

AN EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN SAMPLE IN WEARABLE ART BY COMBINING OTTOMAN MINIATURE ART AND SURREALISM: BASHAQUES

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Abstract

At the beginning of the 20th century, Wearable Art, which can transform art into design objects or transform design object into works of art thanks to the influence of Avant-garde Art Movement, played an active role among designers and artists as a new style of representation. The notion of wearable art that reveals the relationship of textile products not only with the body but also with the soul has been made a current issue by the young artists in recent times. In this study, we dealt with the 3rd wearable art collection of Bashaques, named *Entrada De Gala En El Haren* (Gala's Entrance into Harem). The question of "Can surrealism movement be adapted to the Ottoman miniature over Salvador Dali?" served as a motivational tool for Bashaques in creating this collection. We analysed the visual effects of the works created by the miniature artisan for this collection on traditional textile products such as clothes, Turkish takunya (clog) and quilt.

Key Words: Bashaques, Textile Design, Surrealism, Ottoman Miniature Art, Wearable Art.

Öz

Yirminci yüzyılın başlarında, Avangard Sanat Hareketlerinin etkisiyle, sanatı tasarım nesnesine ya da tasarım nesnesini sanat eserine dönüştürebilen 'giyilebilir sanat' yeni bir temsil biçimi olarak tasarımcı ve sanatçılar arasında etkin bir rol oynamıştır. Tekstil ürünlerinin sadece bedenle değil, ruhla olan ilişkisini de ortaya çıkaran giyilebilir sanat kavramı, son zamanlarda Türkiye'de genç tasarımcılar tarafından yeniden gündeme gelmiştir. Bu çalışmada, Sürrealizm akımı Salvador Dali üzerinden Osmanlı minyatür sanatına uyarlanabilir mi? sorusundan yola çıkan 'Bashaques' markasının *Entrada De Gala En El Haren* (Gala'nın Hareme Girişi) adlı 3. giyilebilir sanat koleksiyonu ele alınmaktadır. Minyatür sanatçıları tarafından bu koleksiyon için yapılan eserlerin; giysi, takunya ve yorgan gibi geleneksel tekstil tasarım ürünleri üzerindeki görsel etkileri analiz edilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bashaques, Tekstil Tasarım, Gerçeküstüçülük, Osmanlı Minyatür Sanatı, Giyilebilir Sanat.

Introduction

Since their first appearance, textile products have served as a means of expression of our whole lives, which we would like to reflect sensually and intellectually, and they have been shaped according to the societies' ways of living in distinct geographies. The most common area of use of today's textile products is, for sure, clothing. It is possible to say that in the shaping of the clothing profiles of a society, the factors such as culture, way of life, faith, tastes and likings, social status and economy are determinants. Textile products having undergone a change after the 20th century have moved quickly away from their traditional characteristics. Avant-garde artists observed this shift in the society, reflected this on their works and were widely acclaimed. This situation led the designers to search for differentness (Yinelek, 2014:2). The designers who associated themselves with artists enriched the fact of clothing with new creations. In this process, in which fashion and art directly have affected each other, each of which has the characteristic of reflection of the works the artists created, textile products have taken the creative and authentic feature of art as a reference against the "wear and throwaway" concept of fashion. The wearable art emerging with this thought interacted with various disciplines with its sculptural appearance, clothing, art and fashion, and it was mentioned in many pieces of researches. The artistic works many artists and designers interpret by being inspired from their own culture, historical forms or nature give a message by forging a link between the one wearing or the one watching them, or they take them through an artistic journey in the creation of that cloth (Ok, 2016:66).

In the individual-dress relationship, wearable art transforms textiles into tactile and touchable products by focusing on the design thanks to which the combination of idea, emotion, excitement and form is transferred to clothes. Today, a period is discussed in which all of the artistic, technical, aesthetic, etc. accumulations are reflected and in which textile and fashion objects that can transform into various symbols are included. Wearable art, which has continued its influence from the 1960s as of today with the motto of making people wear works of art, reflected on Turkey in 2000s. Later, it emerged before us in the form of mass production. On the other hand, the designers were observed to focus mostly on accessory design. However, Bashaques, which applies fashion to its designs with its all dynamics by moving fashion beyond a source of inspiration, introduced a new perspective into the concept of wearable art, and it drew attention with its visual show. Even though there were many designers inspired by surrealism movement and Salvador Dali, the founder of Bashaques, Başak Cankeş (b.1988, İzmir/Turkey) combined the Ottoman miniature art with Surrealism, one of the movements of modern Western art, and reflected the interaction between them with her wearable art collection named *Entrada De Gala En El Haren*. Even though the collection's addressing to five senses and its presentation with installation and performance show in different spaces were previously observed in plastic arts in Turkey in the 1980s, it is a situation encountered in the field of fashion for the first time. Nowadays, when the conceptual orientation of art is frequently given a space, it was observed that scholarly publications on the notion of wearable art consist of few compilation studies and that no studies have been carried out related to field study. It is

