

**A PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION WITHIN A
POSTMODERN MANNER**

A THESIS

**SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
PAINTING AND THE INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS
OF BILKENT UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS**

**By
Vahap Avşar
February, 1992**

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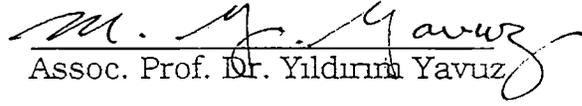
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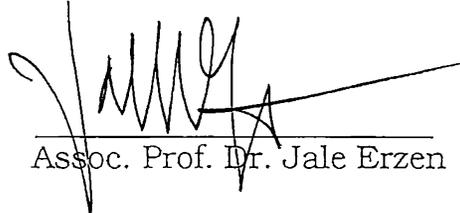
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ABSTRACT

A PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION WITHIN A POSTMODERN MANNER

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Painting Department

Advisor : Assoc. Prof. Dr. Halil Akdeniz

February 1992

The thesis aims to analyze the postmodern debate which has been subject of intense debate in the western societies in particular. The thesis discusses the postmodern discourse, and constitutes a body of theoretical work for this writer's approach to art.

Geographically, the postmodern discourse exposes an immense variety and has been investigated from the viewpoint of major theoreticians and of theoreticians from the so-called peripheries.

Recent postmodern art has been central to this thesis. Following the examination of such works, the works of art of this writer are discussed in terms of speculations on what constitutes them and in what kind of discursive practise they establish themselves.

ÖZET

POSTMODERN TAVİR İÇİNDE RESİMSEL BİR ÇÖZÜMLEME

Vahap Avşar

Resim Bölümü

Danışman Doç. Dr. Halil Akdeniz

Şubat 1992

Bu tez günümüzde özellikle batı toplumlarında yoğun tartışmalara yol açan postmodernizmi analiz etmeyi amaçlamıştır. Tez bir yandan postmodernist söylemi tartışırken, diğer bir yandan bu yazarın sanatsal yaklaşımını yansıtan teorik bir çalışma alanı oluşturmaktadır.

Coğrafik olarak çok çeşitlilikler gösteren postmodern söylem, belli-başlı kuramcılarla, yaygın deyimlerle periferiden kuramcılarının bakış açılarından araştırılıp değerlendirilmektedir.

Son zamanlardaki postmodern sanat çalışmaları bu tezin merkez temasını oluşturur. Bu çalışmaların değerlendirilmesiyle yazarın kendi çalışmaları, onları oluşturan spekülasyonlar ve kendi kendilerini meydana getiren söylemsel pratikler çerçevesinde tartışılır.

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INTRODUCTION

Recently Postmodernism has been subject to intense debate and postmodernist production filled all aspects of our life. European philosophers works attached to the subject within the progressive context of tradition such as François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Jean Baudrillard. Postmodernism has been mainly understood by these theorists as the loss of legitimation of the great meta-narratives and heroism of Enlightenment.

Francois Lyotard used the notion of sublime, by Emanuel Kant and idea of language games by Ludwig Wittgenstein, to embody his discourse, that suggests rejection of presentation and meta narratives, offers the unrepresentable as well as micro narratives.

Michel Foucault entered in the postmodern debate with his archeological and geneological investigations on confined people and their right to speak themselves. His works began about the right of the confined people led him to investigate the power in general, legitimacy of intellectuals using this power on the individuals, in particular. Related to examinations of people in margins and this is considered to be the first time the problem of "otherness" been brought to discussion.

Freudianism, Oedipalism and French Institution by Jacques Lacan have been attacked by anti-psychiatrist group in France. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari proposed "schionalysis" against psychoanalysis. In this manner they have used deterritorialisation - slippery or lubricated space to stress the concerns that had appeared to be fixed to the repressive structures of capitalism.

The work of these European theorists criticised by postmodernists of North America and "peripheries", as being the First World -reflections on Europe to decenter and demystify the European cultural and political predominance.

After the World War 2, the technical and scientific changes and the constitution of a new kind of society has been subject to mainly North American postmodernists, such as Fredric Jameson and Hal Foster. They have focused the postmodernism debate on product of culture and art of post World War 2 era, and positioned postmodernism as a social category - a dominant yet diverse set of structure and institutional processes.

In the first chapter of this thesis, part entitled 'The Constitution of Postmodernism' includes the works of European theorists such as Lyotard. Foucault. Deleuze, Guattari and Baudrillard.

At the end of the part "The Constitution of Postmodernism" the recent direction of postmodern debate, that is - feminist critique of patriarchy, the discourse of the others, has been evaluated. The interaction between postmodernism and discourse of the others (women, blacks, gays, Third World people) embody themselves on their common critiques of patriarchy, master narratives and representation of west. The challenge of others aimed to legitimate the discourse of repressed and marginalised people, in western societies and in peripheries.

The works of artists have been parallel to the the developments above have been demonstrated a challenge against old establishment of art. structure of representations and legitimation of male dominance in all aspects of social / cultural life.

Through eighties and early nineties artists in North America have been producing art works in postmodern approach intensively. Painters of this generation used traditional medium in a subversive context without descending into gestural immediacy. They have made imageology serving as social, cultural and ideological critique of social institution and power. Their eclectic images all taken from media on the hand; reflects the transparency of our time, on the one other hand, slipperiness of the capitalist system.

Other artists of the same generation used techniques of the very media combined photographic image and text: to attack the uncritical incorporation of the media and society. This group of artists and their works have referant to the concept of 'the death of author', and a survey of their works made in an art historical context in this part.

Concepts of postmodern debate, that has also been critical in reading work of postmodern art as well as my own works, have been gathered together and examined in the part "Critical Lexicon". This part aimed to function as a group of key words, that will help to enter both the debate of postmodernism and my own works.

In "Postmodern Condition and Observations in Plastic Arts" postmodernist art practices, compared with previous ones that has an effect on postmodernists, such as minimalism and Conceptual Art, inspected.

Finally the writings on works starting from 1986 the earliest (the works have had an important role in constitution of recent works) functions in twofold: setting of the ideas, concerns and conditions behind their making, as well as describing the works.

1. POSTMODERN CONDITION

1.1. Constitution of Postmodernism

I think of the postmodern attitude as that of a man who loves a very cultivated woman and knows he cannot say to her "I love you madly", because he knows that she knows (and that she knows that he knows) that words have already been written by Barbara Cartland. Still there is a solution. He can say "As Barbara Cartland would put it, I love you madly". At this point having avoided false innocence, having said clearly that it is no longer possible to speak innocently. He will nevertheless have said what he wanted to say to the woman: that he loves her in an age of lost innocence. If the woman goes along with this, she will have received a declaration of love all the same. Neither of the two speakers will feel innocent, both will have accepted the challenge of the past, of the already said, which cannot be eliminated: Both will consciously and with pleasure play the game of irony... But will have succeeded once again, in speaking of love.

Umberto Eco, Postscript to the Name of the Rose

The term "Postmodern" is neither a new subject nor a new description for art and society of the last decade. The legitimation of postmodernism has been subject to intense debate for the last ten years. In the visual arts, the term achieved currency slightly later than literature and architecture.

In 1971, Brian O'Doherty published an article called 'What is Postmodernism' in *Art in America*, which began "Now the modernist era is over... postmodernism is our diagnosis for what surrounds us, one never hears it defined..."¹

He complains and adds that there is no definition for the term, because everyone's definition will expose the confusion the word is

designed to cover. Today the problem is more complicated and there is no clean-cut definition for postmodernism. Current postmodernism debate is the product of, (as Cornell West criticizes) "First World reflections upon the decentering of Europe that take such forms as the demystification of European cultural predominance and the deconstruction of European philosophical edifices".² Works of Francois Lyotard, Michael Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari can be contemplated in that context.

Jean-Francois Lyotard's well known book, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge³, is one of the first major essays published on the subject and he argues the questions of relevance, adequacy and fitting, in discussions of politics, science, and art, which he believes are the only items that can lead to 'correct narratives' and 'correct contents'. This position viewed by John Roberts in his highly sophisticated book called Postmodernism, politics and art.⁴

"In fact a correlation exists between the breakdown of modernist historicism and the great emancipatory narratives; we live on the threshold, Lyotard argues, of an age of micro-narratives, of aesthetic and political pluralism."⁵

Postmodernism has been understood by many theorists as the loss of legitimation of the great meta narratives and heroism of enlightenment.

According to these theorists, modernity has been understood as the period of modernization and the origins evaluated in threefold; proximity to revolutionary politics and the development of the western working class, the emergence of the second technological revolution, that is communication and film technology, and lastly the demise of the tradition of Academic Art, and its ruling-class allegiance to classical precedents. Roberts mentions in his book that, it is "this condition that theorists of modernism such as Leon Trotsky, Walter Benjamin, Clement Greenberg and Theodor Adorno, have developed their aesthetics."⁶

Thoughts of these theorists of modernity, in the minds of early twentieth-century visionaries, were expected to lead to a freer society and emancipatory social structure as Lyotard stated in an interview. He said that "the great technical and scientific developments and the progress in knowledge have failed of getting rid of the world of ignorance, poverty and despotism,"⁷ although the developments continued to take place, they did so without leading to the realization of these dreams of emancipation. Thus, the gap between the idea of modernization and the modernized reality has been huge in every aspects of life.

Lyotard's well known book Postmodern Condition which was published in 1979, has been discussed and referred to very intensively, but the new theories and publications on postmodernism often attack Lyotard's ideas. In the English translation of Postmodern Condition⁸ in 1984 Lyotard added an appendix, to the book.

In the article "Answering the Question; What is Postmodernism?" he has responded to the questions as well as evaluated his arguments and gave more definition of postmodernism. He wrote that "this is a period of slackening - I refer to the color of the times".⁹ He states that the postmodern is a part of the modern, the challenge by contemporary artists to the previous ones, and he makes his underspeech: "A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant."¹⁰ He criticizes the modern aesthetics as "an aesthetic of the sublime, though a nostalgic one. It allows the unrepresentable to be put forward only as the missing contents; but the form, because of its recognizable consistency, continues to offer to the reader or viewer matter for solace and pleasure. Yet these sentiments do not constitute the real sublime sentiment, which is in an intrinsic combination of pleasure and pain: the pleasure that reason should exceed all presentation, the pain that imagination or sensibility should not be equal to the concept"¹¹

He finally gave a definition and wrote that "the postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable."¹² So a postmodern artist or writer, according to Lyotard is in the position of a philosopher, as he discusses that the work he generates is not in principle conducted by pre-established rules, and they cannot be judged according to a concluding judgement, through applying usual categories to the work, because these rules and categories are what the work of art itself is searching for. "The artist and writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done."¹³ In this manner he positions the work of art as an "event" and the artist as a "pioneer".

At the end of the article, he finishes with a rather ironic statement, "Postmodern would have to be understood according to the paradox of the future (post) anterior (modo)."¹⁴ Lyotard mostly borrowed Emanuel Kant's concept of sublime and Ludwig Wittgenstein's idea of language games to constitute his discourse, on shifting meta narratives with micro narratives, rejection of representation and offering for radical artistic experiments, but those remains rather provincial that is narrowly a European context. In his Eurocentric viewpoint postmodernism becomes "a recurring moment within the modern that is performative in character and aesthetic in content".¹⁵

In the 1960's, Michel Foucault, Robert Castel, Laing and Cooper have brought a particular debate on the confined people (mentally disordered people and prisoners) by examination and theoretical analysis. These two groups of people in the margins of the society were never considered as a problem before.

