence are at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University's Cinema-TV Institute, which invites interested scholars to browse their collections.

The archive also restores old Turkish classics. Although it is open to scholars and students from other institutes, the main problem with the archive is that there is no accessible catalogue, and no plans to make one available.

DVD Film Archive

The Mithat Alam Film Centre at Boğaziçi University is a film centre with a comprehensive DVD film archive and has been engaging in many projects such as screenings, seminars, talks and workshops for students.

Festivals and events

There are numerous national and international film festivals around Turkey, including festivals focusing only solely on shorts, documentaries or animation or specific topics.

International Istanbul Film Festival in Istanbul

The main event in Istanbul is the International Istanbul Film Festival, which started in 1982. The festival takes place in April and features an international and a national competition, providing a wide range of films. The festival includes a co-production and networking platform called "Meetings on the Bridge". The Istanbul Culture and Arts Foundation (IKSV), which organises the festival, has another event titled "Filmekimi", which presents a weeklong selection of award-winning features from festivals around the world in October; it is an audience-oriented festival with no industry involvement.

Istanbul, IF Istanbul (International Independent Film Festival)

The second biggest festival in Istanbul, IF Istanbul (International Independent Film Festival) was launched in 2002 as a fresh, young and LGBTI+ friendly festival. The future of the festival is uncertain, as the two founders and directors of the festival since the beginning, Serra Ciliv and Pelin Turgut, were dismissed without any explanation. From its second year, the festival has been owned by AFM cinema group, which merged with Mars Entertainment in 2013. In 2016, Mars was sold to the South Korean firm CJ CGV Co. – the company holds the monopoly of exhibition in Turkey and is in a lot of dispute with the industry – which dismissed the directors in October 2018.

Adana, Antalya and others

Although İstanbul seems to be the cultural capital of Turkey, the film industry's most popular festivals take place in two other cities: Adana and Antalya. Antalya Film Festival is the oldest film festival in Turkey, and its national competition is the most important one for filmmakers in Turkey. However, a few years back, the festival became the site of conflict between filmmakers and the state. As with nearly all other film festivals in Turkey, it is organised by a foundation that is controlled and managed by the elected city officials. As such, it is directly affected by local and national politics, and the management changes with every election, resulting in a lack of continuity. In 2014, when one of the documentary films was taken off the programme due to its political content, many of the jury members in various categories resigned in protest. The following year, festival organisers cancelled the documentary competition. In July 2017, the National Competition, which would have been in its 54th edition was also cancelled. Ironically, this resulted in a creative new organisation. A group of filmmakers designed a national competition that runs simultaneously to the Antalya Festival, but in Istanbul. In 2017 and 2018, the "National Competition" sections of Antalya were held in Istanbul, complete with a jury, awards and a closing ceremony.

The International Adana Film Festival (www.adanafilmfestivali.org.tr/en), which started in 1969 with a national and international competition, continues to be one of the main festivals.

Among the less-established events, in 2018, the Malatya Film Festival held its eighth edition and the Bosphorus Film Festival in Istanbul its sixth; both are international festivals.

Ankara International Film Festival & Festival on Wheels

The Ankara International Film Festival (www.filmfestankara.org.tr/en), which celebrates its 30th edition in 2019, is the main festival in Ankara with a rich programme and national competitions for feature, documentary and shorts. Another Ankara-based festival, Festival on Wheels, organised by the Ankara Cinema Association (ankarasinema-dernegi.org/en/), opens in Ankara and continues travelling around various cities in Turkey. Starting in 1995, the festival visited many cities such as Artvin, Bursa, Kars, Sinop and Kastamonu and travelled to other countries in the region, such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Greece and Macedonia. The festival creates a film and festival culture in cities, some of which do not even have a movie theatre.

Women Film Festivals

There are two women's film festivals in Turkey: Filmmor in İstanbul and The Flying Broom in Ankara. Filmmor Women's Cooperative (filmmor.org/en) has organised the festival since 2001, travelling to other cities throughout the year screening films directed by women and organising seminars, workshops and talks. The Flying Broom (ucansupurge.org.tr/en) organised also by a non-profit women's organisation, is based in Ankara and also organises workshops, seminars and talks on gender equality and women's rights. In 2018, the two festivals joined forces and collaborated in their festivals mainly due to economic hardship.

LGBTI+ Film Festival

The first queer festival in Turkey, Pink Life Queerfest (www.pembehayatkuirfest.org/en/), organised by the Pink Life Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) Solidarity Association, started in Ankara. Facing bans and censorship, it managed to continue with its sixth edition in İstanbul in January 2019.

Documentary Film Festival

Documentarist (www.documentarist.org), the only international documentary festival in Turkey, started in 2008 and is an independent festival with no government funding, featuring a selection of national and international examples from documentary cinema.

