

# ***Transformation of Art and Artist into Advertisement***

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## **Abstract**

This article is based on Jean Baudrillard's book *Conspiracy of Art*, published in 1996. In this artwork, Baudrillard emphasizes that now the art and artists have changed into a commercial object and they have bought and sold like a product. Audience just have the illusion of art because the art and artists got away from their real values. Modern life has simulated the cultural values and popular people and artists can not go beyond rather than becoming an industrial brand's star. This work aims to reveal how and why art and artists have turned into an advertisement element.

***Keywords:*** *Art, Artist, Advertisement, Simulation, Image, Industry, Brand*

## **Özet**

Bu makale Jean Baudrillard'ın 1996 yılında yayınlanan *Sanat Komplosu* adlı eserini temel alarak oluşturulmuştur. Baudrillard bu çalışmasında, günümüzde sanatın artık ticari bir nesne gibi alınıp satılmakta olduğunu, insanlarda sadece sanat yanılsaması yarattığını sanatın ve sanatçının gerçek değerlerinden uzaklaştığını vurgulamaktadır. Modern dünya, kültürel değerleri simulasyona uğratmış, popüler kişiler ve sanatçılar endüstriyel ürünlerin marka yıldızları olmaktan öteye gidemez hale gelmişlerdir. Bu çalışma sanatın ve sanatçının nasıl ve neden adeta birer reklam unsuruna dönüştüğünü örneklerle gözler önüne sermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

***Anahtar Kelimeler:*** *Sanat, Sanatçı, Reklam, Simülasyon, İmaj, Endüstri, Mark*

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## **Introduction**

The consume culture, which emerge after the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in essence, transforming everything as a consuming object in the mental dimension. Baudrillard argues that excessive consumption takes place not because of the needs but because of trying to provide interpersonal superiority (Baudrillard, 2010). The consumer culture uses media and mass media in order to perform successively this period and banalizes everything. Thus, the object loses its real purpose and turns into indicator. The meaning of *indicator* is its transformation to prestige and reputation. In consumer culture, everything is produced to consume. Within this concept, Baudrillard thinks that art is also no sense in terms of consumer culture and claims that art is a system that crushed under consumer culture. Baudrillard argues that art has a special meaning before the modernity and it was related with perception of the world. He says that;

*The World and all inside is given by the God, it was God's present for the people, and the artists were the people who had the ability to describe the world's beauties. The art was making connection between the real World and the metaphysics. The artists were outstanding people who could open a window from real world to abstract world. In modern times, the transcendental side of the art has disappeared with the contemporary art (Baudrillard, 2010:113).*

The main aim of the real art is to try to understand the world and revolt against it but the modern art has broken its ties from the real art and became a part of the contemporary system. Thus, Baudrillard, describes art as a “function isolated object”. The art has no longer a meaning and serves to the contemporary system. This situation is described by Baudrillard as “a second world that people try to built up in their mind” (Baudrillard, 2010:107). The art has just concentrated on material and goods, and lost its privilege.

### **1. The Concept of Imagery in Art**

Baudrillard asserts that the modern art is the enemy of imagery and has turned into “simulation” ( Baudrillard, 2010:8 ). Today, the art has no sense and just has the function of show off. Because, the modern art is just questioned in terms of shape, it is not questioned in terms of what

it's shown. Baudrillard explains the contemporary art's meaningless in his work "The Conspiracy of Art". He defines it as "hyperreality";

*"If the meaning of reality continues like this, than we should define it as simulation. It is necessary to delete the imagery from the world's reality, but it shouldn't be carried into aextermination levels. The space inside of the term reality should be filled with imagination."*(Baudrillard, 2005).

Today, the imagery that takes place in modern art has no meanin to people. Because these imageries don't make any reffers to meaningful values in the real world, it interestingly changes its place to value that should be reffered. Baudrillard describes this situation like this; *"imageries are no longer a mirror that reflects the reality, they are the thing that turn reality into hyperreality"* (Baudrillard, 2002). He means that imagery is not a concrete thing so it has no meaning, but imagery replace itself with reality and turns in to simulation. Thus, reality is successfully destroyed by the contemporary system.

