

## **Analyzing Baksı Museum Through The Search**

### **For The Center in Today's Art**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is based on the understanding of center in art; examines the displacement of the dominant forces of art along with economic, political or social changes and the reasons for this change. By examining this change from the Renaissance period to the present day, by tracing the similarities and contrasts in the past and present, through the conditions that led to the formation of these centers, their artistic production and consumption between these periods and today, the circulation of artistic productions in the world, museology, and collections, we answer the question of whether we can talk about a center today. It aims to search and adapt these central searches to today and to shed light on the transformations taking place in the art world. It aims to make an analysis by examining where artistic production and consumption has shifted through the phenomena of globalization and the formation of alternative centers of the West. After examining these center changes, we compare the Baksı Museum, which presents itself with a different stance, unlike the models existing in the center, by establishing a relationship with capital or the city in the global art environment where different center definitions are formed and the center is displaced, and reveals its special situation by comparing it with known museology models to put; using keywords such as periphery, production, migration, alienation, cultural democracy, employment, the museum's new definition of center-periphery is tried to be defined.

**Keywords:** Art; Baksı; center; museology; periphery.

## INTRODUCTION

Art; with the political, social, sociological and economic changes, from ancient times to the present day, was first under the rule of religion and then the aristocracy, but in the 20th century it came under the auspices of capitalism and market conditions began to dominate art. In this direction; the displacement of the dominant power of art along with economic, political or social changes and the reasons for this change are examined in this thesis. In the first part, the development of art and the search for a center, especially in Italy, with the understanding of the Renaissance, in the second part, Paris is mentioned as the center of art along with modernism, in the third part, by tracing the art that came under US domination after World War II, the momentum gained by today's art and the position of art. An attempt has been made to explain it by establishing a connection with past periods. In the fourth chapter, while trying to find an answer to the question of whether we can talk about the existence of a center of art today, it is examined where the centers of art have shifted in the world, taking into account artistic production and consumption. In the last part of the thesis, after touching on the center-periphery relations in politics and art in Turkey; Baksı Museum was discussed as an observation of the reflection of the cultural policies of the Republican period, which could contribute to eliminating the disconnection between the periphery and the center by being located in the periphery, trying to close the distance between the center and the center by carrying art to the periphery, thus aiming to popularize culture in the periphery.

## RESULTS

The aim of the thesis was to seek an answer to the question of whether we can talk about a center today. In the research, from the historical process to the present, where the center has existed and what the conditions and concepts were that created these centers were examined. When it comes to today, it has been seen that the era of homogeneity of the central culture in contemporary art has disappeared, and it is possible to talk about many centers that are parallel to each other and constantly changing places.

Baksı Museum, which the thesis chose as an example through the search for the center, showed us the suggestions that art does not have a problem of just existing in the center, but in fact, how important it is to have art in the periphery.

In this context, against the homogeneous art of the central culture, we come across the proposal of the geography, which is the center through the universality of the language of art. From this point of view, the importance of what the museum does, not where it is, is seen. With geography and people, it has been seen that the museum creates a center with its discourse and practices. While the initiatives created in the center will pile up and remain as branches of the West, the initiatives created in periphery will bridge the gap between the center and the periphery; the center can be formed as a genetic code that ensures the integration of the society.

## DISCUSSION

Globalization indicates expanding international connections or the existence of global networks. Besides, we do not see a single whole or layered network that connects everything. We can talk about a network consisting of many networks or sub-nets that sometimes overlap, sometimes temporarily, sometimes permanently. For example, the financial markets of Amsterdam, London, New York or Tokyo are interconnected, but the same is not true for the artistic network. However, we cannot ignore that financial and artistic intersections also interact. It is no coincidence that New York is both a financial and an arts center at the same time (Gielen, 2016, p. 150). However, certain distinctions can be made between these networks. Subnetworks within the art world are primarily of financial importance, others of intellectual or educational significance.

The global "network" contains within itself various networks and thus various hierarchies. Rapid global movements are causing a series of transformations, there is a focus of attention directed more towards the search for the new. Moreover, the landscape created by art becomes more colorful than ever before. The curators are on the hunt for fresh talent across an international spectrum. Is this movement creating a polyphonic art landscape or building a new Western cultural imperialism: With the ever-expanding global art network, more and more artists and works are connected in one of many subnets within the global network. Not only the mass media, but also the accumulation of capital is responsible for the increase in internal competition in various fields of art.