As a result of his archeological and genealogical investigations, Foucault has developed a model of organization built by confined

people. "This what we call 'informal' organizational model, which of that concentrates only on a certain subject and grouping at this moment and disperse by the time the subject starts to loose its unity."¹⁶ This is the group without a chief, centre or place. Starting from this model, some rights were provided for this group in France. Gilles Deleuze describes the works of Foucault with him in an interview:

"Your work began in the theoretical analysis of the context of confinement, specifically with respect to the psychiatric asylum within a capitalist society in the nineteenth century. Then you became aware of the necessity for confined individuals to speak for themselves, to create a relay (it's possible, on the contrary, that your function was already that of a relay in relation to them) and this group is found in prisons- these individuals are imprisoned. It was on this basis that you organized the information group for prisons, the object being to create conditions that permit the prisoners themselves to speak. ¹⁷

As the result of these activities, prisoners gained right to speak. Generally, in his works, Foucault is concerned with the problem that people who control the power used it in terms of wasting the individuals' power, whether this power is political (state) or economical or intellectual (because intellectuals can not be seen separate from the politics).

Here came the problem of legitimacy of intellectuals using power over the individuals in the modern world. So we come to the stage where those intellectuals no more have right to speak about or for the other people. Foucault explains this condition which contradicts with the traditional mission of intellectuals.

In an interview, Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze focused on the subject of change in relationship between theory and practise in

postmodern era. Deleuze states that, "At one time, practise was considered an application of theory, a consequence; at other times, it had an opposite sense and it was thought to inspire theory, to be indispensable for the creation of future theoretical forms."¹⁸ In both cases their relationship is considered as a process of totalization.

Today the relationship between theory and practice are incoherent and fragmentary. As Foucault says that, "In this sense theory does not express, translate, or serve to apply practise: it is practise. But it is local and regional... not totalizing. This is a struggle against power, a struggle aimed at revealing and undermining power where it is most invisible and insidious... A "theory" is the regional system of this struggle."¹⁹

Related to this, Foucault and Deleuze also discuss radical changes in the intellectual's political position: "the political involvement of the intellectual was traditionally the product of two different aspects of his activity: his position as an intellectual in bourgeois society, in the system of capitalist production and within the ideology it produces or imposes.... and his proper discourse to the extent that it revealed a particular truth, that it disclosed political relationships where they were unsuspected."²⁰ And today, "in the most upheaval, the intellectual discovered that the masses no longer need him/her to gain knowledge: they know perfectly well, without illusion; they know far better than him and they are certainly capable of expressing themselves...."²¹

According to them intellectual's role is no longer to place him/herself somewhat ahead and to the side in order to express the stifled truth of the collectivity; rather, it is the struggle against the forms of power that transforms him/her into its object and instrument in the sphere of "knowledge", "truth", "consciousness", and "discourse".²²

"The antijudicial struggle is a struggle against power and I don't think that it is a struggle against injustice, against the injustice of

the judicial system, or a struggle for improving the efficiency of its institutions." ²³

Compared with Lyotard, Foucault's archeological and genealogical investigations in to premodern and modern modes of constituting subjects and analyses on discourses of otherness and marginality of confined people, provides more concrete social and historical substance, but this "otherness" still determined with European boundaries and remains rather parochial and Eurocentric framework.

Parallel to Foucault's work, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari worked within anti psychiatry movement and constitute an attacking the specifically French institution by Lacan and oedipalism of Freudianism as well.

In the book Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia²⁴ they propose 'schizoanalysis' against psychoanalysis. In their own words, the aim of schizoanalysis is: "To discover beneath the familiar, reduction the nature of the social investment of the unconscious. To discover under the individual fantasy the nature of group fantasies. Or, what amounts to the same thing, to push the simulacrum to the point where it ceases to be an image of an image, so as to discover the abstract figures, the schizes-flows that it harbours and conceals. To substitute, for the private subject of the statement relating only to two orders of - personal images, the collective agents of enunciation that for their part refer to mechanic arrangements. To overturn the theatre of representation in to the order of desiring production: this is the whole task of schizoanalysis".²⁵ In the book Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Thousand Plateau²⁶ they inspect societies within the state with a schizophrenic and anonymous approach, without linguistic constraints. Deterritorialisation - slippery space is the term they made up in French to implicate the state of mobility of things and people.

In Deleuze and Guattari's work, schizophrenia celebrated as a means of deterritorialising meanings that had appeared to be fixed to the repressive structures of capitalism. The schizophrenic lives the world as a discourse of surface that which intermix, supersede and displace one another, but never accumulate on a vertical axis, instead of regressing meanings back to origins. Meanings remains mobile and refuse to take their place within the order of things.

Deleuze and Guattari express their concern by comparing chess, the war game (which is played in the palace) with the game 'Go', which only consists of pawns, having no inner functions. Go's space is 'slippery', chess's is 'knobby'. This condition of slipperiness, deterritorialises the place by putting that space back into its place. " (Building an outside despite the space, to consolidate the territory by building a neighbor territory, to deterritorialise the enemy's territory by implosing it, to deterritorialise the self by moving to some other place of denying itself..) Another justice, another action, and another time-space".²⁷

According to Fredric Jameson to grant some historical originality to a postmodernist culture is also implicitly to affirm some radical structural difference between what is sometimes called consumer society and earlier moments of capitalism from which it emerged.

World War II is a turning point for many technical and scientific changes and a new kind of society began to emerge afterwards. This new society has been described as post-industrial society, in the age of multinational capitalism, consumer society with the changes of the nature of information and its dissemination in the TV age media society has emerged.

These developments in society and history and the new structure of society as a result of those developments has been subject to North American postmodernists such as Fredric Jameson and Hal Foster. Jameson attempts to focus postmodernism debate on post-War 2 and cultural and artistic practices. He views it as: "Every activity, every part of life, is now subject to the market, and can be packaged,

bought, and sold."²⁸ Jameson positions postmodernism as a social category and compares the radical break of present society, with the older prewar society, that before 1950's:

"New types of consumption; planned obsolescence; an ever rapid rhythm of fashion and styling changes; the penetration of advertising, television and media generally to a hitherto unparalleled degree throughout society; the replacement of the old tension between city and country; centre and province, by the suburb and by universal standardization; the growth of the great networks of superhighways and the arrival of automobile culture..."²⁹

In this new society, Jameson described, the work, consumption and communication system as well as class relations, education, the family, sexuality and arts has been transformed. Thus is postmodern and constitutive features of postmodernity described by him as: the waning of affect, the rise of aesthetic pluralism, the globalization of culture and the loss of history.

Postmodernism has forwarded a well established critique of "master" narratives (master in terms of dominant and male) by the early 1980s. Craig Owens discussed this phenomena as: the apparent crossing of the feminist critique of patriarchy and the postmodernist critique of representation".³⁰

This interaction between postmodernism and feminism has been the subject of many debate and works of art, both in America and Europe, in 1980's. For feminists, those master narratives were devised and told by men - Neville Wakefield calls this "his/story since this is the gender which has constituted itself as the subject of History".³¹ Social groups such as feminist, announced the crisis in western representation, its authority - that is male, and its universalizing claims, and systematically denied historical representation, as Wakefield discusses: "The feminist challenge to the patriarchal order of things was in this sense epistemological in that it questioned the structure of representations by interrogating

the (male) system of legitimation by which they are endorsed or excluded".³² This challenge of feminism generally aimed to legalize the discourse of (hitherto) marginalised and / or repressed people within western societies.

Feminist critique dealt with the rise and fall of the modern myths of mastery and progress - myths that take the form of narratives, and this is the first major attack on such mythology. These narratives are not necessarily gender specific but according to Dick Hebdige, "the Great Stories which for thousands of years the cultures of the west have been telling themselves in order to keep the dread prospect of otherness at bay".³³ For him the "Great Stories" such as shadowing History by the logos, the Enlightenment project, the belief in progress, rationalization, science, modernization, the transcendence of history the class struggle, retreated by postmodernism. Feminism and postmodernism both agree that the representational systems of the west include only one vision, that is constitutive male subjects of "meta narratives" in Lyotard's word.

1.2. Postmodern Condition And Observations In Plastic Arts

I am always the other.

Cindy Sherman

From Marcel Duchamp's presentation of a urinal as a 'Fountain', to Conceptual Art, the avant-garde has been concerned with bringing art into consciousness as a social institution and breaking its autonomy.

Although modernist avant-garde may be seen as a part of the project of enlightenment, Michael Newman argues that, "the 'death' of the avant-garde in postmodernism doesn't necessarily exclude the possibility of a critical and socially emancipatory role for art, which needs to be considered in less total, more limited and more specific terms."³⁴

The premises and antecedents of postmodern art practises can be found within Pop Art and Minimalism as well as Conceptual art. In Pop Art, postmodernist roots are mostly focused on Andy Warhol and it is arguable whether we can consider Warhol as a father figure for postmodernism. Newman writes:

"Warhol exploits the mechanisms towards the creation of the artist's public image which had been unleashed on Pollock. The question of whether Warhol's strategy is a continuation of a modernist concern with urban modernity, or a break towards the postmodernist assertion of the loss of a model in the real and a generalized state of equivalence or simulation is obviously an important one."³⁵

Minimalism was in a way a result of Duchamp's ideas and activities, which at the same time is an attack to subvert modernist theory.

Minimalism questioned the aesthetics of the art object: the status of the art object as a commodity which was also the concern of Conceptual Art, the identity of art within the tradition of painting and sculpture which is the intelligence of art, making not only the ability and sensitivity but also the art system as a social structure, by directing the attention away from object to its physical context and it is made to refer to nothing but its own making. Postmodernist artists used the fragments of these concerns for various purposes.

Conceptual Art's critique for the pop and Minimal Art object was concerned about a refusal of commodity status. As 'idea', art should be common property, so the primary medium was to be nothing but language itself. This was the response, in a way, to the unrealized potential of Pop and Minimal Art. "Pop artists, while engaging in the 'kitsch' culture of mass media and publicity excluded by Greenberg, turned their images into high art emblems, in a way which blocked any insight, they might have afforded into the social relations of consumerism and ideological reproduction."³⁶

The only exception is Warhol's imitation of the factory production system and his approach to his art as a corporate identity.

The failure of Conceptual Art is the absence of development of a social constituency other than in the art world, ironically, avant-garde without any army behind it. In the Frankfurt School sense, Conceptual Art has "failed to appreciate the problem of expressiveness (not to be identified with revival, quasi-ironic versions of expressionism, which can be taken as an ideological answer to the problem, not with the formalist aesthetics of the object)."³⁷

Postmodernism understood either as the return to the historical and traditional or renewal of modern radicalism, appreciates Conceptual Art as a turning point, in the terms of conceptual's contradictions towards modernity and opening up new horizons.

"The lessons of Conceptual Art underwrite attempts to re-engage with painting without lapsing into gestural immediacy."³⁸ Works of Robert Longo, David Salle and Eric Fischl, can be reviewed from this viewpoint.

Robert Longo uses mass media images to deal with everyday life aspects in his large scale works. In the series such as the 'White Riot Series, (1982) he shows a group of yuppies, gouging each other wildly, beautifully dressed in black suits. Longo frees himself to use any techniques and combines them in any order the body of work requires. For instance some of the yuppies are painted in black and white, with a sharp graphical effect, some casted in metal as a bar relief. In his later works concerning American power and violence, are the series of panels put together to complete a narrative, each with the different idea, style and technique. His concern of making this series evaluated by Charles Jencks in his well known book on arts and architecture, Postmodernism, as "In these series he claimed to consider his role as pointing up the power and violence of American life... Responding to this he casts him/herself in the role of policeman or guardian"³⁹ blowing the whistle on society.

Another American artist, David Salle, (Figure 1) who decisively continued to make paintings from the beginning of the 1980's to the present day, is the artist referred as the best fitting artist in the discourse of postmodern painting.

