

CURRENT RESEARCHES **in FINE ARTS**

Editor

Assoc. Prof. Göktürk ERDOĞAN, Ph.D.



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CONTENTS

Chapter-1

Hans Hofmann's Life, Artist and Educator Personality

7

Yusuf Emre IŞIK

Mustafa IŞIK

Chapter-2

Postmodern Art, Food and Beverage Icon in Claes Oldenburg's Installations and Soft Sculptures

21

Ezgi TOKDİL

●*Chapter-1*●

**HANS HOFMANN'S LIFE, ARTIST and
EDUCATOR PERSONALITY**

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Pedagogical Description

Hans Hofmann was born in 1880 in the German rural town of Weissenburg. His father, a civil servant in the German government, had a strictly disciplined personality. He could spare very little time for his family and children. His mother and grandfather Frederik Manger had an influence on Hofmann's personality development. During Hofmann's time with his grandfather, philosophical thoughts such as questioning the nature of reality are also considered to be an introduction to his creative idea in the post-childhood years (1). (In today's pedagogical sciences, it is that the periods of children up to the age of 10 are fundamental in personality development).

At the age of six, Hofmann moved to Munich, where his father was working. He displayed the perfection of his superior intelligence in mathematics, science and philosophy when he started school. At the same time, due to his interest and aptitude in music, he studied piano, organ and violin as well as music lessons (2). Hofmann's love for nature was further enhanced by his family's holiday visits to his farm on the River Main. This period, when he started to draw, became an indicator of Hofmann's versatility (1).

When Hofmann reached the age of 16, his father assisted him in serving in the Bavarian State Public Administration. He gained experience in the field of mechanical and technical engineering in this business where he worked for two years. His scientific approach and creative genius are revealed in all his writings and teachings. During this period of his life, his interest and interest in electromagnetics was one of the brightest periods of Hofmann. Since the idea he developed was underage, he was able to obtain an intellectual property patent by applying with his mother's company. His father was so impressed that he sent him a thousand marks through a person to do further studies. But Hofmann used

this money to study art. For several years, Hans Hofmann studied art at various art schools in Munich, covering the basics of figure, landscape and still life drawing and painting techniques. Meanwhile (in 1900) he met his friend Maria (Miz) Wolfegg (1).

Hofmann met his teachers Michenlow, Aspe, Fereniz, Grimwald and the most active of them Willi Schwarz in Munich. Schwarz, who explained his impressionism idea to Hofmann, had been to Paris before. Hofmann was influenced by the idea of observing nature through light reflected on objects. The scientific discovery of light and color gave his versatile intelligence an excellent appeal. Thanks to Willi Schwarz's introduction, she met the nephew of Phillip Fruendenberg, who is a supermarket owner and famous art collector in Berlin. Fruendenberg became Hofmann's customer. In 1904, Fruendenberg gave financial support to Hofmann to go to Paris and develop himself, and Miz took part in this trip. Fruendenberg maintained his support for ten years until the first world war broke out (1).

In 1904, Paris was the only center of modern art movements. Impressionists were powerful during this period. In those years, the Fov movement, which emphasized its vibrant bright color palettes, continued under the leadership of Matisse and Rouault. The Cubist movement was just beginning with the perception of Picasso and Braque that the disintegrating objects split into basic shapes, lines and planes (1).

Hans Hofmann's Principles in Art Education

Working with great dedication and dedication in the arts, Hans Hofmann differed on the role of the art educator. In one of his discourses, he said to his students (1): "Being an artist and being an art educator are two contradictory things. When I paint, I improvise, I am editing, and my paintings manifest in an unexpected, unique way. With my role as an artist, I leave theory and method to

the background, I trust only empathy or my feelings... In my role as an educator, I act just the opposite. I feel obliged to make an explanation for what cannot be explained, taking into account every style line and color theory and method” (3).



Figure 1: Hans Hofmann

In an interview with the museum curator, Katherine Kuh “What do you think about teaching art?” in response to the question (1); “I spent years training - it took me a lot of time. I don’t think my long-standing role as a teacher has harmed my art much. You can teach art but you cannot make artists. People talk a lot about academic education. I can only say that the word ‘academy’ has little meaning in my artistic life” (4).

Hofmann realized that in art teaching everything depends on

the student's interest, perception and talent. He printed this slogan as "Selected Essays on Art" on the cover of his notebook. He has repeatedly stated in his writings that "an artist cannot be the product of a teacher by any means, intuition, reason and genius cannot be taught" (5,6). "At every stage of its production, a work of art goes through a process that evokes inspiration, intuition and conscious emotions that could not be rationalized before. At each stage, the work finds its form in being dependent on the sensitivity, temperament and mental genius of the artist" (7).

According to Hofmann, all arts, whether painting or music, begin with "nature". Nature becomes both a visual model for the artist and the most reliable source that activates the creative impulse as a constant stimulus (1). The fact that the artist made his model in a photographic, imitative style was not suitable for the purpose of this view. Thus, he emphasized the necessity of working with models for his classes.

At the beginning of 1915, he stated in the Munich School bulletin: "Art is not just an objectified imitation of reality. Without the creative impulse of the artist, even the most perfect imitation of reality is a soulless form, a panopticon**". In the artistic sense, the claim that form takes its impulse from nature is correct, but still does not depend on objective reality; it depends much more on the artistic experience revealed by objective reality and on the artist's mastery of the spiritual means of the fine arts, by which this experience of art becomes reality in painting. Creative expression is the translation of these concepts as an internal spiritual form resulting from the fusion of artistic expression tools in the unity of spirit and form. This is due to the functioning of the whole complex of thought and emotions,

* Panopticon means observing the whole, conceived as a prison building model by the English philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham in the 18th century.

together with the powerful control of spiritual tools. Imitation of objective reality is not creation, if it were, art would be based entirely on scientific, objective and objective seeing” (8). Such a view would be the subject of science rather than art.



