

INSTAGRAM AND REALITY: INSTAGRAM NARRATIVES OF AMELIA ULMAN AND ABDOU DIOUF

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ABSTRACT

The use of social media tools with a visual interface has become an integral part of daily life. This has resulted in the rise of selfies, which are personal photographs posted on social media platforms. Instagram is one of the social media platforms where images or selfies from daily life are shared. The authenticity or reality of the personalities, selves and lives portrayed on social media platforms such as Instagram, especially through selfies, has brought about various debates. At the same time, the use of social media in art as a subject or medium due to such features adds a different dimension to this situation. The potential of an artistic project to manipulate reality through selfie photographs reveals the importance of this study. Based on this point, this study aims to question how real the selves and lives presented on social media platforms are, especially in the case of Instagram, one of the most popular social media channels. Two projects produced with two different artistic concerns that allow this were selected as a sample. Among the social media platforms, Amelia Ulman's Excellences and Perfection Project, which highlights the social domination of the female body through the posts made on her Instagram account, and the profile posts opened in the name of Abdou Diouf, which tells the story of a migrant's journey of hope from Africa to Spain, which was created for the promotional film of the Getxophoto Photography Festival. In this research, which is based on the discourses of Jean Baudrillard, Erving Goffman and Hal Niedzviecki together with the samples, it has been found that social media transforms the identities that individuals create or want to create in the online environment into hyperreality by going beyond rational reality.

Keywords: *Instagram, Selfie, Social Media, Art.*

INSTAGRAM VE GERÇEKLİK: AMELIA ULMAN VE ABDOU DIOUF'UN INSTAGRAM ANLATILARI

ÖZ

Görsel bir arayüze sahip sosyal medya araçlarının kullanımı günlük hayatın ayrılmaz bir parçası haline gelmiştir. Bu durum, sosyal medya platformlarında yayımlanan kişisel fotoğraflar olan selfie yani özçekimlerin yükselişiyle sonuçlanmıştır. Günlük yaşamın içinden görseller ya da özçekimler gibi paylaşımların yapıldığı sosyal medya platformlarından biri de Instagram'dır. Instagram gibi sosyal

medya platformlarında özellikle özçekimler aracılığıyla tasvir edilen kişiliklerin, benliklerin ve hayatların özgünlüğü ya da gerçekliği çeşitli tartışmaları da beraberinde getirmiştir. Aynı zamanda sosyal medyanın bu gibi özellikleri nedeniyle konu olarak veya mecra olarak sanatta kullanılması bu duruma farklı bir boyut kazandırmaktadır. Sanatsal olarak yapılan bir projenin özçekim fotoğrafları aracılığıyla gerçekliği manipüle edebilme potansiyeli bu çalışmanın önemini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu noktadan yola çıkarak yapılan çalışmada en popüler sosyal medya mecraları arasından Instagram ve bu mecra örneğinde özellikle sosyal medya platformlarında sunulan benliklerin ve hayatların ne kadar gerçek olduğunu sorgulamak amaçlanmıştır. Buna imkân tanıyan iki farklı sanatsal kaygı ile üretilen proje örneklem olarak seçilmiştir. Sosyal medya platformları arasından Amelia Ulman'ın Instagram hesabından yapılan paylaşımlar üzerinden kadın bedenine dair toplumsal tahakkümün öne çıkardığı Mükemmellik ve Kusursuzluk Projesi, aynı zamanda da Getxophoto Fotoğraf Festivali'nin tanıtım filmi için kurgulanan bir göçmenin Afrika'dan İspanya'ya umut yolculuğunun hikayesinin anlatıldığı Abdou Diouf adına açılan profil paylaşımları ele alınmıştır. Örneklem ile birlikte Jean Baudrillard, Erving Goffman ve Hal Niedzviecki'nin söylemleri de temele alınarak yapılan bu araştırmada sosyal medya tarafından bireylerin çevrimiçi ortamda yarattıkları ya da yaratmak istedikleri kimlikleri rasyonel gerçekliğin ötesine geçirecek hiper gerçekliğe dönüştürdükleri bulgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Instagram, Özçekim, Sosyal Medya, Sanat.*

INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the most important concepts that have not changed from the first people to the present day. The form of communication, which is defined as the expression of people's spiritual lives or the method and process of influencing and being influenced by each other (Kılıç, 2002: 16), has constantly changed with the process and technology. The point it has reached today can be shown as reaching the end of the limits of its instant and mass dissemination through social media.

