

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/osman-hamdi-beys-at-the-mosque-door-and-the-urgency-of-painting/>

This video discusses Osman Hamdi, a significant Ottoman intellectual and artist born in Istanbul in 1843 who died in 1910. He contributed considerably to the cultural scene of the Ottoman Empire as a bureaucrat, director of the Museum of Antiquities, founder of the School of Fine Arts, and pioneering archaeologist while maintaining an active painting practice for five decades.

Hamdi's artwork, especially the oil painting "At the Mosque Door," reflects a blend of tradition and modernity. In the context of the 19th-century Ottoman society, oil painting represented a move towards modernity and Europeanization. The painting features ordinary characters outside a mosque, depicting a nuanced portrayal of Ottoman life and identity. Unlike typical Orientalist imagery, which often exoticized Eastern cultures, Hamdi's works challenge stereotypes and offer thoughtful reinterpretations.

This video also contrasts Hamdi's approach to painting with that of contemporaries like Claude Monet. While Monet aimed to capture the immediacy of a fleeting moment, Hamdi saw painting as a medium that synthesizes long-term historical processes. In "At the Mosque Door," Hamdi embeds multiple self-portraits within the scene, emphasizing the interconnectedness of personal and collective history.

Through this work, Hamdi seeks to engage viewers in recognizing the historical depth of their present. Ultimately, he portrays oil painting as a powerful tool for conveying deeper truths about identity and heritage, contrasting with Monet's focus on the transient moment. The discussion highlights how both artists grappled with the role and capabilities of oil painting in a rapidly changing world at the end of the 19th century.