

From Waste to Art: A Study on Student Creativity and Creative Expression through Recycled Materials in Art Education

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Atıktan Sanata: Sanat Eğitiminde Geri Dönüştürülmüş Malzemeler Aracılığıyla Öğrenci Yaratıcılığı ve Yaratıcı İfade Üzerine Bir Çalışma

ABSTRACT

In this study, the use of waste materials as a teaching resource in art classes is examined. Trabzon University, Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, Department of Painting third-year students first collected and sorted textile wastes that were randomly thrown into the environment, and then transformed these waste materials into works of art with wood printing method in the school's printing workshop. In this study, which adopted exploratory, experimental and descriptive research methods, a total of 12 artworks produced in this way were analyzed. The study reveals the differences in classroom atmosphere and student performance when instructional resources are used or not used. It also emphasizes that inappropriate management of textile waste is an important factor causing environmental pollution and draws attention to the effects of textile waste visually and intellectually. The aim of this study is to increase the awareness of environmental aesthetics and environmental awareness in society. In the research, students were given information about wood printing technique and the place of recycling in art, and then, in the light of this information, students transformed the fabric wastes they collected into artistic compositions. This process allowed the students to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice and also contributed to their environmental awareness. These works were designed according to the color element and the principle of balance. Artists use colors to describe and depict the subject matter in their works. Also, the principle of balance is important for a work to be clear and harmonious. It is important to balance the elements correctly so that all elements are harmonious. Therefore, students were asked to create their compositions according to these two elements. Finally, students were encouraged to participate in comments and critiques and a program was organized to discuss art production together.

Keywords: Recycling, Waste Material, Sustainability, Woodcut Printing, Colage

Öz

Araştırmada, atık malzemelerin sanat derslerinde öğretim kaynağı olarak kullanımı incelenmektedir. Trabzon Üniversitesi Güzel Sanatlar ve Tasarım Fakültesi Resim Bölümü üçüncü sınıf öğrencileri, öncelikle çevreye gelişi güzel atılmış tekstil atıklarını toplayıp ayırmış ve ardından bu atık malzemeleri okulun baskı atölyesinde ahşap baskı yöntemiyle birer sanat eserine dönüştürmüştür. Keşfedici, deneysel ve betimsel araştırma yöntemlerini benimseyen bu araştırmada, bu şekilde üretilmiş toplam 12 adet sanat eseri analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma, öğretim kaynaklarının kullanıldığı veya kullanılmadığı durumlarda sınıf atmosferi ve öğrenci performansı açısından meydana gelen farklılıkları ortaya koymaktadır. Aynı zamanda, tekstil atıklarının uygunsuz yönetiminin çevre kirliliğine sebep olan önemli bir faktör olduğunu vurgulamakta ve görsel ile düşünsel anlamda tekstil atıklarının etkilerine dikkat çekmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, toplumda çevre estetiği ve çevre bilinci duyarlılığını artırmaktır. Araştırmada, öğrencilere ahşap baskı tekniği ve geri dönüşümün sanattaki yeri hakkında bilgi verilmiş, ardından bu bilgiler ışığında öğrenciler, topladıkları kumaş atıklarını sanatsal kompozisyonlara dönüştürmüşlerdir. Bu süreç, öğrencilerin teorik bilgilerini pratikte uygulamalarına olanak tanımış ve aynı zamanda çevre bilinci kazanmalarına katkı sağlamıştır. Bu eserler renk unsuru ve denge prensibine göre tasarlanmıştır. Sanatçılar, eserlerinde konuyu betimlemek ve tasvir etmek için renkleri kullanırlar. Ayrıca, denge ilkesi bir eserin net ve uyumlu olması için önemlidir. Tüm unsurların uyumlu olması için unsurların doğru şekilde dengelenmesi önemlidir. Dolayısıyla öğrencilerden kompozisyonlarını bu iki unsura göre oluşturmaları istenmiştir. Son olarak, öğrencilerin yorum ve eleştirilere katılımı teşvik edilmiş ve sanat üretimini birlikte ele almak üzere bir program düzenlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Geri Dönüşüm, Atık Malzeme, Sürdürülebilirlik, Ahşap Baskı, Kolaj



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Introduction

According to research, of the 100 billion tons of textile products produced annually worldwide, 92 million tons end up in landfills as waste. To put the magnitude of this issue into perspective, it means that every second, a waste-filled garbage truck is being dumped into a landfill. If this trend continues, it is expected that within a decade, the volume of textile waste will increase to 134 million tons per year. Additionally, if textile production continues at this scale and no measures are taken to mitigate textile waste, the sector's global emissions are likely to double by the end of the decade (Gupta et al., 2022).