The contemporary art world continues to globalize by adding new regions to its body each

time. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, curators and other decision makers turned to the East to hunt for new talent. Nearly 9 years later, it was Africa's turn, and now China and India are becoming an important market (Gielen, 2016). In addition, the opening of branches of museums such as the Louvre and Guggenheim in the Middle East, such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and international art fairs create a vibrant art traffic. The centers of art seem to be moving quickly, or at least there are several centers formed side by side. This should not be perceived as if the art world had no center; rather, there are many parallel and mobile hierarchies of small and large. All regions around the world become potential players for the contemporary art scene to the extent that they can enter, exit, or re-enter the hierarchy structure. For example, Bilbao, can be featured on the world map together with the Guggenheim Museum, an icon of contemporary art.

In a time defined by globalization, connectivity and post-colonialism, institutions are shifting their gaze to so-called “peripherals” while also taking an inclusive approach to showcasing art from more distant centres, side by side. The side with positions more clearly associated with Western centres; The centralist position of the past is read as an inclusive model.

If we look at Figure 1, we can classify the centers as dynamic and static centers. Development-oriented centers such as universities and institutes that we mentioned in the previous paragraph are static; if we classify the mechanisms that control the art market, such as fairs, auctions, biennials and galleries, as dynamic centers, we will see that they communicate with each other and form a network, and we can benefit from this scheme when classifying the centers.

If we examine the art scene in Turkey through early republican period in terms of center-periphery, the policies of the republican period in Turkey tried to eliminate the differences between social layers, and populism, one of the basic principles of the Republic of Turkey, and its result, national sovereignty, also determined the direction of culture and art policy (Tansuğ, 1986, p. 157). In these conditions where national sovereignty was realized, the activities that would emerge as a result of art education were aimed to reach all parts of the country. The way to spread culture to the public was to spread general education. As in Europe after World War II, Turkish art was also experiencing significant changes. Modernism had dominated the West since the late 19th century, and it was just beginning to become visible in Turkish art in these years. In the period from the late 19th century until World War II, when modernism was at the center of European art, Turkish art also entered the process of forming an identity. It was

inevitable to examine this process by taking the ideologies put forward by the Western world as an example and to also take into account the experiences of the Ottoman Period. In the first half-period until the Republic, Ottoman policies trying to reconcile traditional culture with Enlightenment thought, and in the period from the Republic until the 1950s, the revolutionary, nationalism and populism ideologies of the state and the Republican People's Party were decisive. In the report submitted to the relevant ministry by the director of the State Academy of Fine Arts, painter Namık İsmail, during the years when the 10th anniversary of the Republic was celebrated in 1933, it was pointed out that art and culture could reach universal dimensions within a national quality (Tansuğ, 1986, p. 159). The report touched upon the use of Turkish artists to spread the Turkish revolutions to broad layers of society, and to ensure that the art works done in big cities are taken to every corner of the country and that the love of painting and sculpture is instilled in the society.

Today, there are many new artistic formations in Anatolia that changes position the center to periphery. Some of these are the Odunpazarı Modern Museum opened in Eskişehir Odunpazarı, the Baksı Museum established in Bayburt; examples such as the Biennials held in provinces such as Sinop, Çanakkale and Mardin seem to be trying to create a center in the periphery. The initiatives taken at the center will pile up and remain a branch of the West. However, returning to Anatolia will eliminate the disconnection between the center and the periphery; The center may be formed as a genetic code that ensures the integration of society. Like the center in Shils' (1975) terminology, the center with its cultural dimensions, which expresses the institutions built on the values and beliefs that guide the society, can be created as the center of the system of symbols, values and beliefs that govern the society.

## **CONCLUSION**

If we look at the cultural policies of the Republic period, the ideologies of revolutionism, nationalism and populism were decisive in the period from the establishment of the Republic until the 1950s. At this point, if we touch upon the point where the museum meets the cultural policies of the Republican Era through the points emphasized by founder of Baksı Museum, Koçan (2019), we see that the genetic code of the republic, the codes of revolutionism, populism and nationhood, overlap with the codes of Baksı.