From oral culture to the invention of writing and then to the use of the internet, the media, which has gained a great momentum in life with technology, has socialized and gained important roles in the daily life of the person. Social media tools with a visual interface are in the first place in daily life. Basically, and practically, the images that emphasize the visual interface are formed by photography. The German art historian Alfred Lichtwark made a determination in 1907, a date considered to be early for photography, as follows: "In our age, there is no other work of art in which a person is looked at as carefully as a portrait photograph of himself, his closest friends, relatives and loved ones." From this point of view, he moved his research and thoughts from the field of aesthetic distinctions to the field of social functions, that is, to the social dimension of photography (Benjamin, 2013: 30). Photography, which has facilitated expression in the daily life of the individual with this feature from past to present, has changed the quality and quantity of sharing with social media.

In the light of this information, publishing one's own photographs from one's daily life as selfies has brought a new dimension to photography as social media content. In this study, two projects that question the question of how real the personalities, selves and lives put forward as well as the effort to be visible in the field of selfies with social media opportunities are discussed.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Existence On Reality and Identity in Social Media

In the Turkish Language Association dictionary, social media is defined as a communication environment that enables visual and audio material sharing, information transfer and communication between users through social networks created on the general network (TDK, n.d.). Social media is based on surveillance and consumption. In other words, it is possible to describe web-based applications that allow users to share information, emotions and opinions and enable mutual communication.

Many studies have been conducted in the past in this sense, but due to limited opportunities, the first social media was SizDegrees.com, which was established in 1997. Through this platform, users created profiles, listed their friends, had the chance to connect and message with others, but it was closed down in 2000. Since then, there have been new developments in this field and it has become a sector that incorporates many features through new platforms.

In addition to its similar features with traditional mass communication tools, it is also in an important position due to its ability to incorporate all of its written, audio and image-based structure. Even if it is not face-to-face communication with social media, it can go beyond a monologue type of communication as in traditional mass media, and the fact that it allows for feedback makes it interactive. Through social media, everyone has the opportunity to express themselves and their views. However, this feature is sometimes misused and misguided by sharing false information. It enables communication with people who cannot be reached and communicated with in daily life. On the other hand, insulting words that people cannot use against each other in face-to-face communication are easily used on these platforms, which leads to judicial processes, especially with famous people who write comments of this nature. Mobile phones provide the opportunity to connect to social media platforms anytime and anywhere, and although this provides democratization in terms of accessing information and communicating, it also makes the issue of privacy controversial.

On platforms like Twitter or Facebook, these users can share their life experiences and views in text and with visuals; on platforms like YouTube and Vimeo, they can share video-based visual and audio media; and on Instagram, they can share images taken mainly with the combination of mobile phones. All users on social media create their own media content. Moreover, social media allows the realities of the physical world to exist in a virtual environment, creating a new dimension of reality.

The inevitable intervention of social media on lives once again reminds us of Baudrillard's thoughts on reality. Social media and related tools, which produce certain meanings in order to maintain a certain order that exists on a social basis, are increasingly producing literary, linguistic and especially visual content. While examining the nature of social media and related tools, it reveals the reality of the content disseminated from social media and the transformation of this content into hyper-reality. Speaking of a simulation period in which sign and discourse are at the forefront, Baudrillard stated that reality has been replaced by images-symbols, and that the concrete has been replaced by virtual realities. Likewise, he elaborates and defines this situation through simulacrum as the appearance desired to be perceived as reality, that is, the act or idea of simulating, pretending to have what one does not have, or showing something unreal as real. Social media and mass media have a very high power in the foundations of Baudrillard's assumption. The media, which previously had a unilateral effect, has transformed objective and rational reality into simulation with technological innovations in the social media era we are in, and from there it has evolved into hyperreality, which is a media product. In other words, the artificial reality created by social media can reach a hyper-reality that is in a way above rational reality. As a result, the identities created or desired to be created through social media reveal such a reality in the audience (Baudrillard, 2003).

For social media, different identities are constructed and strategies are developed that focus on liking this identity. For most users, beyond communicating with their acquaintances and expressing themselves, it is not as it is, that is, by moving away from rational realities; it is used for the purpose of adapting the bodies and lifestyles that are admired and desired to individuals as they want to be, in a sense, creating their own hyper realities and exhibiting these new fictional images.