Baudrillard thinks that the term contemporary art indicators have turned into nonsense like a pornographic opinion. In his work "The Conspiracy of Art", Baudrillard says that;

*As pornography has ended the sense of hearing, modern art has finished the ambition of producing illusion. Actually pornography has taken away all the senses in human life. Sexual life is now just performed with instincts, not with senses and people are living their sexuality in hyperreality imagery level* ( Baudrillard, 2005).

In here, Baudrillard also explains the nothingness in art. The real indicators in art have lost all its esthetics and meaning, and seems like more real than reality. Thus, reality gives its place to hyperreality, art disappears and simulation comes forward. Actually, the illusion in art hides the reality and causes to think about the art from different point of views, but simulation in art causes to reveal all the reality and thus prevents the ability to think and give meaning. It is impossible to talk about illusion where there is no real world, and also it is impossible to talk about esthetics where there is no illusion.

## **2. Advertisement**

Advertisement is a way of giving information about a product or a service to people through media like newspapers, magazines, televisions, banners and signs. With this way, people get instruction about the price of the product and the service, where to buy and how to use it. Advertisements try to convince people that if they buy that product or service than they would save money or make a good shopping. Advertisement also helps producers to find a wide market and gives chance to evaluate their investment (Burton, 1995).

Advertisement is also described as selling products through media. The basic aim in advertisement is to sell the product. For doing this, it is important for advertisements to assure and convince the consumers<sup>2</sup>. The person who makes the advertisement of the product, should draw attention and create enthusiasm among the consumers rather than the similiar products. Fort this reason, advertisement is described as a science and art which continuously requires innovation and research.

Advertisement is increasingly important activity among marketing efforts of the companies. Due to the effects of the media on society, technological developments in communication area and increasing competition in business have increased the importance of advertisement. Today, almost all the companies think that they need advertisement to increase their business facilities. (Yılmaz,1998).

It is a reality that, advertisements give direction to consumers choices in the market. Television channels, radios, magazines and the internet help products to meet with the target group. The fast growing advertisement industry also caused another reality; misleading advertisements. This is also described as secret and subconscious advertisements. This kind of advertisements give misinformations to the consumers about the product's quality and specifications<sup>3</sup>. Basically, the photoshop technique is used to supply visual changes about the product. It is a kind of making illusion on consumer eyes with changing the products colour and shape. So, the product begins to perceived more beautiful and aesthetic than its original. It is obvious that this technique has an important effect on consumers choice. In anyway, persuading the consumer is the basics of advertisements.

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<sup>2</sup> Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi, *Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, Samsun, 1987 sayı:2 s.221

<sup>3</sup> Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi, *Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, sayı : 2 s.223-224

### 3. Misleading Advertisements

Misleading advertisements are described as the type of advertisements which give misinformation or exaggerated claims, incomplete information, image distortion of the product and unreal comparisons. It is also defined as fraudulent advertisements (Gülsoy, 1999). Misleading advertisements are come up due to the sales efforts of the companies and lack of legal sanctions (Torlak, 2001).

The basic target of the advertisement is to reach the consumer in fast and easy way. It is an obligation to give a shape to the sales message and behave strategically in order to influence the consumer (Esna, 1997). Different strategies are applied for each product and service. It depends on both the product and target group. The strategy, which has a close relation with the success of the advertisement, should be firstly determined for the success of the product. Thus, the factors that affects the strategy should be taken into consideration. (Altuğ, 1993).

