

Exlibris as a Form of Producing Art and a Review on Erkin Keskin's Exlibris Art

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Abstract

Combining his knowledge and experiences on the printmaking and the art of graphic design with the exlibris art, Erkin Keskin is one of the prominent exlibris artists of our country. In this paper, it has been, both technically and theoretically, reviewed the exlibris works by Erkin Keskin that he has designed for his own name. During the review, it has been analyzed the methods and techniques the artist used, and observed his production phases. The artist's exlibris works have been categorized within five different topics, that is, producing process, defining, analyzing, interpretation and conclusion, and the results acquired have been presented within the paper. The objective of the paper entitled "Exlibris As A Form Of Producing Art And A Review On Erkin Keskin's Exlibris Art" is to put emphasis on the fact that the exlibris art will not continue its existence merely as another practice, and that reviewing exlibris works is as important as producing them as well, and to create awareness of Erkin Keskin's works by remarking his contribution to the Turkish Exlibris Art. This review on Erkin Keskin's exlibris art intends to become a precedent for meeting the need to increase the number of theoretical studies on the exlibris art in Turkey.

Keywords: Exlibris, Erkin Keskin, Printmaking.

Introduction

To be able to get information from artworks, the reviews seek for some answers of various questions evolved for understanding what it has been displayed in the work, how the work has been composed, what the images in the work mean and how come the work is so powerful and successful. The answers of these questions enable the researcher to reach aesthetic qualities (Mittler,1989,p.48). A review of exlibris as a form of producing art helps viewers to perceive not only what they see, but also what the basis of exlibris grounds. Reviews made are important in terms of reaching to presumption about exlibris, unearthing its value and understanding it. This paper reviewing the exlibris works Erkin Keskin designed and printed for his own name, seeks some answers to similar questions as in artwork reviews. Exlibris art will be surveyed in accordance with these questions and answers. In order to understand an exlibris, it is essential to look at it closely and scrutinisingly, and to distinguish its unique and intrinsic characteristics making it different from other exlibris works. Whether an exlibris is fluent and perceptible at first glance is shaped according to desires of its artist and requests of its commissioner. An exlibris being easily comprehensible has, naturally, a major importance not just in terms of artist and collector, but also viewers. Themes such as portrait, commissioners' professions, animals and motifs of plants, commissioners' hobbies, books or library views, or designs merely consisting of texts are frequently used in exlibris works intended to be easily comprehensible. On the other hand, exlibris works that viewers can not instantly perceive at first look, but after thinking on for a while, begin giving the meaning are more of works featuring religious subjects, mythological stories, signs and symbols.

In his exlibris works, Erkin Keskin generally prefers the metal etching as a technique and builds compositions in which viewers perceive a spatial feeling. His compositional approach that is highly rich in terms of textures, and dominantly has geometrical forms in his early exlibris works gives place to the one consisting of female figures. They are kind of works that make viewers think, ponder and ask questions in the sense of the symbolic expression, and which a viewer has difficulties in making an individual correlation with.

Erkin Keskin's exlibris work that he made for his own name will be studied within four stages, which are defining, analyzing, interpretation and conclusion. Some of the presumptions found during the defining stage are the narrative features and some are the visual ones. The visual features have been included in the analyzing stage and the narrative ones included in the interpretation. Data obtained from defining, analyzing and interpretation stages will be exploited in the conclusion.



Image 1
A rough drawing for the exlibris the artist
made for his own name, 2014.

An Exlibris Review

The Producing Process of The Exlibris Erkin Keskin Made For His Own Name
In this exlibris, the artist used the etching technique and printed it in one colour and with one plate; he built the image by creating the richness of grey values, from white to black. The method he used made a significant contribution to the success of the work.

Erkin Keskin creates his exlibris works by especially using the etching technique. It is also possible to observe this choice of the artist in his other prints. As many other artists do, he uses alternative etching tools which are invented by the artist himself. He creates the textural areas of his works by means of these tools. He completes the rough preliminary drawings by using digital media and during this process, he makes some required configurations for his compositions, taking figure and space relations into consideration constantly. By adding texts to these elements, he digitally recomposes his drawings. Computer technologies can be exploited within every steps of artistic creation in today's art scene. The artist transfers his preliminary drawing prepared digitally onto the metal plate by using various methods. In the exlibris discussed in this paper, which he made for his own name, Erkin Keskin placed the scanned image of the drawing onto the sketch, and then made some linear studies of the figure's values. He created some textures by combining the paint splashes he previously made on various surfaces with the digitally brush strokes. The stamp form he used in the works of his late-period is here in the sketch with its scanned image in this exlibris. He wrote the 'exlibris' word right above the stamp. He also added in this step the texts in the small areas of the exlibris, generated by scanning various documents prepared digitally and used in daily-life. And finally, he worked on his own name's typeface and position in the work.