Figure 2: Prospectus of the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts, Munich, 1915

Hofmann’s quality as a teacher in the USA has been associated with many factors. First, this may be a valid reason, given the years he started teaching abstract art ideas in the United States, which had little exposure to “modern art” ideas. The second factor was that Hofmann had a dynamic personality. It was his ability to analyze and explain what a painting should be, recognizing art and its problems. He formulated his own ideas in an understandable language and expressed them repeatedly in his lectures and articles (1).

Hans Hofmann's Discourses on Art

According to Hofmann, the ability to create a work of art is innate. The true artist is at the center of his life and must create. The arts educator helps grow this innate talent, which Hofmann demonstrates with his words (1): “Art is the form of expression that emerges from the soul of the artist and overflows. Since the soul of the artist is rich, he tends towards the meaning, paying relatively little attention to the ordinary requirements of the material world. It glorifies the objective world by reshaping it with its intellectual and artistic quality. A work of art is a world in which the artist reflects his inner feelings and emotions” (9). “The child is a true artist, and the artist must be like a child, but not remain a child, but know what he is doing as an artist. This means he won't allow himself to be emotional or anything like that. The artist should know what he is doing” (8). “Man is at the center of the creative world and his job as an artist is to find inspiration in the creative activity of relationships and forces” (5).



Figure 3: Hans Hoffman with students at the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts, Provincetown, 1947

While emphasizing the role of talent in learning an art form, Hofmann never rejects the role of the teacher. Hofmann sees the arts teacher as having a role that affects society as a whole. It implies that the art educator must do more than teach technical methodology (1). He not only limited the problem of art education to artistic development, but also focused on the problems of how artists will produce, with a dedication to the general understanding of art and especially the taste of art (9).

In another statement, Hofmann; “As a teacher, I realized that talent is everywhere. Unless talent condenses with intelligence, one cannot be an artist. Although ignorance, mediocrity and selfishness only produce amateur masters, the searches and efforts of the artist personality are constantly based on suspicion and modesty” (10).

In an interview, Hofmann brilliantly described his teaching role: “This is a tremendous experience, teaching... I think there is no other man in the experience I have as a teacher in this world. As a result of years of teaching, I came to the conclusion that you cannot actually teach art; you cannot do this. You can let anyone paint, paint, have fun, but you can’t teach him the sixth sense. Everyone has more or less abilities, which then depends on the teacher how the skills are developed. Talent develops through external influences or work, not teacher force. You cannot interfere with it, you belong to a certain time. As you, you are the result of a certain time, you are the creator of this time. Everything passed down from generation to generation in a cycle makes your business important” (11).

In an earlier statement, Hofmann had said: “As an artist, I know that art cannot be taught. No one can make a musician unless he is born a musician. Likewise, as long as a person is not sensitive to art, no one can make him/her sensitive to art. The artist is always a mystery. An artist obliges himself to create a unique art language

by mastering long and deep artistic works. Educational opportunities and conceptual perception are of course a must in order to create a unique artist personality. Our time would really be very culturally deprived if it was not for art” (12).

Hofmann was concerned that he found the methodology of arts education in America too overly academic. Feeling that a country without its own art would fail, he developed an idea under the title of “Painting and Culture” (1): “Art education has a meaning for America, it must be more and more inclusive and more meaningful. The problem of civilizing this enormous country is not over yet. Art education should be aimed at enriching the student’s life. The teacher should be a guiding guide for the student, developing the power to “feel” living or inanimate things with sympathy and sensitivity” (9).

Hofmann saw art as a reflection or a mirror of the time it was produced. Therefore, the artist had an important role in interpreting and presenting the truth. Also, the art audience had a responsibility to use a trained intelligence. Hofmann said (1): “Art is essential for a holistic and balanced life, it must be an integral and permanent part of national culture. When America adds a unique art culture to its economic wealth, it will be one of the happiest countries in the world. It is a national duty to lead teachers and support emerging artists, and the insurance of spiritual vitality. We do what we do for art for ourselves, our children and our future” (9).

For these reasons, Hofmann thought it was important to develop a fine arts school in the USA to teach “modern art”. The main principle of his school should be freedom based on knowledge. The school was to bring American art into the mainstream of what is happening in the European art world. Thus, he hoped it would help American artists reflect their own culture (1).

He developed a strong philosophy and teaching method at the Munich School of Fine Arts and published his ideas in the 1915

Munich School bulletin (1): “Despite the abundance of the objects depicted, the work of art is a whole in spiritual form that preserves the integrity of the structural relationship, does not allow fragmentation. While the images in the work gain a holistic expression, the independent expression of the images reduces the spiritual value of the work. Thus, the artist must learn the basic principles that create the spiritual figurative language of fine arts. The artist must create his own view of nature, that is his own experience, whether it is about nature or independent of nature” (13).

In the bulletin of the 1947 New York School, Hofmann simplified this idea and said, “Despite the emphasis on fine arts; In fact, the knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of painting should provide the student with a conceptual basis to overcome problems in any field” (14).

In 1951, Art Digest magazine stated the following on the page it reserved for Hofmann’s biography: “His genius as a teacher stems first from his rational thought and respect for art laws, and secondly, from his ability to passionately and openly demonstrate what he says about art” (15).