At first glance, advertisements seem like innocent promotion and marketing tool. But thanks to growing technology and competitive marketing conditions, advertisement has turned into a manipulation and conditioning tool. Today, advertisement brings fake aesthetics and quality to the product which is called commodity aesthetics. This transformation causes the artistic elements like poem, music and painting to serve for holding companies, capitals and other profit organizations and started to convince people, no matter they need or not, to be regular consumers. This is also the mentality of capitalism which promises people “beauty”, “favor”, “eternity”, “justice”, “fantasy” and so on. Capitalist market economy uses and changes the art into its own benefit and tries people to believe that all the financial and moral satisfactions might come true through itself. Simply, capitalism uses the art for its own benefits. For this reason, Baudrillard claims that “*in a short time art will change into advertisement and disappear*” (Baudrillard, 1998).

Baudrillard says that Europe has changed the world with removing the aesthetics and everything converted to image. When we look around we can see that everything has turned into display industry through advertisements, media and images. The system gives value on the aesthetics of the indicator

rather than its original value. Even an ordinary thing turn into aesthetic shape, globalize and followed by people.

According to Baudrillard, there is no more modern art. Now, the art has transformed into advertisement, technique and design. Thus, the art can not reflect it's sense correctly and artistic creativity is just a jigsaw. We have now a kind of show rather than an artificial performance.

#### **4. The Importance of Advertisement**

It is not a coincidence that advertisement industry has grown rapidly when we look at it's background. There is a popular story in advertisement area; "Shell's managers, the popular petrol company, have a secret meeting with pope in Vatican. Cardinals are listening the talks from outside of the door. Shell's manager are offering 1 Billion Dollars to pope but pope is rejecting the offer. Later they start to increase their offer; 2 Billion Dollars, 3 Billion Dollars, 5 Billion Dollars, 10 Billion Dollars... But pope doesn't change his mind and says; "No, it's impossible". The Cardinals, who are secretly listening the argument from outside the door, can not wait longer, enter into the room and say the pope that; "we need this Money, why don't you accept it?" The pope says; "Our guests offer us to use the term *Shell* rather than *Amen* in all churches after our prays. How can I accept this?" (Aytemur, 2000).

Franklin Roosevelt, the former President of USA, says that" If I had had a chance to start life again, I would have chosen advertising industry for job." Winston Churchill, also one of the former president of USA, says that "consumption instinct in humans, is the main source of advertisement. It injects people to live a good and comfortable life.". (Aytemur, 2000). It is clear that leader people are also aware the effect and power of the advertisement.

People see and find themselves in the advertisement screens, they also listen the advices of the people whom they admire and take them as model in their lives. For this reason, many of the companies try to cast populer artists, sportsman/sportswoman and such kind of people. For example, once a building company in France, called Totem, was having difficulties for selling their flats and at the edge of bankrupt, thanks to Salvador Dali

that he accepted taking a role in this company's advertisement and when Dali says "I'm also living at Totem", in a short time the firm could be able to sell all the flats. (Torlak,2001).

### **5. Transforming Art into Trade**

Baudrillard thinks that, modern art has lost its origin and became a part of the capitalist system. Art is now serving the capitalist system with dissipating itself (Baudrillard, 2010). Artwork has turned into industrial object and has just a value of indicator in business area. Originally, the function of art, is giving sense, make people smile and cry but now it has a function of diversion and temptation.

The artist and artwork take shape according to commerce and financial rules. The art can be bought and sold, furthermore the art itself has become a sector in trade. According to Baudrillard, today in Europe, the value of an artwork is just Money and it is just a tool for industry. Baudrillard also asserts that art has turned into an object of consumption in big entertainment and show industry.

### **6. Star System**

Casting famous people in advertisements, help the product to take attention and make it memorable. Besides, target group identifies themselves with the famous character in the advertisement and thus the sales level of the product increases. The spectator see the star in different platform rather than cinema, television, concert or theatre. Stars sometimes take part as a driver, cooker or cleaner and gives advice to people to buy the product that s/he is using in the advertisement. Children stars are casted in the advertisements which are intended for children, like ice creams and chocolates. With a good advertisement scenario plus a combined star casting enables the product to be demanded by the consumers (Sequela, 1990).