Right after the sketching process, he proceeds to the stage of preparing the plate. He makes use of various methods during this stage. He decides which one of the techniques he should use while transferring his elements used in the preliminary part of the work onto the plate surface. After settling upon, he transfers the stamps, finer and small texts, the words of 'exlibris' and 'the person's name' in the guide study onto the plate by using silkscreen techniques. Subsequently, with the guide of his sketch, he creates forms on the plate by carving, flattening and engraving. Completing his initial processing on the plate, he lowers the plate into the acid bath. The artist, then, prints a proof to see the first state of the work. Depending on results of the proof, he decides what to do next. If the proof is unsatisfactory, he keeps manipulating the plate until he gets what he wishes.



Image 2

Erkin Keskin, An exlibris for his own name,
12,5 cm x 10,5 cm, Metal Etching, 2014

Considering the methods used by Keskin stating that he keeps working on the result after printing the proof, it is seen that he developed some methods intended to solve the textural problems the artist originally took into consideration. In this work, he sought for dark daubs behind of the figure to be able to bring it into the foreground. Furthermore, he also used those dark daubed areas at the bottom of the exlibris to balance the dark areas behind the figure and to create textural diversities with darker daubs in the dark. He created daubs by overlapping small textural areas one another. He included the methods he usually utilizes, such as mezzotint, drypoint, deep engraving, in this particular work as well. The artist used special tools he invented, and roulettes to achieve diverse textural effects.

After printing a second proof, the artist assesses the results and manipulates the plate again. In this step, he makes various forms connecting the daubed areas and textures together explicit and clear. He solves the technical problems showing up in the print and takes another proof. Generally making experimentations with technical tests by printing proofs, the artist believes that every single proof makes enormous contributions to exlibris. In this process, the artist experimenting with the thickness and deepness of lines interprets the areas of lines, daubs and textures through his distinctive forms.

Defining

During the review of the exlibris, it will be taken an inventory of the whole elements seen in the exlibris, regardless of spatial, positional or dimensional features. In the defining stage, an identification of the visual elements composing the exlibris will be made, and it will be explored what they are.

The 'exlibris' word written in a circular form is seen in the right upper corner of the exlibris, and we see the postage stamps below it. A rectangular box slopes down from the top of latter 'i' letter of the 'exlibris' word. This box falls away toward the text of the artist's name 'Erkin Keskin'. The area of the rectangular box consists of repetitive fine and dashed lines and has darker tones. Different type of lines gets through the rectangular box. The 'Erkin Keskin' name intersects with those taller and irregular lines, and is in alignment with the bottom end of the box.

The artist uses a circular hollow form placed between the female figure and the 'exlibris' word. Behind this hollow spiral form, we see a set of lines consisting of a line beginning in the top border of the exlibris and becoming thinner from the top to the bottom, and some other lines that irregularly and disorderly go from the bottom to the top. The lines running from the lower

part of the circular shape go through the the elipse which is a platform where the female figure stands on.

In his exlibris, Erkin Keskin uses a nude female figure standing up to split the circular movements through a vertical motion in the composition. She stands leaning back with her upper left shoulder and lower right one, and pushing her belly forward. Putting her weight onto her right leg, she leans her left foot and hip on the platform in her back. She comfortably puts her right arm through the leg. We see a strip spreading over her both legs, but it isn't felt on the right leg since it is falling behind. The figure stares at viewers with her slightly leaned head and her squinted eyes.

Behind the figure, there is a black platform started from the upper border of the exlibris and ended where the woman's feet are. The darkness of the platform continues to the upper part of the figure, diversifies with the lighter tones and ends with a bold black line. We see the black splashes in the area between her legs and breasts as well as some texts on top of her. These texts are in lighter tones in comparison with the splashes. There are lots of lines intersecting on the horizontal and vertical planes on top of the figure.