The genius Hofmann taught thousands of students in New York for 25 years with his unique education and training philosophy. The majority of the people Hofmann trained were people who had an artistic education and had artistic personalities. They tried to take advantage of their advanced experience from a master. Hofmann’s interest and vast knowledge created an attractive learning focus for young artist candidates (1).

In 1958, Hans Hofmann closed his school. Published in 1959 a summary of educational experiences from past years (1): “Art teaching still climaxes today with an objective imitation of nature, an approach that tries to develop the conceptual, creative capacity in response to the student’s sensitivity and temperament on a purely aesthetic basis is rare. In the creative process, imitation should

not be allowed to have even the tiniest part. The creative impulse that dominates any talented person forces the first creative attempt. Talent is quite ordinary and by no means extraordinary. It is always perceived and experienced as a mystery within itself. Art education can bring about or destroy the creative impulse. But it doesn't matter to destroy creativity because a real, original talent will eventually come back. It will appear naively without any academic training. Allowing unlimited freedom in arts education will either reveal true talent or remove the mediocrity and all false mysteries of one's true nature. However, I must admit that allowing unlimited freedom in arts education can be bad for ordinary talent as well as good for a genuine and original talent. Unlimited freedom can be applied depending on the person concerned and other qualities that he presents as a person. It is clear that people who are not gifted can also be useful in professions they can tackle, but they can also hold themselves for a long time under the mysterious magic of art. A talent that burns too fast will not last. Only professional integrity, meticulous self-discipline and full knowledge of one's own will make up the master" (16).

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Figure Bibliography

1. **Figure 1:** Hans Hofmann <https://www.wikiart.org/en/hans-hofmann>
2. **Figure 2:** Prospectus of the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts, Munich, 1915 <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/hans-hofmann-papers-5966/subseries-2-1/box-4-folder-1>
3. **Figure 3:** Hans Hoffman with students at the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts, Provincetown, 1947 <https://www.artlyst.com/news/albert-kotin-early-new-york-school-abstract-expressionist/>

●Chapter-2●

**POSTMODERN ART, FOOD and
BEVERAGE ICON in CLAES
OLDENBURG'S INSTALLATIONS
and SOFT SCULPTURES**

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Abstract

The scope of this research is the examination of the life and art of Claes Oldenburg who is a sculptor of the Pop Art movement occurring and developing after 1960s within the concept of postmodern art. First of all, postmodernism was defined and the basic paradigm changes were compared with the previous period in the research. Afterwards, through an orientation towards Pop Art which is a postmodern movement, the formal and semantic dimensions of Claes Oldenburg's sculptures and soft objects were analyzed.

Claes Oldenburg's artistic career started as a painter but continued as a sculptor as he was impressed by the shop windows, graffiti, advertisements and piles of garbage in New York City and started to use these objects in his sculptures. Initially, he started to form different objects by painting plaster pieces, later he started to make soft objects and like the Pop Art artists, he began to create works of art by selecting his subjects from objects of consumption. His most famous works are different food objects formed by soft materials (cake slices, hamburgers, an ice-cream cone). He also has giant sculpture installations in public spaces. Analysing different social, cultural and political meanings and connotations of food icons in Oldenburg sculptures within the scope of the artistic tendency of the of the period and its relation with conceptual art was the aim of this study.

Keywords: Claes Oldenburg, Postmodern Art, Installation Art, Conceptual Art, Postmodernism

Introduction

This article presents a new approach from a wider perspective on the works of Claes Oldenburg including both the soft objects and sculptures starting from 1960s and sculpture projects he designed for public areas until the end of 1990s. The artistic expression forms of 1960s were primarily analyzed in this article based on the judgement that every artist belongs to his/her own period and is nourished by the data acquired through the cultural, social and political structure s/he lives in. Following a research line from general to specific, the reforms provided by postmodernism with its new tendencies apart from the traditional formation understandings are covered with the modernist approach of the previous period and the artistic reforms of the new period are analyzed. Then, Pop Art movement, also called as New Dadaism or New Realism, which emerged independently in USA and England in the late 1950s was analyzed in detail in the second part of the article. This section also presents inferential data on how and to what extent Oldenburg's biographical information was reflected in his art, the reason behind his choice of the food and beverage icons he used or the individual meaning of his orientation towards these images and re-interpretation of the reality.

After these analyses, starting from the reformed images of different consumption objects made of metal and plaster painting, a new analysis was made on the collective installations exhibited in a location he called 'Shop' (Pastry Case I, 1961-62), soft sculptures of remanufactured food items (Floor Cake, 1962) and finally large scale consumption items integrating with the urban structures in the public area and presenting a paradoxal approach on reality. This review covers the formal and contextual analysis process of Oldenburg's works.

Accordingly, with a semiotic approach on visual reality, it is concluded that Claes Oldenburg's transferral way of his own re-

ality and the expression of his perceptual experience not only follows a two-dimensional process of creation, but also uses different artistic expression such as painting, sculpture and architecture together. In addition, underlining Oldenburg's works carry concepts such as urban life, consumption culture and alienation to the visual reality, the position and significance of the artist in the cultural atmosphere of postmodernism is emphasized.

1. Modernist Approach and Postmodernist Culture

In historical process, important changes have occurred in the fields of science and art, parallel to the social structures and regimes. These changes occurred mainly due to philosophical transformations in thinking systems and have brought along a collective re-shaping by creating paradigm changes within the process.

