The history of Venice & Istanbul convergence in visual arts goes back a long way. The portrait (in oil painting) of Fatih The Conquerer who signed the peace treaty in Venice in 1479 by Gentile Bellini which is exhibited at London National Gallery today is one of the predominant examples of the said convergence. The Ottoman Empire which maintained its business connections and cultural relations with Italy throughout the history always left the door open for its visitors composed of musicians, painters, architects and sculptors. For example; Giuseppe Donizetti who was invited as the Conductor of Empire by Mahmut the 2nd in 1827 was awarded the title of “Pasha” by winning the palace’s affection. Nevertheless, Adolphe Thalasso who is famous with his researches on the Ottoman art of painting and theatre and is of Venetian origin and born in İstanbul; Fausto Zonaro who is the court painter; Giulio Mongeri who is an architect; Gaspare Fossati; Pietro Canonica who is a sculptor are some of the Italian visitors of the Ottoman.

The said ongoing relations during the Ottoman period change their course by the Turkish artists participating in the modern art activities held in Italy during the Republican period. Turkey who participated in the Venice Bienalle in 1954 for the first time would participate in the activities again in the 1990s. The Venice Bienalle adventure of Turkey who has been represented by the artists such as Kutlug Ataman, Hüseyin Caglayan, Bülent Sangar and etc. in recent years is not limited with the said activities. The Istanbul Bienalle which became one of the important brands of Turkey in the field of art would take the Venice Bienalle as Her model when She organized the Istanbul Bienalle for the first time in 1987 and would establish Her own style in the next periods. The activity of “An Anthology from Venice & Istanbul : 51st International Venice Bienalle” which is held in 2006 at Istanbul Modern under the curatorship of Rosa Martinez; the “Sultans in Venice” exhibition of Ismail Acar, the painter, which is held synchronously with the Venice Bienalle are the significant artistic events bringing the journey of art between the said two cities into view in different perspectives and such examples may be increased.

In the paper; artistic convergences between Venice & Istanbul will considered in historical aspects and within the scope of current activities of art.