The elliptic form standing under the foot of the figure is in darker black tones. Inside the elipse, however, we also see some light and medium tones. There are the 'TYP...' letters hand-written with capitals inside the elliptic form. "Uludag University, Faculty of Education, Painting Teaching Department, Nilufer/Bursa/TURKEY" is written right on top of the 'TYP...' letters, outside the elliptic form. There is a bold black line between the female and the area in her left. This line extends over the elipse starting from the upper border of the exlibris. On the lower border of the work, we see some dark and half tones around the elliptic form. Lines in different thickness move upward starting from the bottom part of the form.

There is a dark black spot under the left hand of the figure, and a lighter grey spot under it. And then, we see an area consisting of black splashes, fine dashed lines and texts, under the grey spot. A light grey rectangular area heading from top to the bottom in the left side of the figure is splitted into small pieces with different sizes. This fragmentation is realized by the line extending over the breast-high of the figure starting from the lower part of the rectangle, and spliting through a vertical motion. There is another area between the peak of the line in the middle and the left side of the exlibris. On the left of this textural area, there is a further grading area moving from the bottom to the top. This area merges with the textural one on the upper part of the rectangle and gradually disappears on the top. We see a texture created by the repetition of small dashed lines in the area between the

vertical line from the bottom of the rectangle, an arch emerging from the peak of this vertical line toward the figure and a dark daub where the figure is inside. There are various forms in the lighter daub on top of the rectangle. These are the textures created by different line values and texts. However, the texts are barely legible. The area in the upper part is splitted by a thin line in the middle. Moreover, the small daubs, here, create a short arch.

Analyzing

During the analyzing stage, the focus will be on the principals of art to be able to understand how the artistic elements have been composed in the exlibris. It will be sought for the hints and presumptions that are intended to reveal how the exlibris has been composed or arranged.

The compositional dispersion of the exlibris is based on the contrast of dark-light tones. The eye is gravitated towards the focal point by this contrast. The diversity in tonal values provides to the exlibris a dynamic characteristic by creating a sense of motion and rhythm. The straight and curled lines have been utilized with a perfect balance in the exlibris. There are two parallel lines identifying the left and right limits of the dark daub behind the figure. The widths and depths of the two lines are different from each other. We also see vertical lines under the woman's feet, moving upward from the elliptic form. These lines intersect with the curled lines coming from the lower part of the hollow spiral form. Lines having different widths and forms from each other create a stylistic contrast.

Lines having nearly same values have been used harmonizingly in groups, either all together or separately. Variety has been created by the use of straight-curved, thick-thin and dark-light lines in the exlibris. The hollow spiral form is composed of fine lines. This kind of lines creates a three-dimensional effect. The artist uses the linear values with a gradually gradation, and makes some of the lines darker and some lighter. The width and depth of the line in the lighter area in the upper left corner of the exlibris differ from the width and depth of the vertical arch-shaped line in lower part. He creates this diversities in linear values by using deep-engraving and drypoint methods of the etching techniques. This linear construct really makes a great contribution to the rhythm and motion of the exlibris. Texture is dominant in the whole exlibris. Various textural areas are in harmony, and are effective in emphasizing the elements created the exlibris separately. For instance, the textural variety behind the female figure enables both the figure and the other areas to show themselves. The area with short dashed lines, which is under the arch in the rectangular box on the left side of the figure, has same textural characteristics with the

rectangular area under the 'exlibris' word. The texture of the latter is denser and more frequent than the former's, and here, the direction of the texture is in horizontal plane. The rectangle is in darker tones despite of its position in the background. In the background of the work, we dominantly see the textures of a paper made use of, creased and written on it. While this texture shows itself in the lighter areas in both left and right sides of the figure, it is, slightly and vaguely, used in the areas where the darker tones are dominant. The artist makes gradual transitions in the textural areas to create sense of volume and spacing. And, in doing so, he uses the advantages of the etching technique. Textural areas give a sense of motion and rhythm to the exlibris. Different textures of the exlibris have been used in a harmony and in proportion.

