

The Notion and Use of Space in the Curatorial Works of Başak Şenova

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Abstract

In this study, the concept of spatial perception in curating and the stages of spatial usage from the preservation to the presentation of artworks throughout history are examined. In contemporary exhibitions, curators shape the viewers' spatial perception to give meaning to the exhibitions. Since the beginning of the 2000s, curators have been more influential. The transformation of public exhibition spaces from "Natural Curiosity Cabinets" to salons, from salons to the white cube, and subsequently to open spaces has taken place from the 18th century to the present. Throughout the study, this transitional phase is addressed, and significant works and investigations regarding space and spatial perception throughout history are discussed. In this context, the use of space in curating, the perception of exhibition space, and the utilization of exhibition space, from salon exhibitions to the white cube era, are examined with reference to Brian O'Doherty's book "Inside the White Cube". Then, the components influencing the perception of space and the works of Başak Şenova, one of today's successful curators, were analyzed.

Keywords

Başak Şenova;perception of space;space design

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the transformations of exhibition spaces from the past to the present through the lens of spatial perception. While spatial perception was not prominent in Paris Salon exhibitions, it gained significance with the introduction of the “White Cube” concept, and the concept of space became important in exhibitions through components that influence perception.

In the past, exhibition spaces were designed according to strict architectural rules, reminiscent of the rules governing the construction of churches in the Middle Ages. To ensure that there was no contact with the outside world, all possible ways of connecting with the exterior were blocked off and windows were eliminated. The walls were plain white, and the primary source of light came from the ceiling. The gallery floor was either polished to such an extent that one could hear even one’s own footsteps, or it was covered with carpet to maintain silence, thereby enabling the individual to focus on the walls. Due to the strictly regulated and homogeneous nature of spatial perception in salon exhibitions, even ordinary objects within the exhibition space could be perceived as works of art.

In classical modernist galleries, a neutral atmosphere with a workshop or salon-like feel was maintained, evoking a sense of distance between the viewer and the artworks. Displaying artworks within frames in a way that prevented physical interaction with the audience contributed to a rather cold perception of the gallery. The “Salon des Refuses” and “Salon des Independents”, established by independent artists after the French Revolution, were the first examples of galleries that stood out as venues for exhibiting artworks that involved critical approaches to the art of the period, tradition, and evaluation methods.

In subsequent periods, the significance of spatial perception has led to an exploration of the influence of components and emotions. The viewer's perception is intricately shaped by the combination and interpretation of the constituent elements of the spatial environment and the sensory experiences of the individual. It is noteworthy that a comprehensive comprehension of spatial perception cannot be attained solely by focusing on spatial components or sensory inputs in isolation, as these factors are mutually intertwined and interdependent. In order for the viewer to establish their position within a given space, it becomes imperative to delineate the boundaries of the spatial environment. Furthermore, to apprehend the interrelations between different spatial realms, the viewer must familiarize themselves with the pathways,

focal points, markers, and connecting elements that facilitate orientation. These fundamental aspects, serving as directives, not only assist in orienting the viewer but also play a pivotal role in fostering spatial adaptation and providing informative cues pertaining to the spatial domain.

In this context, perception can be described as the process by which individuals acquire information from their environment. Perception is closely intertwined with sensory and cognitive processes, encompassing an individual's experiences, conceptual framework, as well as emotional, psychological, and cultural characteristics. When it comes to perceiving space, it is not only the sense of sight that plays a role, but other senses are also significant and influential. Although the user initially perceives the space through visual cues, perception arises from the integration of multiple senses.

Perception is an artistic necessity for both the artist and the audience. We perceive space not only based on what we see but also on what we sense. The range of an object's influence is determined by our perception of space. The possibilities presented by the field of perception are not considered separately for the artist and the audience. However, the types of perception it creates and their consequences can be evaluated separately. Space and the understanding of space have been among the most fundamental subjects in architecture, as well as in the plastic arts (such as painting, sculpture, and ceramics), philosophy, psychology, and physics.