Since fabric, a textile product, is the most used material in the fashion industry, this makes the textile sector one of the most polluting industries. It can be easily stated that the sector, which produces a significant amount of waste each year and consumes energy resources at a high rate, is not very environmentally friendly. Therefore, well-known brands should strive not only to use new designs and high-quality raw materials but also to make their products more environmentally friendly to attract more customers (Wang, 2006, p. 29). Billions of garments and shoes are produced and sold annually in the global fashion industry. A significant portion of this production turns into waste each year, with only 20% of this waste being recyclable or reusable. As a result, the fashion industry rapidly depletes energy resources and pollutes the environment recklessly and at a great pace (Jayanti & Widyarko, 2021, p. 2). It is a well-known fact that certain chemicals harmful to human health and the environment are used in some stages of fabric production. These substances include pesticides used in cotton production or the cultivation of its raw materials, as well as chemicals added during the dyeing process and the transformation of raw materials into textiles (Koç & Çinçik, 2010, p. 2). Some of these substances infiltrate drinking water, and even after undergoing purification processes, it is not always possible to eliminate these chemicals. Unfortunately, this leads to numerous diseases in humans, including cancer. With the growth and development of the fashion industry over time, a negative impact on the environment has emerged, causing pollution in various forms. Considering the continuously increasing demand for clothing, bags, shoes, and other items, the only way to reduce this pollution and destructive impact is to minimize waste production, use fewer energy resources, and strive to produce green, sustainable, and recyclable products (Finn, 2015, p. 29). In this context, we are aware that conventional waste management methods such as incineration, landfilling, and open dumping have always existed. However, these practices result in the contamination of water and soil, leading to increasing concerns about the lack of an integrated approach to waste management in the country (Yücel & Tiber, 2018).

Combating the destructive impacts created by humans on Earth, such as textile waste, requires a multidimensional approach that involves not only scientists but also engineers, politicians, and artists (Chavan, 2014, p. 81). Art can synthesize complex scientific knowledge and convey it to the audience, offer new perspectives on issues, touch people's emotions, and create a climate of engagement. Art can move emotions, develop empathy, capture the multisensory nature of experiences, and promote self-reflection and awareness about complex environmental changes (Curtis, et al., 2012, p. 2-3). Therefore, it plays an important role in expanding this area of effort and potentially having a significant impact on public attitudes (Favero et al., 2017, p. 35). In this context, many contemporary artists express their personal concerns about environmental sensitivity and sustainability through diversified forms of creative art. Some artists use waste materials that pollute the environment and disrupt aesthetics to create installations, collages, and assemblages in their artistic productions.

This study aims to raise awareness among third-year students of the Painting Department at Trabzon University's Faculty of Fine Arts and Design about environmental issues and ecological dynamics. By reducing textile waste, the study seeks to propose sustainability and cohabitation through art. The aim is to produce recycled art using textile waste and the woodcut printing method in the printmaking workshop. The following topics are examined within the scope of the research:

1. What are the possible impacts of fabric waste in the environment we live in?
2. What are the potentials of using recycled art as a sensitization tool to reduce fabric pollution?
3. How can artworks be designed and produced from fabric waste, and how can they be used to raise awareness about environmental pollution caused by fabric waste?

Recycling and sustainability are of great importance for society as they provide a roadmap for reducing the problem of environmental pollution. The use of collage works produced from waste fabric, which will be analyzed in the study, to create environmental awareness serves as a form of transforming waste into something useful that will contribute to environmental sustainability. The importance of the concept of recycling in art has been researched as a subject for years. In the previous researches in this context; Dağ (2020), in her study "Görsel Sanatlar Dersinde Atık Nesnelere İşlevselliği Olan Tasarım Çalışmaları Uygulama Örneği", conducted at Gazi University Eğitim Bilim Sciences Institute, discussed the transformation of waste materials in art into toys with primary school students. Mamur (2017), on the other hand, in her article "Sanat Eğitiminde Sürdürülebilirlik ve Çevre Eğitimi Üzerine Bir Çalışma" in Ege

Education Magazine, conducted research within the scope of producing three-dimensional art works with waste materials with primary school students. Sağlam & Enginoğlu (2016) examined the place of waste materials in art education in their article "Atık Nesnelere Sanat Eğitiminde Kullanılması" in *Western Anatolian Journal of Educational Sciences*. Bekar (2023), on the other hand, examined the transformation of waste objects into seating objects used indoors with university students in her article "Mobilya Tasarımında Atık Malzeme Kullanımının Örnekler Üzerinden Değerlendirilmesi" in the *Journal of Art and Design*. In their article "Sürdürülebilir Eğitim Materyallerinde İllüstratif Yaklaşımlar ve Bir Öneri" Yurtkulu & Yavlak (2022) in the *Journal of Art-e Sanat*, examine illustrative approaches used in picture books and aim to raise environmental awareness in children. They analyze the "Live with Zero Waste" series, evaluating the role of visuals created from recycled materials in sustainable education and in her article, "Kolaj Tekniği ve Yaratıcı Sanat Eğitimi İçin Önemi" in the *idil journal*, Uz (2023), examines the importance of the collage technique in art education for fostering free thinking, creative expression, and imagination in students. The study addresses the role of collage in artistic production and its impact on nurturing creative individuals, presenting its findings through a literature review and descriptive analysis.