Among mass communication tools, television has the most power to influence target audience and it has also a wide range of audience. Besides, as television both appeals ears and eyes, it gives chance to audience to have more information about the product (Aytemur, 2000). Giving an advertisement message through an expert or a star is a very popular kind of phraseology. For example, consumers can view an expert or a star in

a tooth paste advertisement like a dentist, in a detergent advertisement like a rigorous housewife and a famous sportsplayer in a sports shoes advertisement.

Another reason that advertisers casting famous people is, famous people may help creating image for the product and also ordinary people take pains to popular people. So, star system is used in advertisements due to encouragement and reminiscence (Sequela 1990). For example, in cosmetics advertisements fashion and cinema stars are being casted. Because, fashion and cinema stars are always well-groomed in screens and thus, the advertisements give consumers the feeling that “if you use this cosmetic product than you will also have a good looking like this star” . Another reason for advertisers casting fashion and cinema stars is that they are more reliable in the consumers eyes and this would effect the consumers choice (Karaçor, 2000).

Baudrillard claims that; in near future the art will give its place to advertisement and it will disappear (Baudrillard, 2010). When the famous people’s profits from their actings in advertisements are analysed, it is clear that Baudrillard has a right in his thoughts. Because, the artists have to work on for weeks and months to build a real artificial work and they earn little money, but thanks to casting 30-40 seconds of a products advertisement they earn a big amount of money which may enough for their rest of life.

There are some examples of famous people’s profits from their advertisement performances<sup>4</sup>.

- In 2010, Kenan İMİRZALIOĞLU take a part in Pepsi advertisement and earn 350,000 Turkish Liras,
- Comedian Cem YILMAZ, take a part in Turk Telekom’s advertisement in 2007 and earned 2,5 million dollars for one year. In 2008, he earned 5 million dollars, in 2009 he earned 6 million dollars and in 2010 he earned 7,5 million dollars.
- In 2010, Beren SAAT has earned 600,000 dollars from a deodorant advertisement and in 2011 she earned 1 million dollars from a chips advertisement.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.gazeteciler.com/reklamlarda-oyunarak-para-bastilar-0-33155p.html>



- In 2011, Şahan GÖKBAKAR, earned 2,5 million dollars from Turkcell advertisements.
- In 2013, KIVANÇ TATLITUĞ earned 1,3 million dollars from Mavi Jeans advertisement and he earned 2 million dollars from Akbank advertisement.
- In 2014 Hadise earned 750,000 dollars from Penti socks.
- In 2015, Meryem UZERLİ earned 600,000 dollars from Elidor advertisement.

### **Conclusion**

Baudrillard defines the contemporary situation of the art and artists, especially their coarseness, in his work “The Conspiracy of Art”. He makes an explanation that the art has become the centre of the consumer culture, away from quality and meaningless. Besides, the artists have now the character whom they criticize before and accepted the world’s popular values. According to Baudrillard, the real artist should stand still against the negative conditions of the life and reflect the reaction through art. But in the contemporary art, it is not important what the art is trying to tell, it is important for art to become a part of a brand and serve for consumer culture.

The idea of “use it once and throw it to dust” in contemporary consumer culture, is now also the idea of art world and has no aesthetics. The artists are producing an art just for consumption. Baudrillard says that, contemporary artists are inspiring from meaningless and bullshit, thus all the images which belongs to art has disappeared. The most pathetic situation according to Baudrillard is, the artists have no idea about the art and randomly moving in eternal space, but they believe that all the silly things that they are performing are form of art. Baudrillard defines this situation as conspiracy and the audience are the victims of this situation. We have another problem here that Baudrillard who perfectly defines the pathetic situation of art, doesn’t give any solution to this problem. He just paints a pessimistic picture and leaves it.

To sum up, the term modernity should not be leaving the original values of the senses and the art. Like before, art should be the only but effective weapon in artists hands againsts the degeneration of life. Consumers

should be enlightened and informed that popular culture elements are just searching for taking money from their pockets and popular culture has no intention about reflecting the soul of the art. Thus, popular culture production of art never be permanent and always would be on the mood of searching “what is next?”.

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