Therefore, directional elements in space should be used carefully to avoid creating a wrong perception of space and causing problems for the user. The presence of perceptible boundaries is essential for the viewer to recognize the space. It is not necessary for the boundaries that the brain can perceive to be clear. Indefinite boundaries are sufficient to define the space, even if they do not turn the space into a closed volume. Limiting elements that make up the space can lead to psychological relaxation for the person. Boundaries and emphasis elements affect the senses and help to perceive the space as a whole. These elements are the components that create the space for the viewer. The definition of the components and elements of space depends on the comprehensiveness of the environmental systems, the location of the space within the landscape, and its functionality. Space is created with a measured, proportionate, and balanced composition. In our age, whether an exhibition space is a white cube or an alternative space is important not only in terms of the design process but also in terms of the interpretation process, and it affects the relationship between the viewer and the artwork. In an ideal gallery space, all factors that may hinder the perception of the artwork as art are excluded.

When it comes to spatial perception, the sense of sight holds a more important position compared to other senses. In visual perception, the first organ that is stimulated is the eye. The sense of sight transfers the reflected light from objects to the visual center in the brain, where it is combined at a conscious level to form the experience of visual perception along with color perception.

The relationships between the elements that make up a space create a whole and turn the composition into a space. These elements have different roles in the organization of the space depending on where they are used; they can be limiting, focusing, unifying, or separating. The viewer perceives the space through these roles. The main components that stand out in an interior space are the structural components. The structural components play different roles in the construction of the spatial organization. They can unite, divide, separate, or limit the space. Elements of the space such as columns, beams, walls, and roofs serve to limit the space by separating it from the surrounding environment, while elements such as windows and doors have unifying properties. In spaces where circulation is important, such as museums and exhibition halls, directional elements organize the space. In this context, emphasis refers to strong elements that differentiate a limited space functionally, symbolically, or formally from the overall composition.

All components that define a space are guiding elements for people moving through it. While the boundaries and scale of a space help determine a person's position within it, components such as paths, connection points, signs, and nodes are necessary for establishing spatial relationships. In spaces like exhibition halls, these components, when combined with perceptual factors in design, are crucial in ensuring visitors are guided through the space without feeling lost, and in creating a pleasant experience for them. Conversely, if these components are not effectively utilized, visitors may experience a constant feeling of disorientation and anxiety, altering their perception of the space.

Considering these factors, this study explores how Başak Şenova, one of today's successful curators, approaches the concept of space in each of her curatorial endeavors. By approaching every project with a designer's eye and employing design problem-solving methodologies throughout all stages, from conceptual frameworks to spatial design, she has created a unique style in her curatorial work. Başak Şenova is a curator who begins by designing the viewer's perception, starting from the space itself. The concept of space holds great importance in the

viewer's perception. In her role as a curator, Şenova designs the viewer's spatial perception. Başak Şenova emphasizes that her main focus is designing the viewer's perception, and she approaches all aspects of the projects, from conceptual frameworks to spatial design, through design problem-solving methodologies. In general, the artists Başak Şenova collaborates with are artists who produce works through research processes that extend over a long period of time. Therefore, the collaborative processes result in the emergence of different processes and the formation of new collaborations each time. The extended research periods provide a fertile ground for artists to delve into their subjects, leading to the creation of thought-provoking and conceptually rich artworks. Through these collaborations, Şenova facilitates the development of dynamic relationships between the curator, the artists, and the audience, fostering an environment conducive to creative exploration and experimentation.

RESULTS

While many curators accept spaces as they are and organize artworks based on this foundation, Başak Şenova adopts a different approach. Rather than accepting the space as it is in her exhibitions, Şenova takes the path of transformation to design the viewer's perception. She actively works to shape the viewer's experience by reimagining and altering the space itself.

“Ground: Space Surface Layer,” is an example of an exhibition curated by Başak Şenova. This exhibition took place at “Bir Dükkan Sanat Mekanı” and featured works by Z. Zeren Gökten, Eser Selen, and Mürüvvet Türkyılmaz. The exhibition consisted of fictional narratives constructed by the three artists in response to the spatial context. Designed around the concept of “What can be done against gravity?” the artworks were displayed on the ceiling. This approach allowed the space to maintain its identity while simultaneously engaging the audience and inviting them to become part of the exhibition experience.