thought that all the objects characterized as wearable art should be assessed within the scope of plastic arts and they should be characterized in accordance with the criteria of this field. In this study, it was examined through visual samples how the creations included in wearable art which Bashaques created by being inspired by the Surrealist Salvador Dali's works and the Ottoman miniature art are each converted into a work of art. The study also aims to remind traditional Turkish culture about to be forgotten by combining different art disciplines over a local brand having also missioned being innovative, creative and different.

Method and Material

In this study, a qualitative research method was used to accommodate the researched topic into a conceptual framework. Local and international papers were that reviewed which had been published before. Of the works prepared within the concept of Bashaques' collection, 4 miniatures and 7 pieces of textile products where the miniatures were used were chosen as samples. The selected works and the designer's visual samples were provided from the designer's archive. While the samples were being examined, interviews were made with Başak Cankeş, the designer of Bashaques and one of the primary sources in the creation aim of the collection, its conceptual idea and its creation process, and Gülden Gener and Arya Kamalı, who were among the miniature artists having contributed to fabric designs with their illustrations. The subjective data obtained were evaluated and were presented in the conclusion part.

Conceptual Framework

Art and understandings of art have been essential for designers and fashion for a long time. Designers have been created their creations being inspired sometimes by the view of art or the idea to be conveyed, and sometimes by motifs, colours and forms of art (Gökay, 2004:40). In art, the movement introducing innovation and dissimilarity in terms of understanding can be characterized as movement of art. It can be said that each period has a distinctive message determined and an understanding of art related to this message. Fashion, on the other hand, is societal form that combines the attraction of differentiation and change with the attraction of similarity and harmony (Frisby and Simmel, 2003:41). Fashion, which is closely affects people's way of thought and course of action, and which expresses all events, is the reflection of thoughts and behaviour that are accepted by a large segment of society (Gürsoy, 2010:14). Fashion, which is a multi-faceted concept, dominates innovation, creativity, creations and a design world in the presentation of dress (Waquet and Laporte, 2011:7,8). Works of art, by combining with design, enables an aesthetic pleasure to develop in viewer/user. Combining design with art is both a fact known to all and a current subject (Givry, 1998:12). Designers are also the main figures participating in the production of fashion unequivocally. They play a key role in the maintenance, reproduction and spread of fashion (Kawamura, 2016:95). When considering the source of the influence they created and taking into account the results of the research, it was observed that they changed the air of the period and the atmosphere surrounding them. Thus, fashion and art became integrated, starting to follow a common course demonstrating

the beauty of the moment experienced (Givry, 1998:21). All of these sources of inspiration of wearable art continue to contribute to creations.

A Brief History of Wearable Art

As can be understood from the origin of the word, wearable art places a great importance on being wearable art and expressing artistic value. Wearable art has cut across being a movement and possessing the attribute of wearing in the course of time, and was transformed into a concept encompassing the understandings with intellectual foundation. Duncan mentions that clothing is influential in its transformation into wearable art, as well as its just being a visual object (2003:8). On the other hand, Leventon before anything else, defines wearable art as a used material and a branch of art in which textile material is used in the processes being experienced (2006:12). Origin of artistic clothing dates back to movement and schools of thought that combine art and craft such as Movement of Art and Craft, Art Nouveau, Jugendstil, The Vienna Secession and Bauhaus. Wearable art first appeared in England against the negative effects that the Industrial Revolution created on items productions produced and consumed in the society. It was influential in New York and the district of San Francisco Bay as a new contemporary movement thanks to the increase in the demand for the revitalization of craft in liberal atmosphere in the 1960s (Dale, 1992:18). In this process, art was particularly voiced that an attitude had to be developed which was based on hand workmanship with traditional methods and which appreciated the wisdom of craftsmanship. In this period, during which the struggle between functional decorative art and non-functional fine escalated, many artists in Europe aspired to create artistic dress (Leventon, 2006:12-14). In the society, the youngsters in particular rejected to become common, owing to developing technology, speed and mass production. It can be said that this attitude served as a catalyst in the development of wearable art. As Loschek stated, "dress can be defined as an artistic art when it departs from being a commercial product enabling us to get dressed and is presented with aesthetic concerns and artist's soul. In this way, fashion is included in art" (2009:171). On the other hand, today clothing forms of wearable art are gradually exhibiting a sculptural form and most of the works of wearable art created are fashioned not only for wearing, but for viewing as a work of art and being understood (Dale, 1992:18).