The content and significance of this research involve examining the process of Trabzon University Faculty of Fine Arts students transforming textile waste into artistic products through woodcut printing. Furthermore, this study and the resulting artworks, when embraced under the idea of reusing waste for artistic expression, potentially create job opportunities for students in their fields of study. One aim of the study is to enhance both students' and academics' creative subconscious and contribute to creating a greener world. Without achieving this development, students would solely rely on technical application and fail to reach cognitive depth necessary for understanding.

This study could enhance its contribution by offering suggestions for future research. For instance, exploring the transformation of different waste materials into art or conducting similar studies with different age groups could broaden the knowledge in this field and offer new perspectives.

Methods

Trabzon University Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, Department of Painting, third year students and the Practical Workshop II course were selected for the research. This research consists of four stages. In the first stage, the history and technique of woodcut printing technique and the works of artists in this field were conveyed to the students. In the second stage, the meaning of recycling, how it is applied and

examples in the context of art were presented to the students. In the third stage, students were asked to collect discarded fabric wastes in the environment. In the fourth and final stage, the collected fabrics were cut and placed on paper according to the selected composition in the printing workshop of the faculty, and after the 15x15 cm woods were carved, they were turned into works of art by printing on them. These works were designed according to the color element and the principle of balance. Artists use colors to describe and depict the subject in their works (Mittler, 1994, p. 8). In addition, the principle of balance is important for a work to be clear and harmonious. When not aligned correctly, elements and the overall structure can appear disorganized and cluttered. It is important to balance the elements correctly so that all elements are harmonious (Güngör, 1972, p. 41). Therefore, students were asked to create their compositions according to these two factors. Finally, participation in students' comments and critiques was encouraged and a program was organized to address art production together. This method can be expanded in different educational institutions through online learning platforms or collaborative projects. Students working together on recycling and creative processes can enhance artistic interaction across schools. Additionally, social responsibility projects can be integrated to raise environmental awareness, ensuring that art contributes to societal impact.

Results

Recycling and Recycled Art

The concept of recycling as a societal issue is unclear in terms of when it first emerged. Environmental experts, in collaboration with a group of archaeologists, have discovered that ancient peoples, who lived before us, maintained a green lifestyle by recycling their waste. According to the findings, ancient humans produced new materials by recycling tools they used in daily life, creating new items from broken tools made of stone and bone (Benek, 2023). The concept of recycling generally means to reuse, revitalize, replace and repair. In general terms, recycling is the process of returning waste, garbage or unusable materials back into the production cycle and transforming them into the same product or another product (Baudrillard, 2004, p. 49). In order to solve the problems related to recycling, which is one of the most important and popular issues of our time, it is necessary to take steps towards sustainable environmental and economic development and to ensure that the macro and basic development views in the country are compatible with environmental protection (Yücel, 2003). It is an undeniable reality that we have to use natural resources to meet the needs of society and the individuals living in it. However, the

use of natural resources can be minimized by increasing resource efficiency and preferring clean energy sources and recycling materials. Therefore, moving towards recycling and sustainable development of natural resources requires fundamental changes in human attitudes and behaviors (Hiller-Connell & Kozar, 2014, p. 72). Among the existing waste management methods, recycling is considered to be the most effective, efficient and sustainable. By specifying all existing waste utilization processes, it confirms that recycling is recognized as one of the most innovative ways to manage a reasonable amount of waste in the environment and reduce negative impacts on residents. However, recycling is the most preferred method compared to landfilling and incineration (thermal or energy recovery) (Woolridge et al., 2006, p. 96).

At the beginning of the 21st century, criticism of the new age of industry and consumerism was on the rise, leading to an analysis of the very nature of artworks and materials. Manco (2012) attributes the rise of collage art made of various materials to the Synthetic Cubism Movement: By adding newspapers and other elements to their paintings, they blurred the line between painting and sculpture, but also bridged the gap between real-life objects and art (Antmen, 2009, p. 43). Modern art transforms the waste materials of its time into creative works of art through collage and assemblage. This process allows the true purpose of the scrap material to be re-understood. Moreover, artists' search for found objects took them to unlikely places, to markets and hardware stores, to recycling and scrap heaps, to cosmetic counters, and even directly to manufacturers. Recycled art as environmental activism is now a core concept in contemporary art practice globally. It is an undisputed fact that the polluted environment of waste from human consumption is ubiquitous, and this encourages artists to create artworks that care about the environment. Recycled art is one of the current approaches that offer a creative solution to the accumulation of waste. The term recycled art usually refers to an art practice that uses disposable objects from everyday life to communicate a specific idea (Yilmaz, 2006, p. 385). Recycled art, also known as creative reuse or junk art, encompasses creative works made from discarded materials that once served another purpose. These materials can range from old plastic toys and used vehicle tires to fabric scraps and construction materials. The process of recycled art is sometimes referred to as creative reuse, scrap art, and similar terms (Arnason & Kalb, 2004, p. 49).