Another prominent exhibition in which Başak Şenova shaped the space to design the viewer's perception was “Unrecorded (Kayıtsız),” which took place in 2008 at Akbank Sanat. In the “Unrecorded (Kayıtsız)” exhibition, Başak Şenova chose to darken the space to erase the physical data of the space. The darkness of the environment caused the viewer to lose their sense of direction and perceive the works differently. Each work in the exhibition directed the viewer to another work, creating various routes that could be followed. Since the viewer could not see the entire space from any point, they could not predict what the next work on the route would be.

In 2009, ‘Lapses’, which was exhibited at the Turkey Pavilion of the 53rd Venice Biennale, was one of the works that Başak Şenova created the space herself. In this project, Şenova worked with artists Banu Cennetoğlu and Ahmet Ögüt, and instead of designing the exhibition according to the space, she designed the space based on the project and works at hand. Until that time, Şenova had prepared her projects starting from space, but in this exhibition, she followed the opposite approach.

In 2010, Başak Şenova curated the “Ali Cabbar Disquiet Shadow (Huzursuz Gölge)” exhibition at Yapı Kredi Kazım Taşkent, which was formerly a bank branch before it became a gallery. Given the structure and architectural elements of the space, which has been used as a gallery since 1964, being an old bank branch presented a challenging space to be transformed into an art gallery. Therefore, in this exhibition, Şenova transformed the gallery architecturally according to the design of the exhibition. Paintings were hung on the gallery walls, and the walls were transformed through massive murals. In this exhibition, Şenova designed the viewer’s perception through various techniques.

The “Postcapital” exhibition, which took place in Opal located within the Plato Vocational School campus in 2010, was designed as a multimedia installation and open database. The project was a digital archive consisting of over 250,000 texts, audio files, and videos compiled from the internet by the artist over the past 10 years. The exhibition focused on the social, political, economic, and cultural changes that have occurred worldwide in the last 20 years, with two significant historical events as the axis, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the 9/11 attacks.

Başak Şenova designed the structure of “The Move” exhibition held at Arter in 2012 based on the logic and moves of chess. This exhibition, comprising works by Rosa Barba, Adel Abidin, and Runa İslam, featured a collective body of work that converged in approach on the ground floor. The other floors were dedicated to each artist's individual exhibitions. While each exhibition was presented as a distinct entity within its own context, the curatorial methodology of the exhibition was based on a calculated structure that expanded the spatial dynamics by making reference to the game of chess. Thus, the exhibition presented a carefully planned framework that allowed for the appreciation of each exhibition's unique qualities while also creating a cohesive whole.

In its 2nd and 5th editions, Başak Şenova served as a co-curator of the Contemporary Underground Art Biennial - D0 Ark, a project designed to be completed over five editions and eventually transform into a combination of a military and contemporary art museum. The museum currently hosts 160 artworks that offer different perspectives on the Cold War era. The biennial aimed to both refresh collective memory and solidify data within its scope. The 2nd Contemporary Underground Art Biennial was organized in partnership between the Republic of Turkey and Croatia, with Başak Şenova and Branko Franceschi as co-curators. The biennial consisted of 35 international projects produced specifically for the event, within the conceptual framework of the curatorial concepts “Time Cube” and “The Castle.” This shelter, designed to protect against the impact of a nuclear attack, has been transformed into an art space without compromising its original wallpapers, which contrast with the white wallpapers typically found in contemporary galleries. The space has been carefully preserved to maintain its unique energy. Drawing inspiration from the shelter's history, the resulting environment emphasizes both the visual and auditory perception of the viewer.

