


An Evaluation on Azade Köker Sculptures in the Context of the Use of Materials

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Abstract: When the developments in the field of contemporary Turkish art after 1950 are evaluated in terms of both substance and form, it is seen that the production techniques of works of art have undergone a lot of change. It is possible to say that innovative and experimental works, especially in the field of painting and sculpture, are developing rapidly. In these years, when the use of traditional materials began to change, different kinds of objects and materials began to be used frequently to create sculpture forms. Starting from the 1980s and 1990s, this change and innovative approach in Azade Köker's sculptures also occupy a very unique place in Turkish art. The use of different materials that stand out in Köker's recent sculpture works were evaluated as plastic in the research and analyzed by comparing them with traditional sculpture production materials. Examples of her works, which she exhibited especially in biennial and contemporary art meetings, were selected and evaluated within the scope of the research.

Keywords: Azade Köker, Sculpture

Introduction

Köker was born in 1949 and went to Berlin in 1973 after completing her education at the Istanbul State Academy of Fine Arts. He completed her education in Berlin in the sculpture class of Lothar Fischer at the Berlin Academy of Fine Arts. She is an artist who strives in every category of visual production, which should be evaluated in the context of interesting and multiple aesthetics both in previous periods and today (Kahraman, 2013, p. 312).

Many new forms of expression emerge in the contemporary art discourse. In terms of this approach, in which traditional taboos are destroyed, it is possible to cite Köker's works as an example. When it comes to sculpture art, marble, metal and similar heavy materials that come to mind have been replaced by many different materials today. Among them, we can count materials such as paper, polyester, cardboard, and gas concrete. We can often see these materials in Köker's recent works. Her sculptures in the relationship between the body and space she created were made of paper and similar materials (Image-1).



Image 1. Azade Köker, 'Spheres', Paper Sculpture, 120x100x120cm, 2012 ("Web")

"It is important to tell the most presenting the least in sculptures. As I don't like the clutter of words, I want the forms to be simple and combined in order of importance." (Ünay, 2020, p. 3). The artist, who questions concepts such as people, cities, migration, chaos and motion in her works, preferred objects that create a perception of vulnerability and transparency in the context of simplicity and material use, while transferring such subjects to her works. With this approach, she wanted to draw attention to the fragility and sensitivity of the subjects she focused on. The artist, who describes the stacking of cities and people and the confusion, has worked on this subject by giving meaning to the material she uses while creating her sculptures. In terms of both substance and form, these works are considered as very effective examples in contemporary sculpture art. The transparency created by the structure of the material used while creating the forms creates an effect that is impossible to see in traditional sculpture.



Image 2. Azade Köker, 'Verlassene Dichte', Paper Sculpture, 100x90x90cm, 2017 ("Web")

Azade Köker conveyed her works and thoughts on hybridity in an interview with her as follows:

- One of the concepts used to describe your work is "hybridity". What are your views on this subject??
- As the global world entered the 21st century, it focused on phenomena such as liquefaction, melting and fusion. "Hybridity" and "merging" became the catchwords in the multicultural society debate. The postmodernist concept is crucial to the question of hybridity because it opposes the enforced uniformization and homogeneity of modernity, and advocates radical difference and plurality. The fragmentation, which is the basis of postmodern society, has a social character. Explaining this fragmentation has yet to come to a conclusion anywhere. It has not yet been possible to achieve new heterogeneous and global intergroup communication. In this respect, the "hybridity" of a wide variety of life-forms became a guiding keyword. But behind the natural juxtaposition of different cultures, economic and political dictates are hidden. Postmodernist thought insistently attaches importance to diversity and distinguishes between the hybridity experienced in consumer societies and the cartoonish image of hybridity. It is very important to understand where the differences come from, that is, whether they come freely or out of necessity. Seeing hybridity as social harmony is the claim of today's politics. The concept of "hybridity" is a concept that promises to re-strengthen the social order for societies that are bogged down in conflicts due to the emergence of cultural, ethnic and racial differences. The political thought that enables the fusion and dissolution of each other in order to put the differences into a tolerable form is called "liberal hybridity". Rather than dividing these different groups from each other, it is a style of politics