Different thinking systems and philosophical analyses replaced the thinking systems prevalent in feudalism which is a regime based on land system and capitalism which is focused on money and capital in the post capitalism information society (post-industrial period) (which began with the development of technology and the spread of computer networks in the post-capitalist era of 1980s) and technological developments, mainly the dynamics in political structure, became an important driving force during this transformation process (Wallerstein, 2002; Akkaya, 2007).

Thomas S. Kuhn defines the main transformations in science as paradigms and usual scientific activities. In Kuhn's scientific philosophy, these concepts present a new paradigm occurring after a depression and the usual scientific activities occurring within this paradigm afterwards. Theorems and laws which are independent from one another or effecting one another directly or indirectly appear in each paradigm and these new theories continue

their progress until a new depression period (falsification of a law by experiments done in another scientific field or an experiment entering a vicious cycle by causing unsolvable results), until the accepted paradigm is unsatisfactory to respond to the new questions of the science (Kuhn, 1970).

In this respect, a parallel fictional structure is observed clearly when the change processes in the field of art are examined. There are movements and artist groups existing in a new paradigm occurring with basic changes in social systems and thinking patterns and again effecting one another directly or indirectly and providing the occurrence of a new society by criticizing the existential problems of one another. Just like the usual scientific activities of Kuhn continuing until a time of depression within a paradigm, these movements constitute a usual period of activity continuing until a new cultural induction period. In this direction, it is seen that the modernist philosophical movements with an experimental approach constitute the most important paradigm in the field of art and then the changes in radical belief and philosophical systems after the war created the next paradigm; postmodernism.

Analyzing this change and transformation system is important to understand how and why modern and postmodern periods replaced one another and how long they existed within one another and finally their basic characteristics. With this distinction, developmental stages of these two paradigm periods within the context of this article, the cultural structure Claes Oldenburg's art belongs to among the movements taking place as the usual activities of the last paradigm both by being denied and nourished by one another and which critical approach it has would be analyzed in detail.

When the idea of modernity is separated into two groups as historical and aesthetic modernity, the first of these presents a

new philosophical system belonging to an earlier period and covering a phase of a collective change in all the systems in question. However, when aesthetic modernity is examined, within the scope of this article and in a very general way; firstly the language influenced by religion in the Middle Ages in the field of art, then radical changes in the forms of approach to reality during and after the Renaissance, and the differentiated attitude of the artist's image against the external reality are expressed. "(...) aesthetic modernity should be understood as a crisis concept involved in a threefold dialectical opposition against tradition, modernity of bourgeois civilization (with its ideals of rationality, utility and progress) and, finally itself, as much as it perceives itself as a new tradition or form of authority" (Calinescu, 2013: 18). Accordingly, in the existence of aesthetic modernity, there is a criticism against the systems which are the product of the philosophical system of the industrialized societies which are the product of capitalism and also the previous period constituting the scope of this society. This criticism has brought along a new change in the approach of the artist's image to the concept of reality in the field of art. The artist presented his/her own reality instead of directly reflecting an external reality s/he sees and accordingly experienced a complete change (transformation) in sensual and visual concepts.

In 20th century, a new paradigm shift took place in the field of art, this change seemed to express a visual change in the formal structure but it basically occurred as a product of a new depression period in the whole world after the war, as a reaction against capitalism in which modernism was born. Apart from these dynamics, it has brought along many changes in the cultural field and has become the foundation of a radical transformation phase experienced in intellectual systems. In such an environment, while art inquires the perception of reality, its meaning and aim

and looks for a way out, a new production environment was entered on the other hand and modernism's of supreme fact has left its place to "whatever" slogan. Gradually, a new artist group, gallery and bourgeois class aesthetic emerged in pursuit of art works called kitsch art and market appreciation.

Although a definite time cannot be stated for the period when postmodernist culture didn't pursue admiration and got normalized, as the artists led towards the eclectic structure of postmodernism as the art movements occurring successively after 1960 questioned objective existence and arts of photography and movie quitted being a different branch of art through their revival (the first demonstrators of this structure were seen in Dada shows), a new era in which an interdisciplinary field of art made its presence felt, the aim became more important than the context and the borders between life and art disappeared.

Another aim of Dada shows was to criticize bourgeois aesthetics which is the taste judgements of Aristocrates in modernism and thus to remove the borders between the high and low art (this will be covered in detail later). According to Fineberg (2014: 18); "While modernism emphasizes common sense, objectivity and progress, the attitude started to be called as postmodernism even questions whether they would exist or not." Greenberg approached the concept of postmodernist culture from a different perspective and interpreted modernist revolution, not as the expression or political image of technology which started to rise or the return of art to primeval realities, but as the self re-exploration of art (Connor, 2005: 124). In other words, Greenberg isolated this new era he called as modernism after modernism from the periodical and social developments and stated that the art followed formal and stylistic aesthetical perception.

So, the concept of postmodernism presents a fundamental change in the concepts of vision and perception from a new per-

spective. While through modernism, the artist learned how to reflect the things s/he sees by transforming the act of seeing into his/her own perceptual reality instead of presenting them in the systematic order they should be seen, postmodernism provided the re-design of this perceptual reality, basically the transformation of the objective reality of nature, modelling of concepts and trial of new expression possibilities. Rules and strict borders of modelling of appearance were removed and new expression possibilities replaced the old modelling understandings in the cultural environment of this new era.