Early Cinema

Since 2014, boutique festival İstanbul Silent Cinema Days (www.sessizsinemagunleri.com) has screened examples from early cinema.

Animation Film Festival

Founded in 2011, Canlandırınlar Association (www.canlandiranlar.com/en)

aims to provide a roof for animators to gather and collaborate. With its International Animators Festival, Talent Campus and Shorts Competition, it is the main venue for animators in Turkey.

Short film festivals

There are various short film festivals in Turkey organised by universities, high schools and culture and arts foundations. One of the oldest short film festivals in İstanbul is the International İstanbul Short Film Festival, which has been organised by IFSAK since 1978. Other major short film festivals are the Akbank Short Film Festival, İzmir Short Film Festival, Hisar Short Film Selection and university short film festivals at Yıldız Teknik University and Marmara University.

Curated film programmes

Some of the major museums or centres also regularly present curated film programmes. İstanbul Modern Art Museum, Pera Museum, SALT İstanbul and Beykoz Kundura are some of the main venues that curate special programmes throughout the year.

| Prizes and grants

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism

One of the most important developments especially for arthouse cinema in recent years has been funding provided since 2005 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism's website states that since 2005 (until 2017) 446 features were granted with a total amount of 157,569,646TL. Out of 148 local productions in 2017, 29 were partially funded by the ministry. The funds that are gathered from the tax from ticket sales are distributed to filmmakers, from features to documentaries and shorts, and for the various stages of film production, such as scriptwriting development and post-production.

While the financial support for films has been beneficial for the industry, the process is not transparent, and the committee's decisions are seen as increasingly political. Filmmakers who supported the peace petition, as well as projects with LGBTI+ or Kurdish content, have not received any funding. In addition to being cut off from state funding, this rejection means that these projects most likely cannot apply for Eurimages, which requires locally secured funding from co-producing partners' own countries, and there is no other support scheme at a local or regional level in Turkey as exists in countries such as Germany or France.

Support from NGOs

The main non-governmental funding available is the New Film Fund, which has been available since 2015. This fund is given only to documentary films, at development, production, or post-production stages, and the maximum amount given is 40,000TL. It is supported by Anadolu Kültür, one of the most active NGOs in Turkey.

www.yenifilmfonu.org/en

Support from film festivals

Another important platform launched in 2015 for developing film development is "Meetings on the Bridge", organised by the Istanbul Film Festival. Meetings on the Bridge is a co-production, training and networking platform; it organises film development workshops and trainings on scriptwriting, pitching, production, marketing and social media. With support from the Istanbul Development Agency, Meetings on the Bridge started the Short Film Workshop in 2017, aimed at a new generation of young filmmakers working on their first or second short films. Another initiative the programme is involved with is the German-Turkish Co-Production Development Fund, establis-

hed in 2011 by the Istanbul Film Festival Meetings on the Bridge, Medienboard Berlin Brandenburg and Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein Film Funds, which aims to support co-productions and cultural exchange between the two countries. German-Turkish co-productions in pre-production phase can apply for the fund. Along with workshops, Meetings on the Bridge organises film talks, screenings and case studies.
<https://film.iksv.org/en/meetings-on-the-bridge>

The Antalya Film Festival, Malatya Film Festival and Bosphorus Film Festival also have co-production and project development markets. The Antalya Film Forum, which was held for the fifth time in 2018, takes place within the scope of the Antalya Film Festival. The forum platforms are Fiction, Documentary, Work-in-Progress, Projects Looking for Producers, and Short Film Work-in-Progress Platforms and the Sümer Tilmaç Antalya Film Support Fund. Since the cancellation of all national competitions, along with the boycott of the festival, many directors and producers have boycotted the Film Forum as well.

Many festivals around Turkey give monetary prizes for their competitions. The IKSVM Istanbul Film Festival has a 25,000 euro award for the winning international competition film and 150,000TL for the best national film. There are also prizes for Best Director (50,000TL), Special Jury Award (50,000TL), Best Actor and Best Actress (10,000TL), Best Short Film (5,000TL) and Best Documentary (10,000TL), plus a special prize for feature debuts, in memory of a young director, Seyfi Teoman, who passed away at a very young age. CMYLMZ Fikirsanat sponsors this award of 30,000TL.

The International Adana Film Festival also distributes monetary prizes in various categories. The international film award is 50,000TL and the winner of the national competition gets 350,000TL. Since the cancellation of the national competition of Antalya FF, this is the biggest prize money available at festivals. For a list of all the awards given, see: www.adanafilmfestivali.org.tr/sayfalar/oeduelller.

The International Malatya Film Festival gives a 100,000TL prize to both national and international winners. There are also awards for different categories including best short film (5,000TL). Malatya Film Festival has had a film platform since 2017, giving a special award of 100,000TL to a "family film" in honour of acclaimed Yeşilçam director Ertem Eğilmez.

