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DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF CONTEMPORARY TURKISH SCULPTURE

ПЕРИОДЫ РАЗВИТИЯ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ТУРЕЦКОЙ СКУЛЬПТУРЫ

В работе рассматриваются проблемы становления турецкой скульптуры как жанра искусства, которые после исламизации получили социологическое направление и приобрели идеологический характер.

Introduction. “Condition of sculpture has always been problematic in Turkish depiction. Architecture and sculpture which has common features with Turkish urban culture had to expose itself in rather indirect ways. These fields could only produce within the sphere of small handcrafts. Turks have always been successful in masonry. The first examples of it can be found in Middle Asian Art. Orhon monuments should be considered as monumental sculpts. Balbals are the primitive monuments sculpted from stone and in the figure of human. Turks’ conversion to Islam turned sculpture to an ideological issue. Then, sculpture had been associated with idols which was the source of ancient Jewish fear. Thus it had to compromise with the strict rules of depiction in Islamic faith. Although it had been possible to observe a naive development of small handcrafts in the spatial contexts such as the reliefs on the Seljuk castles or on the Ottoman graves, it could not be called sculpture in a proper sense; it was not forming the space in a proper artistic way” (internet 10.04.2012). As it is well known, art of sculpture integrates with settled, local life styles and has an important place in the urban texture. This is obviously rather difficult to generate and improve in a nomadic culture. Before reaching Anatolia, Turks were sovereign in Asia as a nomadic people. Thus it was simply not suitable for art of sculpture to form a permanent and rooted tradition within a societal context as such. Therefore the artistic creation of Turks, who were shaman worshipers before arriving to Anatolia, were limited to portable ornaments and reliefs on tools to operate in the nomadic lifestyle. Figurative features can be seen on some of these creations but it would be more correct to consider them as stylized forms to make the thing look decorative. “Constructions made by Anatolian Seljuk’s contain some reliefs with human and animal figures. Tomb stones were also the structures of Ottoman period engraved and ornamented with a very fine work. Fountains and pools can also be included to these kinds of structures. Personal interests of sultans like Mehmet the Conqueror,

Murat the 2nd and Abdul-Aziz never got expanded to the masses. Even the beginning of westernization movement in Ottoman society did not help sculpture to develop. Art of sculpture had been ignored until the establishment of Sanayi-I Nefise Mektebi (the first school of fine arts)" (internet 10.04.2012). "The reason behind the reactions against sculpture rather than painting is the stronger resemblance between idols and statues. Statue shadows earth. In the 15th century Ottoman fountains, grave stones and architecture works which contain sculpture with abstract, schematic elements are replaced with rococo style in the 18th century. Atmosphere of 18th century paves the path for interactions that lead to westernization in the 19th century (Ebru N.Sülün, April-May, 2011:77)".

Relations between Sculpture and Turkish Society in the Period of Republic.

Pre-republic period of Turkish society, except some weak attempts, could not develop an understanding of sculpture. Art of sculpture was almost non-existent. That's why the implementation of the each program concerning art had to raise awareness for the masses in order to trigger the need for art instead of improving the existing poor reception of art (Google, 10.04.2012)". Thus, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk attached great importance to the development of sculpture as well as other kinds of art. "Turkish people were not ready to embrace sculptures. As a matter of fact, they had no such expectations at all. Yet it did not take long for the people to get familiar with it. People whose perception about statues were very poor, were surrounded statues of Ataturk erected on the city squares. This was how they got introduced to sculpture as the last branch of art to enter in Turkey. Starting the sculpting activities had the character of revolutions which are enforced in society by the decision makers above the society. Entrance of sculpture in Turkey and beginning the training of it in western terms had no other possible way. For there were no qualified sculptors in Turkey, activities had to launch the art of sculpture beginning from the most basic level (Internet, 10.04.2012)".

Generation of art training and related institutions in Turkey came very late in comparison with the west. Strong traditions in Turkey suppressed the free formation of art and sculpture in particular. Attempts to improve art's condition in Turkish society were very valuable and efficient. However they were limited to the pursuit of promotion of art.

Implementations to Improve Sculpture. On the way to the realization of the ideals of civilization, social awareness was aimed to be generated through the option of instrumentalizing the art of sculpture. This was going to be a difficult process inevitably. Public territories were spotted to be the arenas of making people used to seeing statues. All squares had begun to have at least one Ataturk statue on it. However erecting big sized monuments required technical expertise. Besides, it was impossible to undertake the iron works of these giant monuments. This led to the invitation of the artists from abroad. First monuments of the republic had been made by some European artists. They were Heinrich Krippel, Pietrocanonica, Josef Thorakand, Anton Hanak (Gezer 1973: 14).