The vertical black area behind the figure, the lighter-toned rectangular area on the left side of her and the spots in the area of the 'exlibris' word are balanced with horizontal areas in the floor. The lighter spots on the floor, starting from the upper border and heading toward the lower merge gradually with the dark spot on the floor and the elliptic form. The female figure is notably three-dimensional. Splashes on her provide the balance between the dark area behind her and her body itself, and create a concordant integrity in stylistic terms. There are arch-shaped two lines meeting near the left leg of the figure. Among them, the one heading towards left side moves outwardly and also creates an area in the floor. The other one heading towards the right, on the other hand, disappears in the hollow spiral form on the right of the figure.

The aim of the elements used in the exlibris is to create a spacing. Vertical lines moving up from the lower part of the elliptic form help in perceiving its spacing with the figure standing on the other side of the ellipse. The area created by the intersections of the arches on the figure's left leg puts the leg of her in the background in perception. The hollow spiral form and the lines running through it are in front of the figure, creating a background/ foreground relation along with the other lines. The spots on the figure emphasize the depth with the vertical large black area behind them. The posture of the figure intensifies the spatial effect. The textural area located on the lower part of the arch in the rectangular area in the left of the figure are in the forefront more than the other lighter area. The words 'exlibris' and 'Erkin Keskin' in the right, postage stamps, address details and the rectangular shape created with dashed lines are worth to mention as the other elements that also intensify the spatial effect. The rectangular form that gradually darkens while moving up from the 'Erkin Keskin' word is in the back of both the female figure and the other areas. This form has a significant meaning because of its impact in creating depth in the exlibris.

The other fact that strengthens the sense of depth is the use of forms in different sizes and lines in different thickness. The dark-light contrast and tonal gradation applied throughout the exlibris make great contributions in the illusion of depth. The stylistic elements used in creating the illusion of depth stir a motion effect along with the spacing.

Interpretation

The objective of this stage will be to establish the meanings of the elements composing the exlibris by taking each input reviewed on the exlibris in the stages of defining and analyzing, into consideration. In this stage, it is likely to be applied different methods in detecting the narrative characteristics of the work. It will be interpreted other exlibris works by the artist as well and determined their similarities and differences with the chosen work.

Exlibris works have been designed in accordance with the artistic approach of their own periods, and with various themes. Portraits, coat of arms, custom marks specific to the families, armours, weapons, mottos, architectural elements, typographic arrangements, animal and plant motifs, and human figures have been included in exlibris (Pektas, 2014, p:19) The artists working exlibris have never dropped their obsessions to make use of the imageries of indoor-outdoor spaces and especially female figures in their works. As one of today's exlibris artists, Erkin Keskin is, also, amongst the artists who create their exlibris works with this inclination.

The body of exlibris works that artist has created from 1997 until today has similar aspects with his approach in his fine art prints. It is possible, in the first place, to observe this similarity in technical approach. Working with metal etching technique for many years, the artist is one of the prominent masters of the technique in Turkey. He shows his mastery and competence in metal etching technique in his exlibris works as well. His approach to exlibris highly resembles the technical practices of Eastern European artists, having a reputation for their subtle accuracy.

In the exlibris works of his early period, he builds compositions in spaces filled with geometrical shapes. On the basis of natural forms, he uses spatial abstractions created with geometrical forms, and his empirical spatial studies. That he links all these compositions together with the person whose name will be used the exlibris gives a different meaning to his works. Interpreting his empirical spatial studies along with the geometrical forms, which he likes so much to use, in the exlibris for Kemal Topçu, the artist adds a warm atmosphere to these rigid forms by hand-writing the words 'Kemal Topçu'. Until the year of 2010, the artist has used geometrical forms in his works, instead of female figures.