Self-presentation in identity construction is a concept that Erving Goffman contributed to the sociology literature. People can present themselves in a new personality, situation or social position in line with the different goals and desires they set. Goffman emphasizes the fact that presenting oneself as having a certain characteristic is as important as actually having the desired characteristic (Hortaçsu, 2012:

270). In his book "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life", Goffman likens this situation to a theater play and analyzes the presentation of personality through the concept of "performance" as a theatrical effect. He interprets the concept of performance as the actions of individuals that have some effect on the audience and that occur over time throughout the continuity of the person rather than the audience in particular. He states that each actor in theater plays are actors who take on different personalities as a result of different roles for the audience. With reference to this, individuals can adapt different roles in social life to their daily lives according to their social identities. In other words, individuals who take on multiple personalities express their identities that best reflect the situation they are in from the repertoire they have (Goffman, 2020).

The one-to-one equivalent of this situation emphasized by Goffman is experienced especially on social media. In Goffman's theory, it is possible to equate stage and theater actors with Instagram, a social media tool, and its users. In this approach, Instagram is a stage where the individual creates new identities in life. The visual content created in the Instagram profile, that is, on the stage, especially selfie photos, correspond to the performances of actors. They reveal their performances with gestures, facial expressions, body language and physical characteristics such as race, gender and age. Subsequently, the places where they exhibit their performances also correspond to their scenes with carefully selected objects, accessories, physical design and all the content in the background in the visuals they create.

The other major factor in the emergence of all these personalities is the evolution of the phenomenon of surveillance, peeping and audience in the process. The prominence of the concepts of surveillance/peeping in modernism is defined as oppressive and coercive surveillance/peeping with the concept of "Panopticon". It is seen that the change largely emerged with postmodernism. In this section, surveillance/peeping is defined as the surveillance/peeping of the majority on the minority, called "Synopticon", which has spread rapidly with digitalization. It can be exemplified by the viewer in front of the television watching the people in TV shows. Then, as a result of the further advancement of technological developments, surveillance / peeping has evolved into the "Omnipticon" dimension with the dimension of pleasure and entertainment intentionally, even legally (Okmeydan, 2017). At this point, it can be argued that the phenomenon of surveillance / peeping, which has reached the last dimension, is realized with social media. Niedzviecki argues that a "culture of peeping" has emerged for the situation that now makes surveillance and peeping ordinary for the audience. Thanks to social media tools such as Instagram, peeping is now commonplace with viewers. He states that it is actually ironic that users make the personalities they create here watchable, and that all kinds of mutual communication with the audience is actually an ironic situation. However, from this point of view, he interprets the banalization of this situation in terms of the audience and the user as both a necessary consequence of being born in a society living in the age of technology, non-stop shopping and global entertainment, and a reaction against them (Niedzviecki, 2010).

The need for likes and comments on our published lives as a result of the frenzy of sharing every moment of our lives on social media about where we are and with whom we are with has reached the point of addiction. Being present on social media and constantly updating this presence has become a part of the routine of daily life. After the update, the number of likes and comments are followed and these lead to new posts. Thanks to social media, people express themselves and become visible at the same time. At this point, profile photos, added photos and video content are of great importance.

Selfie

Selfie can be defined as taking a photo of oneself alone or with a large number of people by including oneself in the photo via a phone, camera or tablet computer. Selfie is sometimes confused with the concept of self-portrait and the first selfie is the photograph taken by Robert Cornelious in 1839, which is also the first self-portrait in the history of photography. It is possible to define self-portraiture as the artist's artistic production through one of the fine arts mediums such as painting, sculpture, photography,

video, performance by using the artist's body as a tool and material. Self-portrait is an artistic production in which the artist uses his/her body as a tool to express himself/herself as well as the elements he/she wants to explain and criticize in society. Selfies are taken for purely individual purposes. Some of them can be taken anywhere in our daily lives, such as at dinner, at the cinema, on vacation, etc., as well as souvenir photographs taken at special times and places or with people.

The effort to gain likes and followers and thus to be recognized and become famous is also reflected in the posts. At this point, it is necessary to fulfill conditions such as wearing branded clothing, or if not, at least carrying the bag, going to prestigious and exclusive places, eating and drinking there, doing everything necessary to be beautiful or handsome, and generously displaying all physical features. Thanks to the cameras added to cell phones that allow high-resolution photography, photos can be taken anytime and anywhere, and selfies have been on the rise in recent years. Beyond instant selfies, there is an increasing number of artists who prefer selfies as an artistic technique.