"Some programs for the promotion of sculpture were planned in addition to Ataturk's series of revolutions which aimed to raise the country to the modern civilized level. Thus artistic productions as a whole needed to be supported. While working on the integration of sculpture with people's perception, it was important to reach the people in Anatolia. On the other hand, in order to ground the infrastructure to reach the goals, crucial investments were launched. Obviously, the adventure of sculpture which was only going to begin by the foundation of Republic required a proper education system in western style. The only educational institution Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi which was preserved in the transition from Ottoman to the Republic, named after State Academy of Fine Arts in 1926, did not have the satisfactory structure for the need. Therefore, this institution was going to be re-arranged and improved to meet the needs. But being the only institution in Turkey and not having sufficient number of sculptors, the Fine Arts Academy was incapable of raising the level. Therefore some extra measures needed to be taken and the education of sculptors was given priority with some implementations. One of the most important implementations was sending one graduate student of the Academy to Europe every year. Until the outgoing students finished his/her education in Europe, European sculptors were requested to sustain the education in the Academy. In this respect, Ratip Aşir was the first to go to Paris in 1925. In the following years Ali Hadi Bara, Zühtü Müridoğlu and Nusret Suman followed him to go to Paris or Munich which were the important centers of any kind of art" (Internet, 10.04.2012). Modernism project of the Republic was subjected to people of Anatolia instead of the educated, intellectual population in Ankara or İstanbul and it aimed to create civilized Turkey with the inclusion of people of Anatolia. The role of sculpture to serve this project was irrevocable. Thus the placing the monuments of Ataturk or the ones depicting national independence war all around Anatolia were very efficient and functioning to invoke national awareness as well as breaking the taboos regarding sculpture. As a result of these implementations, integration of sculpture with people was soon achieved and on the other hand artistic environment was revived by the strong governmental support. Thus the development of sculpture in Turkey had a journey from two different directions towards the shared destination.

"1930-s was influenced by the first generation that completed their education in Europe and turned back to Turkey. Their return animated the aesthetic environment even though it was limited. This period is distinguished with the formation of an argumentative ground which voiced the problems related to art and artistic education. This period is also registered as the achievement of direct contact with people through the informative and influential activities such as exhibitions, publications of articles and translated works. Newly established galleries, educational institutions, and community centers must all also be mentioned regarding this period. Zühtü Müridoğlu displayed his and Turkey's first individual exhibition in 1932 and community centers which opened in 1932 organized several exhibitions to support the skilled youngsters. Community center in Ankara started the first of the Painting-Sculpture Exhibition in 1936. Painting-Sculpture Museum was opened in the following year and "1st State Exhibition of Painting-Sculpture" was organized in 1939 (Internet, 10.04.2012). "1937 was an important year concerning the development of sculpture in Turkey. A world famous sculptor Rudolf Belling was appointed to the head of the

administration of the sculpture education at Academy of Fine Arts. Belling's academic activities were great steps forward for Turkish sculpture. Belling's program of sculpture education allowed modern trends and it wasn't limited to academism but had an open attitude thus let a new era to being concerning sculpture in Turkey. He encouraged Turkish artists to use the new methods. He had many students as well. They were in a sense second generation sculptures; Hüseyin Anka Özkan, Hakkı Atamulu, Yavuz Görey, İlhan Koman, Zerrin Bölükbaşı, Hüseyin Gezer, Turgut Pura and Şadi Çalık. Now I will try to depict the visual context of that period by the help of Şadi Çalık and İlhan Koman.