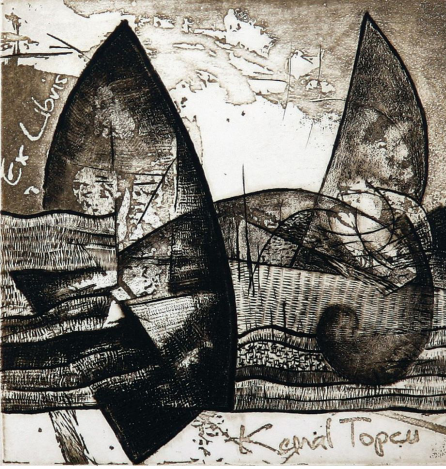


Image 3

Erkin Keskin, An exlibris for Kemal Topçu, 11,6
x12,5 cm, Metal Etching, 2009

When analyzing the exlibris in terms of tonal values, we see the dominance of the contrast of light, half and dark tones. The use of tonal contrast drags the eye toward the accented areas. Tonal richness of the exlibris provides senses of motion and rhythm. The straight and curved lines have been balancedly used in the exlibris. Especially, the spiral-shaped tall line in the right of the exlibris contributes to the motion and rhythm. The artist using various textural patterns has created a diversity. We see this textural variety in the horizontal plane on top of the words 'Kemal Topçu', as well. The textures, here, create a balance by getting varied through the horizontal plane. The textural area with the light daub, located on the upper side of the exlibris, and the horizontal area, where the words 'Kemal Topçu' are, balance each other. The typeface preferred has a dynamic nature that supports the horizontal, vertical or diagonal forms of lines and daubs. In his exlibris, the artist has used a great number of forms, either differing from or repeating each other, with a range of sizes. In the composition where two similar vertical forms intersect the horizontal one, the rhythm and motion are created thanks to these forms. The forms in the exlibris are used for creating spacing.

In his other exlibris for "Hayati Çetin", the artist embellishes his geometrical forms with lines and daubs, and while doing that, uses the principals of art. Typography in the work creates a balance in the composition, with an approach in tune with the dynamic nature on the upper side of the female figure despite of her inertia. He uses the balance of dark/light tones effectively in his "Hayati Çetin" exlibris. There is a transition from the dark-coloured area to where the figure stretches her head out, to the lighter area where the figure stands on. Here, the eye is dragged toward the area, in which halftones mainly dominate, located in the right of the exlibris. The differences in dark-light tonal values strengthen the rythm and motion phenomena. There are some areas in the exlibris, emphasized by the curved and straight lines. The area in the upper right of the nude figure enriches the movement with the variety of linear forms running through the space from the figure. The artist uses the deep engraving and drypoint methods of etching in this work, too. Areas consisting of lines make a great contribution to the motion and rythm of the work. In the other 'Kemal Topçu' and 'Erkin Keskin works discussed previously, the texture, also, has been used a major factor of balance. Textural variety is emphasized different areas of the work. Creating senses of rythm and motion, textural richness is gradually used to create illusions of volume and spacing. The textures created with the newspaper texts are in coherence with the other textures of the exlibris. Forms used in the work are arranged balancedly. And, through the forms in different sizes, foreground-bacground relation and spacing are strengthened in the work. The striped form reminiscent of a goat's horns, used along



Image 4

Erkin Keskin, An exlibris for Hayati Çetin, 12 x
11,5 cm, Metal Etching, 2010

with the female figure has major similar characteristics with the form in the exlibris that he made for his own name. Although it has been included in different works, the artist uses this form as a balancing element. Through the elements such as tone, form, line, texture, the effect of depth is created in the exlibris. All those elements have, skillfully and masterly, been used to create the illusion of depth.

It is required to make a review on symbols throughout the history and symbolic expressions, during the stage of reviewing the 'Erkin Keskin' exlibris. Symbols are not a flight of imagination. The cultural backgrounds laid beneath them are highly rich and deep.

The symbols having different meanings depending on cultural traditions along with some of the universal symbols such as apple, pomegranate, grapes, owl, lion, tiger, snake, eagle, the Sun, the Moon, stars and planets, having mainly shared meanings, are in the group of symbols frequently used in the exlibris works. The ones named as animal, plant or astrological symbols have richly mythological meanings based on ancient stories, myths, epics and holy writings. For example, the apple with its image as a forbidden fruit in the myths of Genesis is a symbol frequently preferred in the exlibris works. The 'apple' symbol traced to Adam and Eve in holy scripts is regarded as the forbidden or the clandestine in today's exlibris art (Alp, 2014, p.6) The postage stamps under the word 'exlibris' is displayed more upfront and pronounced than the sketch version. Postage stamps, the artist's address details, the hand-written **ТУРЦИЯ** word, the accidentally-formed textures and the other hand-writings are the informations on the envelope of the letter being sent to the artist from Bulgaria. In addition, the fact that the 'exlibris' word is shaped in a circular form just like a seal supports that idea. Keskin builds his composition on the basis of the marks on the envelope and the objects attached to it.