From the above statements, it can be understood that recycled art is a term used to describe creative artistic expressions made from discarded materials or objects that once served their original purpose. In terms of practice (reusing waste materials to create art), while some art historians date the development of this art form to the 20th

century when Pablo Picasso invented a collage using used newspaper and photographs, the concept of recycled art is not new in the art world. Shortly after Picasso, artist Marcel Duchamp also used waste and found objects to create art. Duchamp incorporated bicycle wheels, wooden furniture, and even a ceramic urinal in his sculptures. (Gomez, 1999, p. 29). This type of art practice continued in the 1960-70s, with artists such as Robert Rauschenberg and John Chamberlain joining the movement in the form of assemblage and sculpture. This art practice later became a common approach among contemporary artists, especially where sustainability was one of the main themes or a form of environmental activism (Gatto et al., 1978, p. 85).

One of the concepts that makes recycled art important is the intellectual interaction of the works produced. The salvage practices of the artists involved in this work help to redefine the authenticity of found objects that have been appropriated, giving new life and purpose to materials that are seen as nothing, worthless or useless (Alpat, 2012). All over the world, artists, designers and architects are emphasizing recycling in their practice and using their work to highlight the impact of our waste on the environment. There are currently no limitations for recycled art in terms of material, size, approach, dimension, form, timeline and other criteria (Wiguna et al., 2021, p. 2).

Sarah Meyers Brent, an artist who creates original sculptures and installations from waste materials, reflects fundamental elements created by all the chaos and madness of life. It is known that working on the possibility of reusing waste generated from daily life and finding new beauty in them is directly connected to the concept of transformation. Brent emphasizes that motherhood is an important factor in her artistic creations. It is possible to find traces of all elements of life in her works. She states that she is busy discovering the aesthetic potential in the materials around her. For this reason, she is known for using the waste found in her studio and home. "I am only after the material. I think material has a life of its own and is full of interesting shapes and forms. I love the history of things," Brent explains (Yıldız-İlden & Sarıca, 2023). Beautiful Mess is an intimidating assemblage of discarded laundry and other objects that Brent collected from his own home and then arranged in his Somerville studio, adding paint splatters, spray foam droplets and his signature fake flowers. Secured in place with drywall, Beautiful Mess (Image 1) seems to pop off the wall before falling to the floor. On a studio visit, Brent explained that the piece is partly an expression of motherhood and partly an expression of anxiety about the environment. "This is what life feels like to me right now," she explains. But not everything is as chaotic as it seems. Beautiful Mess balances blocks of color. Lilacs lean to one side, while baby blues cluster on the other. Black fabrics create contrast and depth

along the raw edge of the drywall, while bright whites are scattered across the floor, drawing the eye down. At first glance, Brent's work looks like a mess, but it is in fact meticulously organized (Hershon, 2023).



Image 1. *Beautiful Mess, Mixed Media on Plasterboard, Acrylic And, Fabric, 144 x120x 75 (Meyers-Brent, 2017)*

Ian Berry utilizes denim fabrics in his art works. In his creations (Image 2), the artist skillfully employs different shades of denim, which might be mistaken for oil paintings or blue-tone photographs. Berry goes beyond merely showcasing a piece of clothing; he interprets the world in this unique manner, breathing new life into old garments. He treats denim much like a painter uses paint, transforming used clothing into artistic expressions that resonate with viewers on a deeper level (Enes & Binboğa, 2021, p. 887). Ian uses scissors as his paintbrush, mastering their use skillfully. The awareness of tone variations caused by each wash and fade is observed and interpreted in his works. The process of dissecting and examining stacks of old denim jeans into their tones, noticing contrasting tones, and assembling them with some cutting and sticking initially began as an experiment. However, this has elevated the artist to being one of the top 50 most talked-about individuals in the world of denim, showcasing how he thinks and interprets in his art (Berry, n.d.).



Image 2. *Michael Schumacher, Waste Denim on Canvas, 120 cm x 120 cm (Berry, 2019)*

Deniz's works are shaped in the manner of oil paintings and contain fabric waste and broken buttons, among many other

textile wastes. The artist draws attention to the frenzy of consumption and the resulting excessive waste, emphasizing that every piece thrown away can be a usable material for her. Considering Turkey's textile production and activities, Deniz's creation of sustainable works from these wastes is of great value. The belt regions, zippers, buttons, and every part of the waste denim fabrics used in jeans production serve as valuable materials for production (Image 3). Although the colors of denim fabric pieces are in shades of blue, when combined, these pieces can create various light and shadow effects, adding depth to the artworks. Deniz Sađdıç started her works by using denim pants from her wardrobe and embarked on this path with the idea of using clothes she would no longer wear as raw materials for her art. Over time, noticing the abundance of fabric waste and learning that 8 to 10% of produced clothing turns into fabric waste due to defects, the artist focused more on this issue and placed fabric waste pieces at the center of her production (Enes & Binboğa, 2021).