2. Pop Art Movement and the Life and Art of Claes Oldenburg

In the previous section, it was stated that the Dadaist actions emerged as a criticism of the supreme art concept created by modernist culture which is a product of the capitalist society. Turning their back on the naive artistic understanding, these artists pursued the pluralism in art and produced works presenting a criticism against the leading effect of money and capital on the art. In 1950s, together with Pop Art, the postmodernist culture carried this approach further but this occurred not in a form different from Dadaism or as a reaction against the capitalist culture but with an identity nourished from it. Towards the end of 1950s, a radical change occurred in the perspective of the individual towards the external reality mainly due to the technological developments, the phase of change in the social structure and thus new possibilities in the thinking systems. Following the devastating effect of the camera over canvas throughout modernism, postmodernist culture was lead towards new expression possibilities with the development of camera and animation arts. Plato's expression of 'an imitation of an imitation' described in the theory of ideas has turned into a new adaptation in the field of art, where

cheap copies took the place of real artworks and this phenomenon of consumption began to spread rapidly in all areas of life.

Parallel to many other paradigm shifts throughout the world after the war, a new shift occurred also in the field of art, in the late 1950s, instead of re-interpreting reality just like modernism, Pop Art took the reality as it is and benefited from its capitalist side within its complete existential structure. Expression of the fact that Pop Art movement is the pioneer of the new paradigm with a deliberate approach within the article was primarily due to its positive and negative contributions in the field of art. Developments in copying technologies have placed mass production copies against the supreme art phenomenon of modernism and this brought along the reality of the degeneration in art and the loss of its value while facilitating the reachability of art by larger masses of people. A new culture called the culture of consumption occurred due to the rapid distribution of mass production objects and this culture marketed all images of the changing world as a material of art. In this new cultural environment, the artist not only expanded the borders of art by reinterpreting the images of the popular culture with his/her own sense of reality in different stylistic structures and also the world outside the individual, the external reality, was reinterpreted as an art object in this sense.

According to Timucin; “In any case, it is our point of view which aestheticizes the objects. There are no objects which are spontaneously aesthetical or became spontaneously aesthetical” (2013: 153). The subject transforms the object into an aesthetic object by turning it into an aesthetical object through his/her own inner sense by determining the object through his/her own perception of nature or determines that object as an aesthetical object of his or her own. Aestheticizing an object is above all providing it a humanistic form and meaning. 153). “(...) By de-

termining the aesthetical object, the artist makes the human being a part of the nature. Aesthetic object shines where man meets nature” (2013: 153). In the process of postmodernism, nature and art make it an object. In this sense, an integration, an intertwining sensation and eclectic form in artistic language of expression emerges.

Although the works of Claes Oldenburg create a simple visual sensation as the re-expression of the nature using an artistic language of expression as pursued by modernism, it basically presents the eclectic form of postmodernism with its most significant characteristics. In his works, there is an artistic form of expression in which the shaping of the visual material is not only limited to the pictorial expression but is also followed the three-dimensioned formation understandings (these works are again a reflection of the consumption culture occurring with postmodernism) and they existed as a part of the architecture and urban life in his recent works and also in which new fictional locations are created with a reactionary approach to the gallery system of modernism. This criticizing approach can be clearly noticed in his expression “I am for an art that embroils itself with the everyday crap and still comes out on top.” (Oldenburg, 1961; Harrison and Wood, 2016: 787). This is also a re-interpretation and expression from a different reflection for the art perception the Pop Art artists, especially Andy Warhol, wanted to reach.

In this new cultural environment, after the art education he took in the middle of 1950s, Claes Oldenburg settled in New York in 1956 and was influenced by showcases, advertisements and all images of the consumption culture and changed his discipline from painting to sculpture and in 1960s, he started to make plaster sculptures of the food and beverage items and exhibit them in a showcase he called as “The Store”. Again, in those years, he created new formations by gathering humans, sounds,

movements and objects and then he made giant sculptures made of different fabrics and filled them with different materials. These years include the period in which Pop Art movement became strongly popular in USA. The most important artists of the movement such as Richard Hamilton, Robert Rauschenberg, Roy Lichtenstein, Tom Wesselmann and Andy Warhol created a new perception of art by considering the consumption items of the popular culture from their own approaches of reality. Claes Oldenburg is one of the artists playing an important role in the emergence of a new art perception with a similar language of expression.

In this new cultural environment called postmodernist period, Oldenburg not only reinterpreted the images, but also followed an important commentary tendency of carrying the concepts and facts in all fields such as the city as a whole, urban life, motivational structure of human beings and their basic needs from their positions in the new reality to the field of art. Each of these images are represented by objects of worship for cultural consumption fact and when these objects are enlarged and located in a gallery, moving away from their real reason for existence which is being eaten and they tend towards a common aim with an object shown everyday in TV commercials. Although these objects are the images of everyday crap as Oldenburg expresses, gaining a superior identity, they become an object of art for the society. In this sense, the most important characteristic of Pop Art movement is the almost complete removal of the distinction between art and life. Although modernism is interpreted as the interventions of moving away from the distinction between the life and superior aesthetics of the previous period in a way, postmodern art movements occurred as a result of the changes brought by postmodernist culture which can succeed this completely. The pioneer of this new paradigm was Pop Art movement.

