

Ethical dimension of live animals as ready-made objects in contemporary art

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ÖZET

Reaction through art, observed among the 20th century artistic movements, can result in artistic works in which animals are made the object of violence. The objections caused by these works sometimes make people question what art is and its value, and sometimes result in legal interventions. It is the forms of expression in contemporary art where idea gets ahead of physical production. In such an atmosphere, 'philosophy of art activities that question what art is' have become almost equivalent to artistic production. However, the controversial works make the concepts of ethics, law or public influence determine what art can or cannot be. In the background of all these developments, advances in the field of biology blurred the boundaries between animals and humans. After such developments, through which the anthropocentric thought system has lost its power, the position of animals in the system will also change. The reappraisal of animals will fundamentally affect the behavior of the human species towards them, undoubtedly. In such a system where the determinants of the concept of ethics are redefined, objectification of animals will not be ethical as before. In this regard, art can no longer be separated from other fields. When the determinant of the boundaries of art is a non-art field, the discussions within the field lose their meaning. This study aims to investigate the limits of contemporary art by examining the reactions to the selected examples of artists whose ways of including animals in their productions are criticized.

ANAHTAR KELİMELEER

Çağdaş sanat, sanatın sınırları, sanat ve etik, sanatta hayvan kullanımı, tepki çeken sanat.

Çağdaş sanat alanında hazır nesne olarak canlı hayvan kullanımının etik boyutu

ABSTRACT

20. Yüzyıl sanatsal hareketleri arasında gözlemlenebilen, sanat eseri aracılığıyla tepki verme davranışı, sanat alanına dahil edilen hayvanların şiddetin nesnesi haline getirildiği çalışmalar ile sonuçlanabilmektedir. Bu çalışmaların sebep olduğu karşı çıkışlar ise bazen sanatın ne olduğunu ve değerini sorgularken bazen de hukuksal müdahaleler ile sonuçlanmaktadır. Çağdaş sanatın ifade biçimleri, düşüncenin nesnel üretimin önüne geçtiği bir alandır. Bu ortamda, 'sanat'ın ne olduğunu sorgulayan sanat felsefesi etkinlikleri, neredeyse sanatsal üretim ile eş değer hale gelmiştir. Bununla birlikte, tepki çeken çalışmalar, sanat alanının dışından gelen etik, hukuk ya da kamuoyu etkisi gibi kavramları, sanatın neler olamayacağını belirler duruma getirmektedir. Bütün bu gelişmelerin arka planında ise teknolojinin hızlı gelişimi ile birlikte, biyoloji alanındaki ilerlemeler de, hayvanlar ve insanlar arasındaki sınırları giderek belirsizleştirmektedir. Antroposantrik (İnsanmerkezci) düşünce sisteminin gücünü yitirdiği bu gelişmelerden sonra ise hayvanların sistem içindeki konumu da değişecektir. Hayvanların değerinin yeniden ele alınması kuşkusuz, insan türünün onlara karşı davranışlarını temelden etkileyecektir. Etik kavramının belirleyicilerinin tekrar belirlendiği böyle bir sistemde ise hayvanların nesneleştirilmeleri eskisi gibi etik olmayacaktır. Bu konuda, artık sanat da diğer alanlardan ayrı tutulamayacaktır. Sanatın sınırlarının belirleyicisi sanat dışı alan olduğunda ise alanın içerisindeki tartışmalar anlamını yitirmektedir. Bu çalışma ile birlikte çağdaş sanatçılar arasında hayvanları üretimlerine dahil ediş biçimleri eleştirilen sanatçılardan örnekler ele alınarak, verilen tepkiler üzerinden, çağdaş sanat'ın sınırlarının araştırılması amaçlanmaktadır.

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KEYWORDS

Contemporary art, boundaries of art, art and ethics, use of animals in art, reactive art.

Introduction

The 20th Century is a period in which permanent changes in every art area were observed. Common features of the artistic movements emerging in that century have counter-reactive attitudes against the old patterns while getting used to the change accelerated by science and technology. In this context, movements such as Cubism, Expressionism, Futurism, Dadaism, and Surrealism that appeared before World War II were meant to destroy forms and patterns, either traditional or academic. For example, Cubism's tendency to take objects apart in search of their essence can be considered to be the manifestation of a reaction to the disappointments brought on by the age that the artists live in. Artists who belonged to the movement of Dadaism chose a more direct route. Dadaists aimed to destroy art completely since they saw it as one of the values of the Bourgeois Class, whom they deemed responsible for the World Wars. Futurism Movement artists, on the other hand, went as far as supporting war and violence while defending the new against the old with a modernist stance. In the following years, the failures of the propositions by the Enlightenment Revolution and Modernism, and then the traumas caused by the World Wars, increased the opposition to the values of modernism after the first half of the century. With the process after modernism that is called the post-modernist process, while the boundaries between art types became blurred, the behavior of reacting through the work of art continued in different ways. While there were reactionary works on the glorified works of modernism, especially among the performances that highlight the human body, sometimes many examples of feminist and anti-masculinity were created. The reactivity in these works continues with the works in which the artist can direct the violence to her own body, aiming to trigger the audience by surprising them. Stuart Brisley's 1972 performance titled 'And for today ... nothing', where he spends hours in a tub filled with stale water, Stelarc's hovering performances with shark hooks on his skin, Gina Pane's 1973 performance with razor blades and rose thorns, and Marina Abramovic's performances in which she pushes the boundaries of her own body can be given as examples.

As can be seen, violence in art can sometimes be directed at the artist's own body, against an object, or towards animals. The animal phenomenon has its place in the history of art in varieties, from the cave paintings to the animals whose genes were intervened in the Bio Art Movement. In the arts, animals were initially used to reflect the meanings ascribed to their representations. With the inclusion of ready-made objects in art in the 20th century, Marcel Duchamp paved the way for examples in which living and non-living animals would be used in artistic productions. In this article, on the other hand, the limits of artistic production are questioned by considering case studies in which animals are sometimes harmed or killed. Among the artistic movements that fall within the scope of the definition of contemporary art, there are undoubtedly examples where animals are not harmed. In the aforementioned case studies, apart from the meanings associated with the definitions specific to their own species, the connotations attributed to them complement the concept discussed in the artwork. Jannis Kounellis' 1969 work '12 Horses' and Joseph Beuys' 1974 work 'I Love America, and America Loves Me', in which Joseph Beuys uses a coyote, are controversial in terms of the inclusion of animals in art against their will. However, since the core messages (human or animal) of such studies do not intersect with the way of making any living creature the object of violence, such examples are not included in the scope of this study. In this study, the limits of the use of disturbing elements in contemporary art for the purpose of triggering the audience will be examined through examples in which live animals are included in art.