Image 3. *Atatürk, Waste Denim Pieces with Mosaic Method on Canvas, 2021, 180 cm x 140 cm (Sađdıç, 2024)*

The works of the artists demonstrate how contemporary art has transformed in terms of material and meaning. As Manco (2012) points out, the collage art that began with the Cubism movement has enabled the conversion of waste materials into artistic expressions in modern art. In this process, artists emphasize environmental awareness and sustainability by using different materials. Deniz Sađdıç's works lead the way in transforming textile waste into art. By using waste materials from Turkey's textile production, she gives new life and meaning to these materials. Particularly by using denim fabrics and various textile wastes, she shows that waste is not just trash but also has artistic potential. Ian Berry's works, created with denim fabrics, draw attention by using these materials as a painter would use paint. By combining different shades of denim fabrics, Berry creates depth and light-shadow effects, giving new meaning to old garments. Sarah Meyers Brent's works reflect chaos and environmental concerns by using waste materials obtained from daily life. Brent explores the aesthetic potential of waste materials and transforms them into an artistic language. These artists not only create aesthetically impressive works using waste materials but also increase environmental awareness and provide a critical view of consumer society. Recycled art has

become an important part of contemporary art practice, allowing artists to engage in environmental activism through waste materials. These works demonstrate how art can be used in a socially and environmentally conscious manner.

Woodcut Printing

Woodcut printing is a technique used in East Asia, particularly in China, in ancient times to print text, images, or patterns on textiles and later on paper. In this technique, a wooden block is carved in such a way that only certain areas and lines are left at the original level; these are inked and printed in a relief printing process. Woodcut printing played a significant role in the spread of written communication, facilitating the mass production of documents and books, contributing to the dissemination and preservation of knowledge. The oldest examples of printing on fabric date back to before 220 AD, and the technique first emerged in China during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). Woodcut printing remained widely used in East Asia until the 19th century, and Japan's Ukiyo-e printmaking art became prominent during this period (Tokuno, 1894). This technique, known as the oldest printing method in the literature, is based on the principle of designing high printing areas in a simple sense and lowering the areas outside the printing by carving. In practice, white areas are first carved in the desired texture, and then paint is applied to the high area remaining on the surface of the mold with a roller and printed on paper. The process of transferring the print to the paper can be done by pressing, or it can be done by pressing the back surface of the paper with a wooden spoon or a wooden material in the form of a roller. (Tekcan, 1997, p. 141). A tree with a hard or soft texture to be used in printing is cut transversely or vertically, then processed as a printing surface, and then the printing mold is prepared by carving with special tools used for carving. The artist draws the pattern on a hard-textured walnut or hornbeam, and then carves the outer parts of the printing area with the help of a scalpel and büren. It is preferable to cut the hard-textured wood transversely as this will facilitate the carving process. In the case of soft wood, vertical cuts are made to obtain relatively larger surfaces, so that the texture of the wood can also be utilized. The artist makes the work whole with the texture of the tree and can transfer the texture to the work. In the woodblock printing technique, separate molds must be prepared for each color. The dye is applied to the surface with a roller and then the pattern is transferred to the paper either with the help of a spoon or a special press (Tekcan, 1997, p. 148).



Image 4. *The People, Woodcut, 1922, 34x45 cm (Kollwitz, 1922)*



Image 5. Stages of the Applications in the Print Workshop

Analysis of the Student's Artworks

The compositions were analyzed separately for each student practice depending on the recycling, woodcut printing method, art theories and aesthetics explained in the course. In this context, the 12 works analyzed were named as "Student Artwork 1", "Student Artwork 2", etc. In the following paragraphs, First, the analysis of the works is presented, linking the chosen subject with the applied method. Then, the meaning of the colors used is explained, followed by an examination of how balance is achieved and the composition is structured. Finally, the visual representation of the work is included.

"Student Artwork 1" (Image 6), "Mood" was determined as the design subject. Within the scope of this project, the student preferred red and green waste fabric materials. In the composition, contrasting colors were carefully used to provide balance and rhythm. While the upper part of the work contains single-colored fabric pieces, a portrait reflecting the student's different moods was created at the bottom, woven with detailed lines on a wooden background. By transforming waste fabrics into artistic expression, this project addresses not only the search for visual aesthetics, but also the harmony of contrasts and the expression of mood. The monochromatic colors used in a minimalist

approach on the upper part and the wooden floor enriched with detailed lines on the lower part provide the viewer with a visual experience, giving the opportunity to explore the mood of the student in depth. The idea behind this design is the desire to express the natural properties of the material and the complexity of mental states, which enhances the power and meaning of art. The Image in the middle adds balance to the composition, while contrasting colors add equal importance and depth to the work. The use of contrasts in this balance increases the aesthetic and semantic richness of the work, further emphasizing the power of art.



