

## **A Section from the 1960s to the Modern Day: The Place of Nature in the Concept of Land Art**

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### **Abstract**

All the living beings on earth have accommodated to the nature to keep their lives, they have become integrated with it and they have tried to explore environment by wondering. Through the centuries, nature, being subjected to studies of both the scientists and the artists, has been physically corrupted and ecologically damaged by the negative effects of the industrialization. The nature, subject of the artwork beforehand, has become integrated with the handiwork within the concept of "Land Art", coming up after the 1960s, and has started to be a part of these handiworks. The art has come out of the galleries or the pointed out idea has been reflected different from sculpture and painting art, instead of the objectivity, the thought has been placed to fore front. The art work has become visible in nature, travelable within, observable from the pictures or videos as it may not be lasting, out of focus and out of long lasting. This study is a type of scanning work based on the change of the concept of "Conceptual Art" after the 1960s handling the art work that the artists' way of use the nature in their works and nature's integration with the work physically.

**Key Words:** Land Art, Environment Art, Sand Art, Land Art, Nature

## 1. Introduction

Human beings like all other living things on earth, live within nature to maintain the requirement to adapt the nature and to use its facilities by turning it in his favor. The nature in terms of living environment, become curious, investigated and an inspiring source to the scientific and artistic products.

## 2. Methods

This research is a scanning model. According to Niyazi Karasar (1999), scanning model is described as to define a situation as it is now which is still in present or in past. In the research artists' way of using nature in their works and integration of nature with art works physically with the understanding of "Conceptual Art" based on the change of artistic works after 1960s is depicted.

## 3. Findings

Nature, from the Renaissance to Impressionism, Romanticism to Realism, has been in arts such as music, poetry, sculpture and painting and even has taken place as a subject itself in the works. This aspect of nature is considered as historical documents in many areas, this important feature of nature is used as guidance in some agricultural activities in relation to a number of simplified lines and abstractions. Man's survival process in the industrialization period has caused the destruction of nature and ecology in time because of the reasons like factory waste and garbage mountains.

The jeoglifs of animal figures, geometric lines and shapes that Nazca Civilization made between BC 200 and AD 600 years are the examples based on the occupied square kilometres in area and formal characteristics that are away from conscious work of art and used as basis of expression. (Molina, 2012: 18)



Picture 1. Nazca Lines, Hummingbird, Peru.

In industrialized societies with rapidly changing social and urban structures, a new understanding of art has begun to show itself as an action (Yılmaz, 2006: 155). Artists have directed to search alternative ways of expression and space unlike conventional works exhibited in galleries and museums. The use of limitless variety of materials, sizes, retention time and the use of space, elimination of limits among the art disciplines, in the emerging art understanding after 1960s, makes the nature as the basic element task in the areas that art is used.

Developed and various used materials with different designs that make formalism alternative, bring out “Conceptual Art” in time and make understanding superior than morphology nowadays (Atakan, 2008: 9). The understandings that emerged in the United States named as “Earth Art”, “Eco Art”, “Soil Art”, “Ecology Art” and one of the understanding that came to the fore after 1960s is the “Land Art” that such artists like Walter De Maria, Nancy Holt, Sol LeWitt, Richard Serra, Robert Smithson, James Turrell laid down (Dempsey, 2012: 532).



Picture 2. Walter De Maria, Lightning Field, 1977, New Mexico.

“Land Art” artists have established between nature and art work by using large rural areas, coastal shores and wooded areas. The obvious common point seen in movements such as Minimalism, Fluxus, Process Art, Poor Art is that they use environment in very range and work of nature. With this perspective, while addressing the environment, factors such as technic, idea, place that some works show similarities it is hard to tell at a glance which art movement that is (Yılmaz, 2006: 200-208). Also in the 1970s, “Land Art” spread to Europe includes the movements of “Non-Art” or “Anti-Form” (Germaner, 1997: 44).

According to Ahu Antmen (2008), “Land Art” presents an approach that makes nature visible, aims raising awareness about nature and blesses nature against technology (251). For this reason it can be said that it is the discovery of nature in another form or nature is pictorial and sculptural by itself (Aydın, 2012: 52-53). Materials that do not harm the environment during implementation is preferred because prolonged survival is not in question so because of its impermanence feature they can be stored as photography or video methods. According to Semra Germaner (1997), the marks that are in nature and in close relationship with it presented as work of art explain the format of documentation (45).



Picture 3. Nancy Holt, Sun Tunnels, (1973-1976), Utah.



Picture 4. Dennis Oppenheim, One Hour Run, 1968, New York.

When “Land Art” works are studied it is seen in two forms as internal environmental art and external environmental art based on where they are applicable. Thus, some artists prefer indoors while others prefer open areas during the meeting with the audience. In this respect, the works of Claes Oldenburg exemplify internal environmental art, Robert Rauschenberg’s works exemplify external environmental (Demirkol, 2008: 165). Richard Long, Dennis Oppenheim, Andy Goldsworthy, Christo and Jeanne Claude, Amel Chin, Michael Heizer are some of the artists that have done works based on “Land Art”.



Picture 5. Claes Oldenburg, Floor Cone, 1962, USA.



Picture 6. Robert Smithson, Spiral Jetty, 1970, USA.

According to Ali Akay (2005), “Land Art” is a culture that opens to nature. By focusing to draw attention to the nature sociologically it has a social or civil role (265-266). An artist who performs a particular job with a number of materials in a place of nature makes a submission to the entire globe by the way of supplying and arranging the materials and proposes to protect nature immediately by respecting her (Yılmaz, 2006: 238).



Picture 7. Richard Long, *Stone Line*, 1977, Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Artists question traditional art disciplines with their works that they do in nature, vast lands and by using land in an effort to present understanding of space in works with new plastic forms make space limitless. Artist thinking world as a place uses any object and even nature in order to actualize his ideas. Therefore, “Land Art” can be called another way of discovering the nature or nature’s becoming pictorial and sculptural personally (Aydın, 2012: 52-53).



Picture 8. Andy Goldworthy, Stone House, 1997, Avustralya.

By Sibel Kedik (2010), the thoughts that endeavoring artists with an intend to leave an imprint on nature, are demonstrated sometimes with monumental work, sometimes with modest actions. Some land art projects show features of lasting for years as they are applied with direct intervention on nature through permanent deforms (108).



Picture 9. Michael Heizer, Double Negative, 1969, Nevada.

Land art includes not only lakes, beaches, mountains to create the basis of visual oriented works but also performative works that artists define as actions like tours or walks (Antmen, 2008: 253-255).

The artists showing several performances with their works in the deserts, quarries, vast lands, abandoned mines, mountain peaks use every piece of existing nature with care, make the art limitless and eternalize the place and so they emphasize the idea of respecting nature (Gedik, 1999: 36-41).

#### 4. Conclusions

In recent years, the development of industrialization and technology has led to an increase in environmental problems. Factors such as engaging industrialization, nuclear tests, wars, chemicals used in agriculture with the increasing population lead the environmental pollution to the dangerous level. Artists, always being the most sensitive segment, brought a different approach to the art and introduced a variety of applications and performances in 1960s in order to react these such negative situations and draw public awareness.

This conception, quite different from classical painting and sculpture, has made art come out of galleries and museums. In addition to being part of the nature, the art, according to Mehmet Yılmaz (2006: 254), is the transformation of view into nature and nature into work of art so it is the life's representation of art.

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