His eclectic subject/imagery has cultivated a way of representing stereotyped images taken from mass media and the world of art. His use of mass media images juxtaposed one on to other, creates a collage of unrelated subjects, and added to this, the title of the works are unrelated with the actual imagery, creating a chaos that is not understandable, unless the overall meaning is captured. His archetypal image is a naked woman (mostly seen from the behind) drawn on the background scene to give overlaid contradiction that is originally taken from Picabia. "Salle follows a strategy of infiltration and sabotage, using established conventions against themselves in

the hope of exposing cultural repression."⁴⁰ In other words 'This 'deconstructor' blowing up 'ideological institutions' by using the conventions of classicism, the pop image against the assumptions of TV, the pornographic still against Penthouse."⁴¹

Eric Fischl's subject matter is again American middle-class eroticism. Large scale canvases of (usually single) photographic shots which remind Edward Hopper's use of light, are beautifully painted. The morality implied is enigmatic, the character caught in an unpleasant action creates a voyeuristic atmosphere for the viewer. Subjects depicted as naked sunbathing mother and daughter or a masturbating mother and his son stealing money out of her purse, while watching out for her, are about the same social conventions that "the depiction of the desires which are so ordinary and legitimized that we overlook their subversive fetishism."⁴² All these artists concerned with the critical and subversive potential of art in terms of preparing the near past.

In the Postmodernist era, the critique of the traditional object, combined with the need for a revised social content led artists to engage with the mass media, photographic image and to video and performance. In England, photography looked back to the example of constructivist photomontage, avant-garde film and constructivism. They did this in terms of exposing the social contradiction "Docklands Community- Poster Project". (Figure 2) One of the brilliant examples, by Peter Dunn and Lorraine Lesson. In their serial billboard posters, they have shown how "The Big Money Is Moving In" Dockland. ⁴³

In North America, artists combined text and photographic imagery. Barbara Kruger, (Figure 3) combined the text and mood of Conceptual Art with photography to create a critical distance, and attacks on male representation and authenticity as in the works such as : "Your comfort is my silence".

Richard Prince, Cindy Sherman and Sherrie Levine, whom are in the line of Pop Art, went beyond the surface of Pop art and photography.

Richard Prince's works, dated mid-eighties, are the re-photographs based on existing media images (of Marlboro) (Figure 4) excluding the advertising copy. Prince's works indicate "our uncritical incorporation of the media image into our daily lives,- where we often treat the flat ad as another reality."⁴⁴

Cindy Sherman's series of 'Untitled film still' made in early eighties, are the black and white photographs of stereotype American women in action, using her own face and body. Then she made color photographs of stereotype American women again, by using herself with exaggerated make up and costumes. Sherman is concerned with the figures in the world of art (renaissance) in her recent works (Figure 5).

Conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth identified the problem of Conceptual Art in 1975, to quote from Newman "what began in the mid-sixties as an analysis of the context of specific objects (or proportions) and correspondingly the questions of function, has forced us now, ten years later, to focus our attentions on the society and/or culture in which the specific object operates."⁴⁵ It is this condition that prepared a base for postmodern artists who have used Conceptual Art strategies in relation to social forms, content and intervention.

It is those strategies that led postmodernist artist to place a well established critique of master narratives, by the early 1980's. Jeny Holzer (Figure 6) and Barbara Kruger's slogans using public sign systems and Jeff Wall's re-functioning of back-lit cibacrome photographs of advertising display system have roots in Conceptual artist Dan Graham's reportage work 'Homes for America' that representing stories in suburban American houses. Newman argues that feminism is also the concern that postmodernists borrowed from conceptual art.

Alongside feminism, the questioning of authorship and constitution of subjectivity that first existed in Duchamp's non-interventional 'ready-mades' but with the influence of Roland Barthes' essay 'Death of the Author' brought in to discussion by Conceptual Art. Barthes in his famous essay says, "We know how that a text is not a line of words, releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash, and the reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination."⁴⁶

Sherrie Levine has showed a photograph of a painting by Franz Marc along with the text above, with the replacement of 'picture' for text, in 'Contemporary American Art' show in London, in 1981. "We know that a picture is but a space in which a variety of images, none of them original, blend and clash... A painting's meaning lies not in its origin but in its destination."⁴⁷ Since that time, she has made copies of photographs 'after' Walker Evans, drawings after William de Kooning, Egon Schiele, watercolors after Mondrian, Matisse etc.. She was concerned about the commodity value of art, originality, creativity as well as the feminist aspect of the critique of male dominance of history of creativity (all the works she represented are taken from the work of male artists of past). She represents the idea of creativity by re-presenting someone else's work as her own in an attempt to sabotage a system that places value on the privileged production of individual talent.

The concept of 'Death of the Author' allowed artists to constitute a discursive attitude in art making. They have set up collaborations even for making a single painting.

Komar and Melamid, Gilbert and George, McDrouth and Mc Gouch, Starn Twins, Gilles and Felix, and Hüseyin Alptekin and Michael Morris in Turkey, are the legendary couples of contemporary-romance, and produce works of various techniques in this manner.

In recent years, more of the collaborative groups, made up of several artists started to emerge, such as Group Material (Figure 7-9) and Grun Fury. A group of people from various disciplines got together to work on the project ACT UP, offered by The New Museum, New York, in 1986. After the project was over, the group met again. Grun Fury "has come out" said one of the group members.

Their work was based on the subject 'Art Against AIDS', and they realized several projects in this context. The organization 'Art Against AIDS' commissioned Grun Fury to design a project that would run outside of buses in San Francisco in 1988, and they did the poster work called 'Kissing Doesn't Kill, Greed and Indifference Do' (Figure 8) which mimicking the imagery of Benetton ads, shows a combination of people of different races and genders kissing each other.

Again, the problematic of the 'Death of the Author', practised in art, is accurately identified by Newman: "Politically, it is a part of a more away from class politics based on the relations of production and a base-superstructure model, to an emphasis on ideology and a more fragmented democratic politics, not necessarily organized according to traditional class lines (eg. women, gays, blacks, the old, the unemployed.)"⁴⁸ (Figure 10)

2. PICTORIAL REPRESENTATIONS WITHIN A POSTMODERN MANNER

1. Critical Lexicon

This part includes some of the concepts that fill an important place for postmodern debate and for my own approach in making art. Their function is twofold: First to help to capture an understanding of postmodern items; second, helps to constitute a lexicon in terms of reading the works.

MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION AND THE DEATH OF AURA

Walter Benjamin's theories on "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" took place in an era when the hegemony of the minorities replace with the mass culture. In this point a new relation experienced between art/craft with technical reproduction/economical dispersion. For Benjamin its inevitable to reproduce unique work of art and he sees the aura in terms of "periods of history" ,and questions the aura of the art work of pre-technical reproduction.

The social bases of the contemporary decay of aura is twofold in Benjamin: the desire of contemporary masses to bring things "closer" spatially and humanly and attitude of overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by reproducing it. He argues that how the reproduction of the magazines differs from the image seen by the naked eye and how these two things are linked to each others.

To ruin the aura of an object is to make of a perception whose "sense of the universal equality of things" which has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique objects by means of reproduction. Thus is manifested in the field of perception what in the theoretical sphere is noticeable, for example in the

increasing importance of statistics. The adjustment of reality is a process of unlimited scope, as much for things as for perception. (Figure 11)

SIMULATION AND SIMULACRA

Simulation experienced through the history. Zeuxis and Parrhasios's competition for the best representation of the world in Greek mythology, Jorge Borges's tale in which the cartographers of the empire dream of a coextensivity between the map and the territory, history of miniature, representing the life in the Ottoman palace, Orhan Pamuk's allegoric tale about the painting of Istanbul and another painter reflecting mirror on the painting.

Jean Baudrillard in his article Simulacra and Simulations⁴⁹ applies the all reaches of everyday life, what Walter Benjamin wrote about the age of mechanical reproduction. Culture is now dominated by simulations, Baudrillard discusses objects and discourses that have no firm origin, no referent, no ground or foundation. To comprehend the status of commodities of the post-war era, Baudrillard dealt with a semiotical model that can decipher the meaning structure of the modern commodity. The "relation of word, image or meaning and referent is broken and restructured so that its force is directed, not to the referent of use value or utility, but to desire."⁵⁰

Baudrillard's "Simulacra and Simulations" extends, his theory of commodity culture. "The distinctions between object and representation, thing and idea are no longer valid."⁵¹ Instead he established a world consist of models or simulacra which have no referent of ground in any reality except their own. In the beginning of the article he quotes the story of Borges about "map of the Empire" as the "finest allegory" of simulation: "Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror of the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal."⁵²

Simulation does not mean imitations , rather manipulating of the features by which generic objects are recognizable as such (Figure 12). It is artificial , yet at the same time the distinction between the real and the artificial has collapsed, (gender...) and with it a further set of distinctions , Including functional/non-functional, mass-producing /hand made, sight/content, content/discontent commercial / conceptual. In simulation as a sociological condition, it is as if war and murdering become a kind of video game, as we experienced recently in Gulf War which was rather a program called "War in the Gulf " made by CNN.

So simulation is experienced as a problem of identification insofar as the distinction between the representation and the represented upon which identification previously depended no longer holds.

Baudrillard argues that today there is no more mirror of being and appearances. The real and its concept experienced "rather, genetic miniaturization is the dimension of simulation. The real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models - and with these it can be produced an indefinite number of times".⁵³ That is not real anymore because it is no longer rational, enveloped by an imaginary, its not measured against some ideal or negative instance. It is a hyperreal, the product of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere.

"Simulations" is one of the single most instigating text to enter the postmodern debate. Baudrillard provides the fullest account of the entanglement of the real with its representational model, and the "perversity" of the relationship between the image and referent. Borgesian allegory of simulation in the beginning of the text, is what Baudrillard's analysis is of a postmodern culture of simulation. Another extreme allegory of simulation can be given is the postmodern film Blade Runner by Ridley Scott. The film is set in a world that is ultimately Baudrillardian, "The real is produced from miniaturised units, from matrices, memory banks and command

models - and with these it can be produced an indefinite number of times".⁵⁴ Tyrell corporation is responsible for the manufacturing of replicants, that is genetically produced human simulacra, designed to use as slave labour in the exploration and colonization of the other planets. The latest generation, "Nexus 6", "the reproduction of the real has exceeded its production to create beings that are superior in strength and agility and at least equal in intelligence to the genetic engineers who created them. They are more human than human in every way except one, and for this they are prepared to risk "retirement"- Hyperreality's euphemistic term for execution. They lack only history".⁵⁵

✓

PASTICHE AND SAMPLING

Musical or other medley made up from various sources; work imitating style of author, period, etc. Pastiche became the dominant aesthetic - which is quotation without attribution of reference, in "postmodern work of art"

According to Jameson: "Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practise of such mimicry, without parody's ulterior motive, without the satirical impulse, without laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exist something normal compared to which what is being imitated is rather comic".⁵⁶ For Jameson pastiche is one of the most significant features or practices in postmodernism today.

In the film "Blade Runner" which has been referred as the major postmodern film stage sets intermingle freely with an architectural history that itself has become staged with the elements from history of architecture, history of cinema and simulations of architectural styles coalesce produce a synthetic meta-pastiche" Wakefield has stated. "The result is an excess of scenography - an obscene transparency - a pornographic violence in which everything is rendered as performance".⁵⁷

To quote from the history of painting, Manet, nevertheless, was inspired by Titian's Venus of Urbino and Goya's Maya naked, When he painted his Olympia. And Cezanne; Picasso all made their own version of the reclining nude with her black cat and black servant. Bedri Baykam also painted an Olympia by using Manet's reproduction Vasif Kortun wrote that, "Olympia was another bastard created by Giorgione / Titiano's Venus and some other holly nudes".⁵⁸

Postmodernism's use of pastiche is attacking the aspects of purity and demand of absoluteness in modernity.

The term sampling used mostly in pop-music, has similarities with pastiche, It is copying the rhythms and snatches of tune from someone else and then arranging them to produce a musical effect.

Gathering pictorial material from popular and high culture, ranging from national admonition to advertisement and local consumerism. The image sampling deconstructs and reintroduces consumer concepts to the consumer society.