2.1. Reproduction Food Image: Metal and Plaster Painting Sculptures:

The first works of Claes Oldenburg in 1960s were food and beverage items made with a mixture of metal and plaster and painted with plastic paint. These works were the metaphorical connotations of the mass production objects resulting from the consumption culture and the consumption based both on the form and use of material and the image chosen and through there works the artist reinterpreted all opportunities of the arts of painting and sculpture. In the examined plaster painting works of Oldenburg, some connotations of fast living fact which became prevalent in all Europe and USA in 1960s and was a result of capitalist societies and information age are observed in terms of shaping the material. These studies not only removed the border between the arts of painting and sculpture as dadaists turning the human acts into art by widening the area of art, but also provided a new reality to the art by choosing the art material among food and beverage items which are the basic needs of human beings as the popular culture carrying all objects in daily life to the are of the art. Claes Oldenburg attributed human qualities to these objects, made them erotic, transformed them from organic to geometric and made the opposite or enlarged them on an architectural scale through formal connotations that layered each object with alternative definitions” (Fineberg, 2014: 187).



Figure 1: Claes Oldenburg, *Pie La Mode*, 1962, Muslin soaked in plaster over wire frame, painted with enamel, 33x50.8x48.3 cm. Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

“Pie La Mode” (Figure 1) which is one of Oldenburg’s first plaster sculptures made in 1962 is the reshaping of a piece of cake which can easily be seen in a shop window during the clutter of the daily life and forming it by giving a causality other than its natural material and presentation aim. While the vivid and instinctive movement in the colouring of the work can be seen as a reference to the Abstract Expressionist movement and especially the paintings of Jackson Pollock, it also presents a new point of view on the speed and changing images of the information age. The brilliance of the plastic paint brings an appetizing look to

the slice of cake, just like the images or slogans used by the advertisements to highlight the product they want to sell among its kind. While the other artists of the era, just like Richard Hamilton, carried this consumption phenomenon of the society they live in to the field of art with the collages they formed by random images chosen from the commercial pages of the magazines and newspapers, it is observed that Oldenburg materialized the same images by recreating them and changing their meaning and aim and turning them into objects of art.



Figure 2: Claes Oldenburg, Strawberry Shortcake, 1961, Muslin soaked in plaster over wire, painted with enamel, 17.7 x 12 x 9.5 cm.

Figure 3: Claes Oldenburg, Hamburger with Pickle and Olive, 1962.

Oldenburg collected all objects which were meaningful for him (banners, scrap on the streets, crushed tins, papers, boards) and all popular culture images - advertisements, street signs, restaurant displays, wall writings - that are and included them in an aesthetical re-formation phase and thus presented a development parallel to the language of the changing world and the society in which he went through a phase of self-recognition and creation within the new reality. Instead of gathering these objects on a painting platform in their original form and preserving their ma-

terial characteristics just like Robert Rauschenberg, Claes Oldenburg redefined these objects with their real visual characteristics and stated this as “What I see is not the object itself but -myself- in its form” (Oldenburg, 1970: 48; Fineberg, 2014: 187). When his works named “Strawberry Shortcake” (*Figure 2*) and “Hamburger with Pickle and Olive” (*Figure 3*) were examined, both in the form (simple forms, stains of paints applied quickly, etc.) and the context (selected image being a consumable item, creating a temporary perception, etc.), it is observed that the changing consumption understanding of the era was visualized by being transferred to the personal sensual perception. Colours are vivid and bright, again the paint used increases the reality illusion of the material just like the appetizing images of the popular culture. So “the vivacious excitement of motion” was reinterpreted as if you are looking at hundreds of interesting images you see on the shop windows when walking on the streets of a city (Fineberg 2014: 188).

2.2. Showcase Installations

Oldenburg brought together all the plaster painting sculptures he reformed in 1961 in a gallery he called “The Store”. The artist describes his reason for creating this gallery as; “... He said “An ‘artistic’ appearance or content was produced from the referral of the object, the origin of the object is neither the object itself, nor me. These objects are exhibited in a gallery, but this is not the place they belong to. A store would have been better (Store-a place full of objects)...” (Oldenburg, 1961; Harrison and Wood, 2016: 787). The store was located on a busy street and with its cheap cloth shops and buffets, its vibrant structure was in a complete harmony with the effect Oldenburg wanted to create. “The shop was a warm room full of hamburgers, tennis shoes, packed shirt-tie combinations, reliefs of the Pepsi symbols and sewing machines ...” (Fineberg, 2014: 188). All objects exhibited

here were irregularly shaped and reproduced plaster and bright coloured objects with no definite borders. These objects almost completely removed the border between life and art as a referral to the consumption fact and the complicated structure and crowdedness of the period in terms of both their placement and gathering of hundreds of independent images.

His work called “Pastry Case I” (Figure 4) is an image from The Store where plaster painting sculptures Oldenburg made between 1961 and 1962 were exhibited in showcases as the images on the shop windows randomly seen in any place in the city. This work of Oldenburg who stated that he worked on very simple objects he saw while walking on the street also created a new reality in which the copies of the images seen in the real world were gathered in groups. While the colours and the forms of the objects attract attention with all their attractiveness, these create both an appetizing effect and present a new point of view on the causality of the art since they are uneatable. This new approach also creates an environment of tension caused by this contrast and according to Oldenburg, this forms the source of his art. This tension and clutter of meaning is like the presentation of the popular culture and consumption understanding.



Figure 4: Claes Oldenburg, Pastry Case I, 1961-62, Burlap and muslin soaked in plaster, painted with enamel, metal bowls, and ceramic plates in glass-and-metal case, 52.7 x 76.5 x 37.3 cm

“Glass Case with Pies” (Figure 5) is one of the many showcase appearances of Claes Oldenburg’s created in the same years. The pies located on one another in a showcase are again on the market with all their bright colours and appetizing effects. The placement of different colours on different floors with different colour schemes is a demonstrator of the continuing validity of the aesthetic concern. While these sculptures create an ironic delusion as they are uneatable despite their realistic appearance, sacred place perception for museum and art galleries and again the contrast presented by his gallery called The Store create a parallelism. Gallery image which sold the art and the artist all through modernism was excluded from Oldenburg’s Store with all other concepts and forms the new era left behind. In this “new gallery” all the noise and dirt of the street and all perception-

al images of the culture were reproduced and were located next to one another without any distinction. Just this characteristic of Oldenburg who stated that he loves working on simple ideas and images seen everyday demonstrates that he is not just an artist of his time but added a new identity to art not only by observing the images in the popular cultural environment of the society he lives in but also through re-interpreting and drifting them back into life.