One of the definitions of the notion of violence is "using brute force against those who have opposing views" ((TDK), 2020). At the same time, the fact that animals, which do not have any views due to not possessing human values, are made the target of destruction directed against the opposite view, makes the righteousness and purpose of the perpetrator questionable.

However, presenting such destructiveness as an artistic movement creates a base for asking ethical questions, such as whether art can justify violence or whether the opportunities provided by artistic freedom will always result in positive results. This kind of discussion is also compatible with 'the ways of thinking of contemporary art, where questioning what art is or isn't is almost equated with artistic production'. In addition, the reactions to the works mentioned can make the sanction powers, such as the codes of law, effective in drawing the boundaries of art. The boundaries that cannot be crossed, determined in this way, also contribute to the questioning of meaning by saying what art cannot be.

Examples of artists who were criticized for the way they included animals in their artistic production

Today, the primary reason that can make killing an animal logical is to meet the need for food. In addition, the sacrifice of animals in religious rituals also justifies the act of killing among followers of the faith. As for the arts, the act of animal sacrifice brings to mind Hermann Nitsch, the best-known member of the Vienna Actionists. In addition to using the human body, Nitsch used animals in his performances. Nitsch's art bears inspiration from the immediate and direct forms of expression of Abstract Expressionist art and the performances of the Fluxus Movement. So much so that, similar to Joseph Beuys, who was a part of the Fluxus Movement, assuming the shaman role, Hermann Nitsch resembles a priest who conducts the rites of a paganist religion in his performances. The artist's sources of inspiration include inspirations ranging from the rites held for the Ancient Greek God Dionysus to the symbols of Christianity. Especially the Dionysian rites show parallelism with Nitsch's performances. Dionysus is the ancient Greek god of wine, growing grapes, and fertility. Like Nitsch's performances, an atmosphere of enthusiasm prevailed in the Dionysian rites.

The artist wishes to return to nature by taking primitive rituals as the basis of his actions, somehow eliminating the artificiality of modernity. The purpose of Nitsch's actions is to create a kind of purification-catharsis¹ effect on modern man. For this reason, "Nitsch developed his public actions into a series of performative festivals –the Orgies Mysteries Theatre – which incorporated rituals sacrifice and destruction as a vehicle for purging and catharsis" (Warr & Jones, 2012, p.93). 1962's 'The Blood Organ' performed in Theater of Orgies Mysteries consists of three days of brutality, reminiscent of the Dionysian rites, where the participants can come and go whenever they want. During the event, the bellies of bulls and sheep were pierced, and the removed internal organs were stuffed back into the carcasses(Warr & Jones, 2012, p.93). The general aim of movements such as the Fluxus Movement in the 1960s is to remove the boundaries between art and life and to involve the audience in the artistic movement interactively. Nitsch also abandoned classical production forms by showing tendencies close to the understanding of contemporary artists of his time. The artist searched for reality rather than theatre, and arrived at the orchid 'Action', comparable to Antonin Artaud's 'Theatre of Cruelty', to which he himself refers, and whose aim is reality and life itself, in all its positive and negative aspects(Warr & Jones, 2012, p.93). From this point of view, it can be said that for Nitsch, life is not a totality in which positive aspects can be selected, and negative aspects can be left out. Therefore, art should reflect life as it is with its negative aspects. Humans are no exception to this situation, with the good and evil they contain. For this reason, the notion of violence comes to the fore in Nitsch's actions. It can be concluded that one of the factors that was effective in determining the world view of Hermann Nitsch, born in 1938, was World War II (1939 – 1945), with its nuclear weapons and concentration camps. Nitsch's art expressed the reaction against a social structure whose economic and industrial variables had led to war. However, this expression found its reflection on animals, not on the structure that caused the violence. In this sense, actions are defined as the purification of a person by confronting his identity through the

¹ Ca-thar-sis: \ ka-'thar-ses\ n, pl ca-thar-ses \-,sez[NL, fr. Gk. Katharsis, fr.katharizein to cleanse, purge, fr. Katharsos pure] (ca.1775)
1: PURGATION 2 a : purification or purgation of the emotions (as pity and fear) primarily through art b: a purification or purgation that brings about spiritual renewal or release from tension 3: elimination of a complex by bringing it to consciousness and affording it expression(Merriam-Webster, 1996, p.181).

feeling of being strong by dominating the weak, and the relief that develops in parallel with this situation. Presenting this definition as an artistic activity creates a contradictory situation because the anger is directed at the wrong target. As a result, the artist is protested by animal lovers in many countries of the world, for killing real animals and using their blood and corpses in his performances. The protests held in Tasmania for the '150th Action', another continuation of the Mysteries Theatre, can be given as an example of the reactions to the artist's work. In 2017, A petition was called for the cancellation of this performance, and more than 2,000 people signed this petition. The petition was prepared against this event, which condemns a living thing to death in pursuit of artistic endeavors and trivializes the slaughter of animals for human use(Elbaor, 2017)(Image 1).



Figure 1 Hermann Nitsch, 80.Aktion, 1984,3-Day-Play, Prinzendorf Castle. Photo: Heinz Cibulka.©Atelier Hermann Nitsch.

Source: <http://artpulsemagazine.com/i-think-art-is-a-way-of-intensity-interview-with-hermann-nitsch>

Another artist who uses various animals in his works is Damien Hirst. 'A Thousand Years', one of the artist's works in 1990, 'employs living and dead material to make a point about life cycle' (Collins, 2007,p. 214)(Image 2). Through the sub-text of this work, it is possible to gain information about the main idea of the artist's work. The work consists of two parts. The first part contains a dead cow's head and an electric fly killer hanging from above. A glass block with holes in it separates this part. On the other side, there is a white cube with holes in its middle. Fly larvae are nested in the white cube. The larvae, which turn into flies as they grow, can fly through the holes in the compartment and pass to the other compartment containing the cow's head. While the flies that can switch between the two chambers feed on the rotting cow head on the floor, those caught in the fly killer hanging from the ceiling die by being electrocuted. Therefore, the floor of the first section is covered with dead flies. The project, conceived as a closed system, interprets the repetitive life cycle between birth and death via flies.