Design Ideas of Başak Cankeş: Introducing Bashaques

Bashaques, established in 2014 by designer Başak Cankeş (b.1988) offer service in İzmir/Alaçatı as a concept store and art gallery. Bashaques missioned both contributing to art and fashion by suiting dress uniqueness and people's inequality and producing design products under the name of wearable art. Philosophy of brand is based on the idea that the human body is unique, and it aims to move this body to a point far away from uniqueness with ready-made clothes. On the other hand, Başak Cankeş's view of art was shaped with her mother's being a guide, and thus their visiting many countries and museums. The artist, especially stressing her admiration to Turkish culture and craft, thinks that even though we have many valuable artisans, performing the same craft for years has hindered our country's artistic development. When preparing her creations, Cankeş collaborates with the

artisans in the process of applying her ideas in order to reveal the things in the soul of craftsmen and to protect the cultural assets we possess. Because, she wants to demonstrate that the combination of skill with idea forms the basis for art. Her creations' source of inspirations shows themselves with forms, patterns and textural effects. These effects are manifested with silicone textures, wool and mainly leather material except 100 % silk fabrics. The designer, who at the outset started her studies as runway, preferred to create her creations with artistic works and multi-disciplinary exhibitions, because she did not want to go ahead with making presentation in runway. Because, according to her, fashion does not just consist of fashion. She has respect for all kinds of creations; however, because she herself has been affected from art so much, she thinks that everything has been done in fashion. She says it is impossible for her to create her presentations just by making models walk and producing cloths with no work of art when she blends the Turkish culture and art with other disciplines and the works of international artists. Therefore, Cankeş first created the work of art of each textile product, thus enabling people to enter into a different world. When she actualizes her ideas, she collaborates with weaving artists, photographers, miniature artists and tile artists, and she sets off with a new team. She shares the ideas in her mind with these artists and asks them to make a test specimen which they have never done before.

Cankeş, in whom this process created a great excitement, remains as contemporary art", but including craft into art may introduce innovation into the Turkish culture. In addition to her receiving education on fashion design in İzmir University of Economics the courses Başak Cankeş took in Central Saint Martins in the UK, and her serving as an assistant to many famous designers in Turkey have contributed definitely to her designer's identity and vision. In her experience of 3rd Wearable Art which she designed in 2016 and whose name is "Entrada De Gala En El Haren" (Gala's Entrance into Harem), in which she imagined Gala's, wife of Salvador Dali, entrance in the Ottoman harem through surrealist miniatures, a different show-room that symbolizes harem was preferred for each product range. In the presentation in which modern dance shows were performed, the opening of the show was made with sophisticated scents that consist of citrus fruits such as bergamot, lemon and spices such as clove, coconut and saffron. As we know, the above-scents remind us of the Ottoman Era. Egg Sculpture (fig 1) which sculptor Bülent Sancar prepared by being inspired by the image of egg contained in Salvador Dali's work named "Geopolitical Child Watching the Birth of the New Man-1943" who watches the rise of humanity, in which Dali mentions the establishment of America and its becoming a super power in the post-Second World War, symbolizes rebirth with the dancer (Begüm Canbulatoğlu) who left the egg when the egg cracked (anonymous, 2017). Egg Sculpture bridges the gap between the East and the West both because it is and element Dali mentioned in his works. She used the egg as a material in miniature art. The performance enriched with modern dance made a different impression on the audience.



Fig. 1: The Egg Sculpture and its detail. Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week İstanbul

In this presentation, about which we can say that it is a conceptual study addressing to humans' five senses, the designer explains why she has chosen Surrealism and Dali as follows;

I have a daydreamer personality even in daily life and I have been unbelievable feeling close affinity to works of Dali since the moment I first saw them. Human constantly endeavours to show his personality to others. This is my personality. Because my perspective on events are not so much realist, I am the one who has lost in her private life but who has always won in the sense of design. Salvador Dali had found his Gala, but Gala did not try to drag him into realism. The lucky a surrealist needs is this. All of these concepts reflect me (personal communication, May 5, 2017).