During the Republic period, the development of culture and education in the periphery, which was included in the cultural policies, was neglected due to the changing cultural policies in the

following periods and it was observed that the periphery was deprived of art and art could only progress with initiatives in a single center. It seems that the concept of 'otherness' became evident and was discovered only after the 1980s, when it became a trend in art. In this sense, both Turkish modernism and postmodernism were actually followers of the West. Because he did not actually determine his own cultural interests. It was turning to calligraphy and the concept of 'otherness' when he turned to the West. However, when you look at the Baksı Museum, it is seen that this 'otherness' has been eliminated, it keeps art and tradition together and performs this with the exhibition it holds, and it also brings the art and education that the environment is deprived of to the fairies with the qualified exhibitions you will encounter in the center.

It also contributes to this cultural development by providing employment for women, encouraging training and scholarships for local children. Sociologist Prof. Baksı Museum's position in the center-periphery relationship. Neşe Özgen (2010) explains: The creativity of art is different from the utilitarianism of craft, it does not perceive benefit as aimed at realizing the functional. On the contrary, art becomes utilitarian by trying to reveal the healing side of the desire for transformation in the mind. In this sense, yes, art is actually the work of the periphery, not the center (Özgen, 2010, p. 192-193). The center takes the well-known artisan benefit and disseminates it. Art, on the other hand, transforms the place that really touches life, that is, the eyes, the heart and the mind, as it sees it, and returns it to its owner. It emerges from the 'environment' and transforms and strengthens the environment. That's why art has to stay in the 'periphery'. That's why art is progressive. Özgen sees the Baksı Museum as a place of production that will save art from elitism and return it to its owner.

'The modernist movement is simply bringing the idea of a museum to a place that does not have a museum, which public institutions had to do in the Republic modernist project,' states Ali Akay. In this sense, Baksı Museum is a personal project that has done what the state could not. For example, in the case of FRACs, that is, regional art centers and collections in France, this structuring was carried out in a postmodern period (after 1979). They were founded by the Socialist Party's Minister of Culture, Jack Lang, after 1981, and these museums played a very important role in the development of contemporary art in France. Many international artists emerged from here were also trained here. In this sense, the importance of regional art centers or museums seems to be very great.

Baksı Museum is truly a special case that does not resemble a museum model within the general museum logic. Edhem Eldem said: “Every museum may be a monument. However, the Baksı Museum is a 'monument' that does not serve any logic, any system, any political project, any ideal or any intention other than itself. It only shows itself (Zeytinoğlu, 2012, p. 101). Baksı Museum is neither the property of a company, nor is it sponsored by companies from outside (temporary or permanent), nor is it a state-sponsored political project. It does not have a curator who is responsible for everything, who makes big circulation plans, who selects works of art, classifies them according to a certain principle, determines the audience profile and visualizes the principles in question accordingly. In Baksı, the owner does not have a collection that can demonstrate his superiority of status or impose on the audience as 'national or personal wealth.

Jette Sandhal (2016), who publishes on museology and is a museum manager from Northern European countries, in her findings revealing the difference of Baksı Museum with traditional museum concepts. She says that the museum has created new financing, creation and management models in the field of museum management. She emphasizes that it can be a model for examples that can be created elsewhere. While the fact that it received the European Museum of the Year Award is interpreted as appreciating its qualities that point to new trends and paradigms in museology, the fact that it can be a source of inspiration for museums shows that it has an important place in museology.

In summary, we can list the activities that make Baksı Museum different from the known museum models and support the mission of transporting the center to the periphery as follows:

- The museum, which exists in the form of the modern art museum with its qualified exhibitions, also carries these exhibitions to the center.
- It removes the hierarchy by keeping the current and the traditional together.
- It is project-oriented, it produces concepts with its activities. It contributes to life and society with the concepts it produces.
- It has a conciliatory role, it is an intermediate layer, it plays a conciliatory role between the center and the periphery.
- It provides employment, especially by giving importance to women's employment, it creates space for women.
- Contributes to the education of young people and children in art and supports them with scholarships.

- Contributes to the revival of the richness of Anatolian culture with the Anatolian Awards.

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Baksı Kültür Sanat Vakfı Yayınları.

**Figures**

**Figure 1**

*Relocations of the centers*