Image 6. Student Artwork 1, "Mood," Mixed Media on Paper, 2023, 35x50 cm

"Student Artwork 2", has a design consisting mostly of quadrilateral pieces. The student emphasizes the principle of balance by using similar shapes (Image 7). The red circle at the top of the work draws attention as an element of contrast and creates a visual balance. In addition, in this work, which the student named "Soul Transitions", the squares ordered from large to small reflect the ever-changing nature and complexity of the human mood. The quadrilateral forms shaped with woodcut prints and waste fabrics tell the viewer about the contrasts of the human psyche, sometimes with deep blacks, sometimes with intricate patterns, sometimes with peaceful serenity and sometimes with a circular pattern. Through the skillful combination of materials and forms, this artwork invites the viewer to explore the various and deep layers of human emotions. This artwork invites us to explore the various and deep layers of human emotions through the skillful combination of materials and forms. In particular, the squares created in the work are placed on the far right, smaller squares are placed on the left side to create balance, while the red circle in the middle is positioned in the center as the focal point. This arrangement aims to leave a deep impression on the viewer by maintaining the visual balance of the work.

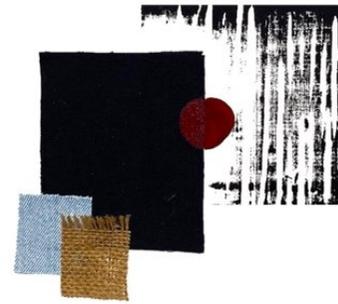


Image 7. Student Artwork 2, "Soul Transitions", Mixed Media on Paper, 2023, 35x50 cm

"Student Artwork 3", "Image Losses" creates visual balance by successfully using the contrast of warm and cold colors with a composition dominated by red and blue colors (Image 8). The 15x15 cm human Image with an engraved skull and a broken heart on a wooden background is detailed by printing it on paper with red color. While the red color expresses pain and loss with its main symbolism in the work, the skull is interpreted as a flower symbolizing the birth of melancholic feelings and the effort to fill the place of things that will not return. The color blue is used to convey melancholy to the viewer, emphasizing the emotional depth and complexity of the work. The three almost equal-sized squares in the composition reflect the transformation of opposites into balance, while the long piece of book positioned at the bottom functions as the unifying and balancing element of the work. This arrangement creates a visual flow and depth of meaning for the viewer and helps the work maintain its thematic integrity.



Image 8. Student Artwork 3, "Image Losses", Mixed Media on Paper, 2023, 35x50 cm

"Student Artwork 4", represents people trying to transfer their emotions to the virtual world. The work titled "Transfer of Emotions to the Virtual World" conveys the message that "human beings search for what belongs to them; however, if they do not choose to observe their own free will during this search, they lose their perception of reality and get lost in this virtual world". The colors chosen purely instinctively represent the search, while the faint Images printed with wood on pieces of waste fabric are used to emphasize the realities that are forgotten but waiting to be remembered.

The purpose of using the color cream in the composition is to depict people who have lost hope and have complex emotions. Likewise, the green color used at the bottom of the composition is preferred to emphasize the feeling of losing hope. In the composition of the painting, the large square and the green-colored square supported underneath it are placed on the left side, so that the square and images placed in the lower right corner to balance the weight of the left side provided the flow and visual balance of the composition. This arrangement (Image 9) allows the viewer's eyes to be naturally drawn to each corner of the painting, enriching the experience of discovering the story and emotional depth of the work.



Image 9. Student Artwork 4, "Transition of Emotions to the Virtual World", Mixed Media on Paper, 2023, 35x50 cm

"Student Artwork 5", quadrilateral pieces are used to give the viewer a sense of calm and serenity. These geometric shapes also symbolize closed spaces, nobility and weight. The choice of colors also deepens the meaning of the work. Pink gives a sense of emotional warmth and softness, while brown creates a feeling of naturalness and trust. Black is a symbol of mystery and depth, adding a mystical air to the composition and arousing curiosity in the viewer. The combination of these colors is intended to reflect the work's search for inner and outer balance and the effort to discover the emotional and physical existence of man. In this abstract work titled "Dynamic" (Image 10), waste fabrics were used as a ground and the element of contrast was emphasized by placing dark brown and light colors in reverse in the composition; this situation provided balance and rhythm in the design. The abstract pattern carved on wood is inspired by objects we use in daily life such as glass and brushes. The dark brown squares positioned on the right-side balance the contrast with the light-colored square on the left, reducing the weight on the left side of the composition and thus creating a harmonic balance.