There are many designers who were influenced by surrealism in the periods when wearable art appeared, and who adapted Dali's works to their designs. Therefore, Cankeş thinks that being inspired only from surrealism will not be enough and nothing can be added to the genius of Dali. Her admiration to the Ottoman miniature and Turkish culture reminds her of a film scenario as follows: "Dali put on a fez and sat in front of a canvas in the Topkapı Palace". Cankeş, thinking how interesting would it be if there were a film like this, makes some more brain-storming, and she starts thinking if Dali would draw a miniature there, what would he draw? She would probably place his elephants in the miniatures. Then, he would draw Nasreddin Hodja. Perhaps, he would make Hodja seat back onto the elephant instead of a donkey. Maybe, he would place his melting watches on the elephant and make

a saddle, and then he would draw Nasreddin Hodja's face as his face. After all, he was full of himself. Or, if he drew an Ottoman Hammam, would he hang his melting watches on the rope in the hammam? These kind of questions shaped her collections. She tells about the research process she made in the preliminary phase as follows;

Primarily, i studied Dali's life and how his talent to painting improved. I looked his early paintings he painted. I noticed how he expressed himself when his own style was not fully developed. I read the words he uttered. I had a look at the intersections related to DNA and psychology, and also the parties he gave. His house in Spain, his videos about egg, how he fell in love with Gala and how he met her, what he brought from his visit to Istanbul, etc., in short, I examined all the details. Yet, I think I examined his face at most. Then, I began to search for the miniature artists. I found painters. I found muralists. Later, I told these artists: "If you draw surrealist miniatures, how would you interpret these over Salvador Dali? (personal communication, May 5, 2017).

As Cankeş has mentioned, each of the painters and miniature artists whose ideas she conveyed dreamed a different story, reflected them on their miniatures and produced unique works. It is known that Dali considered himself as a master of Renaissance and in the meantime a surrealist painter who became against normative discipline of fine arts. Surrealism is spelling and describing of thoughts by excluding every kind of aesthetic and moral concern without the supervision of wisdom (like in dreams). Miniature is, on the other hand, pictures of books made to visualize the events told in the written works. Starting from this information, Gül den Gener, a miniature artist, used Dali's portrait in the background of her work named "A Levni Woman in the Eyes of Dali", which is included in the figure 2.



Fig. 2: A Levni Woman in the Eyes of Dali and Başak Cankes

Departing from his being fond of his mother and wife (his wife Gala's face is seen in his tear duct), she applied a female figure of Levni, an Ottoman miniature artist, on eye-brow and moustache. She used Dali's famous walking sticks in order to support the woman on the eye-brow. Gener, who found striking the painting of Dali, "Lobster Telephone-1936", and always focused always on creating surrealist painting, placed lobsters instead of fruits on the tree image in his miniature. Because Dali often changes the forms of reality in his paintings. Like Dali, who transferred the transformation of the rocks in the town into his paintings in his childhood, Gener also used the human-figure rocks (rocks of Dali face) in her miniature. In this miniature, a detail she made unknowingly is that she drew each of the objects three times. According to her, this reveals the secrets of her subconscious. The artist expresses her way of dealing with the matter she imagined in her dream as follows; *"Even though I know that it is impossible to go extreme as Dali did, I departed from Dali's thoughts and utopic plots that come from his subconscious. I was not Dali and my subconscious was not his subconscious. I just tried to understand Dali and his talent reaching eternity (personal communication, May 5, 2017).*



Fig. 3: A Levni Woman in the Eyes of Dali

An elephant symbol in Dali's work, named "The Elephants-1948" representing future, power and dominance, and Cankeş's miniature named Hicret-i Efyal (Migration of Elephant), she prepared with her realistic interpretation, were used in Kimonos (figure 3) and a traditional Turkish quilt by using different fabrics such as organza, silk, polyester and velvet all together.