Figure 2 Damien Hirst, *Thousand Years*, 1990

Source: <https://www.damienhirst.com/a-thousand-years>

The most well-known work of the artist is named 'The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living' (*Image 3*). This study also deals with the theme of life-death, as in 'A Thousand Years'. The study involves a dead tiger shark swimming in a protective liquid. "Damien Hirst is obsessed with how to convey the transience of life and the permanence of death; his famous work 'The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living' transposes human emotions onto death beast, which once was a frightening killing machine" (Collins, 2007, p. 298). The artist has many works in this technique, using animals such as sheep, pigs, cows, and zebras in his series called 'Natural History.'

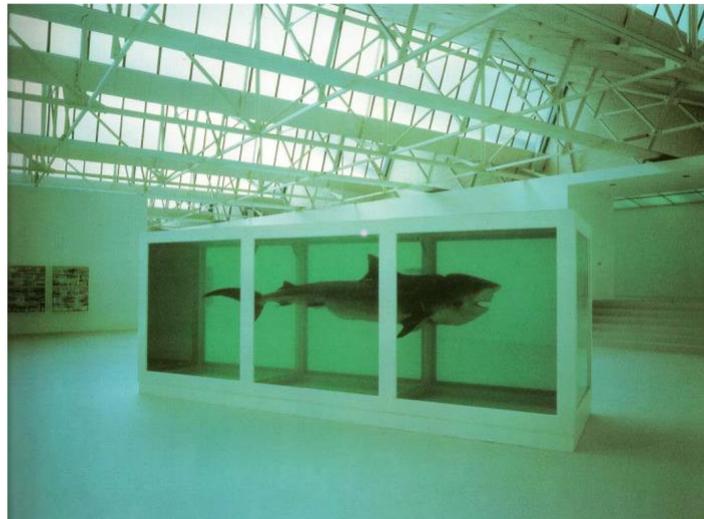


Figure 3 Damien Hirst, *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, 1991

Source: Lucie-Smith, Edward. *Art Today*. (London: Phaidon Press. 2003) p.297

Hirst does not personally kill the animals he includes in his work, but the demand he creates will result in the animals being killed. In her critical article 'How Many Animals Died for Damien Hirst's Art to Live?' published in 2017, Caroline Goldstein gives information about how Hirst finds his animals. Hirst obtains his materials by various methods. London's famous Billingsgate Fish Market, Australian shark hunter Vic Hislop, and London-based taxidermist Emily Mayer are examples of these methods (Goldstein, 2017). Goldstein also estimates how many animals Hirst's work will cost, from small animals like flies and butterflies to sharks and cows; the general total, according to her article, is "913,450" (Goldstein, 2017).

Thousands of tropical butterflies were wasted in Hirst's 2012 exhibition 'In and Out of Love' at Tate Modern. Italian animal lover-activist group 100% Animalisti Italiani protested the artist's exhibition in Francois Pinault's Palazzo Grassi in Venice. As the group states on its website;

...this fake artist (like [Hermann] Nitsch and [Maurizio] Cattelan) and those who support him" and blasts Hirst for capitalizing on animals by incorporating them into his past artworks. Hirst has actually killed thousands of butterflies for an exhibition at the Tate Modern and had a tiger shark fished from Australian waters to create his infamous 'The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living'(1991) (Voon, 2017).

In the works of artists such as Hermann Nitsch, there are objections to the fact that art is an object that can be bought and sold and that it is limited to certain places during the exhibition phase, which was also seen in similar artistic movements in the 1960s. We can no longer see this attitude in Hirst, who gained recognition in the 1990s. Considering the prices of his works, it is plausible to say that animals are objectified much more directly in Hirst's work.

After the backlash at Damien Hirst, his production methods have been questioned. While it is possible to produce works that cannot be distinguished as real or fake with the methods used by the artists of the Hyperrealism Movement, it is a matter of curiosity why Hirst persistently uses real animals. In a sense, it can be said that when a subject like death is chosen, using living things that once lived will reveal the source of the power of the artist's works. The utilization of real animals in art creates an emotional drive that works in two ways. Firstly, while the disturbing dimension of the artist's work causes controversy, it increases the artist's recognition. Secondly, we can talk about the state of pleasure created when the death of another living thing becomes an object of spectacle. In both cases, animals are objectified in the name of art. According to Yvette Watt, a University of Tasmania lecturer focusing on animal studies and the arts, an artwork that reduces animals to inanimate material such as clay or paint can be viewed as unethical, especially if it comments on human issues unrelated to the animal (Kaplan, 2017).

Gabriel Tuazon, a Filipino sculptor who creates works from recyclable materials, is another artist who is known for his killing of a cockroach. Tuazon executed a cockroach that had entered his house in a mini electric chair made from recycled materials (Figure 4). Posting the execution video on the internet, the artist caused controversy on social media. Tuazon was later arrested for "torturing animals" (Ikeji, 2018). It is paradoxical that Tuazon was punished for a cockroach that he would have killed under normal circumstances even if he had not released the video. In daily life, too many insects or animals that are classified as harmful are killed because they are found in undesirable places. This situation does not constitute a crime legally. In addition to this event, the punishment of Gabriel Tuazon creates a paradoxical situation when compared to the position Hirst reached in the art world despite the thousands of flies that died after being caught with an electric fly killer in Damien Hirst's work 'The Thousand Years'. The factor that should be mentioned here is the inadmissibility of torture. The artistic dimension of the video is also discussed, as it is unclear whether Tuazon took an artistic stance before publishing the torture. However, the flashbacks to the video mark a decisive limit to other studies using animals. In this case, it can be said that a creature cannot be tortured, even if it would normally be killed, and presenting this situation in an artistic way does not separate this situation from punishment. The existence of a sanction such as punishment draws a red line in determining the limits of artistic freedom. At such a point where the boundaries of art intersect with the boundaries of law, it will be up to the artist first and then the buyers to decide whether these red lines are worth crossing.