Image 10. Student Artwork 5, "Dynamic", Mixed Media on Paper, 2023, 35x50 cm

"Student Artwork 6", a composition dominated by quadrilaterals symbolizes trust, solidity and logic. By placing the shapes on top of each other, a dynamic and authoritative impression is created (Image 11). The color blue represents a sense of calmness and trust and is associated with a sense of continuity and infinity in the composition. Waste materials in neutral colors are used as a backdrop, creating unity and balance between the different elements that come together in the work. The red and blue colors used in the woodblock print create contrast and give dynamism to the composition and create a balance in harmony with the square shaped fabrics around the print pattern in the middle. The layered placement of the shapes emphasizes the messages that the work wants to convey to the viewer more strongly. Through both visual aesthetics and symbolism, this design reflects the human search for solidity and continuity in the inner world, while offering the opportunity to explore the emotional and semantic depth of colors.

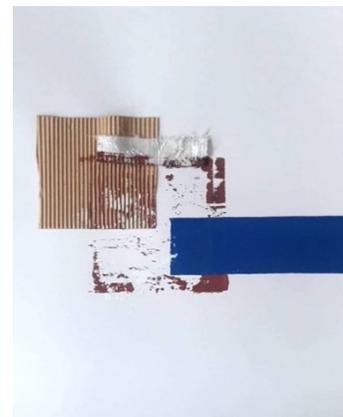


Image 11. Student Artwork 6, "Trust", Mixed Media on Paper, 2023, 35x50 cm

"Student Artwork 7", represents the Trojan horse according to Greek mythology (Image 12). According to the mythological story, it is told that the Trojan Prince Paris was the unseen starting point of the war by refereeing the beauty contest of the goddesses Aphrodite, Hera and Athena. Inspired by this mythological story, the student chose the

color red for the horse image by using a top piece embroidered with red writing on white fabric. While the color red symbolizes excitement and passion in the composition, it also emphasizes the power and mythological meaning of the horse image. The choice of colors used in the composition carries deep symbolism and offers different emotional layers to the viewer. While white represents purity and cleanliness, red expresses power, passion and warrior spirit. The combination of these colors increases the richness of the work in terms of both aesthetics and meaning. In the work called “Trojan” the concept of balance is an important element in the composition. The student has created a remarkable focal point by using the color red by centering the horse image. While this focal point functions as the balance element of the composition, it also creates a visual rhythm in the eyes of the viewer. The central position of the image and the balance of colors around it provide the work with a visually balanced and impressive integrity.



Image 12. Student Artwork 7, “Trojan”, Mixed Media on Paper, 2023, 35x50 cm

“Student Artwork 8”, a work is presented in which the basics of existence and non-existence are examined, inspired by the subject of emptiness. In the work titled “Existence and Absence”, the existence of an object does not occur without emptiness, as well as the characterization of absence for things we cannot see. In the choice of color, navy blue represents the feeling of depth and mystery, while the color blue provides serenity and peace. Black is used to emphasize the inner depth and mystery of the work. With the combination of these colors, the atmosphere of the work gains both a mystical and an intellectual dimension. Using navy blue fabric as a background, the root is designed with woodcut printing method. The root on the white side of the paper represents emptiness. While using woodcut printing, one of the traditional printing techniques, the composition is shaped with the textures of waste materials. In the work (Image 13), a square piece of fabric was used as the ground and the pattern printed with woodcut printing was placed in the center of the composition, creating a balance in symmetry.



Image 13. Student Artwork 8, “Existence and Absence”, Mixed Media on Paper, 2023, 35x50 cm

“Student Artwork 9”, the work titled “Thoughts” (Image 14) represents the expression of one’s inner thoughts and the repetition of complex thoughts. In this work, in which paper and white fabric are used as a background, the written papers symbolize certain thoughts in the human mind, while the carvings and oval shapes on the wood come together to form the human image. In the choice of colors, ochre symbolizes serenity and calmness, while white creates a neutral background, allowing other colors to stand out. Black emphasizes the inner complexity of the work by increasing the sense of depth and mystery. The diagonal symmetry in the composition gives the work a balanced and aesthetic appearance. The diagonal placement of the two pieces provides visual balance and harmony, offering the viewer a journey of deep thought. This arrangement visually expresses the complexity of the human inner world and the flow of thoughts.



Image 14. Student Artwork 9, “Thoughts”, Mixed Media on Paper, 2023, 35x50 cm

“Student Artwork 10”, the work titled “Rooster” features a woodcut carved form of a rooster symbolizing awakening. While the rooster symbol emphasizes that people should be sensitive to animals, it can also be perceived as a wake-up call. The light-yellow color is intended to attract excitement and attention and is used to draw the viewer to the center of the work (Image 15). The composition is balanced by using squares represented by angular shapes and their opposites, rounded forms. This balance ensures that the work is both in

aesthetic harmony and offers the viewer a visual fluidity. The squares, consisting of angular and straight lines, evoke a sense of constancy and order, while the rounded forms evoke feelings of movement and fluidity. In this way, the work is rich in both symbolism and compositional balance. The symbolism of the rooster reminds us of the responsibility of humans towards nature and animals, while the compositional balance strengthens the visual expression of the work. In this way, the work not only offers the viewer a visual experience, but also deep intellectual and emotional layers.