Developments in technology have also brought with them transformed communication channels, providing new forms of communication, languages, platforms and new possibilities for artists, to which new ones are added every day. These artistic approaches, which are exemplified across digital arts: net.art, which is diversified as network art, software art, which is created from data from websites or web pages, or new media art, which uses many structures such as video, photography and sound.

Developing technology offers many different technical possibilities to the art of photography. One of these is the ability to take photos with cell phones. In 1999, after the introduction of the 0.11 MP camera added to the phone, which allows cell phones to take photos, it has become an indispensable feature of phones very quickly. There has been an increase in the number of photos taken with cell phones, which can be with us anywhere at any time, and at the same time, photography fields such as mobile photography have also emerged. Today, the quality and features of the camera and lens of the phones are at the point of being one of the most important criteria for purchasing a phone. Post-shooting interventions made in the darkroom in the past can now be done in seconds through computer programs. Many of the results achieved through these programs can also be obtained through applications downloaded to mobile phones.

METHOD

Both social media platforms and the subject of selfies have been the source of many artistic projects. Within the scope of this study, Instagram, one of the most popular social media platforms since its establishment in 2010, has been selected as a sample among social media platforms. Amelia Ulman's Instagram account, which allows us to question once again how real the profiles created on this medium and the selves, personalities and lives presented in the profiles are, and the "Excellences and Perfection" Project, which highlights the social domination of the female body through this account, as well as the account opened in the name of Abdou Diouf, which tells the story of a migrant's journey of hope from Africa to Spain, which was created for the promotional film of the Getxophoto Photography Festival, were taken as two artistic projects. In the study, case study research (Dul & Hak, 2008: 8), which makes it possible to select one or more events from real life, collect data from these events and analyse them with a qualitative approach, was applied.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Amalia Ulman And The Excellence & Perfection Project

She is an actress, director and performance artist born in Argentina in 1989, raised in Spain, educated in London and currently living in the US. With the Perfection and Imperfection Project, she created and shared images suitable for the performance she designed on her personal Instagram and Facebook account between April 19 and September 14 in 2014 (Figure 1). Her first post started with the text "Part 1" and then she created content that coincided with a self-living the life she fictionalized and shared them on her account at regular intervals, and finally she ended her posts with a black and white rose

photograph. When Ulman was asked how much the person in his posts was himself, he made the following statement: *“It was all fiction, I did months of research, there was a beginning, middle and end. I dyed my hair, renewed my wardrobe and acted. That is not me”* (Öncel, 2016).



Figure 1. Amelia Ulman, Excellence and Perfection Project, 2014 (Artwort)

In Ulman's project, Amalia is a young woman who moves from a small town to Los Angeles to become a model. Her posts during this process paint an image of an innocent, childlike and cute young girl dominated by pink and white tones. Pink rose petals on the bed, specially decorated nails, rabbits, plush toys, strawberry cake photos are other shots other than selfies. Then she breaks up with her boyfriend, starts working as an escort after financial difficulties, buys very expensive brand name products, stays in luxury hotels and starts eating food that suits this lifestyle. In this process, she takes selfies with sexier underwear, shopping bags with brand logos, branded products, money and selfies that show her body more in the foreground (Figure 2). During this period, she is accompanied by a gun in her photographs, she poses by kissing the gun in her hand, black and gold colors are in the foreground, sharp clarity and contrast draw attention. During this period, she shows her breast augmentation operation in selfies with bandages and then in underwear. Then she starts to use drugs, depression and then a rehabilitation process follows. And she returns to her family, takes photos with children and babies, makes a new boyfriend, starts eating healthy and doing sports, leaving behind the bad days in her life and focusing on her future, and the project is concluded with posts dominated by green and earth colors.



Figure 2. Amelia Ulman, Perfection and Perfection Project, 2014 (Artwort)

Ulman discussed how power, privilege and prestige are constructed and presented on social media, as well as the beauty standards of the time and the superficial presentation of women on social media. According to Hannah Black: “Public services have been privatized and private life has become public. Once upon a time, only professional hotties graced all major media outlets; now social media makes anyone a hottie if they want to be” (Black, 2013).