The Ankara Film Festival's Best Film award is 50,000TL. It also rewards Best First Film, Best Documentary, Best Short Film and supports a feature project in development with 30,000TL.
www.filmfestankara.org.tr

The Bosphorus Film Festival also distributes awards: 100,000TL for Best National Feature Film and smaller amounts for different categories. It also has awards for International Feature Films (starting at 50,000TL), shorts and documentaries. For the full list, see: www.bogazicifilmfestivali.com/en/awards.

Financial situation

Unlike many industries around the world, unions do not have a wage policy or minimum wage for people working in the industry. Therefore, income inequality is one of the major issues in the industry. Salaries are usually on a weekly basis, except for the cast director, who earns approximately 20,000TL per film. Some of the average weekly rates from data gathered from people working in the industry during 2018 are: cinematographer 12,500TL; art director 6,500TL; costume designer 4,000TL; set dresser 2,500TL; line producer 5,000TL; production manager 3,500TL; focus puller 3,300TL; first assistant director 4,500TL; and location manager 2,500TL. For small roles, actors' fees are around 1,500TL a day, but with main leads the salaries vary greatly depending on the name. All salaries mentioned above might have a variation of 20-25 percent.

For independent productions, the approximate budget ranges between 10,000TL and 3,000,000TL. (Of course, with exceptions of no budget films to some special cases such as Grain by Semih Kaplanoğlu, which allegedly had a budget of 5,000,000 euros). For more mainstream productions, budgets vary from approximately 3,000,000TL to 30,000,000TL; Müslüm and Organize İşler are two of the few big-budget films.

Mainstream productions mainly finance their own films and series (Ay Yapım (ayyapim.com), BKM (www.bkmonline.net), TAFF (taffpics.com), AKSOY (www.aksoyfilm.com.tr), Nulook (nulook.com.tr), TMC (www.tmc.com.tr)), whereas arthouse films are usually co-productions with funding from the Ministry of Culture – when possible – and mainly European funds

Critics and researchers

The Film Critics Association (SIYAD)

Most of the established critics are members of the Film Critics Association (SIYAD), a section of the International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI). SIYAD has about 100 members, who are active in published press, broadcast media, online criticism, as well as academic writing. SIYAD members such as Esin Küçüktepepınar, Alin Taşçıyan, Janet Barış, Yeşim Tabak, Engin Er-tan and Senem Aytaç regularly serve on FIPRESCI juries at international film festivals. The association also organises the oldest regular awards ceremony in the industry, which celebrated its 50th edition in 2018.

New Directions in Turkish Film Studies Conference

In cinema studies, the main event is the yearly New Directions in Turkish Film Studies Conference, initiated and overseen by Deniz Bayrakdar for 20 years. For more than a decade, it has taken place at Kadir Has University. Early Ottoman cinema has seen a surge in interest recently, with scholars such as Ali Özuyar, Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen, Canan Balan, Nezih Erdoğan, Savaş Arslan and historian Saadet Özen discovering previously unknown material. (For an interview about the journey of cinema in the Ottoman era, listen to this podcast in English with Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen: www.ottoman-historypodcast.com/2015/09/cinema-ottoman-empire-turkey.html.) Other scholars based in Turkey and abroad who publish on Turkish cinema in English are Elif Akçalı, Murat Akser, Eylem Atakav, Melis Behlil, Ahmet Gürata, Esin Paça Cengiz, Kaya Özkaracalar and Asuman Suner.

Peer-reviewed scholarly journals

The three peer-reviewed scholarly journals are *sinecine: Journal of Film Studies* (<http://www.sinecine.org>), *SineFilozofi* (<http://www.sinefilozofi.org>) and *CINEJ Cinema Journal* (<https://cinej.pitt.edu>). Although they are not solely devoted to Turkish cinema, almost half of their content focuses on the subject. CINEJ is published entirely in English, while *sinecine* and *SineFilozofi* are in Turkish with a few English articles in each issue.

(Social) media about film

Altyazı (meaning subtitle in Turkish) Distributed nationwide, Altyazı monthly film magazine is the longest-published cinema magazine in Turkey. Founded in 2001, it has a wide range of coverage from arthouse and popular films to classics, shorts and documentary films, along with special monthly features. The website and its social media accounts are also active (www.altyazi.net), with more than 100,000 followers on Facebook, 190,000 on Twitter and 36,000 on Instagram. Due to the economic crisis in Turkey, in January 2019, monthly issues have been suspended for a few months for the first time in its 17-year history.

