

By  
Maria Eliades  
Photos By  
Gözde Otman

# GIYÇEK

## WHERE DRESS UP IS FOR GROWN UPS



**W**e entered Giyçek not knowing what exactly to expect. We'd been hearing about the nostalgic photography studio in the famous yellow Doğan Apartments on Serdar-ı Ekrem for a while, and every time we walked on the cobblestone street to discover yet another fantastic boutique or shop, the studio's logo of a camera, a mustache, and a fez, seemed to wink at us. So when we finally did pay the studio a visit, we were more than pleased with the experience. Imagine walking into the ground floor of an old Istanbul apartment. The floors are covered with those distinct Italian and İznik-influenced early 20th century cement tiles, the ceilings are high and decorated with pleasant molding at the corners, and the lighting is Art Deco-inspired. On one wall two racks of specially-designed historic dresses, military coats, and veils hang, and on another, shelves of fezzes, plumed and



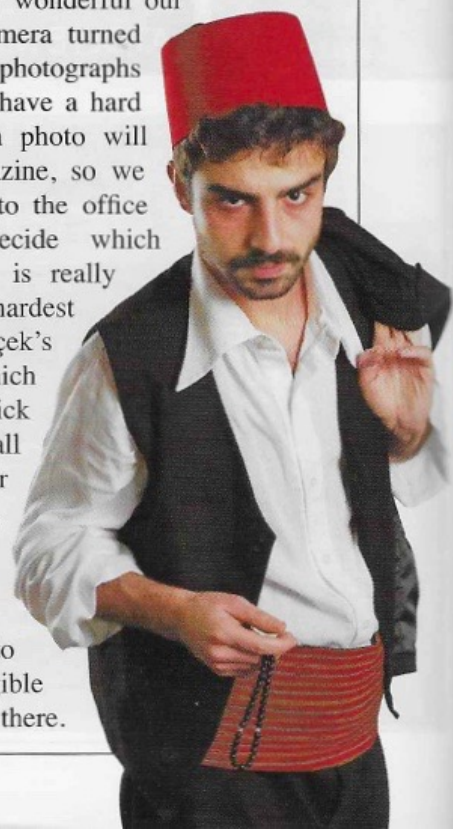
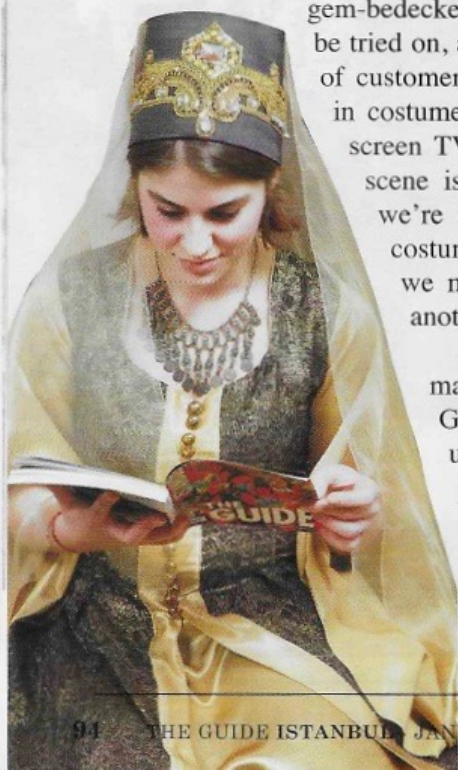
gem-bedecked hats beckon to be tried on, all while a film roll of customers clowning around in costumes plays on the flat screen TV on the wall. The scene is set and suddenly we're all diving into the costume rack to pick who we might have been in another Istanbul.

The owner and main photographer, Gözde Otman, guides us through the process of choosing our costumes in Turkish and in fluent English. We decide to fudge our history

a little bit in the end, with our art designer in a 19th century pasha's uniform, and our junior designer looking every bit the nargile-smoking darling we'd expect him to be. The rest of the staff chooses the more decadent costumes of the Ottoman era with all the blingy accessories we can manage to pair with our outfits (all of course raided from the studio's costume jewelry display) on our heads, around our waists, and on our ears. After a few far too serious shots, Gözde gets us to loosen up and we do, maybe even a little too much, which makes us realize how the more campy shots adorning the studio's walls must have come about.

After some individual shots, we're done, and the photos are literally on the wall. The flat screen, which had been screening the film roll before, now has us flashing by shot by shot. As we watch, we can't stop laughing

at how utterly we've been transformed into our other selves and how wonderful our "playing" for the camera turned out on film. The photographs are so good that we have a hard time choosing which photo will make it in the magazine, so we take two CDs back to the office to painstakingly decide which version of nostalgia is really us. In the end, the hardest part of playing in Giyçek's closet is deciding which photograph we'll stick with, but we'd do it all over again, with our significant others, with our families, and with our friends, just to jump into old Istanbul again and to have something tangible to prove that we were there.





1-Feride Suzan Yalav, 2-Seray Ulucan Kanberoğlu, 3-Elif Savari Kızıl, 4-Yavuz Gündüz,  
5-Selin Kuyaş, 6-Dilara Apa, 7-Maria Eliades, 8-Yılmaz Aysan