Through the posts Ulman made on her profile and presented to her followers, she opened the representation of reality and the indicators of representation on social media platforms to discussion, and she performed her performance of the unreal scenario she created, which had nothing to do with her real identity, through her selfies. For months, his followers were unaware that Ulman's posts were part of a performance, until he revealed it with the message in his last post. "Sorry I haven't written to you in a while, I didn't want to break the rhythm of Excellences & Perfections (2014), I wanted you to believe that the collapse was real, I wanted you to believe in the photographs above all else" (Karahan, nd.). At the same time, Ulman did not provide information to his close circle in order not to distort the reality of the image he drew of his life through his profile.



Figure 3. Amelia Ulman, Perfection and Perfection Project, 2014 (Artwort)

Ulman's project depicts the “cute girl” period with a body shaped by the ideals of developing sexuality, thinness and youth (Skovedt, 2019: 55), the “sugar baby” period reflects a femininity with a more bodily aesthetic, embodied by people like Kim Kardashian (Skovedt, 2019: 55), and the “goddess of life” period comes from people like Gwyneth Paltrow who are homely, devoted to healthy living and self-care (Skovedt, 2019: 71) (Figure 3). According to Siri Skotvedt, Ulman's project did not imitate or reproduce women, but reflected the processes through which they were created, emphasising that women are not passive consumers but active producers with their own online personalities (Skovedt, 2019: 86).

The selfies she took within the scope of this project were included in the Electronic Superhighway exhibition, which was opened at the White Chapel Gallery in London on 29 January-15 May 2015, consisting of the works of 100 artists to reveal the impact of computer and internet technology on artists. Between 8 February-12 June 2016, she shared her work with the audience in the exhibition Performing for the Camera. The exhibition included more than 500 artworks, one of which consisted of Amalia Ulman's Instagram posts. The exhibition focused on the relationship between performance art and photography. Ulman's series was included in the archive of the New Museum in New York. In 2018, a book with the same name as the project was published, and the book included the posts as well as some of the comments on the posts. In 2021, the film *El Planeta*, in which Ulman took part both as an actor and director, was screened at many festivals such as the Sundance Film Festival.

Abidou Diouf Project

In 2015, Spanish filmmaker Tomas Pena fictionalised a person named Abidou Diouf, the name of the former president of Senegal, and on the account *abdoudiouf1993* opened for this person, selfies taken by a young Senegalese man during his dangerous journey to Spain via Mauritania and Morocco were shared. Diouf's journey, which started in front of his house in Senegal, was shown through selfies at every point: on the boat, by the fire, while running away, when he was caught, etc. (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Instagram posts of Abidou Diouf, 2015 (Instagram)

On 21 July 2015, he took a selfie in front of his house, which received 839 likes, "Today I am starting a new life. Today I am starting my European journey for a better future for my family. I will tell all my experiences here. Good and beautiful, bad moments. I hope you like it." and selfie, and the number of followers and likes or comments on the posts continued to increase with each passing day (Figure 5).

On 2 August, a news article was published in the Huffington Post newspaper stating that they contacted Abdou upon the posts made from the account and that they were waiting for his response to the photographs and questions about his story (Ridley, 2015). Following the news, the number of followers and interest in the Instagram account increased, Storyful reached the account and then deepened its research, and it was observed that there was no other social media account with the same name and that the account was opened with the first post on 21 July. The Spanish production company shared videos of some of the scenes in the posts made by Manson on Diouf's account, and the banner hanging on the back of the selfie of Manson getting a haircut before the big journey was also shared on the agency's social media. Following these findings, after Manson and Getophoto were asked about Diouf's story, the agency made a press statement. The statement is as follows:

The creative agency and production company Volga presents the press campaign for this year's GETXOPHOTO photo exhibition. Directed by Barcelona studio Manson, this year's campaign consists of a 60-second video and a linked Instagram account that reflects the way we process and share images of displacement and migration in established media and social networks. It is also a commentary on how the use and significance of photography has changed radically over the last few years, with the image of travel inextricably linked to 'reality'. In this respect, photography is key to the social construction of 'travel' in a globalised society. If this is true of industrial tourism, the endless search and sharing of the 21st century continues. It applies equally to the growing number of people whose travelling is the result of necessity. Migrants and refugees displaced by dictatorial regimes, the horrors of war, and environmental and economic disasters (Mackintosh, 2015).