Figure 4 Gabriel Tuazon, Cockroach Execution

Source: <https://www.dailypedia.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Sculptor-cockroach-torture-2.jpg>

Belgian artist Wim Delvoye is another artist who exhibits an interesting attitude in making such a decision. Wim Delvoye is known for his tattoos on live pigs, as well as for dealing with subjects ranging from digestive systems to gothic architecture. The artist, who has a workshop in the city of Ghent, Belgium, has shifted this production style to China for his works using pigs. His tattoo designs on pigs range from symbols of biker culture to Walt Disney characters (Figure 5). All of the selected patterns reflect the sociological and economic dimensions of the culture they represent. The relationship between economic variables and culture is also a determinant in the artist's choice of subject. In light of this information, it can be said that the artist chose pigs because he sees a similarity between farmers' investment in pigs within their limited savings and the wealthy's appreciation for works of art. In this way, Delvoye brought to life the idea of objects that gained value over time, with live pigs turning into works of art, through the piggy bank. In his words, "The pig is the poor man's piggy bank—art is the rich man's one!" (Draguet, 2019, p.14)



Figure 5 Delvoye began experimenting with tattoos and pigs back in the 1990s

Source: <https://www.tattoodo.com/articles/artist-wim-delvoye-tattoos-live-pigs-4901>

Tattooed pigs can be exhibited by embalming when they die, or by framing their tanned skins. Although pigs are always anesthetized by veterinarians when they are tattooed, a Belgian animal welfare association denounced the project in 2003, and Wim Delvoye moved production to China to establish the China Art Farm (2003-2010) (Draguet, 2019, p.14). It is quite natural for the artist to choose a country like China, which has an important role in global production relations. However, when compared to European countries, the existence of animal rights in China is controversial. Many animal rights activists who criticize Wim Delvoye's work claim that the artist established the Art Farm in China to take advantage of this gap. As The Standard's

Culture Editor Raunak Lally states, "Evidently, he had to make a conscious effort to get away from other countries that could have given legal notice that his work is inhumane" (Lally, 2020). If the artist's reason for choosing China is related to the law, not his production preferences, then it can be said that Delvoye circumvented the limits set by the laws rather than exceeding them. In these conditions, the accuracy of the messages of the works of art produced with this attitude will vary depending on the places where they are produced or exhibited. Such an ambiguity will put the sincerity in the artwork's message into question.

In Delvoye, we see one of the most common models of defense against criticism of using animals as works of art. It is clear that despite anesthesia, pigs have no choice in their skin being tattooed. Despite this, pigs that have become works of art do not end their lives in slaughterhouses because they are saved from the production flow of the food industry and continue to live in the art farm. The objectification of pigs by transforming them into living canvases and making them an object of consumption can be questioned. Still, this would be an understatement compared to the fact that there are millions of animals slaughtered for their meat every day. The fates of animals that are certain to die are changed by the benevolent intervention of an artist. Delvoye also uses this fact in responding to the criticisms leveled against his art. In an interview with artist Y-Jean Mun-Delsalle himself, he utters the following sentences about the criticisms made against his art;

I like when something is difficult; I get more excited. By tattooing pigs, if I get into trouble with animal rights activists, I think it's more interesting. It adds another layer to the thing. For example, why would they not be happy? Why can you kill to eat and you cannot kill for art? They say, "You can kill it to eat, not for art." It's like a war on utilitarianism. Everything has to be necessary. Basically they have a problem with art. You should not tattoo a pig if you're not hungry. As soon as you're not hungry, you think of art. It's a human activity that you cannot completely justify, so these people play a theatrical role but they're basically trying to work out answers for something more general about art, something deeper than their concerns. When they attack me, it's to be in the limelight because otherwise they can go to a slaughterhouse and stand there and protest. A slaughterhouse kills around 400 cows or 1,000 pigs per day and nobody is there protesting. But what's interesting is that by doing this, they automatically add to the discussion about art. Is art necessary? Is art good if it's not necessary and what happens with something that's not necessary? (Mun-Delsalle, 2015)

While Delvoye challenges criticism against his own art, he also contributes to the debate about what art is and isn't. In a sense, the artist answers this question when describing his 2001 work 'Cloaca New and Improved', which can be defined as a large stool producing machine. Delvoye continues as follows; "It's completely useless, which fits my definition of art. For me, art is useless and anything useless is art. So, of course, Cloaca is an artwork because it's completely useless" (Laster 2019). In this sense, it seems like a pointless endeavor to get backlash for something (works of art) that is considered useless and unnecessary. On the other hand, adjectives such as shocking and sensational are widely used to describe the work of such artists. From this point of view, it can be said that the answer to the question of why an artist performs an action that he thinks is unnecessary is to attract attention. It should be noted here that since animals do not die in Wim Delvoye's works, it is necessary to distinguish him from similar artists. Despite this, the objectification of animals as works of art continues in Delvoye's pigs.

Tom Otterness is another artist who takes the idea of bringing an animal that would already be killed into the art space to a much more extreme point. The American Artist is known for his caricature sculptures for the public space. The artist's work, which is related to the subject of this article, is the 1977 film 'The Dog Shot'. In this work, Otterness goes to an animal shelter in Colorado and adopts a dog that will be put to death if not adopted. He spends some time with the dog, then ties it to a fence and kills the dog by shooting it with a gun. From the very beginning, the process is captured on camera. The Dog Shot Movie premiered in 1978 at the 42nd Street screening room in Times Square. The artist says that his purpose in this

performance is to hurt the audience. Otterness continues as follows; "Yeah, I mean that whole night on 42nd Street, as best as I could do it, was the most aggressive way I could think of to show a film, the most damaging thing that I could do to the audience by showing a movie. I hired a photographer with a camera so when people were leaving the theater, they were assaulted by a flash, attacked"(Punk Art Catalogue,1978). As the artist directly states, the purpose of killing a living thing in the name of art is to shock the audience. The artist takes it upon himself to shock the audience and wake them up, and does not hesitate to kill a living thing for this cause when necessary. After the movie is over, it continues to disturb the agitated audience with flash cameras. In the early 1980s, *The Dog Shot Movie* caused various reactions, but the artist was not punished. The artist would face the negative impact of *The Dog Shot Movie* years later. While Otterness was preparing for a public space project, public opinion arose as a result of the reactions of animal lovers, and the artist's various sculpture orders were canceled as a result of the reactions (Lee, 2011). The contents of the artist's current works have nothing to do with the message that *The Dog Shot* movie wants to convey. Despite this, the feedback for a work that he had done in the past and which he would accept as a mistake, limited his other productions. Otterness eventually emailed *The Brooklyn Eagle* the following apology; "Thirty years ago when I was 25 years old, I made a movie in which I shot a dog. It was an indefensible act that I am deeply sorry for. Many of us have experienced profound emotional turmoil and despair. Few have made the mistake I made. I hope people can find it in their hearts to forgive me -- Tom Otterness" (Frost, 2008). In an interview with *Observer* magazine, the artist gives a different answer to the question about why he shot a dog for a video art work from his 1970s answer, Otterness states as follows; "It is something—I've grown to understand that nothing really excuses that kind of action. I had a very convoluted logic as to what effect I meant to have with that video. Whatever I had in mind, it was really inexcusable to take a life in service of that" (Miller, 2011). At this point, the artist eventually comes to the point of accepting that killing an animal for an artistic activity is a mistake for whatever reason. The artist did not receive a legal penalty because of *The Dog Shot*, but his artistic productions were negatively affected as a result of the pressure of the public opinion. Here, in addition to criminal sanctions, public opinion has also been influential in determining the limits of artistic freedom.