that brings them together and thus destroys their differences. The situation of the individual is the same in all countries that are conceived of social turmoil and volatility in these days while the migration event is very current: Can an isolated, fragmented individual be an active subject who can change the society with his inevitable multidimensionality? How will he find an identity for himself? Artistic identity, female identity, national identity, ethnic identity... Which of these will be gathered under a hybrid identity? It would be extremely shallow to explain artistic works by abstracting them from these identity choices. In this respect, it is possible to see that every structure and every form emerging from unifying connections in my works. (Tütüncü, 2016, p. 87-88).

Turkish art, which started to change in the 1980s, started to create its own identity in these years. Considering that the concept of art is constantly developing and changing, it is possible to say that formal pursuits emerge with experimental applications. In this context, all kinds of materials and techniques were used in the artistic creation process and the first examples of the works that can be evaluated in the context of the plasticity of hybridity, which is the subject of the research, was born in this process (Elmas and Kanaç, 2020, p. 1236).

When Azade Köker's works are evaluated in this context, it is observed that there has been a development since the 1980s and has reached the present day with interrogations and trials.



Image 3. Azade Köker, 'Violence II' - Murder of a Mannequin, Paper Sculpture, 100x90x90cm, 2019 ("Web")

In Köker's work on the fragile structure of the human body (Image-3), it was seen that the subject and the material used were constructed in direct proportion to each other. Undoubtedly, the effect of paper and similar materials used by the artist in the expression of the subjects she focuses on is quite high. Although the effect it creates on the viewer is in this direction, the color in the sculptures also causes the viewer to feel this perception more intensely.

The materials used in ecological art productions have a structure that goes beyond the limits of the traditional art approach. It is seen that artists mostly use ordinary, natural and recycled materials. However, since the artists are also interested in environmental and cultural restoration, they used texts, photographs, various scientific reports to attract people's attention to polluted and damaged areas and to regain those areas (Mamur, 2017, p. 1003). With this aspect, it would be appropriate to evaluate Köker's works as part of environmental art. Since the beginning of the 20th century, art and artists who have changed their shells have turned to a radical change, especially in the field of painting and sculpture. In many works of art, it has become possible to observe that concepts are intertwined, and therefore conceptual works are produced literally.

It is possible to observe the perception of origami in Azade Köker's works. Origami means "folded paper" in Japanese. Origami is the art of creating figures by folding paper without using glue or scissors. There are two types of origami: "classical origami" and "modular origami". Classical origami is often created from a single piece of paper. Various animal or object figures are made with classical origami using at most two or three pieces. "Modular origami" is created by combining similar parts and is used to make three-dimensional geometric figures rather than concrete figures such as animals or known objects. In modular origami, where there is no limit to the number of pieces, many different figures can be produced using the same or similar pieces of disassembled toys. Although square-shaped paper is generally used in origami, there is no limitation in the shape of the paper. Today, many different types of origami have emerged. Architectural origami, pop-up origami, kirigami (paper cutting art) can be given as examples. In these types of origami, also called modern origami, sticking and cutting are allowed (Tuğrul, Kavici, 2002, p. 3). Therefore, it is possible to talk about a sense of origami due to the material and structure used in Köker's works.

Conclusion

After the 1980s, a radical change began to occur in contemporary Turkish art and artists kept up with this change. The support of both state and private galleries to contemporary art has been in this direction. Since these years, the influence of our Turkish women artists on art has increased undeniably. Azade Köker, one of these artists, gave very effective examples both in the field of painting and sculpture with the works she produced. The direction in which her art works progress in the context of material use is beyond the use of traditional materials.

The fragile nature of the sculptures has been transformed into an artistic product in terms of the language of

expression in sculptures, whether it is the experimentalism of contemporary art or the translation of origami art into three-dimensional form with paper material.

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Image References

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