The miniature artist Arya Kamali's works, named "İstanbul in Dali's Eyes" and "Gala, Dream of Fish, is in İstanbul" are other examples used in the fabric print of hand-made quilts. In the artist's work named "Gala, the Dream of Fish, is in İstanbul" (figure 4), Dali replaced Nasreddin Hodja, hero of Turkish humour. Because, the artist thought the extent to which Dali is important for his own society, so is Nasreddin Hodja for Turkish culture. In the image of famous donkey Karakaçan, which Nasreddin Hodja mounted backwards, he made Nasreddin Hodja wear Turkish Takunya (clogs) reflecting the Ottoman Hammam culture. Below, there are İstanbul and Bosphorus, and also Gala in the traditional Turkish dress in the Maiden's Tower. The fish included in the work made a reference to Hodja's humorous trait. Fish thinks how they can go there by looking at moonlight in a summer night. Nasreddin Hodja, by creating a solution to these, filled the balloons with water, placed the fish into the balloons and made them realize their dreams. He placed one of them on the moon (personal communication, May 10, 2017).



Fig. 4 and 5: Traditional Handmade Turkish Quilts with Digital Silk Print

Kamalı, in his other work named “İstanbul in Dali’s Eyes” (figure 5), started from the question of “what would Dali have drawn if he had lived in the Ottoman times, and he added the Ottomans and modern Turkey to surrealism by considering not only İstanbul and the past of Bosphorus but also the present day of them. Keeping this in mind, Kamalı described Dali as a Janissary observing İstanbul. He placed an image of a woman on the eye representing the sun. Kamalı, who wants to draw the whole Bosphorus in a single glass, described the water of Bosphorus in a way through which it flows from a tap, as if he drank all the water of Bosphorus and became fuddled. He placed animal faces on the human figures. In the background, a scene of İstanbul is seen and the mosques, important architectural elements, are included. In the sky, on the other hand, clouds that are among the particular traditional Turkish patterns attract attention (personal communication May 10, 2017). This work, also included in the quilt, created a different effect by being used in the forms of clothes (figure 6 and 7).



Fig. 6: Fluffy Vest Two Sided Dress



Fig. 7: Janissary Shirt- Wearable Art Piece

Miniature Art in the Islamic world, has a strong power of expression and an aesthetic structure unique to it, as well as its ornamental characteristics. It has maintained its improvement under the different and various styles. Even though the works included in here bear surrealist marks, the artist Arya Kamali wanted to highlight how powerful miniature is as an art of expression, and stressed that this was not the power of muralist but the power of miniature. One of the most cultural objects of the Ottoman period is clogs used in Turkish baths. In the clogs made of hand-made coloured wood material, Gülden Gener (figure 8) made a reference to Dali's melting watches and interpreted the rigid and

unchanging notion of time. In the other clog, Arya Kamalı used the image of Dali's long-legged elephant (figure 9). In the other clogs included in the collection, the creations ornamented with the surrealist images such as rose, melting watches, fish, apple, etc. turned into wearable art products.



Fig. 8 and 9: Handmade Dyeing Traditional Turkish Hammam Takunya (Clog)

Conclusion

Movement of wearable art shapes designers' works in the process of a constantly-renovated dynamic process which is compatible with today's conditions. As it has been presented in this article, the textiles produced by being inspired from works of art are reconsidered particularly by a young designer in Turkey in terms of design, technique and material thanks to the movement of wearable art. Başak Cankeş cast off the impression that the wearable art collections she created are just visual artistic works. What's more, she has enabled them to play a part in life and to be appreciated on the human body. Performing arts, music, modern art movements, art history, Turkish culture in which she is interested, and the designs of artists and artisans have been indispensable parts of her designs and process of creation. The fact that the traditional arts and crafts sinking into oblivion have become the object of designs and their updating with the modern interpretation takes the Bashaques a step further in respect to protecting the cultural heritage. In light of visual examples we examined, it was observed that the textile products in question (dress, quilt, clog, etc.) hold the function of clothing and that some of them can readily be used in daily life. In this context, we can characterize the products included in the collection as the designs with strong the artistic aspects, bearing certain plastic values. This characterization is based on the effect of Ottoman Miniature and Surrealism interpretation we encounter in fabric designs rather than the forms of textile products. The lion's share in this effect is, for sure, the visual presentation of Bashaques, which contains many artistic disciplines all together and which appeals to the five senses of humans. In today's global world of design, it is predicted that in this study, in which we observe the positive results of the efforts made in order to prevent the disappearance of local identity in Turkey, the local designers who are in the pursuit of innovation like Başak Cankeş will make the notion of wearable art gain new dimensions by re-interpreting art movements with their own cultural identities.

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