Costa Rican artist Guillermo Vargas Jiménez, also known as Habacuc, is another artist who drew reactions with the way he included dogs in his art. He used dogs in Habacuc's works named 'Exposición N° 1' and 'Axioma'. The artist's installation *Exposición N° 1*, realized in 2007, includes a Nicaraguan, Sandinista National Liberation Front Anthem, drugs such as marijuana and cocaine burned in an incense burner, as well as a skinny stray dog. In the installation, the dog is tied with a string to the wall of the showroom, and 'Eres Lo Que Lees'('You Are What You Read') is written on the wall with dog food. In the exhibition, the dog was kept tied up for several days until rumors spread that she died of starvation and exhaustion. In the process, photos of the dog spread on the Internet. The animal's condition drew attention and provoked worldwide outcry, outstripping other elements of the installation (Figure 6 & 7). A petition is then organized to prevent Vargas from participating in the 2008 *Centroamericana Biennale* in Honduras. It is learned that Vargas also signed the petition, ironically claiming that artists always signed their own works. Vargas indeed intended to showcase his seemingly unethical work to manipulate the audience (Project X, 2010). In an interview, the artist says "he wanted to test the public's reaction, and insisted none of the exhibition visitors intervened to stop the animal's suffering. He refused to say whether the animal had survived the show, but said he had received dozens of death threats"(Couzens, 2008).

In this style of interactive works that include the audience in the artwork, the movement of 'leaving the viewer the choice of directing the fate of an animal' is observed. Thus, the audience is expected to question their own moral status and confront themselves. However, when it comes to making a choice, it can be said that the reactions to be given can be predicted since people who will choose the morally wrong behavior will exist under all circumstances. In this way, considering that the production methods of conceptual works of art were not prepared freely, but according to certain plans, it can be claimed that the purpose was implicitly clear in

the first place. If one tries to give an answer by looking at the artists' defenses, it is plausible to conclude that the aim is to accuse the society of hypocrisy and to make it a partner of certain crimes through the viewers who misbehave. Ultimately, it is inconsistent with the logic of drawing attention to the killing of animals by causing another animal to die. Elçin Gen deals with this situation through Habacuc in her article titled 'Loves and Dogs (and Art)'.

At first glance, Vargas seems to have made a fair point about human hypocrisy; but he overlooked the power of the implicit codes of behavior that permeate the museum or gallery visit: It is almost impossible for the typical gallery visitor to attempt to release a dog displayed as part of a piece of art. By tying the dog to the wall of a gallery and making it a "work of art" that should not be touched, it was the artist who pre-manipulated people's view of the dog and their possible behavior. Here, again, the artist places himself in a dual position of power: he not only instrumentalizes the dog, but also makes the visitors (and the thousands of people who participated in the petition as a result of misinformation) the unaware subjects of a 'behavior test' that is no different from experiments in 'psychology research': the artist knows the outcome beforehand, but everyone is part of an experiment where he needs data to prove his hypothesis. As for the dog, he was perhaps better fed during his time in the gallery than when he was free, but the first time he cuts off his leash, he chooses to run away (Gen, 2012)(My translation).



Figure 6 Guillermo Vargas Jimenes, "Eres Lo Que Lees" (You Are What You Read), 2007

Source: <https://hongyihongyi.wordpress.com/2008/05/30/dying-in-the-name-of-art/>

Figure 7 Guillermo Vargas & the Starving Dog. True or False?

Source: <https://bmoreart.com/2008/05/quillermo-vargas-starving-dog-true-or.html>

In examples of Tom Otterness and Guillermo Vargas Jiménez, one of the points that determines the audience's reactions is the type of animal killed. The dog is considered a pet in western societies and has no place in the food industry. It is also curious whether such an artistic activity will evoke the same reaction in a Southeast Asian country where dog meat is consumed, or whether the severity of the reactions will decrease if the animal killed instead of a dog is already a farm animal that will end up in a slaughterhouse. However, the most striking point here is the presence of empathy. As a result, reactions differ as an animal's proximity to a human makes it easier to empathize. A person who can put himself in the place of an animal can oppose that animal's suffering, and art does not justify that animal's suffering.

Another artist who tries to interact with the audience in a different way is Marco Evaristti. The most well-known work of the Chilean/Danish artist is the installation titled 'Helena' that he realized in 2000. In the study, ten kitchen mixers containing live goldfish were used (Picture 8). In the installation performed at the Trapholt Museum of Art in Denmark, the audience were told they were free to push the buttons of the mixers, and some of them actually did. As expected, animal lovers did not remain unresponsive to this event. As a result of the complaints, the

museum director was fined for cruelty to animals. Refusing to pay the fine, museum director Peter Meyer said that "it's a matter of principle. An artist has the right to create works that challenge our understanding of what is right and wrong (*BBC News, 2003*). In this way, the incident turns into a lawsuit and is forwarded to the court. The court in Denmark, after hearing the experts, decides that the museum director, Peter Meyer, does not need to pay the fine. Judge Preben Bagger says the fish were killed 'instantly' and 'humanely'. The court had previously heard an expert from the mixer manufacturer Moulinex, who said that the fish probably died within a second of starting the mixer. A veterinarian also told the court that the fish would die painlessly (*BBC News, 2003*). Thus, the fine is also cancelled. The court's decision does not satisfy the audience, especially animal lovers, who are uncomfortable with Helena, but once again it makes them question what art can be or not. In an internet poll by CNN, 72% (30,592 votes) think this is absolutely not art. Unexpectedly, animal rights philosopher Peter Singer argues that the given option to turn on the mixer raises the question of human power over animals (*Art & Electronic Media Online Companion*). The remarkable point about the cancellation of the punishment in Helena is not that the fish were killed for the sake of art, but that they died without suffering. In the study, by looking at the statements of the experts, we can predict that the use of another species with a more developed nervous system instead of fish or a longer killing process will affect the decision. From this point of view, it can be concluded that art cannot be used as a justification for killing a living creature, without the need to establish a relationship with the animal more easily.