Figure 5: Claes Oldenburg, Glass Case with Pies (Assorted Pies in a Case), 1962, Burlap soaked in plaster, painted with enamel, with pie tins, in glass-and-metal case, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

2.3. Soft Sculptures

The exhibition of Oldenburg opened in Green Gallery in 1962 was filled with new and large dimensioned soft objects created by being impressed by the cars located in an area he saw in a car gallery. The images in his previous works were enlarged to real car dimensions in this study and were made of synthetic fabric and canvas filled with sponge instead of plaster painting this time. According to Fineberg, “A comparison with surrealism was inevitable as the radical shift in the scale and transformation of familiar objects to soft sculptures gave them an aura resembling a dream” (2014: 189). In terms of its form, it even had a surrealist effect. But Oldenburg’s works were a constant effort for self-discovery. These objects were re-interpreted in the middle of the clutter of external reality and made a contribution on his own life.

“Floor Cake” (*Figure 6*) is one of the first big dimensioned soft sculptures of Oldenburg. In these works, a transformation re-occurred in the perception of reality which is already scattered in plaster sculptures. The solid and hard structure of the art of sculpture creates an ironic contrast in these soft and colourful sculptures. So this study, both in terms of form and subject, challenges the established philosophical structure and ductility principle of ‘fine arts’ and gathers humour and irony in a single image. According to Lynton, using bigger dimensions than the normal is connected to the symbols which are sacred and universal. Both challenging and using these general rules, Oldenburg leads us to question the rules which we accept as usual and were actually determined before us” (Lynton, 1991: 304).



Figure 6: Claes Oldenburg, Floor Cake (A Giant Piece of Cake), 1962, Synthetic polymer paint and latex on canvas filled with foam rubber and cardboard boxes, 148.2 x 290.2 x 148.2 cm

“Floor Burger” which is another soft object of Oldenburg in the same exhibition (Figure 7) consists of three separate filled-in pieces. Each piece was filled with fabric and cartoon pieces in different dimensions and forms and these were located one on another and acrylic paint was used in order to present the image of the modelling object in the final stage. In this form, “Floor Burger” is not different from a hamburger in any food chain significantly observed in especially the American food market with the occurrence of consumption culture. The aspect distinguishing it from reality is the fact that the image was taken from a restaurant where it should be and is being exhibited in the middle of a gallery after being enlarged to a car size. In some resources, it is stated that his Freud readings are the reason behind his gradual tendency to use fabric and canvas which is suitable for soft objects rather than plaster and metal which he used before. From this point of view, it is also understood that these objects and numerous soft objects he made later are associated with sexuality (a human characteristic is attributed). A soft tissue and a shapeable

form constitute the basic characteristic of the human body. Oldenburg's works create an appearance gradually becoming more vivid by using the qualities of the material in this sense. As the change occurring in the tissue of human skin or in the soft tissue of hamburger bread when pressure is applied, in these studies, it is demonstrated that the inorganic form is transferred into an organic appearance. Perception of reality is questioned one more time in these studies too, as in plaster sculptures and the canvas of modernism becomes a sculpture material in the beginning of postmodernism (in Oldenburg's works) and later a new reality is created in which the same material has different mutual usage characteristics with architecture in the works of Christo Javacheff and Jeanne-Claude.



Figure 7: Claes Oldenburg, Floor Burger, 1962, Acrylic on canvas filled with foam rubber and cardboard boxes, 132.1 x 213.4 cm

2.4. Paradoxical Approach to Reality: Food Icon in the Public Area

Modernist paradigm and each art movement included in this paradigm were defined as a group of figures criticizing the previous art trend entering in a new formation. But when examined as a whole, a condition of continuity and following one another was valid as in the traditional scientific understanding. When all art trends occurring successively after the post-war period we call as postmodernist paradigm and the 1950s are examined, as in contemporary understanding of science, traditional idea of progress was left behind and leaving linear continuity and questioning the existence of different societies and concepts, very different formal changes were experienced at the same time. So a new era in which the developmental line occurred in the form of drifts occurred.

In 1960s, a new tendency which would later be called as Conceptual Art emerged in art market and gained many supporters. Leaving the formal structure of art, these artists started to question and examine its nature. Towards the end of 1960s, a new tendency called as Land Art emerged and the new tendency turned the art into the land itself by tearing down the walls of the gallery. According to Yılmaz; “From now on, the base of this new gallery is the earth and its ceiling is the sky” (2013: 306). It was inevitable for Oldenburg not to be effected by these new forms of discourse since he lived in a society where the mentioned philosophical changes existed.