The hollow circular-shaped geometrical form in between the female figure and the 'exlibris' word is encompassed with fine lines. This form looks like sea-shells in spiral form, often found in tombs of the paleolithic era. It is generally believed that these forms assist the birth and also make people relieve in their harsh times. They are used as necklaces in daily-life (Ateş, 2001, p.63)

The act of drawing lines emerged as a fundamental, human-specific impulse is a significant communication tool in revealing the things that can not be expressed by words. The lines, which have been in abstract nature originally, have transformed into tangible images as people's vital experiences have become increasingly complex (Öztuna, 2007, p.89) In the exlibris he made for his own name, the artist uses lines both in intellectual and painterly terms. We see lots of lines under the hollow spiral form. Their thickness, length, forms and depth are different from each other. The lines get

united on the figure. The vertical lines emphasize stability and confidence; horizontal lines inertia and calmness; curved lines movement and softness. And, the use of all those lines by overlapping stresses the disorder as well as activeness and excitement. The area that identifies the certain border splitted by straight and tight arches intersecting on the figure's body gives stiffness, tightness and an intrinsic character to the line.

The large dark daub splitted the exlibris through a vertical movement is right behind the figure. This daub represents the tree of life rising to the sky from the earth. The tree harbours lots of things that help individuals meet their vital needs. Here, it is identified with abundance, fertility, life and strength. The woman leans her back to the tree and has its support. In history, the female figure has been in the centre of life as a symbol of fertility. So in this exlibris, we see a woman creating an integrity with the tree in her back in terms of meaning. The tree has also been used in textural terms. There is a textural area consisting of dashed vertical lines, on the left leg of the figure, located in the area under the arches. It is a tree texture. It resembles the rectangular-shaped texture starting on top of the words 'Erkin Keskin' and ending through the 'exlibris' word. The tree texture is rendered in a rectangular form and formed as a shelter.

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The female figure the artist frequently has used since the year 2010 is highly featured in his late-period works.

“The nature shows itself on a women's bodies at the most. The femininity of nature (its essence as 'Mother Earth', plentifulness, nudity, immediate beauty) is mainly portrayed on women. It is her, who ate the 'forbidden apple' narrated in the story of Genesis in holy scripts, and in doing so, crossed the border. We experiences pushing, exploring, practicing the limits inside nature, on women's bodies at the most. Both as imaginary and intellectually. The theme of "Forbidden Apple that caused the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden", one of the themes frequently portrayed in painting and art, in fact, is a symbol of the argument that a woman desires to experience the taste of 'knowlegde' in nature, more than a man does. It is because the tree the 'forbidden apple' picked from is the 'tree of wisdom'. Apple symbolizes both pleasure and knowledge. It will be more helpful and appropriate to discuss the image of women frequently used in exlibris designs in this very 'knowledge and pleasure' terms.”

(Ardahanlı,2013, p.34)

In the 'Erkin Keskin' exlibris, we see a nude female figure standing in front of a tree in a space splitted through a vertical motion. The emphasis is on the female in the exliblis having a dynamic composition. Just like Venus rising on

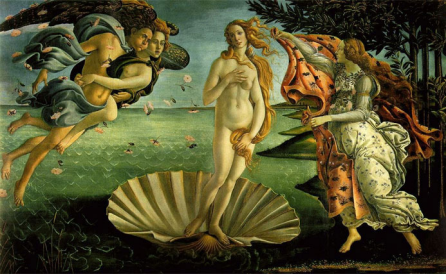


Image 4

Sandro Botticelli, The Birth of Venus, 172,5 cm
x 278,5 cm, 1485.

the sea by standing on a sea shell in the painting named The Birth of Venus by Sandro Botticelli (1446-1510), the female figure rising from the elliptic form in the ground is displayed with a pose reminiscent of Venus' birth from sea. "The entire elements such as the Moon, spiral, snake, pearl, oyster, bead, deer, bird, the colour of red etc. were symbolic constituents of the themes of birth and rebirth." (Ateş, 2001, p.65) The elliptic form in the 'Erkin Keskin' exlibris is related with the Moon, women and fertility.

The woman in the exlibris is highly confident; despite the fact that there is no one except her, she is not in solitude. There are images encompassing her body as if they are a part of it. Erkin Keskin embeds the figure into the textures around her. We, however, can easily notice and pick the figure embedded into textures. The female figure has been used in the exlibris as a compositional and narrative element rather than an object to be watched.