Se7en, formerly known as Arka Pencere (Rear Window) Arka Pencere (which changed its name to Se7en Magazine in December 2018) is another monthly film magazine, with 9,500 followers on Facebook, 30,300 on Twitter and 2,292 on Instagram. The magazine began as a weekly digital in 2009 and from December 2017, it has been published monthly. Unfortunately, as with all other published media, it is struggling with high publication costs.

To give a general idea about the recent economic crisis, with the new exchange rates and paper costs (since Turkey does not produce its own paper), it should be noted that printed media is going through hard times, with many magazines and newspapers shutting down or downsizing. With the ongoing political, cultural and economic pressures, many culture and arts programmes on TV have also been cancelled and arts and culture sections of newspapers have been considerably reduced. As a result, the digital

sphere has become a significant alternative for especially arts and culture media.

Filmloverssss

Filmloverssss, launched in 2011, is one of the most popular websites on film, especially for young cinephiles. It has 153,000 followers on Twitter, 187,000 on Facebook and 76,100 on Instagram.

Filmhafizasi, EksiSinema, beyazperde.com and sinemalar.com can be added to this list. Beyazperde.com, which was launched in 1998, is now owned by French company Allociné and has 8.3 million unique visitors per month, according to Google Analytics in 2018.

Social media

Social media use is very high in Turkey and following the worldwide trend, sometimes personal accounts are more popular than institutionalised ones. YouTubers are also in the game. "FilmeGitmedenOnce" with its 550,194 subscribers (www.youtube.com/user/filmegitmedenonce) and Geekyapar with 179,673 subscribers (www.youtube.com/user/geekyapar) are popular examples.

TSA Centre for Turkish Cinema Studies

An extensive online source for Turkish film history is the TSA Centre for Turkish Cinema Studies: www.tsa.org.tr/en, which serves as an archival database for films, film people, books and magazines.

Lack of official records

Unfortunately, there is no organisation that keeps official records for yearly productions, co-productions, exhibition data, or any other film data. The Ministry of Culture

used to make its lists of financially supported films public, but no longer gives this information on its website. Hence, for box office data, the most reliable sites are boxofficeturkey.com and www.antraktsinema.com.

Resources

There are a few books published in English that can be purchased online. Since Turkey has a lot of academics studying or working abroad, the English literature on Turkish cinema is rapidly expanding. For a brief history of Turkish cinema, Rekin Teksoy's "Turkish Cinema" is a must. He gives a political, economic and social perspective of Turkish film history from the late Ottoman period to the present day.

Savaş Arslan's "Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History", published in 2010, is also a very comprehensive overview that guides the reader through key aspects of the history of cinema in Turkey.

Deniz Bayraktar's "Cinema and Politics: Turkish Cinema and the New Europe" (2009) focuses on "policies, eras, countries, mainstream and art cinema productions, transnational examples, changing narratives and identities", giving a fresh perspective on the discussions in Europe in the media.

"Kurdish Documentary Cinema in Turkey: The Politics and Aesthetics of Identity and Resistance", edited by Suncem Koçer and Can Candan and published in 2008 by Cambridge Scholars Publishing, is an extensive collection of essays on the topic.

Kaan Müjdecı, the director of award-winning *Sivas*, co-directed a documentary on the monopolisation of film distribution in Turkey titled *Kapalı Gişe* (Only Blockbusters Left Alive, Aydemir/Kaya/Müjdecı/Yücel, 2016). The documentary is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXRJnj-jVvU>.

Another documentary, *Remake, Remix, RipOff*, by Cem Kaya (2014), focuses on the Yeşilçam period, when hundreds of films were produced with low budgets and difficult working conditions, often remaking or imitating popular Hollywood productions.

For a more niche audience, a recent documentary, *Bırakın Çocuk Oynasın* (Let the Kid Play, 2018), directed by Hacı Mehmet Duranoğlu and Atalay Taşdiken, gives an interesting take on early cinema in the Ottoman era.

For information about the Turkish film industry, Martin Kanzler's extensive report published by the European Audiovisual Observatory in 2014 is the best source you can find. <https://rm.coe.int/168078354a>

Some organisations also publish reports on issues concerning the state of the industry such as *Se-Yap* and *Meetings on the Bridge*, which are published on their websites.

Since it has been a major concern, there are special organisations that cover the censorship cases in media, culture and arts regularly. *Siyahbant* (www.siyahbant.org) and *Susma24* (susma24.com) are both civil initiatives.

Facilities

There are many professional equipment rental companies. Again, it is advisable to conduct business through a local producer, but here are some main firms where you can rent equipment:

Lighting and Camera

ORION (www.orion.com.tr), STM (www.stmsinema.com), Işık Sanat, V Işık (www.vvisionlight.com), Lighting Doctors (www.lightingdoctors.com), MTN (www.mtnfilm.com) and Banko Kamera.

Grips

Safari Grip and Set Pozitif (www.setpozitif.com).

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