2.2. Writings on Works

I don't think my work is political. I think it's about the stuff that doesn't let me sleep at night.

Felix Gonsales - Torres, (A member of the activist art collective Group Material)

To understand any existence of today, it is required to look back to the historical consequence and antecedents; so determining the product of the present and future is possible through a retrospective view.

The works, from the beginning to present, are the result of an understanding which selects, simplifies, constructs, deconstructs and reconstitutes the everyday objects/aspects of daily life, to explore the problematic of a theoretical level, dwelt with neither an aesthetic effort in terms of a rather modernist attitude of generating a new unique form nor a representation of objective or perceptual (abstract) world.

FORBIDDEN ZONE

This project consist of 1000 numbered and 'Forbidden Zone' written small size stickers. During a trip, round Turkey in August 1986, some hundreds of stickers were placed in various areas ranging from one of the monument of Atatürk, to an old abandoned railway along the river Euphrates, from an ancient ruin of the Hititte Empire, to a local suburban bus. About a hundred of them were also mailed to artists in Turkey and abroad and finally some of them went to the art galleries.

Within this project, some templates of 'Forbidden Zone' and 'It is Forbidden to Take Films and Photos' are also included.

The concern for this work was the political condition of the country after the military coup in 1980.

LIVING PICTURE

The death of Joseph Beuys (in 23th of January 1986), made many people aware of his works, including myself. An exhibition to his memoriam were organized⁵⁹ in Izmir, found participation also from Istanbul and Paris.

My work consisted of an alive white dove and white fluorescent lamp installed in a convex black wooden box with a space behind the glass that is mimicking a framed picture.

The dove lived in the picture-box for the duration of show and I practised visiting the gallery to feed the dove everyday.

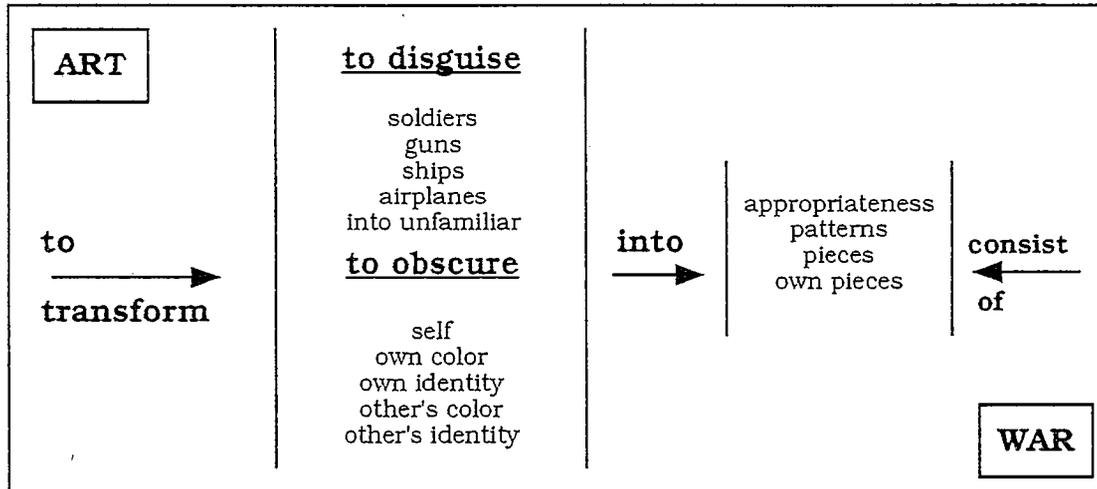
One of the two works had impressed me was one of Sarkis's, which consisted of a army green colored box of metal plaques with some photographical interior scenes printed in the same color.

Another one is a large scale portrait of Joseph Beuys, painted on several hundreds of plain postcards by Ann Aksel. These were sent to all over the world, and receivers' participation allowed the portrait to recombine itself in a process like photographic developing.

CAMOUFLAGE

camouflage n: disguise of guns, ships, etc., by obscuring with splashes of various colors, foliage etc., means of disguise or evasion, VT. conceal (as) by camouflage.

Little Oxford Dictionary



A series of plaster self-busts - made by the assistance of a mirror placed on a pedestal and a large canvas drapery behind them, all submerged in patterns of camouflage.

TRANSFORMED OBJECTS

After camouflage installation, some small scale works such as replacing the context of - Novalgine recipe under the glass as a picture, or Lincocin balls in a candy jar, an unevenly shaped piece of mirror set in to the hardcover of a Koran as a repouse work, or a cardboard bottled water box containing, 25 oil paintings of mine from five years before... (Figure 14) emerged silently in the studio.

The artist, who is described as: "Alchemist, magician, master of potential energy, advertiser who created his own myth, the most intellectual person of twentieth century"⁶⁰ did nothing other than to interfere and transforming the objects and the conventional relations of man with things and objects, to gain this immense reputation.

Grandfather of contemporary art practise, Marcel Duchamp, who defined "the positions and possibilities of art today" with Joseph Beuys and Andy Warhol, has succeeded in getting rid of authenticity and originality by 'quasi-scientific experiments' and conventional rules and obsession of style with this phrase: "I have forced myself to contradict myself in order to avoid conforming to my own taste." ⁶¹

PAINTINGS BETWEEN 1986-89

During the time I have studied for an B.A. degree in painting, I have worked on mainly two series of paintings. In 1986, I worked on a series of repetitive still lives. In the leaflet of the exhibition, Ann Aksel describes these works as: "Vahap Avşar's 1986 repetition series (now in 9 Eylül University, Fine Arts Faculty) of 5 oil paintings records the successive accumulation of paintings of a still life arrangement including a plaster mold from a modeled clay self-portrait bust..."⁶² Space and objects as well as surface are laid out as a patchwork in terms of geometry and color to create a space of patterns.

Another series of paintings realized in 1988-89 are large scale architectural representations. (Figure 15) These architectural constructions are the factory buildings, silos, barracks and greenhouses I have lived around at the time. My concern was the interactive relationship of the individual with the immediate environment. As Beral Madra writes in the capitalist order/system, it is urgent for individuals to fight against the dominance of historical environment-object, and establish new relationship with it." ⁶³

Ann Aksel describes the paintings as: "-based on the bisected tabular structure currently used in Turkey for temporary architecture, ranging from greenhouse to barracks- are also formally impressive, invested with a presence both alluring and terrifying, as the self both accepts and resists merger with its immediate environment. (Figure16) The painting's foreground shapes with their

linear solidity projected from voids of simple contrasting tonality are developed as metaphors of self become environment, environment personified."⁶⁴ They consist of geometrical line structure and divided spheres painted with simple opaque colors. The latest series based on repetition of green-houses and barracks, represented as sculptural forms are that re-placed in to another environment, which becomes a stage with the assistance of dramatic light. This endeavour of re-placing has the potential as a tool to reach the second reality, arriving at another meaning that is enigmatic.

UNDERGROUND EXHIBITION

In May 1990, a group of seven artists had held a show in the basement spaces of Bilkent University's lodgings. Although the campus is located on the steppes outside Ankara, like a big nomadic camp, it demonstrates a postmodern view - not with its building but everything else; the setting of a simulated pine forest or the removal of a building or road in one day, has the ironic character of a unique American University on the Anatolian steppes.

In this underground space seven artists had a room each. In the smallest room with no window, I installed twelve busts of Atatürk on the front wall, casted from a plastic model that was given by a daily newspaper, each with a candle underneath. On the side walls there are postcards of 'Anıtkabir', Atatürk's mausoleum and an old photo of myself in front of a clay Atatürk statue, in the process of working in the studio, and some partially painted photographs all pressed between two glasses and putty.

In the exhibition David Moreno exhibited minimal 'home made' paintings, Oruç Çakmaklı, expressionistic paintings, Laura Foos, collages, Joanna Gordon, ephemeral objects made of wax and muslin, Matthew Brandt, texts and Dennis Hofman, floor paintings.

ANITKABİR, MAUSOLEUM OF ATATÜRK

Anıtkabir is the Mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, 'saviour' of the Turkish nation, built in 1953 on a hill of 700.000 m² sphere, overlooking the city of Ankara, . The Mausoleum consists of mausoleum part called the Hall of Glory, surrounding ten towers, an alley, galleries and sculptures.

On both sides of the alley, leading to the square of necropolis built in the style of acropolis architecture, there are statues of lions made by Hüseyin Özkan in the style of the sculpture of Anton Hanak and Josef Thorak. In the entrance of the alley there are two groups of statues on both sides, executed by the same sculptor. They resemble Greek sculpture as well as Neoclassic, Hittite, and at the same time, German sculpture of the Nazi era. On the left, sculpture of three young men represents soldier, shepherd and a student, and on the right, three women" at both ends are holding forth a cup to the heavens, praying for the soul of Atatürk before God. The woman in the middle, with her hand covering her face , is crying silently."⁶⁵

This painting entitled Anıtkabir (Figure 17) consists of double canvas, and represents a sunny, possibly winter day with the two giant flags hanging, as in any national day. No person is represented in the square. In the second canvas, there are statues of three men painted in monochrome army green on the bright red background, this time it is possibly a winter day with no sun.

The mausoleum is behind the figures in a deep perspective and the figures are under as well as in front of it. The canvases arranged to build a T form. The order and setting generated by central unity is destroyed/deconstructed by the usage of two separate canvases and also by deterritorialisation of the status.

Unity describes the order of modern society: state and social order-security, is at the same time "the term which constituted the state of prosperity"⁶⁶ Ali Akay discusses the ironic body of the state:

"Unity means state; the unique, one in the very center, unifying element and ... insurance, security powers (police/army) and state. How has this prosperity state been prepared? Social order and unity have been established for the security of the people living there; people called 'others' or 'third world' are attracted to this centre" ⁶⁷ from the peripheries.

MYTHS OF OUR TIME

Works included in this project, can be divided in to two distinct but related areas: National myths and Pop myths. One is Atatürk, a father figure for the Turkish nation, and the other, Marlboro man, an anonymous timeless advertising icon with his mythic aura of western landscape.

Social, political and cultural critique of dominance and repression in the one hand, and critique of value systems that draw on popular and commercial imagery on the other, my paintings use the narrative potential of existing myths and of social, cultural beliefs. In terms of the realization and manipulation of kitsch, second reality instead of reality, craftsmanship production - instead of mechanical reproduction, simulation instead of copying is employed as the vocabulary.

Confusion of values in a media society leads to an indispensable condition that is diverse. In Pop myths I refer to the advertising and public relations strategies as artistic devices to define the present-day art world.

Today, in the Postmodern era we live in the world of images created by the media, so painting as an image can only reflect the media as an image reflecting other images. But this is realized through displacement and this displacement of the familiar has the effect of referring to a phenomenology of the post-machine age where simulation is experienced neither as representation of something, of

the 'model', nor as the thing as it is in itself, the specific object. The object as simulacrum, as copy without a model in the real, cannot be referred to an original or signified thing as its source.

The medium for these paintings is also diverse - the western tradition of art in twentieth century has shown a varied character, but in postmodern era not only the tradition as a whole but even a single work of art is diverse. Medium itself is not given so much importance in this context. I am much more concerned with the attitudes conveyed, but in terms of technique, I use various media according to the subject I am investigating: acrylic paint for 'Marlboro man', oil and auriferous paint and printing ink for Atatürks.

ATATÜRK

I used the narrative potential of the Atatürk icon (and also the photographs of statues) that allowed me to place a political and social statement on the historical and contemporary condition of culture in Turkey.

Although the image of Atatürk is available in forms of: photograph, any kind of picture: postcard, stamp and carpet etc., I have used a picture of bust, that is most dominant and which exists in its commonest form in the entrance or interior of every institution, school, hospital, army and police station to legalize this most visible - so at the same time invisible form of power and authority in this part of the world.

Atatürk's statues and busts are the main item for the sculpture of republican era in the country. Busts and statues, even monuments are reproduced several times and coming across twin statues and monuments in distant places of the country is possible.

