

According To Women's View, Plastic Arts: Hierarchy, Image And The Relationship Between The Performer And The Audience For Women

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Abstract: Cultural changes have differentiated the images of women and men imaginations, together with bringing the changes in cultural ideologies, individuality, freedom and the demolition of the moral taboos on women's sexuality into the forefront. Women's expressing themselves through art, have emerged as a result of paternalistic society and as a stance against male domination, just like the development of feminist theory; and art has begun to be transformed and changed in this context. The subordination of women by the paternalistic structure led women to refuse their roles and to create a perspective specific to women in plastic arts, at the same time. In this study, the political and cultural perspective change of the women in the art from the 1900's until today was examined, the familiar and recognized artistic definitions were reinterpreted, and the concepts of aesthetics, hierarchy, image, and the relationship between the performer and the audience for women were re-questioned.

Keywords: Women, art, feminist art, aesthetics, hierarchy, image.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ideas about how critical concepts such as gender, class, religion, sexuality etc. are shaped within popular culture and then they are restructured through art form the social development of art. These patterns and images of being men and women are very significant in terms of our existence. These images are products of the traditions formed by religions and cultures throughout many years. Throughout the history, the status of the woman has been related to private space. According to Mengü (2004: 98), a big social and cultural battle was required for the woman to go out to public space. The identity of woman is accepted through the recognition of the woman's existence. This awareness is the sense of self in the public space.

Woman has demonstrated a certain development and change during the social change process. This change takes place through the ideologies determined by media which shape the historical and cultural features of the woman within the context of the popular culture she is in and turn them into various codes they use. Socialization is carried out by media in information societies. Being a good spouse as well as taking care of the house and children has been among daily life practices of the woman from past to present. The status of the woman within the social structure is determined in terms of social, economic and political aspects. Her behavior and roles within the society were shaped in accordance with the patriarchal system. Berktaş (2000:26) expresses this situation as follows:

The domination the man achieved over the nature includes the woman within its borders. The idea which suggests that men are more rational due to their physical power and they were created to rule, demonstrates that they are the only species to represent the state and the political power. Women are degraded to the status of an unreliable and incapable creature which is far from being rational. This stance created the belief that women should stay out of the public space.

It is possible to say that the woman becomes aware of her existence within the context of the relationships she establishes with other people. Mengü explains this process, which we can define as contrasts for the Western Europe, as complementing each other in accordance with the Islamic way of thinking. While the woman is restricted to the private space within the patriarchal ideology of the traditional society, she has begun to take place in the public space with the formation of the modern social structure. Today, women try to earn their freedom in the public space based on their own effort and production. Cultural changes featured the novelties in cultural ideologies, the individualism, the freedom and the breakage of moral taboos on the

woman's sexuality and differentiated the images of the woman and the man. The change has continued through the women's meeting with art.

The socio-cultural and political clash of women against the patriarchal system affected deeply the language-dominated art such as women's rights campaigns and the like. The restructuring of important features of the European art controlled by patriarchal understanding lead to a change in the sense of the "general aesthetics". Woman-sensitivity has also found a place in the sense of art.

II. FEMINIST ART AND PROBLEMS THEREOF

Nochlin's first questioning of art begins in 1971 with her essay titled "Why Have There Been no Great Artists?". The aim was to reveal women artists who have been ignored in the history of art. Thus, although they were not as many as men were, women artists entered to the adopted historical frame.

Pollock and Parker analyze the historical and ideological status of the woman in terms of art and art production in order to question the traditional history of art. They accept that the woman is different from men artists in terms of artistic and social structures and that they are woman-specific. Various radical actions were taken by women and galleries were opened for the works of women artists. (Gouma-Peterson and Mathews, 2008). The feminist women artists and critics of this era are called the first generation. The first generation women artists dealt with subjects related to the nature and status of the women's artistic productions. While the artists from New York dealt with corporal sexual discrimination, the western artists were interested more in aesthetics and the woman awareness.

III. THE HIERARCHY OF HANDICRAFT – ART

The 1st generation feminist movement starts with rejecting the patriarchal structure in art. For example: May Stevens criticizes the degradation of the woman's body. In that era, the woman's creativity involving the woman's experience was most of the time regarded as decorative art and did not count as a work of art. Joyce Kozloff and Harmony Hammond try to destroy the hierarchy between handicraft and art. They reject the idea that handicraft is a sub-form of art and the weak status of the woman.



Picture 1: Joyce Kozloff

IV. THE WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW, WOMAN'S AESTHETICS

Chigo and Schapiro created the "Womanhouse" project which is a product of Feminist art program. This project is a performance study aimed at raising the awareness of the women audience. Everything the woman expects were read out loud during the performance and her social roles were underlined (having her period, getting married, wearing a bra etc. spiritual and physical roles).

Today, the feminist art focuses on the gender difference and the problem of representation rather than the specific point of view. The representation is formed by predetermined gender concepts. According to Stephen Heath, the identities of the man and woman are differentiated after having passed through processes like law, education, art and communication. According to Norma Broude and Mary Garrard, women and men perceive the world differently and as a result of this difference, the woman leaves a mark on history in terms of creativity with her sensitivity coming to light in art. Garrard discusses the difference between gender and the process of cultural assimilation in her study "Artemisia and Susanna". Here, there are no women trying to be seduced by old men, there is the bad situation of the woman. She emphasizes the woman's point of view and perception.