Figure 8 Marco Evaristti, Helena

Source: <https://www.evaristti.com/helena-el-pescador-1>

Another artist who has been the target of protests is Algerian Adel Abdessemed. The artist's video works received intense reactions from the audience. 'Don't Trust Me', which shows the slaughter of animals such as horses, pigs, and a fawn with sledgehammer blows to the head, at a slaughterhouse in Mexico, and the 2008 'Usine[Factory]' showing mice, dogs, snakes, roosters, and scorpions grappling with each other constituted the source of these reactions. When we look at the motivations of the artist's production, the existence of war can be mentioned in the background of violence in Abdessemed's works, similar to Hermann Nitsch. In particular, the effects of events such as the Algerian Civil War and the Gulf War in the 1990s can be mentioned. Active conflicts still continue in many regions of the world. Similarly, although the artist did not focus on Mexican slaughterhouses in his work 'Don't Trust Me', slaughterhouses are actively working in many parts of the world. Perhaps because of the undeniable existence of these facts, the artist also does not take a step back despite the reactions to his works. The artist expresses himself as follows; "...I have nothing to do with wounds and I don't try to fix anything, nor do I

aspire to it. I am only a 'detector.' I perceive, find and show', says the artist and continues as follows: I use my passion and anger in public, nothing more. I'm not creating illusions (Wilson, 2013, p.10). Discussions about the artist's work even lead to some legal regulations. An example of this is the Humanitarian Arts Ordinance, which was adopted and implemented by the Southern California Assembly in 2009. According to this regulation; If the artist causes animal abuse during the production of the artwork, commits animal abuse himself, or watches and disseminates this abuse in different ways, the artwork is considered illegal; Legal action is taken against the artist (Wilson, 2013, p. 10).

There are other similar examples of Wim Delvoye's work that did not result in the death of animals, but garnered a reaction. Eduardo Kac's 'Alba' is a close example of this. A Brazilian/American artist Eduardo Kac is the most prominent artist of the Bio Art genre who also worked with Damien Hirst. There is no reactive motivation in Alba's production process, but it is a remarkable example in terms of the size of the reactions shown and the effect of the work. Alba is a rabbit that has a phosphorescent green color that glows under a certain special light, by transplanting the green fluorescent protein obtained from the *Aequorea Victoria* Jellyfish, defined as GFP, into its genes (Figure 9). The Alba Project, which took place in 2000, caused controversy around the world. Eduardo Kac, in his article titled 'Life Transformation—Art Mutation', personally conveys Alba's impact on the world;

GFP Bunny" became a global media scandal after a front-page article appeared in the Boston Globe, sharing headlines with articles about the 2000 Olympics and US presidential debates. Articles about Alba were published in all major countries, with wire services further spreading the news worldwide.¹¹ Alba was also on the cover of *Le Monde*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *L'Espresso*, among others. *Der Spiegel* and the *Chicago Tribune* dedicated full pages to GFP Bunny. She also appeared on the front page of the Arts section of the *New York Times*. Broadcasts by ABC TV, BBC Radio, and Radio France also took the Alba story to the whole planet (Kac, 2007, p.168).



Image 9 Eduardo Kac, Alba, Green Fluorescent Rabbit, 2000

Source: <https://www.ekac.org/gfpbunny.html#gfpbunnyanchor>

What Kac did with Alba is somewhat parallel to what Delvoye did with pigs. Logically, both artists interfere with the outward appearance of animals. However, Kac's intervention involves a much higher technology. In terms of genetic engineering, the possibility of using the techniques used by this field on humans in many different ways makes the project a little more frightening, and can increase the tendency to empathize with animals in proportion to this situation. Before the Alba Project, the artist has another experiment called 'GFP K-9', in which he tried to use the green fluorescent protein in a dog in 1998. Kac also talks about the GFP K-9 at the Life Science symposium presented by *Ars Electronica '99*; "He points out that the creation of dogs from wolves is a technology based on the relationship between dogs and humans throughout their long history, which dates back at least 14,000 years according to the archaeological record, a

fact that we have overlooked and that there is no herd of poodles and chihuahuas running in the wild”(Kac, 2007,p.165). From this point of view, the rationale behind the unquestioned acceptance of domestic animal breeding methods also works for transgenetic art productions that occur with genetic engineering interventions. Thus, genetic interventions are also normalized. Using the opportunities provided by artistic expression, Kac foresees the moral debates that scientific progress will bring about and prepares for the formation of a consciousness. But here, too, before all presuppositions, an animal is reduced to a guinea pig in the name of art to support the justification of an idea.

In Alba, there is an intervention in the name of art, the basic building blocks of vitality. With such an approach, the hypothetical divine dimension in artistic creativity becomes frightening. Works such as Alba are more easily accepted than artistic movements in which animals are subjected to violence because of the aims of biotechnological manipulation, such as bringing extinct animals back to life. At the beginning of the Alba discussions, the article ‘Cross hare: hop and glow’ published in the Boston Globe Newspaper touches on the main idea of the discussions; “And they say there's no way of knowing if the animal is suffering or what impact it would have on the ecosystem if the mutant rabbit escaped and reproduced.” And here is no way to know, they say, whether the animal is suffering, or what effect the mutant bunny would have on the ecosystem if she were to escape and reproduce” (Cook,2000).

A brief review of the use of animals in artistic production

The concept of ethics² is too broad to be covered by a text whose main issue is animal abuse in art. In short, it is shaping behavior by investigating what is good or bad. This concept, which forms the basis of every field through acting right, undoubtedly touches upon the field of art. For an area such as art that visualizes thoughts and opens new areas of discussion by going beyond the boundaries created by ethical-like preconceptions, the use of animals in production makes right and wrong become clear because it touches sensitive points about human beings. As can be seen, despite all the reluctance of art to defend its own truths, empathy with animals can end discussions.