Image I have used for the paintings, are derived from a stereotype 'Turkey Tourist Guide' showing in a photograph a big relief bust of Atatürk in sunlight. (Figure 18.19) My paintings consist of a series of large Atatürk portraits painted in gold, oil paint and printing ink, in various sizes and proportions. The grandiosity of the busts are made to implicate the relations of proportion and subject matter, and the state of interactive relationships between scale and power.

Repetition is made to refer to mass production (passe), and to ethical, religious and artistic rituals of our daily life. No metaphors are used as rituals of making official statues is an ideological-economical phenomena in this part of the world, whatever the ruling system is!

Differences in size and scale is the result of the creating process, in that each were made at different times and 'moods'. The look of mechanical reproduction is avoided and the form of artisan craftsmanship and spirit of gilding art applied.

Monochrome paint is applied in the manner of moulding clay (sculpture) but because the scale is out of portion in some, I used the method of painting a bird's eye landscape.

Back surface/ground painted in bulky red printing ink, serves as element of the organic, as well as deterritorializing the subject matter.

FREEDOM AND ADVENTURE, THE 'MARLBORO MAN'

In a consumer society, the value system that lies behind the icons are paradoxical and conflicting. So these works are about the end of the time and erasure of cultural differences.

The images of the 'Marlboro man' have been extracted from everyday-life (a magazine back cover or calendar they have a quality

of mundane and banal simulation that contain their own sensory presence and they refer to something invisible and immaterial. (Figure 20, 21, 22)

How did this image become an icon in our culture? It is concerned closely with the cultural memory. Cultural memory usually embodies itself through 'ready-made's. Not only a found object is considered as a ready-made but anything in the memory of culture can be a ready-made; an image, a character; a landscape.

Cowboy the western hero depicted first in the landscape painting, later in the photography within the context of transcendental landscape of west, became central figure of the American film industry. In painting, photography and films, the "composite western hero was depicted as a man of considerable dignity." ⁶⁸

Films' "pervasive influence played an enormous role in popularizing the symbols of the west"⁶⁹ and the western hero enjoyed his celebrity all over the world within the glory of American film industry.

This is how the cowboy, western hero submerged into cultural memory of modern world.

Marlboro started using the image of the cowboy in 1954, and this image is recognized all over the world alongside the power of American capitalist economy.

The image of the "Marlboro man" has not changed, although portrayed by several different actors. Marlboro cigarette became the best-seller everywhere with the best advertisement campaign ever done. Chris Bruce, the curator of the show "Myth of the West" has written that the success of Marlboro man as a sales tool "is based on the ironic condition that the image derived from the Western myth, is timeless... and this creates an atmosphere of illusion that allows us to associate the cigarette with men of action and fresh air."⁷⁰

Despite all this, what I am concerned about is the reality of our time. Thus, if we consider the 'composite western hero' and his 'transcendental landscape' as the first reality, the 'Marlboro man', I am referring constitutes another reality which is the second reality. Where do my paintings, that have subjects derived from magazines, stand? They are paintings that referring to 'color' of our time and reality of it, although it has nothing to do with the 'reality'.

These timeless advertising images with "no author.. as if their presence were complete-classical in fact. They are too good to be true. They look like what art always wants to look like."⁷¹

A work of art is a complex composite made of several layers of meanings and thus, it requires many readings.

This series of paintings depicting the same Marlboro man in same pose painted in bright acrylic colors with little differences of size, repetition of form and play of changing color.

Repetition again is made to refer to mass production, religious and artistic rituals of our present time, with an obvious awareness of grandfather Andy Warhol and Pop Art classical. Little differences in size with repetition allow paintings to retire from the look of mechanical reproduction of Warhol and Pop Art.

Bright acrylic colors serve as a tool for stressing artificiality, change in colors made the process of the painting ritual into an enormously enjoyable play.

These paintings also celebrate artisan craftsmanship and imperfection of human skills as well as being an attack on mechanical (any type) and electronic reproduction.

Black outline is a presentation to deterritorialise each section of the body, and simultaneously refers to its own graphical quality. Outline is also used since 1987 to deterritorialise the subject matter from the surface/ground and exposes no distinction with the outlines in miniature. Erasure of identical simulation is not allowed at this point.

The words 'Özgürlük ve Macera ', that is, 'Freedom and Adventure', initially emerged as the element of language. The nostalgic meaning of the words have a heavily dramatic and political structure in the history of Turkish linguistics; for me it reveals a rather ironic state of mind. But the latest ones don't have this element, instead, they enjoy minimal semiotic memories of their own.

PICTURE-WRITINGS

If the word "picture "is taken in its widest sense, a person makes a "picture" of his words in writing. Writing is a picture of words. In the same manner as a picture represents what we see, writing represents what we say.

Malik Aksel, Religious Pictures in Turkish Art

Writing as an element in my works henceforth comes and goes. The works entitled, Picture-Writings, (Figure 24) aim to integrate the functioning of artistic (in both sense: "high" and "low"), philosophical and ideological mechanism. A significant attention has given to the focus on the collision between "high" and "low" culture, art and craft, international and local, First World and Third World, as well as between conceptual posture and subjective interpretation.

The Picture-Writings presume the history of calligraphic pictures but they are not calligraphic pictures, They presume the ready-made of Duchamp but they are not ready-mades, they presume the tradition of conceptual art but they are not conceptual arts. They can be typically found in the daily environment as the shop names in the

street, identical company signs in any local bus station (the most spectacular ones in Topkapı, Istanbul) as the writings of admonitions and warnings by state, in the institutional buildings as schools and hospitals.(Figure 23, 24)

SIFIR - CHYPER

I have been using every-dajects in my works, such as 'Novalgine' and Koran since 1986.

The work "Sıfir - Chyper" is constitute of 32 letters-Turkish alphabet with the addition of Q, W, X from English alphabet. Lateres are made of used tins of goods, (food like olive, oil, coke cheese, margarin and industrial goods like car oil), By soldering the plates of tins, thnal letters crafted by me and two other craft-people. (Figure 23)

Although they are made of found objects, they can not be presented as readymades, however they are denatured by hand-crafted modification. The usage of used material is in the nature of production because recycling is not a current trend but a form of production and way of life in third world countries.

These objects presume the history of the ready-made, but they are not ready-mades, they preme the conceptual art but they are not conceptual art. They are manufactured in the tradition of crafty production of everyday use objects. Thus they re to the condition of their manufacturing as art. But at the point, where they are mimicking functional objects - such as shop signs, they camouflage their status as an art object. This process of camouflage plays an important role in the stage of reading them as a text - a deliberate refusal to state a meaning through reading, that stays enigmatic.

CONCLUSION

According to french thinker Jean Baudrillard, something has changed. It is a paradoxical and perverse change which is signing the end of many items of our intellectual life including the possibility of change. Traditional order of monolithic truths, linear grids and representational stability left its place to a set of unstable equations that correspond to collapse and implotions of representational space. In postmodern era solid referents have been replaced by disorientative flux, stable subject by schizophrenic wanderings, immobile relationship by pragmatism and calculated change with chance. According to him reality, once dismantled of its uniqueness can only repeat itself now.

The postmodernity of Baudrillardian discourse, lies in the refusal to participate in existing on teleologies. It is seductive rather than dialectic and challenges more than communicates. Surviving postmodernity from the edge of the end; Baudrillard describes a culture which is predicated on, instability and uncertainty. Starting from simulation everything has become short-circuited within the whirligig of reflexivity and paradox in Baudrillard.

Shizophrenia as opposed to paranoia of modernism, employed with the schizoid ontology as the metaphoric model of postmodernist age. by Baudrillard along with Deleuze and Guattari.

We all agreed now, at least about one thing that, postmodernism is neither an homogeneous entity nor a consciously directed movement, we all agreed now. It is something much more schizophrenic (ill-behaved for some), nebulous, elusive, de-centering and de-centered.

To a certain extent this thesis reproduces the Baudrillardian progressive exhaustion of meaning and Deleuze and Guattari's

lubricated and deterritorialised meaning and intertextuality, that it seeks to analyse.

Although the term 'end' has been announced widely to state the concern of this thesis, it is not possible to give an end to our subject. A conclusion traditionally includes a retrospective summary and judgement, in Wakefield's word, "a stentorian voice to restore balance and perspective to an otherwise imbalanced and volatile world. But such a return to the sanctuary of the critical voice is precisely what is denied by the trajectory of postmodern discourse".⁷² So the task of any postmodern work is , not of finding ends and solutions, but living in a world without these certainties.

In this work, after drawing a theoretical framework, some evaluations were made about the emergence of postmodernism.

My works were considered in the context of those theoretical investigations and artistic productions of different cultures. They are concerned about their geographical location, sociological, cultural states and the zero point of knowledge and art. Thus instead of a search for a technical and formal unity, with individual style, they intent to reproduce social and cultural condition they are surrendered by; as well as transform my own discourse into a material world.

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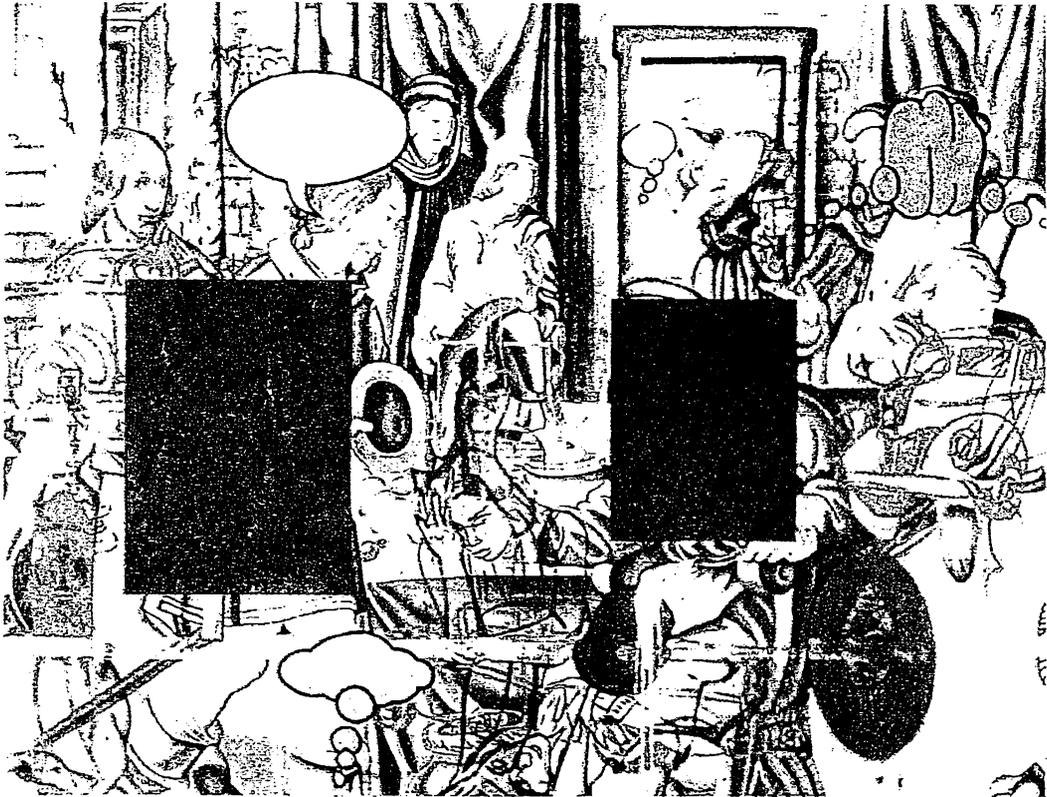