The Jerusalem Show VII: Fractures (Kudüs Gösterisi: Kırıklar), which took place in Jerusalem in 2014, consisted of seven parts presented in twelve venues. In each of the seven sections within the exhibition, which had Jerusalem as its starting point, a reference was made to the past that connects multiple histories to the present time. The historical background of Al Ma'mal, one of the two main traditional tile factories located in the old city of Jerusalem and operating until 1975, was one of the main themes of the exhibition. In addition to the space's own architecture, columns and spotlights were used. The two hammams used in The Jerusalem Show VII: Fractures (Kudüs Gösterisi: Kırıklar), Hammam el-Ayn and Hammam el-Shifa, were transformed by Başak Şenova just like they were transformed in her 2010 exhibition “Ali Cabbar-Disquiet Shadow(Huzursuz Gölge)” at Yapı Kredi Kazım Taşkent, by Ceren Oykut and Conor McGrady's murals. “Climbing Through The Tide (Dalgaya Tırmanmak)”, the opening exhibition of B7L9 in 2019, took place in the city of Tunis. This exhibition took its name from the song “Moonlight Drive” written by Jim Morrison in 1965. The three-story space, which was formerly used as a warehouse, was illuminated using fluorescents, in addition to its natural light, creating a spacious and well-lit environment. In this exhibition, Başak Şenova wrapped the columns of the space with fluorescents and created an openness by not using any partition walls. This allowed the space to be perceived as a whole.

As can be seen in Başak Şenova's perception of space, for her, the exhibition is the most visible

part of a project. However, for Şenova, who believes that the space is not the whole project, all exhibition processes first start with research. Theoretical and practical data are collected, readings and discussions are made, and in this way, the project begins to form itself in a way. Ideas in the process, issues such as obsessions, artists, the thoughts and works of artists, and how the works and the space will be related become clear and the exhibition opens. Şenova attaches such importance to this process that she always prefers to publish a publication in which this process is documented in her every work.

The information obtained, ideas generated, and examinations conducted throughout this study clearly indicate that the concept of space has undergone numerous changes within the framework of the curatorial profession from the past to the present, and continues to evolve and reshape itself today.

The significance of what a space represents for the individuals who use or occupy it, the potential alterations in spatial perception, and how individuals can be emotionally and mentally stimulated in various ways within the realm of space perception, as well as the crucial importance of achieving a balanced approach in exhibition design, have been discussed within the scope of this research.

DISCUSSION

The tendency of our senses, especially our visual perception, to shape and perceive by integrating parts is called the Gestalt effect. The Gestalt approach emphasizes that we perceive objects as well-organized models or patterns rather than as separate complementary parts. (Duman, 2018)

Definition of Space

While space is defined in different ways, Hasol describes space as “a void that separates the individual from their surroundings by a certain extent and allows them to continue their activities,” and according to Ching, space is “a material essence that inherently does not have a specific form.” (Ching, 2006)

Space is not only a three-dimensional volume but also a state of emptiness. Perception is defined as “the expression of the process that gives harmony and unity to the material that comes to the human through the sense, and therefore has physical, physiological, neurological,

perceptual and cognitive components.” (Ching, 2006) Human beings have created a unique void by limiting the universal void that they have difficulty grasping. (Hasol, 2008) The ideal gallery space is a space that excludes any factors that prevent the artwork from being perceived as ‘art’. (O’Doherty, 2010)

Chateau La Coste Art Gallery, designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, is situated among the vineyards of a winery near Aix-en-Provence. The building was designed to end at the level of the garden, with a 6-meter drop below ground level, surrounded by concrete walls in the water. The roof structure, resembling a sailboat or kite, and its integration into the ground add a sense of lightness to the space. This structure is considered both an exhibition space and a work of land art by its designer. (Arkitektuel, 2017)

History of Space

The spatial qualities that create a perception of infinity in exhibition spaces are more commonly observed in the history of religion rather than in the history of art and can be traced back to periods much older than the medieval era. Examples include the pictorial caves from the Paleolithic Magdalenian and Aurignacian periods, where drawings are found inside the caves. (Ertuğrul, 2016)