Image 15. Student Artwork 10, "Rooster", Mixed Media on Paper, 2023, 35x50 cm

"Student Artwork 11", in the artwork title with "Retro", is inspired by old memories and photographs. Each photograph represents memories of the past and the fragments of these memories. This work, made using waste materials, creates a sense of nostalgia and going back to the past. The black color preferred in the work is used as a color that revives memories and creates deep emotional layers. Light colors (white and cream), the opposite of black, symbolize a return and traces of the past. While the composition consisting of squares represents bonding and strength, balance is achieved in the work by using black color together with light colored waste materials. While these compositional choices strengthen the visual narrative of the work, they both offer the viewer an aesthetic experience and make them think about the past with deep intellectual layers. With the transformation of waste materials into artistic expression, Retro not only offers a visual aesthetic, but also keeps the traces and memories of the past alive (Image 16).



Image 16. Student Artwork 11, "Retro", Mixed Media on Paper, 2023, 35x50 cm

"Student Artwork 12", is a work on the theme of "Woman". This work (Image 17) emphasizes that women can be active in every profession and that women can be successful in jobs that are imposed as 'men's work'. The brown waste fabric used in the composition symbolizes women's capacity to be creative and productive, while the green color expresses that women can sustain their vitality and energy. The colors black, brown, cream and green were carefully selected. Black represents strength and seriousness, brown symbolizes warmth and solidity, while cream symbolizes purity and elegance. The color green is used as texture with thick brush strokes and represents the strength and dynamism of the woman. The composition is composed of rectangular forms, reminiscent of authority and the woman at the center. The forms positioned in the center of the composition provide a visual balance, while the rectangular brushstroke painted in green balances the two forms on the left side. This reinforces the message that the woman is both a central image and an element of balance. This design, with its masterful use of colors and forms, emphasizes the place and importance of women in society and offers the viewer an aesthetic and intellectual experience. The power, creativity and vitality of women are powerfully expressed through the colors and textures used.



Image 17. Student Artwork 12, "Women", Mixed Media on Paper, 2023, 35x50 cm

In this study, aimed at determining the contribution of students' ability to create compositions by transforming fabric waste materials into artworks through woodblock printing, it was concluded that the collage technique, based on art theories, was used at a sufficient level. During the research process, students gained knowledge about waste materials, sustainability, and recycling, and subsequently, they created their compositions adhering to the principles of art. As a result, it was observed that the students' designs were realized in accordance with the mentioned principles, and they also had the opportunity to reinforce the theoretical knowledge they possessed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the 21st century, rapid consumption and overproduction have led to the problem of waste, which harms the

environment and living beings. Therefore, reducing waste and promoting recyclable products are of great importance. This study aims to address environmental pollution by utilizing waste fabrics in art and offering a sustainable solution. The recycled art installation created by students demonstrates how fabric waste can be transformed into art and raises awareness. Student works creatively incorporate individual and social themes. The deliberate use of colors and forms ensures that each piece conveys a strong message. The use of waste materials not only fosters environmental awareness but also carries traces of the past. These artworks offer originality in material and form usage while embodying deep meanings. "Mood" uses contrasting colors to reflect emotional balance, while "Soul Transitions" explores the changing nature of the human soul, inviting inner discovery. "Image Losses" symbolizes loss and melancholy with red and blue, and "Transfer of Emotions to the Virtual World" portrays emotions lost in the virtual realm. "Dynamic" expresses the search for balance through geometric forms and color contrasts, and "Trust" emphasizes security and continuity. "Trojan" explores a mythological theme, symbolizing power and passion, while "Existence and Absence" presents the balance between existence and non-existence. "Thoughts" conveys the complexity of inner thoughts with colors, and "Rooster" symbolizes nature and awakening. "Retro" brings nostalgia and past memories to life, while "Woman" highlights female strength and creativity. All artworks provide the viewer with both visual and emotional depth. Waste materials serve as educational tools, while students assume the role of designers. The relationship between the designer and the material directly influences the creativity and originality of the artwork. Each waste fabric piece is evaluated from different visual, technical, and semantic perspectives, gaining an artistic identity. Fabric scraps, often seen as shapeless and worthless, become unique designs when integrated into art. This process proves that a sustainable and nature-friendly approach is possible. The study highlights that both artists and non-artists can embrace the idea of transforming waste into valuable products. When appropriate resources are used in education, lessons become more effective, engaging, and instructive. Additionally, individuals are guided on how waste materials can be recycled. At a societal level, traditional authorities must encourage the reuse of waste. Leaders should support innovative individuals and companies that repurpose waste fabrics by organizing competitions and offering rewards. Implementing reward systems, especially in education, is essential for raising awareness among younger generations.

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