Figure 5. Instagram posts of Abidou Diouf, 2015 (Instagram)

On 3 August, the Huffington Post published another news article on the subject. It was announced that the account was actually a work of fiction, and that the posts on this account were posed by a handball player living in Spain for a photography festival by a Spanish advertising agency (Ridley, 2015b).

The last selfie shared from the Abidou Diouf account on 4 August received 1966 likes from his followers. The last post read:

The journey is over. Thank you friends for all the interest, support and discussion. This Instagram experience was based on the real experience of thousands of people who risk their lives for a better future every year. You can see these and other photo proposals related to travel at the International Getxophoto Festival, held in Getxo, Spain, from 3 September to 4 October, to discover how we use social networks as a place to share travel images and experiences depending on who we are and why we travel, to show that other realities exist and are closer than we think¹. is in the form.

Pena stated that the aim of this project was to make Europeans think about their attitudes towards immigrants from Africa, that they are treated like animals, and that the comments are really racist (Judah, 2015). All of the shots were taken by Pena with a mobile phone in one day around Barcelona. The person in the selfies is a handball player whose real name is Hagi Toure and who has been living in Barcelona for years. The video, which includes the video and selfies he took and the hashtags he used, was shown as a promotional film for the Getxophoto Festival, which was designed as a promotional campaign for the festival organised with the theme of travel².



Figure 6. Instagram posts of Abidou Diouf, 2015 (Instagram)

¹ www.getxophoto.com ve <https://www.instagram.com/p/589kogpMhc/>

² Festival promotion video <https://vimeo.com/134607959>

The fact that the photographer in Abdou Diouf's selfies is out of the circuit, and that a refugee himself directly expresses and reflects the difficult conditions and process he is going through, has made the photographs more effective on people (Figure 6), (Figure 7). Many people criticised the fictional nature of the account and its posts, and Damien Glez was one of them. Glez evaluated this campaign as a fraud, stating that while people followed the series with emotion, the emotion was replaced by anger, that more than 2 thousand migrants lost their lives during this journey according to the data of the International Organisation for Migration until the first 8 months of 2015, and that this Instagram account does not make people think about the ordeal of migrants, but is a deception that pretends to be so (Glez, 2015).

David Campbell argued that there is no need for fraud when there is so much quality work visually documenting the migrants' journey, that the global movement of refugees is such an important issue and the politics around it are so morally problematic that it is fundamentally irresponsible to use it as a crutch and to do anything that might make viewers doubt the value of asylum seekers (Shaw, 2015).

Oriol Caba, who led the campaign for the festival, explained the basis of this project as follows:

In developed countries, there is a use of image that is not common in other parts of the world. We wanted to show how the ordinary handling of self-image can be used to produce self-image, but in a very different context, such as the dangerous and traumatic journeys people go on to achieve a better life. We thought it was strong enough and powerful enough to make a statement and ask a question (Laurent, 2015).

According to Lewis Bush, understanding or sympathizing with the motivations behind deceptive photographs doesn't necessarily make the act of deception less problematic. For those who discover that the narrative is untrue may find that it contaminates their perspective on migration. He argues that it contaminates the view of those who argue that Europeans should be more humane towards people who want to travel here (Ridley, 2015).



Figure 7. Instagram posts of Abidou Diouf, 2015 (Instagram)

In 2016, Light Eye Mind Gallery organised the exhibition "Incomplete Images" curated by Monica Alcazar-Duarte and Lewis Bush. In the exhibition, the works of artists who are themselves refugees, in a sense their own stories, were exhibited. Photographs taken by Tomas Pena and shared on Abdou Diouf's profile were included in the exhibition. Bush, one of the curators, stated that we should look at the internet with an increasingly questioning eye, especially as consumers and producers of news, and that we should not forget that photographs are not only interesting windows into a world that actually exists, but also easily manipulated (Smyth, 2016).

CONCLUSION

Manuela Salazar states that Instagram has become the Schrodinger's cat of social media (Salazar, 2019: 86). Like a cat that is both alive and dead, both the real and the unreal are in the same box, and it is very difficult to distinguish the real from the unreal. The posts of both Amalia Ulman and Abdou Diouf on Instagram, one of the most popular social media channels of our age, are just two of the most striking examples that prove us that everything in social media may not be what it seems. These two projects have opened the issue of the reality of the virtual world and the reality of life to discussion, and have been widely debated due to this feature. Ulman's profile was prepared for the art project she started in 2014 and Abdou Diouf's profile was prepared for the promotion of Getxophoto Photography Festival in 2015.