Figure 1. David Salle, Ugolino's Room. 1990-91

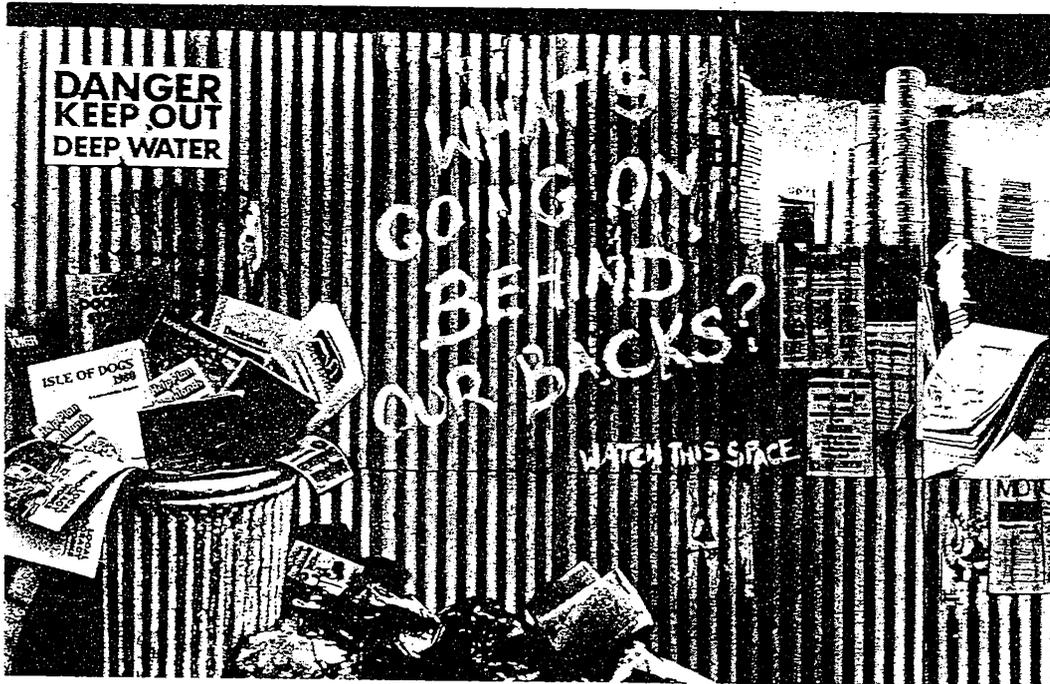


Figure 2. Peter Dunn, Loraine Lesson, Docklands Community Poster Projects, 1986.