“Salon,” which can be referred to as one of the first public exhibition spaces, emerged in the 1800s and created a monopoly on exhibitions. “Salon” is a very suitable definition for a gallery according to the aesthetics of its time. The walls of the gallery do not serve any purpose or have any aesthetic value other than meeting the needs of people. The visual arrangement of the exhibition is a metaphor for the gallery space. The monopoly created by the Salon served the cultural policy and promoted the national style in the way accepted by the Academy. (Diderot, 1996)

After the French Revolution, this monopoly was overthrown and independent exhibitions for independent artists replaced the Academy. “Salon des Refusés” (Salon of the Rejected) and “Salon des Indépendants” (Salon of the Independents), established by artists in 1863, were the first notable examples of galleries where artworks with critical approaches to the period’s art perception, tradition, and evaluation method were exhibited.

In Samuel F.B. Morse’s painting “Gallery of the Louvre” (1833), the artworks are stacked in a way that creates a wallpaper-like effect. This exhibition style has created a sense of unease

within modern perspectives. (Alpay, 2020)

While artists do not like their works to be displayed too high up, they do not usually complain about paintings displayed closer to the ground. Artworks displayed closer to the ground allow experts to examine them up close. Notably, large-scale paintings are typically situated on a sloping surface to facilitate optimal viewing by spectators. In this regard, highly coveted paintings are exhibited at eye level, while smaller works occupy lower positions. In exhibitions of significant repute, an assiduous approach is undertaken to fill every nook and cranny of the display walls, leaving no voids. This principle of organization was also employed by the Impressionists during their first exhibitions in 1874. (O'Doherty, 2010)

In the early 20th century, the idea of 'the construction of space as the work itself,' which developed with Duchamp's concept of "translocation" and the presentation of collage and assemblage as interventions in architectural space in the 1950s, followed by movements such as installation art, minimalist practices, land art, and street performances that surpassed traditional use of the space played a leading role in the development of the understanding of "reproducible/reconstructable space." The exhibitions "Prounen Raum" by El Lissitzky and "Merzbau" by Kurt Schwitters in 1923 opened a new chapter in art history. (Antmen, 2010)

In this regard, Marcel Duchamp's exhibition "The Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme" in Paris in 1938 is an attempt to address traditional display methods in a spatial context. His work "Twelve Hundred Coal Bags Suspended from the Ceiling over a Stove" consists of 1,200 coal bags hanging from the ceiling over a stove and offers an ironic arrangement that challenges the conventional top/bottom hierarchy in spatiality. To showcase the ceiling instead of the walls or the floor as the exhibiting space is also a highly radical initiative. (Schneede, 2014)

Brian O'Doherty emphasizes the artist's avant-garde attitude, stating "Until Marcel Duchamp stepped on it in 1938, the ceiling was a protected space for artists." (O'Doherty, 2010)

The act of reversing the gallery space, where the ceiling becomes the floor and vice versa, along with the stove on the ground now resembling a chandelier, is a direct challenge to the art audience as they themselves become "upside-down" while walking through the flipped gallery. This unconventional transformation is also the first instance of an artist framing a gallery. All of these components together pose a challenge that arose from the analysis of the spatial and behavioral features of the gallery. (Fitzpatrick, 2004)

Modern artists such as El Lissitzky, Kurt Schwitters, and Marcel Duchamp began to present galleries as “non-neutral” spaces for the presentation of art. With the belief that the exhibition space is a crucial element in art, they emphasized the institutional power of the space. (Bulduk, 2016)

After the White Cube

To create a space detached from daily life and a space that allowed for a singular focus on the artwork, it was necessary to remove all traces of the artwork’s social context from the space. In this way, the White Cube reinforced the walls that had been attempted to be dismantled between art and life since the 18th century. O’Doherty defines the White Cube as expensive, exclusive, and elitist. (O’Doherty, 2010)

In 1958, Yves Klein exhibited an empty and white gallery in his exhibition “Le Vide (The Void)”. The artist’s exhibition “The Void” was held at the Iris Clert Gallery from April 8 to May 15, 1958, and attracted great attention. For this exhibition, the walls of the gallery were painted white and the exhibition space was completely emptied. Y. Klein, who exhibited an empty and white gallery space, considered the gallery as art itself and created a metaphysical space in the name of art. (Sanatatak, 2015)