The hashtags added to Ulman and Diouf's posts were selected among the most popular ones on social media. From time to time, hashtags such as #Istagood, #travelgram, #Justdoit, #Photooftheday, #Photochallenge, #Picoftheday and similar hastags have attracted attention.

While Ulman exists as a living artist, Abdou Diouf is a person created by an advertising agency. For both projects, false identities were created and content supporting this constructed identity was produced in the form of text, photographs and videos. At the same time, it was shared with the most used and most remarkable hashtags.

Diouf's account shared 16 photos and videos in 14 days and the most liked one was his last post with 1966 likes. Amelia Ulman, on the other hand, shared 185 photos and videos for 157 days, and the most liked one among these photos was her selfie, which included her reflection in the mirror, with 260 likes. The most important feature of media art is that it is interactive and the likes, positive or negative comments on both platforms have been included in the artistic process and the work.

For both projects, a scenario was constructed in order to present the fictionalised reality in the most effective way. From the innocent girl child in Ulman's life to the sexy woman who works as an escort, from shopping, showing off, plastic surgery and drug use to the rehabilitation process and the process of connecting to life in a healthy way by meditating again. For Diouf, the plot progressed as his last preparations before the journey, his last meal with his family, his departure, his travelling process, his capture and the start of his new life, and both scenarios ended with a happy ending.

Another common feature of both projects is that they were made with artistic concerns and then both of them left the virtual world and reached art lovers physically through exhibitions or screenings. Both projects focus on the questioning of reality in social media. At the same time, Ulman revealed that there is a point of presenting female identity on social media and objectifying femininity for the sake of appreciation. With the Diouf profile, it was aimed to draw attention to the racist and discriminatory approaches faced by immigrants.

Diouf's posts were encouraging and supportive, wishing him luck and good wishes such as "Good luck brother, I wish you success.", "Congratulations and good luck from Barcelona. I wish you all the best and hope all your dreams come true!", "Stay strong brother", as well as insulting and racist comments. We are tired of millions of people trying to come here. There is no place for you here, no work, no dreams.", "Get out of my country.", "Get out of my country please, what you are doing is illegal and hurts many poor Spanish citizens because they don't get their financial aid."

Ulman's profile received comments such as "Cry right, I get aroused while watching.", and the selfie she took while meditating received comments such as "You are a complete idiot who has nothing to do with reality but has a lot of money.". In addition, many comments were made on the posts about her beauty, and after the breast augmentation operation, "Do what makes you you. By the way, you are sexy as you are. Big fake breasts are not attractive. To be honest, you are more beautiful as you are."

Lives are exhibited through social media, and followers can make ruthless comments on the scene exhibited in front of them without thinking too much, and sometimes they can make sentences up to insults. Both profiles discussed within the scope of the study were criticised mercilessly. Online selves and identities created through social media platforms, and followers observe the lives presented to them and judge and comment according to their own value judgements and perspectives. The comments on the posts of the two profiles considered within the scope of the study have become an important part of the works of art.

In addition to being an artistic study, it can be said in the light of all these data that social media and related tools have brought social reality to a decisive point. In other words: tools such as Instagram, which enable the emergence of this new reality that exists through social media and shape the images that spread massively for certain purposes, can recreate the perception of reality. As a result, they can make the distinction between real and fake indistinguishable.

Ulman and Diouf projects are the reconstruction of the reality in today's world, which is called simulation, with its visuals, stories, and audience interpretation and interaction. The reality presented in the project is a hyperreality that is actually reconstructed in the simulation universe by organising the meaning of economic, cultural and social reality and repeating its image.

Negroponte draws attention to the fact that after being included in the digital world, atoms were replaced by data through "bits". He states that these bits, which turn into data, can be manipulated as desired, are in favour of freedom, and form the basis of the functioning of the world in every field by emphasizing the speed and ease of access (Negroponte, 1996). However, as long as communication in social media continues to be experienced with bits, the reality we think exists will continue with abstract or new realities (Robins, 2013: 38). At this point, the interaction of new identities and audiences that emerged with Instagram has brought a new dimension to the phenomenon of peeping and made it almost a part of daily life as suggested by Niedzviecki. Subsequently, it has become possible to talk about Baudrillard's simulation universe and Goffman's performance theory transforming the whole world into a theatre stage.

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