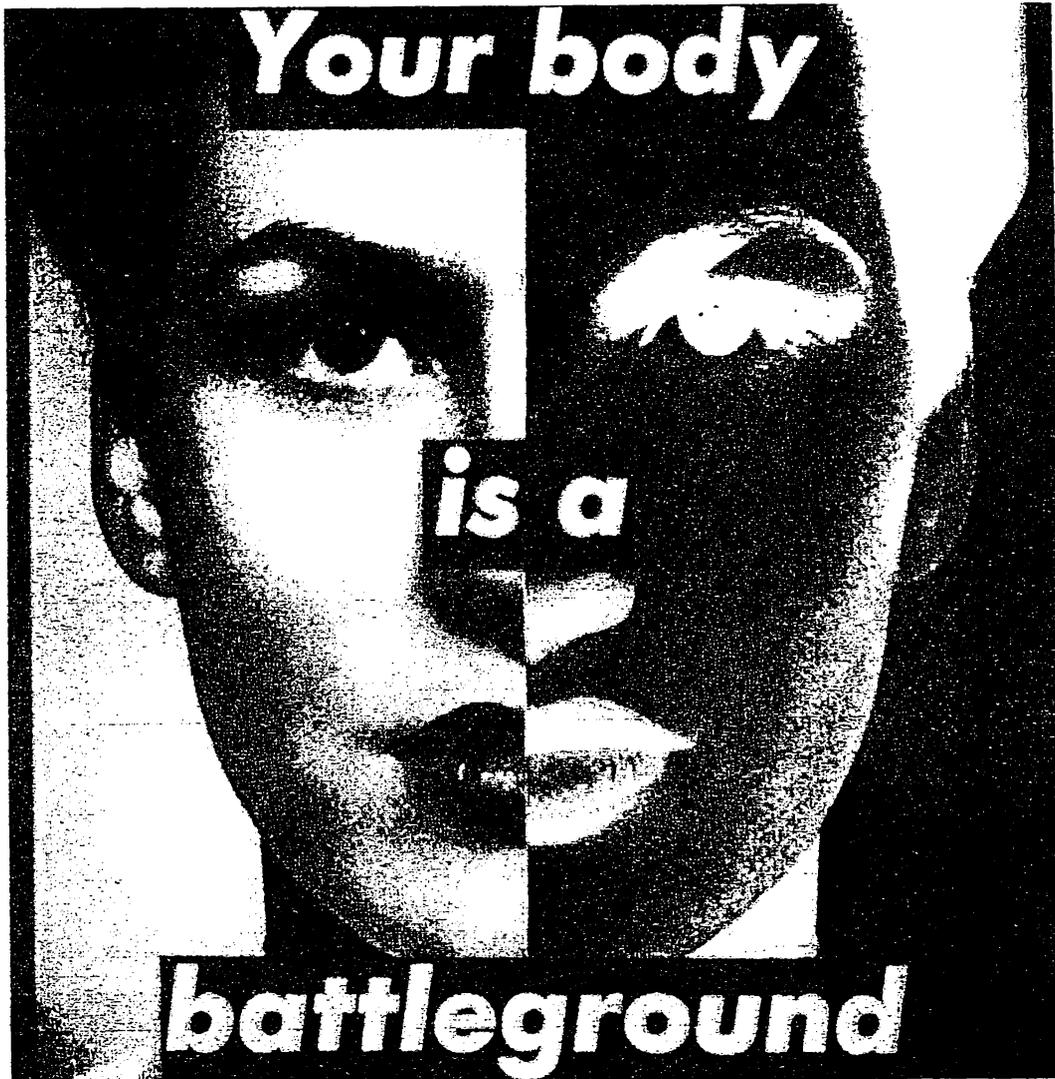


Figure 3. Barbara Kruger, Untitled. (Your Body is a Battleground). 1989



Figure 4. Richard Prince, Cowboy Series, c. 1980's



Figure 5. Cindy Sherman, Untitled, 1989



Figure 6. Jeny Holzer, Fathers Often Use Too Much Force, 1982

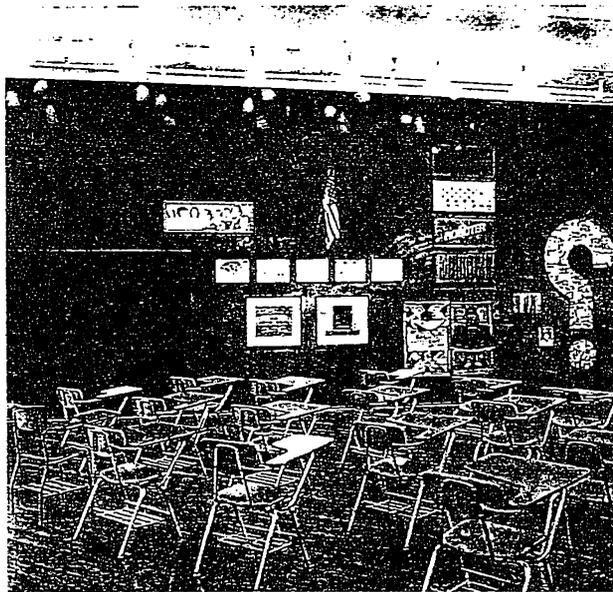


Figure 7. Group Material, Education & Democracy, Democracy (Part 1). 1988

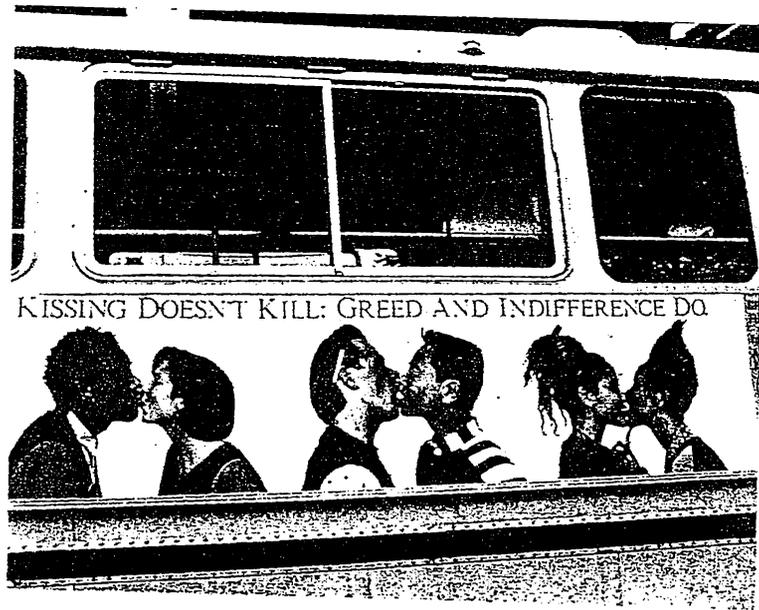


Figure 8. Gran Fury, Kissing Doesn't Kill, 1989

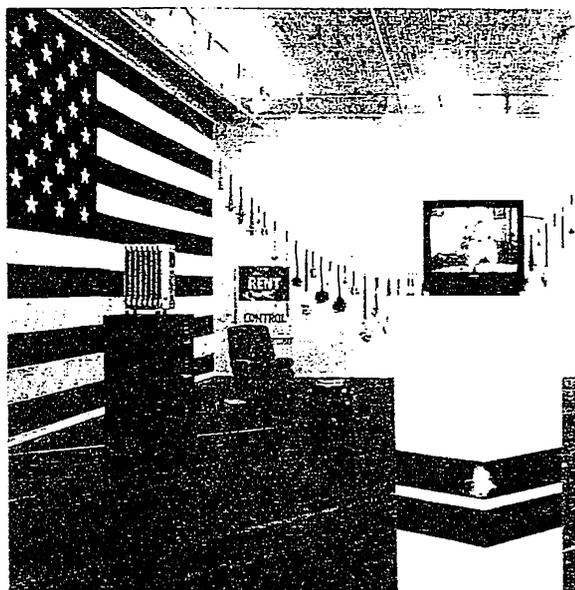


Figure 9. Group Material, Politics & Election, Democracy, (Part 2) 1988

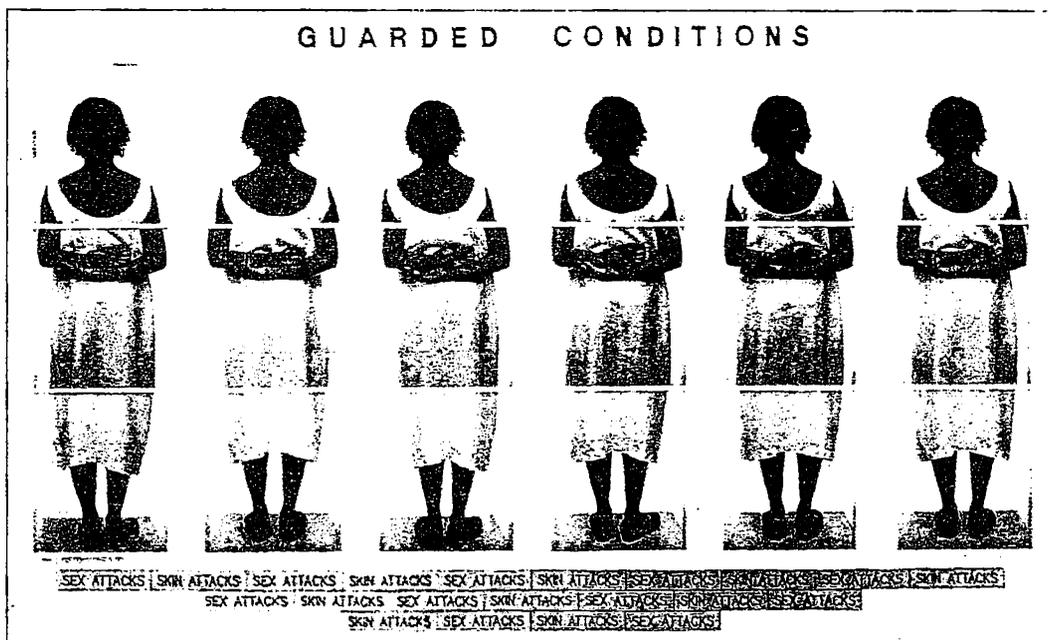


Figure 10. Lorna Simpson, Guarded Conditions, 1988



Figure 11. Andy Warhol, Double Elvis



Figure 12. Vahap Avsar, Freedom and Adventure 03-04

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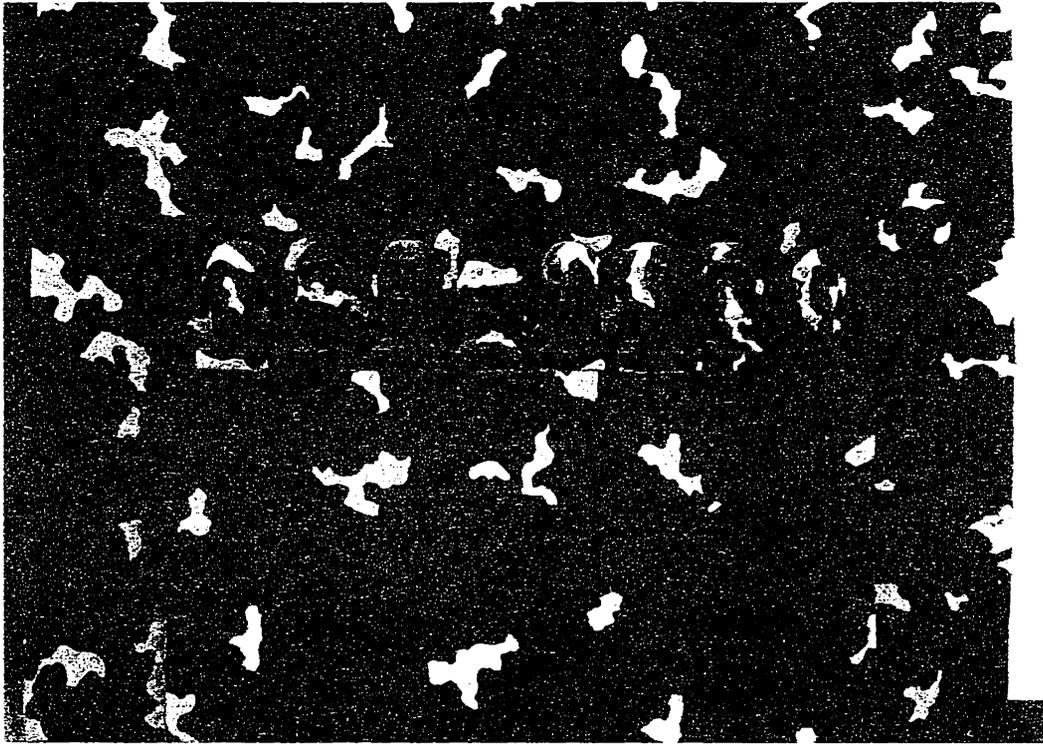


Figure 13. Vahap Avsar, Camouflage, 1987

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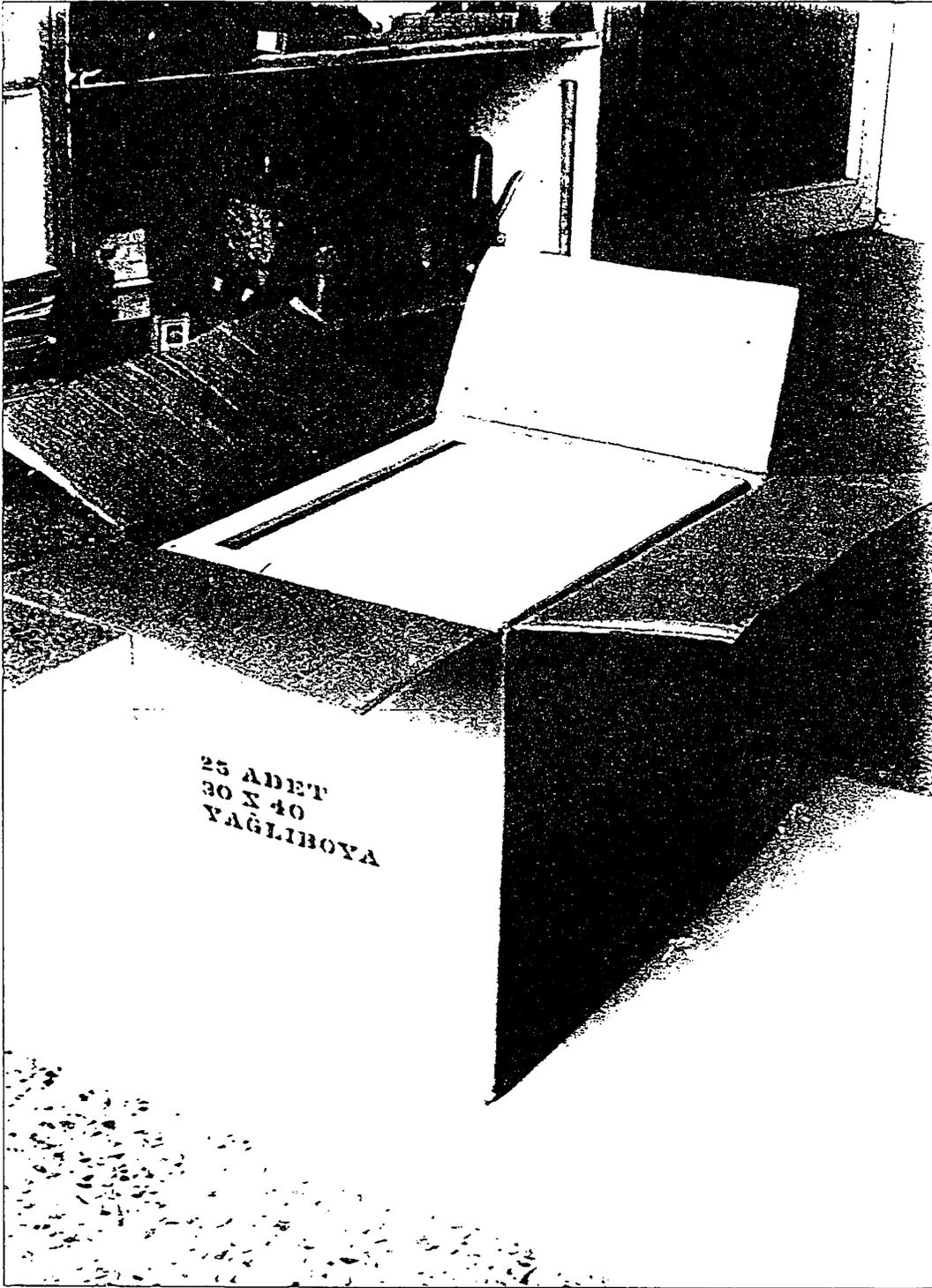


Figure 14. Vahap Avsar, 25 Oil on Canvas 01, 1987

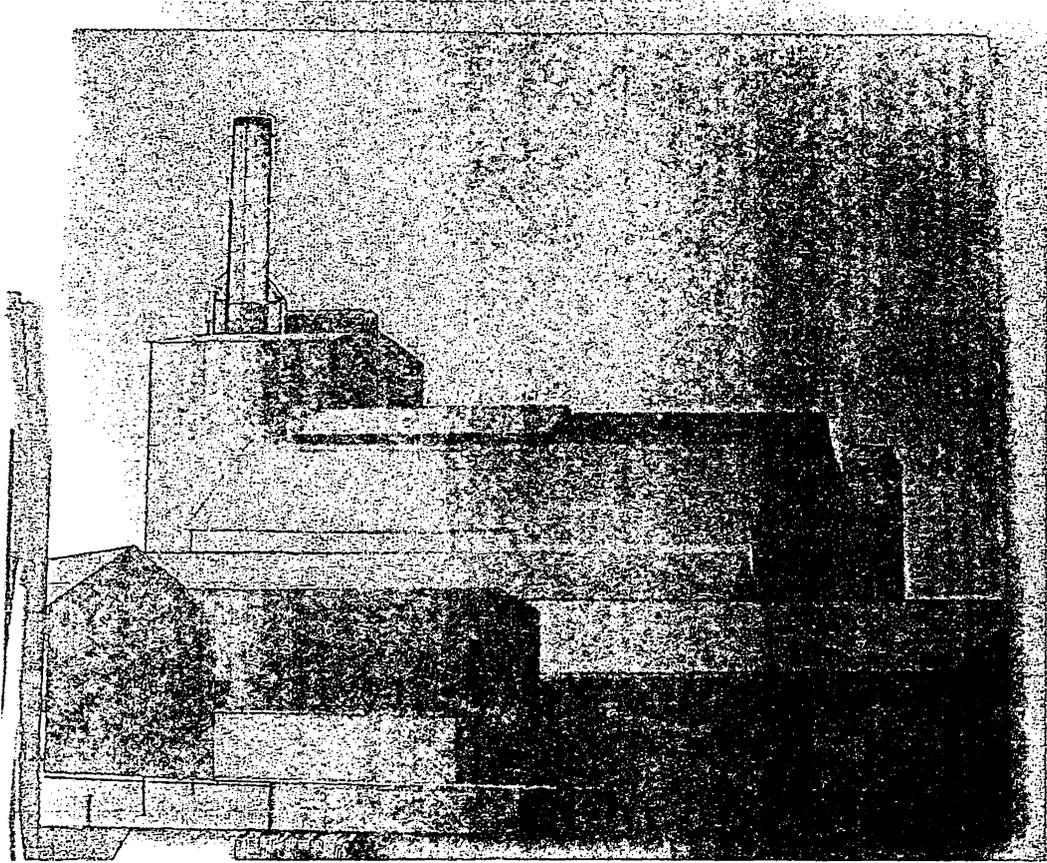


Figure 15. Vahap Avsar, T.E.S.A. 02, 1989

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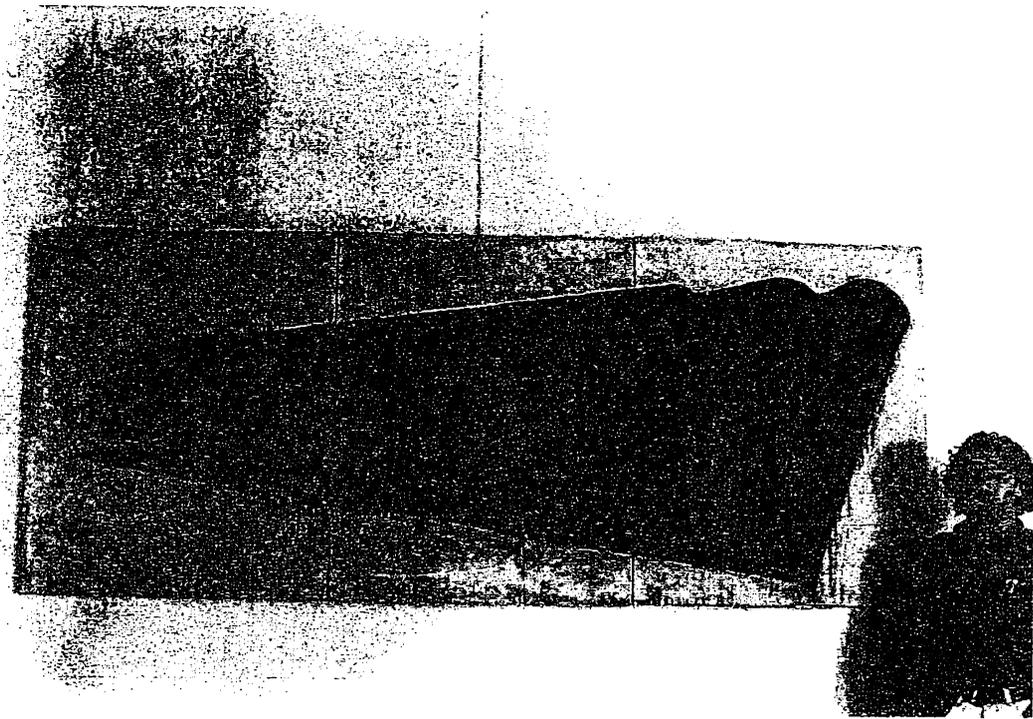