Oldenburg who headed from small dimensioned plaster sculptures to car size soft objects changed his field and material again and gradually headed to large scaled installation in an architectural scale in his recent works. He presented the drawings of these large-dimensioned sculptures together with the soft objects in the exhibition organized in New York in 1966 and “Lipstick” which is his first monumental work was located in Yale University cam-

pus in 1969. Although it is observed that he initially moved away from the food image in these monumental works, in latter years, food and beverage figures which are the most important consumables of the society he lives in gradually became the subject of his art. Contrary to Michael Heizer's removing of giant pieces of rocks from their original places and locating them in the middle of the city, Oldenburg's images in the middle of the city were visual realities he created. Contrary to the other artists in his time, Oldenburg didn't cover nature as the subject of his art within its own reality and regarded external reality as a medium of conveyance his own language of discourse. Food and beverage items which are the reflection of consumption culture became gigantic this time and were located in public places and the transformation in the conveyance was also interpreted as the demonstrator of an intervention for his including architecture in his art.



Figure 8: Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, Spoonbridge and Cherry, 1988, Stainless steel and aluminium painted with polyurethane enamel, 9 x 15.7 x 4.1 m, Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

“Spoonbridge and Cherry” (Figure 8) which is the product of a mutual project he made with his wife Coosje van Bruggen in 1988 is among his most important works which visualized the scale change in his works. The installation which presents the image of a giant spoon and cherry located in the garden of an art gallery also carries the traces of a surrealistic line both in form (dimension, material, etc) and contextual structure (reason for locating, its indifferent position to its surrounding, etc) This work also presents the most significant demonstrators of freedom opportunities for reflecting new intellectual styles replacing the eclectic structure and superior aesthetics of postmodernist paradigm. Nature quitted being a subject of painting (modernism) and reformation of its pieces, objects quitted reflecting the nature of art (first tendencies of postmodernism) and a formed nature image gradually became the expression of Oldenburg’s art.



Figure 9: Claes Oldenburg, Dropped Cone, 2001, Stainless and galvanized steels, fiber-reinforced plastic, balsawood; painted with polyester gelcoat, 12.1 m. high x 5.8 m. diameter, Neumarkt Galerie, Cologne, Germany

2000s present the reflection of a world perspective and social order in which the capitalist society was gradually replaced by the information society and money and capital-focused way of life was evolved into a new way of life which is focused on information and speed. While the phenomenon of consumption continued its strong presence in every field of life, the new century has brought along an era in which new developments in information and thus social, political and art field are experienced. This new era called as new avant-garde in the field of art changes towards a new vision with the developments in computer technologies. While the art of painting is moving on a new figurative line, sculpture transformed into big projects in an architectural scale and photograph and film technologies acquired a new identity with different dimensional characteristics with the development of new techniques unreachable in the previous century and graphic and typography fields acquired an interactive quality in media. Shortly, the first demonstrators of a new paradigm started to emerge but the questions which could be answered by the old paradigm were yet incomplete. This new era has brought along some changes in the philosophical structure in Oldenburg's work, although not in formal scale.

“Dropped Cone” (Figure 9) located on the top of a shopping centre in Köln occurred due to a locating project considered against the crowdedness of the city and the narrowness of the streets. Thus, the work initially planned to be located in an open area was located on the top of a building. The work which became an architectural project also makes a referral to the cathedrals of the city. The counter shaped structure of ice-cream image constituting the subject of the study reveals the image of an ice-cream melting down the windows and reflects the understanding of consumption which is a result of the popular culture in which a product disappears rapidly starting from the moment it is re-

leased and a new product replaces it. Also both its location on top of an architectural building and the content of the subject chosen revealed both the changing intellectual structure of Oldenburg's art and the social contradiction of the changing age by referring to the fact of exaggeration in the society.

3. Methods

While the universe of the research was defined as the post-modern period in art and the postmodernist artistic movements that constituted this period, the works of Claes Oldenburg were chosen as sample. An analysis was formed on the expressions of artistic discourse was formed for the artists using the findings acquired by making an interrelated analysis of the works of artists chosen and these expressions were evaluated for the common and different discourses by comparing with Claes Oldenburg's art. In the final stage, Claes Oldenburg's works were mutually compared with the art of the era by analysing the descriptive form and content and the formal structure of the works was analyzed by considering the formal structure, materials used, place, technique and other characteristics and also the subject chosen as content, the source of the trend and the semantic structure behind the expression.

4. Conclusion

As the result of the analyses, it is observed that Claes Oldenburg's art carries the traces of postmodern art and new paradigm's basic dynamics, the concepts and images of the era were carried to the concept of art by re-creating on an interdisciplinary line and these works presented gradually move on a different line from the artists of the era in terms of creating a new reality. This new reality has centred on the images of the surrounding world and has embodied these images into new fictional settings

through distortions and contextual changes. This transformation improved by articulating on one another and Oldenburg's art gradually compels the borders of painting and sculpture and a new aesthetical perception was created in the field of architecture with the monumental works presented in the last period.

In this sense, it is concluded that as an artist of his society, Oldenburg adapted himself to the changing language of the changing world and information and technology, consumption and creation concepts turned into observable qualitative items and criticism and irony became the main language of narration used for re-creation of the entity in the reality of the artist. Oldenburg chose the images quickly consumed in a world changing quickly as a subject and expressed the fact of humans losing their importance in a commoditised world through his choice of material in his sculptures and also the ironic reflection of the new world understanding replaced by serial production and aesthetics replaced by function through meta objects taken to heights which melt, are softened and abnormal when their own reality is considered. Even though these objects don't present their existence with a significant teleological necessity, they are shaped in the cultural environment of the new era as a demonstrator of the individual estranged both to him/herself and the external reality. As the result of these analyses, it was concluded that the force of illusion creation present in Oldenburg's works are caused by his gathering the traditional forming methods and contemporary expression facilities and also the synthesis of many recognized reflection understandings of the past and the freedom of narration in his period.

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