Şadi Çalık is an artist who internalized the principles of balance, composition, planning and classical plastic elements. His lines or forms generally begins with neo-classic patterns, they gradually get thinner or complicated thus forms its own dynamism" (Olca Ataseven 2011: 135)

"İlhan Koman is another important artist who integrated some mathematical facts with sculpts thus gained his unique artistic identity which got known world-wide. He was born in Turkey but lived in Stockholm. He lectured in Stockholm Academy of Applied Arts in 1960s. He defines his sculptures "embryonic" because each part grows news ideas and new knowledge which can be used to improve the same genre. He challenges the ordinary and the theories which seem to be unarguable (Olca Ataseven 2011: 137)". Koman forces the limits of the material he works with and can really influence it. "The first generation who went to Europe for artistic education came back home as adopted the settled and conventional styles rather than new trends in art and the artistic inquiries of the age. Development of Turkish sculpture until the 1950s was unfolded as a process of solving formal and technical issues with an understanding of classical interpretation of nature. Beginning with 1950s artistic environment of the republic stepped into an appreciable innovative period which could also be felt as a fast improvement for the art of sculpture. Through the trips to abroad or with the means of technology the new developments in the world of art could enter in the country faster than before, thus the artists could be free from the narrow limits of the academy and they could form their creations in line with contemporary art which allows many sorts of innovative attitudes. These movements managed to carry the young generation beyond the classical tendencies of Belling in the education of sculpture. Zühtü Müridoğlu and Hadi Bara brought about totally new dynamism to the academy. These artists established a workshop different than Belling's. These formations caused other formations outside academy as well. Thus Turkish sculpture had a new phase begun which has classical, naturalist creations on one side and individual, independent and contemporary creations on the other" (YasaYaman, Z.2002: 165).

Hadi Bara has a privileged place for Turkish sculpture. His abstract work towards the end of his life proved how consciously, systematic, serious and intensive stages he had in the development of his profession. Even the sharp transformations in his creativity follows a characteristic line which indicates that he was a true sculpture that brought forward strong and permanent works. Sculpture of 1960s, although it did not have a long history, was quite improved and dealing with formal and technical issues as well as conceptual and artistic dimensions. This provided all the artists to create universally and bring forward their own unique styles.

Outdoor Activities of Contemporary Turkish Sculpture. Free creative sculptures distinct from the monumental sculpture began appearing in 1970s in Turkey. Statues placed in different spaces of Istanbul on the 50th Anniversary of Republic are the first examples to this period. Yet some of these were damaged or removed by the current political authority of the time. Concerning the subject and reflection sculptors of the period had the chance to create freely, in the outdoor activities. 70s were also important for conceptual, minimal and feminist tendencies entered in the artistic atmosphere. The first female sculptor Füsün Orda, witnessed the development of new sensitivities and contributed to the formation of a new tradition. Her work expanded the limits of sculpture with respect to the form and content and brings about new enriching discussions. Her first exhibition in 1970s displayed geometrically planned light spaces around the theme of fullness-emptiness. This was beyond the traditional understanding. Towards the end of 1970s everyday objects loaded with memories and values were centralized in her work. She attempted to re-view, thus built a new dialog with them.

The activities in 1980 are also quite attractive. Sculpture instructors from Ankara Gazi High School of Teaching Burhan Alkar, Remzi Savaş and Metin Yurdanur who were trying to promote their abstract work in the society made a statue each. Another activity was carried out by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality in the frame of "Placing Three Dimensioned Contemporary Art Works in the Outdoor". Artists like Meriç Hızal, Seyhun Topuz, Rahmi Aksungur, Vedat Somay, Ertug Atlı, Ayşe Erkmen participated with their free reflections to this placing sculptures to the outdoors of Istanbul.

Conclusion and Final Evaluations. History of art, art and other disciplines related to them had their questionings, propositions and refusals in the most rigorous and evolutionary way all in 20th century. This period also witnessed art's sharing the authority of philosophy over the intellectual realm through expansion of its basic definitions and fundamental issues. Art of sculpture which led "Constructivism and Minimal Art" manifested its subjective existence among the other artistic fields in this revolutionary process. "Certain movements in the general artistic atmosphere of the 1950s of Turkey influenced art of sculpture as well. Artists who oppose the traditional education in the academy achieved the level to follow and even apply the new styles and materials. Additionally, contrary to Belling, Zühtü Müridoğlu and Hadi Bara who had profession over materials and followed innovative sculpture trends, established their own workshops which provided an alternative dynamic compared to Belling's orientations (Ebru N.Sülün, December /January, 2011/2012,73)".

The "space" which comes forward as the common element and a problematic in the interdisciplinary transitions of "Conceptual Art" of the post 60s, is one of the basic issues of sculpture. In this regard "space" element expands the interest, reproduction and definitional aspects of sculpture. Discipline of "sculpture" contains various difficulties in the process of reproduction and development because of its specific needs such as heavy labor, well settled workshops and the interaction it requires with industry and technology.

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