Figure 16. Vahap Avsar, Sinfull Trio, 1989

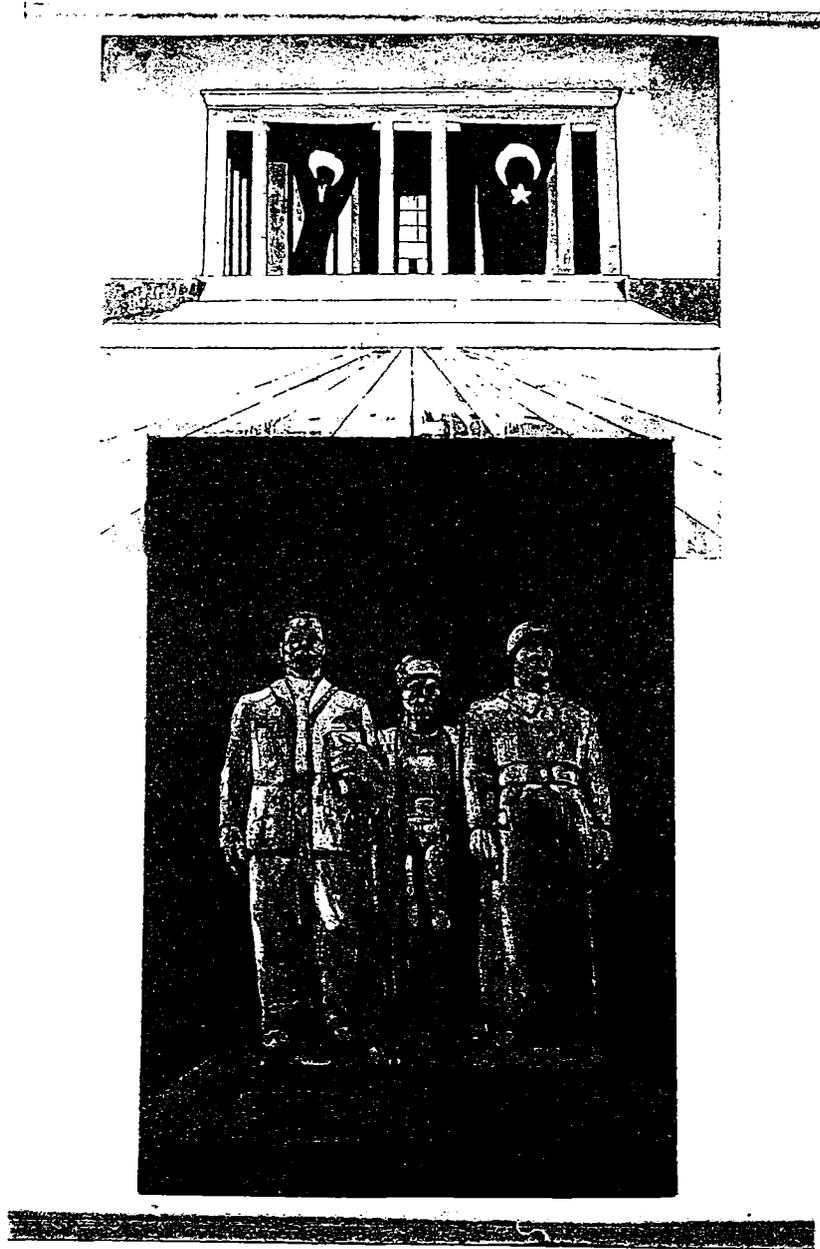


Figure 17. Vahap Aysar, Anıtkabir, 1989



Figure 18. Vahap Avsar, Ataturk 02, 1990

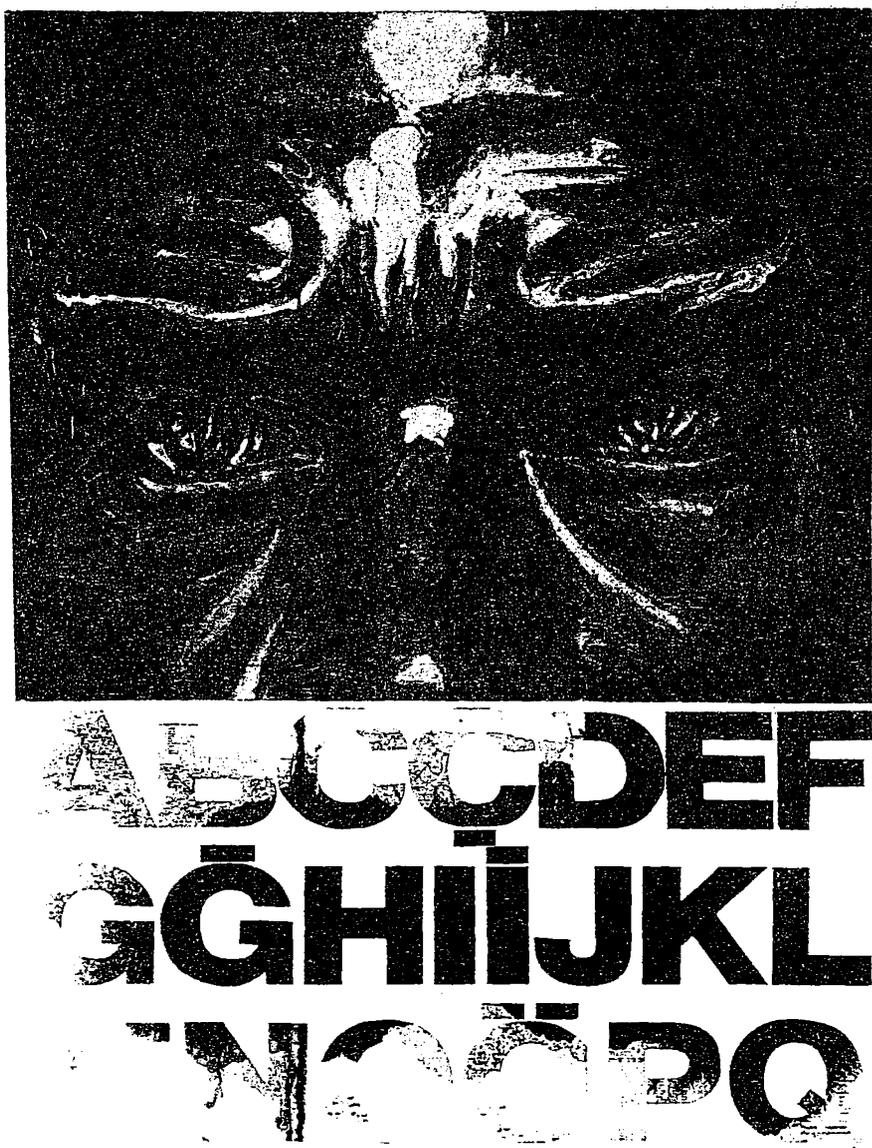


Figure 19. Vahap Avsar, Ataturk 03 and Alphebet, 1991



Figure 20. Vahap Avsar, Freedom and Adventure 02, 1991



Figure 21. Vahap Aysar, Freedom and Adventure 06-07, 1991



Figure 22. Vahap Avsar, Freedom and Adventure 08, 1991

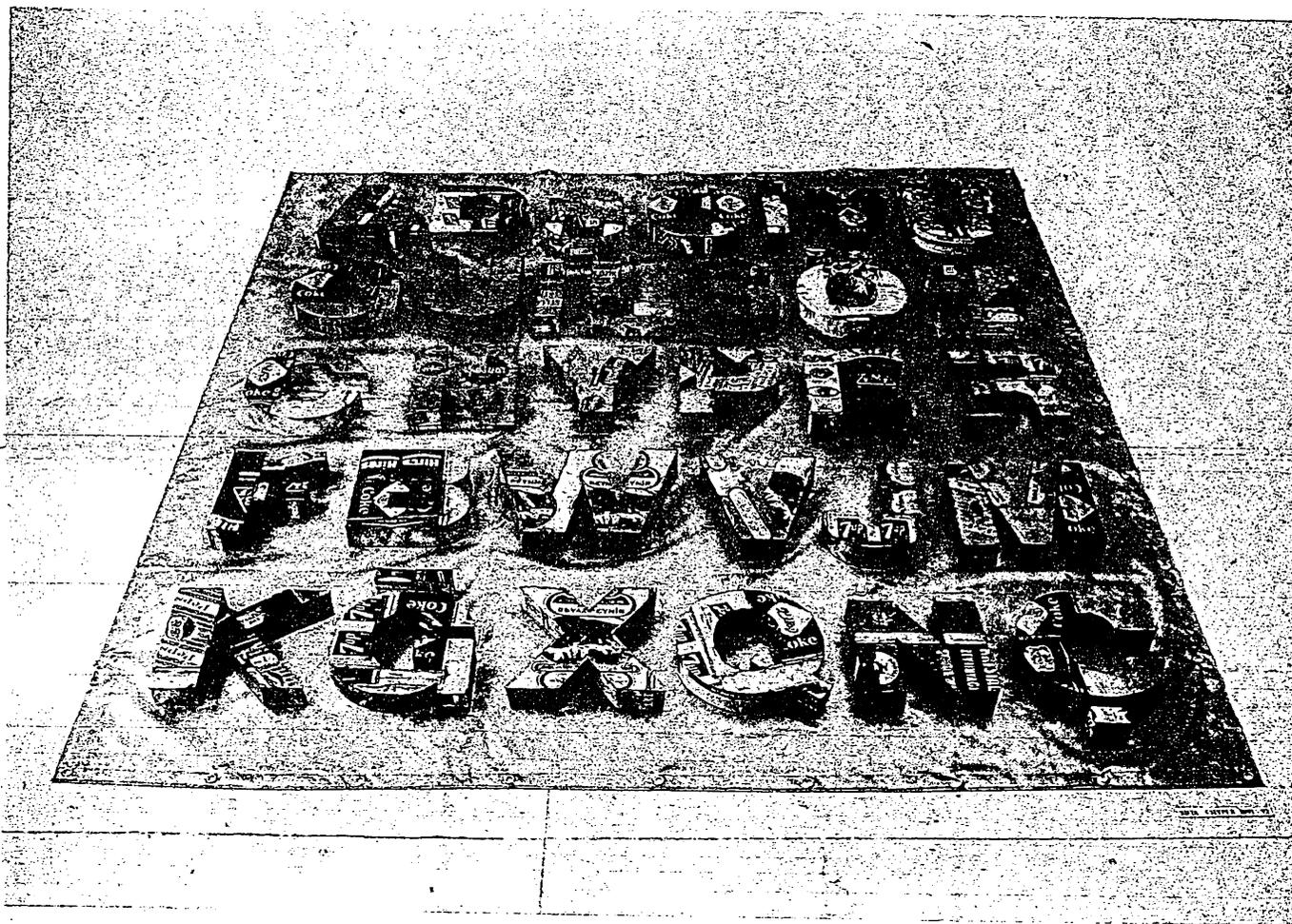


Figure 23. Vahap Avsar, Sifir-Chyper, 1991/1992

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Figure 24. Vahap Avsar, Picture-Writing (Vahap Avsar) 1992