In the composition, the posture of the figure and all the images surrounding her seem as if they are going to move away and bring the body into open. It can be easily said that the artist used as a photographic reference for the figure. A viewer or the commissioner looking at the exlibris can make the foggy atmosphere around the woman clear at any moment, or have already regarded her naked (Berger, 2002, p.61)

It is known that the images such as sea shells, pearl, oyster, the Moon, deer, bird, red as a color, spiral, snake etc. symbolise the ideas of birth and rebirth. Likewise, the spots on the figure represent the eggs enabling fertility in the exlibris. The spots on a leopard in paintings also are symbolised in this way. Queen mother is portrayed as she is giving birth in a chair made of a leopard or coated with its fur. A leopard is also represents power, health, bliss, the fertility of men, the competency of sustenance and protection (Ateş, 2001, p.153)

Like the "prostitutes" of Manet and Picasso, Gauguin's "Primitives", Matisse's "Nudes", the "Objects" of the Surrealists, the artists from Renoir to Picasso made their innovative practices in their manners and styles by using female figures (Chadwick, 1996, p.171.) With their daily lives, nightlives, professions, women have always been included in paintings and prints. Since 2010, Erkin Keskin has used female figures more frequently in his exlibris works. The "Erkin Keskin" exlibris is a work that the artist made for his own name. The work in which the emphasis is mainly put on the female figure gives us many information on his late-period works of the artist.

Conclusion

The history of exlibris art in our country is much novicer than in the other countries. The first exlibris works in Turkey were designed for foreigners in the early 1900s. The impacts of the exlibris art on collectors as well as artlovers led people to love and popularise this art. The proliferation of the exlibris art increased the qualities of works, and strengthened the communication between collectors, artists and owners of exlibris works. From this point of view, Erkin Keskin, as an exlibris artist, contributes to the improvement of this art through his exlibris works as well as his supports for exlibris lovers.

Giving an overall look on His “Kemal Topçu”, “Hayati Çetin” and “Erkin Keskin” exlibris works, it is seen that his control over the technique and the elements consisting of his compositions in contextual and stylistic terms makes the works original, meaningful and strong. In his exlibris with the female figure, by combining the woman’s body with natural images and the idea of communication, he enables the figure to create some effects that change the space. Women in his exlibris works are the symbols of transformation in the nature.

Some results have been obtained after the general review of his ‘Erkin Keskin’ exlibris as well as his other works discussed within the scope of this research. The element he uses most is the line experimented in thin, thick, dense, loose or superficial forms. As one of the most fundamental elements of the design, lines become forms in his skillful hands. His lines head towards textures and daubs, and finally lead viewers in perceiving the space. Some certain forms used in his compositions have a geometrical basis. Spiral forms with dashed lines and triangle or polygonal shapes are the ones that the artist frequently uses. In his works since 2008, we see that he began to use the female figure along with, or instead of, the geometrical forms. The areas improved and composed engender the textural areas created by newspaper clippings, envelopes of letters or used surfaces.

In the result of this study consisted the artist’s producing process, and the stages, which are defining, analyzing, interpretation and conclusion, it is concluded that his ‘Erkin Kesin’ exlibris harbours many symbolic meanings. All these symbols become more meaningful with his masterfully use of the etching technique.

By its period, the ‘Erkin Keskin’ exlibris is an important example as an artwork, in both stylistic and contextual terms. The artists in Turkey recently use the advantages of image-making technologies in their PCs as they design

exlibris. The work that the artist made by using traditional etching methods has a completely conventional structure in terms of reproduction although its sketch was computer-aided. The artist's approach in producing process is an important attitude as being a role model for today's exlibris art and artists.

Especially in his late-period works, the artist uses the contrast between dark and light tones, and female figures in spaces composed with textural varieties. The reason behind it is that Erkin Keskin is highly aware of the role and power of women within the social, economical, political and cultural structures of a society.

When considered how art affected social structures in what extents throughout the history, it is seen that the exlibris art, as one of the creative expressions having massive impacts in small areas, had an significant place both in our country and in the world. Chosing the exlibris as a way of expression for his artistic pose, Erkin Keskin contributes to this art in having a prestigious place in the art scene in Turkey, and also encourages the artists working exlibris in appearing in international platforms.

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