Animals and animal products have been used in daily life for thousands of years, as Eduardo Kac also mentioned in one dimension in the relationship between human and dog. The perception of normalcy created by this situation pushes the ethical debates back into the background due to the negative inclusion of animals in art. Even if animals are negatively affected by this relationship, their presence in this way is considered normal in human life. In 2010, the College Art Association's guidelines for artists and institutions using animals in art and exhibitions are expressed as follows; “no work of art should, in the course of its creation, cause physical or psychological pain, suffering, or distress to an animal” (Kaplan,2017). The CCA guidelines posed a series of questions to artists wanting to use animals, including “Have you done research on the biology of your animal subject to understand aspects of its physiognomy and experience?” (Kaplan, 2017). For studies in which animals die, this question is meaningless. The question can be continued for studies that argue that animals are not killed directly and that they continue their lives as works of art in better conditions. Yvette Watt interprets this situation as follows; “Taking an animal out of its natural environment or previous context, as well as changing the way it is cared for can cause harm. Just because an animal doesn't appear distressed doesn't necessarily mean that it is happy in an exhibition” (Kaplan, 2017).

The striking impact of examples such as the product of genetic manipulation will bring ethical issues that have been overshadowed in to light, once again. The fact that animals and humans have more in common than is thought will make the value given to them be questioned again. As a result of the research on the origin of man, it becomes clear that there is more and more

² Eth-ic\`ethik\`n [ME ethic, fr. MF ethique, fr. L ethice fr. Gk ethike, fr. Ethikos] (14c) 1 pl but sing or pl in constr : the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation 2 a : a set of moral principles or values b : a theory or system of moral values < the present day materialistic ~> c pl but sing or pl in constr : the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group < professional ~> d : guiding philosophy ((Merriam-Webster, 1996: 398)

common ground between man and animal every day. In line with this information, human and animal behaviors can be explained by mechanical processes that basically work the same, due to their common nature. This process results in the definition of man as an animal in a sense.

Features such as human consciousness and language use constitute the main differences between humans and other species. At this point, the granting of a notion like consciousness to human beings legitimizes all negative behaviors towards animals that are considered as lacking cognizance. Studies are continuing to define exactly what consciousness is, the most striking difference, and whether there is a similar (or equivalent) consciousness-like structure in animals as well. It is difficult to say with certainty that there is no consciousness in animals today, but although there are no cognitive traits like that in humans, it is highly possible that there is a subjective structure equivalent to consciousness depending on the animal's own species. It is necessary to dwell on this possibility. In addition, if there is a structure equivalent to consciousness that requires giving personality to animals, this will fundamentally change our perspective towards them. Biologist Marian Stamp Dawkins has discussed this issue in detail in her book 'Through Our Eyes Only? The search for Animal Consciousness', in which she refers to her research on the existence of consciousness in animals. For Stamp Dawkins; "Because if we do decide that other species are conscious, then this will profoundly affect our attitudes and could completely change our ideas about what is morally acceptable to do to them. Eating them, doing experiments on them or killing them, because they are doing something that inconveniences us could be seen in a completely new light" (Stamp Dawkins, 1998, p.5).

A new perspective can be developed, including the art world, by considering this subject a little more broadly. For example, humanity has long since abandoned eating its own kind or human sacrifice for a religious ritual. Today, treating behaviors such as cannibalism and human sacrifice as cultural differences that must be sustained cannot justify ending the life of any human being. Under normal circumstances, killing people is a crime. Under these conditions, if animals are accepted as beings with consciousness and personality, the moral rules valid for humans will have to be valid for them as well. Considering the subject with this logic, if an animal is considered as valuable as a human being, all the rules that apply to humans must also apply to them. Under these conditions, an animal cannot be killed as a requirement of a religious belief or even because of a basic need such as hunger, scientific studies cannot be carried out on it, it cannot be killed as a result of causing inconvenience or damage to its surroundings, and it cannot be made to do anything against its own will. In the opposite case, whether the action taken is ethical or not will be open to discussion. Accordingly, we cannot evaluate art independently of this situation. If a person cannot be forced into an artistic movement, it should not be done to an animal either. Regardless of the subject the artist wants to convey in his work, the fact that one animal will die anyway, or that there are millions of animals in the world in poor condition cannot justify maintaining an ethically wrong attitude. Art cannot be a sufficient justification for a wrong situation.

Conclusion

As a 19th-century habit, the artist's tendency to see himself as in a privileged position led to a type of artist that is accepted and mythologized outside (or above) society. With the opportunities provided by the fact that art is an autonomous and free space within itself, the sample works that are the subject of this text and the similar ones that cannot be included here due to the limitations of this text have been exhibited in the contemporary art scene. Certain common logic patterns are observed in the motivation to produce the mentioned examples. Artists generally think that life is a whole with negative sides, such as death and war, and that art audiences should face this reality. After this primary cause, they claim that they draw attention to other negativities in the world or the killing of animals by killing an animal or causing it to die. As a result of this type of artist taking himself too seriously, it is seen that people take on tasks such as questioning their moral values and confronting them with reality. In addition, it is witnessed that artists visualize this situation by commodifying animals. However, if the

concept of the artist is to be glorified, this concept can be filled in such a way that the artist can foresee the developments that are predicted to take place in the future and inform this through his works. Current social developments increase the value given to animals day by day. As the boundaries between human technology and humans become blurred, the rights of animals are being delivered day by day. In light of these developments, it is not possible to defend the examples where animals are abused for reasons such as "freedom of artistic expression" or "anti-censorship" since they are limited by written laws as well as unwritten ethical rules.