Picture 2: “Artemisia ve Susanna”

1. THE WOMAN’S SEXUALITY AND IMAGES

Semel and Hannah Wilke look for the ways of expression objecting to the woman’s passivity presenting the woman’s sexuality from the masculine point of view.

Tickner: Argues that the most important thing for the woman and the erotic art is to get the woman’s body away from eroticism, thus getting away from manipulation, and in order to do this, the woman has to challenge the taboos on her body and aggrandize the productivity of the female body.

The gigantic work “The Dinner Party”, which Judy Chicago, one of the first generation feminist artists, made together with her assistants is the most controversial work of this era. The work is formed by triangle shaped tables brought together. Each table was designed by Chicago after long researches, adorned with embroidery and Chinese pictures which require fine handicraft. The tables represent women who played important roles in the history and art and there are vagina shaped plates on the tables which reflect the sexual identity of the woman.



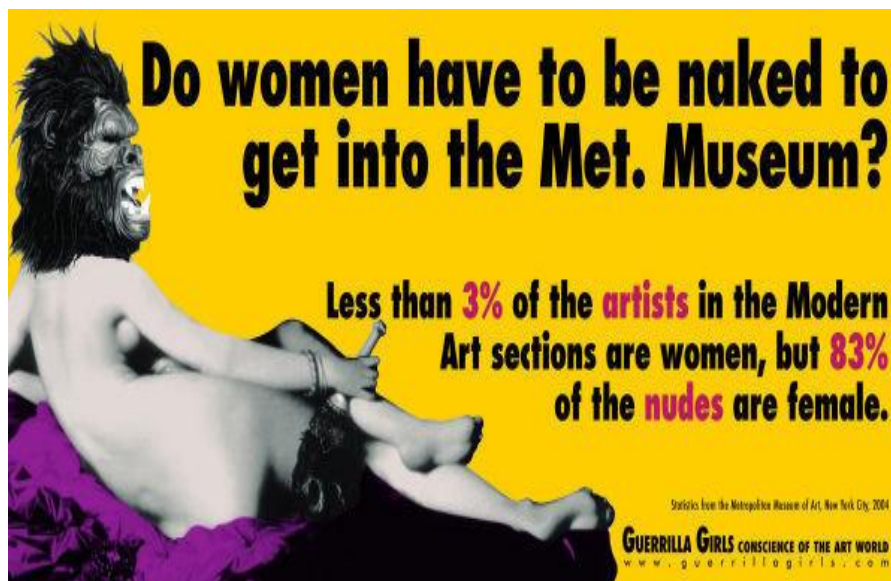
Picture 3: Judy Chicago/Food Feast

The emergence of feminist art destroys the traditional woman’s image as well as rejecting these woman specific images created by the patriarchal structure. The woman’s image is turned into an object and this structure needs to be changed.

V. THE WATCHER – WATCHED RELATION IN ART

The question of removing the woman from the status of watcher-watched and turning her into an active subject is a privileged problem for the second generation feminists. From Laura Mulvey's "theory of look" to Cindy Sherman's photographs where she is both the photographer and the model, watching comes forward as a female area of representation. Both first generation and second generation feminists objected to woman to be an object to be watched.

The fact that only 13 out of 169 artists who took place in the "International Art and Sculpture" exhibition at the New York Museum of Modern Art were women mobilized them. While the exhibition still continued, one morning the New Yorkers saw an interesting poster on the street. The fact that while only 5% of the artists exhibited were women, the 85% of the models painted in the paintings were women was emphasized with the poster saying "Do women need to be naked to get into the Metropolitan Museum?". The fact that only 13 out of 169 artists who took place in the "International Art and Sculpture" exhibition at the New York Museum of Modern Art were women mobilized them. While the exhibition still continued, one morning the New Yorkers saw an interesting poster on the street. The fact that while only 5% of the artists exhibited were women, the 85% of the models painted in the paintings were women was emphasized with the poster saying "Do women need to be naked to get into the Metropolitan Museum?".



Picture 4: "Do women need to be naked to get into the Metropolitan Museum?"

VI. CONCLUSION

The production of art is the creative expression or outpouring of sentiments based on certain compromises, schemes or more or less on codes in time. And this requires the reproduction of cultural codes. The art was reproduced with the female point of view, sense of aesthetics, images, hierarchy and the watcher-watched relation. The disadvantages woman is faced with were turned into advantages and so the problem of woman created the form of representation and found a place of practice in artistic activities.

This point of view does not only remove the inequality between women and men but it also allows the free thought to be recreated with no distinction between woman and man by ending the images attributed to the woman, using as a starting point the ways of thinking which try to feature the woman sensitivity, their downtrodden situation where monumentality is sacred, their ideological exclusion and destroying this twisted mental structure. The World art was influenced by this vision and made all this way to our day and became a guide for today's artists.

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