The reason why the artist sees it as a right to objectify an animal and use it as material for their work is mainly due to their Anthropocentric (Human-centered) perspective. This system of thought places the human being first, and then a certain idealized type within the human's own species, at the top of a hierarchical order, based on a questionable phenomenon such as consciousness. This ordering causes individuals with all differences at the bottom of the hierarchy pyramid to be discriminated against by those at the top. Cultural codes such as racism, gender discrimination, exclusion of individuals with different sexual orientations, isolation of people with disabilities, and finally, advocacy for speciesism all stem from the fact that the entire worldview is based on humanity. Today, all identity politics struggle to overcome these discriminations and accept themselves. When animal rights struggles are considered from this point of view, it will gain more meaning. In this way, new developments and legal regulations are made on animal rights daily. Due to the questioning of anthropocentrism, practices such as veganism and vegetarianism are gaining popularity. As a result of supporting the theoretical infrastructures of these social movements together with scientific developments, universal right and wrong will be redefined. Determined by new right and wrong, these ethical-moral boundaries can also redefine the boundaries of art, perhaps by lowering the value of works of art in the near future so that many attitudes accepted in the name of art today will not be valued as much as they are today, and perhaps they will no longer be accepted as works of art.

Author Contribution

The author's contribution to the article is 100%

Conflict of Interest

There is no financial conflict of interest with any institution, organization, or person related to our article titled "Ethical Dimension of Live Animals as Ready-made Objects in Contemporary Art".

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Genişletilmiş Özet

20. Yüzyıl sanat hareketleri içerisinde yer alan Dadaizm Akımı, öncesinde var olan sanatsal anlayışlara aykırı bir akım olmuştur. Bu akımın en bilindik sanatçılarından olan Marcel Duchamp, hazır nesne kavramını ortaya koymuştur. Bu buluş ile birlikte gündelik hayattaki nesnelerin sanatsal üretimlerde kullanılmalarının yolu açılmıştır. Hazır nesne

kullanımının kazandırdığı üretim olanaklarının ardından, sıradan nesnelere yanında, insan bedeni ve canlı-cansız hayvanların da sanat eseri olarak sunulabilmelerinin yolu açılmıştır. Bu süreçte, Modernizmin değerlerine karşı olan bir çok sanatçı, sanatsal ifade biçimlerine katkı sağlayan bu yeni imkanları kullanmışlar ve tepkilerini ortaya koyabilecekleri çalışmalar için farklı yollar denemişlerdir. Özellikle 1960'lı yıllarda yaygınlaşan beden sanatı ve performans sanatı gibi örneklerin arasında, şiddetin sanatçıların kendi bedenlerine yöneldiği çalışmalara da sıkça rastlanmaktadır. Bu örneklere ek olarak, sanat eseri aracılığıyla tepki verme davranışı, sanat alanına dahil edilen hayvanların şiddetin hedefi haline getirildiği çalışmalar ile de sonuçlanabilmektedir. Performans ya da yerleştirme sanatı yöntemleriyle sergilenen bu eserlerde, izleyicilerin dikkatlerini şaşkınlık yaratarak, dünyadaki var olan olumsuzluklara çekmek amaçlanmaktadır. Bu şekilde izleyicilerde bir farkındalık yaratma gerekçe gösterilerek, hayvanlar alışılmadık uygulamalara maruz kalabilmektedirler. Çoğunlukla, hayvanların ölümüyle ya da ölmesine sebep olan bu çalışmalar, en iyi ihtimalle onların nesneleştirilmesi ile sona ermektedir. Bu tarz sanatsal çalışmalar, yaygın bir biçimde, hayvanseverler ve duyarlı kişiler tarafından protestolara sebep olabilmektedir. Bu eleştirel karşı çıkışlar, bazen sanatın ne olduğunu ve değerini sorgulatırken, bazen de para cezaları ya da sergilerin iptal edilmesi gibi hukuksal müdahaleler ile sonuçlanabilmektedir. Diğer taraftan bu protestolar ve çağdaş sanatın ifade biçimleri, ilginç bir paralellikle ilerlerler. Özellikle düşüncenin nesnel üretimin önüne geçtiği, 1960 sonrası sanat alanında, 'sanat'ın ne olduğunu sorgulayan sanat felsefesi etkinlikleri', ile sanatsal üretim neredeyse eş değer hale gelmiştir. Bu bakış açısıyla değerlendirildiğinde, hayvanseverlerin protestoları da, bir boyutuyla bu sorgulamalara katkı sağlamış görünmektedir. Böyle bir tartışma zemininde, hayvanların öldürüldüğü ya da rahatsız edici şekilde kullanıldığı çalışmalar, sanat alanının dışından gelen etik, hukuk ya da kamuoyu etkisi gibi kavramları, sanatsal özgürlüğün sınırlarını belirler duruma getirmektedir. Bütün bu tartışmalar sürerken geri planda, teknolojinin hızlı gelişimi ile birlikte biyoloji alanındaki ilerlemeler de, hayvanlar ve insanlar arasındaki sınırları giderek belirsizleştirmektedir. İnsanın teknolojiyle her geçen gün daha fazla bütünleştiği günümüzde artık eski tanımlamalar anlamını yitirecektir. Böyle yeni düşüncelerin kabul görmesi ile birlikte, ayrımcılık karşıtı kimlik politikalarının kullandığı savunma yöntemleri, hayvan hakları için de kullanılabilir. Antroposantrik (İnsanmerkezci) düşünce sisteminin gücünü yitirdiği bu gelişmelerden sonra ise hayvanların sistem içindeki konumları da değişecektir. Hayvanların değerinin tekrar ele alınması kuşkusuz, insan türünün onlara karşı davranışlarını temelden değiştirecektir. Etik kavramının belirleyicilerinin tekrar kararlaştırıldığı bunun gibi bir toplumsal sistemde, hayvanların metalaştırılmaları artık doğru kabul edilmeyecektir. Ulaşılan bu noktada, sanat alanı da istisna olamayacaktır. Bir hayvana yapılan davranış eğer yanlış kabul edilecekse, bu hareketin sanatsal üretim dahilinde yapılması bu hatayı düzeltmeyecektir. Bütün bu tartışmalarda bahsi geçtiği üzere, sanatın bu şekilde kullanılması, onun kendi içerisindeki bağımsız ve ayrıcalıklı konumunu sarsacaktır. Sanatın sınırlarının belirleyicisi, sanat dışı alan olduğunda ise alanın içerisinden gelen tartışmalar anlamını yitirmektedir. Bu metin ile birlikte, çağdaş sanatçılar arasında hayvanları üretimlerine dahil ediş biçimleri eleştirilen sanatçılardan örnekler ele alınarak, bu sanatçılara ve eserlerine verilen tepkiler ve bu tepkilerin etkileri üzerinden, çağdaş sanatın sınırlarının araştırılması amaçlanmaktadır.