Land art is one of the alternatives used against the white cube. Land art has maintained its presence more effectively today with a more distinct environmentalist stance. Reesa Greenberg examined the change in spaces from the 1960s to the present day and pointed out that exhibition spaces have become commercial spaces. (O’Doherty, 2010)

Another French-American, Fernandez Arman, opened his exhibition ‘Fullness’ at the Iris Clert Gallery in October 1960. Known for turning ordinary objects into works of art, Arman said about his works, “The meaning of my work is in its pieces. The meaning depends on the object I use,” expressing the importance he placed on the relationship between objects and meaning. (Dolmacı, 2016)

When we come to the post-1960 period, postmodern spaces and minimal art emerged. The most striking example of this is Carl Andre, one of the pioneers of Minimalist art, who created the work “Equivalent VIII” (1966) exhibited at the Tate Museum, which consists of repeated squares made of prefabricated materials (including aluminum, zinc, copper, lead, and iron tiles) on permanent frames on the ground. Andre’s equivalents, consisting of minimalist works, all

have the same height, mass, and volume, which is why he named his collection “equivalents.” (Girgin, 2014)

Brian O’Doherty said, “We have come to a point where we see the space before the art.” He explained this situation as follows: “...We continue to feed on the modernist disappointment of spatial neutrality, its ordinary components: white walls; the minimal framing of art, and controlled lights used in interior spaces to fix our gallery space. I believe art products deserve spatial relationships beyond the boundaries of neutral spaces.” (O’Doherty, 2010, p.23)

Perception of Space and Factors That Affect Perception

According to Forty, until the 1890s, space, as a term, did not exist within the discipline of architecture, but was taken up by German writers within the framework of aesthetic searches. (Forty, 2000)

Norberg Schulz was interested in the perceptual dimension of space and describes five types of it. These are the pragmatic space created by physical movement, the perceptual space created by direct guidance, the existential space that forms the fixed image of the environment, the cognitive space created by the physical world, and the logical space where pure logical relationships are established. (Norberg-Schultz, 1980)

Frank Ching states that space is ‘a material reality, such as wood or stone’. However, he also notes that it is inherently shapeless and disorganized. Therefore, he argues that a universal definition cannot be made for space and continues as follows:

“...Nevertheless, as soon as an object enters the field of influence, a visual relationship is established. If other objects enter this area, multiple relationships are established not only between the objects but also between them and the surrounding space. Therefore, space is shaped by these relationships and by us, who perceive them.” (Ching, 2008, p.10)

In his definition, Kuban speaks of void other than the physical space. He states that space is determined by movement. The distinguishing element of architecture lies in the emptiness of space and its expression of the most genuine values of life. Living beings are defined by their movements, and movement can only exist in a void. Therefore, space is defined by its potential for movement. This movement is not limited to physical relocation within a structure but also

includes visual movement extending toward the limits of the structure under the pressure of human presence. (Kuban, 2002)

Norberg-Schultz's definition also supports Kuban by adding the perceptual dimension. He explains the structure of the space as “shows the three-dimensional organization of the elements that make up a place”. He also mentions that space is not a new term for architecture, but it can have multiple meanings. He states that we can choose between two different uses found in current sources, namely “three-dimensional space” and “space as a perceptual field.” (Norberg-Schultz, 1980)

According to Lang, perception consists of two main processes. These processes are sensory processes based on senses and cognitive processes based on information. (Lang, 1987)

“The sensory process is the process where we interpret the information and data coming from the environment through our senses, while the cognitive process is the process where we conceptualize the environmental information that we acquire through our senses, but cannot perceive, depending on our experiences, and create it in our mind through this process.” (Kahvecioğlu, 1998, p.33)

It is possible to consider the words of American minimalist Carl Andre about his works that expand the limits of the concept of ‘sculpture’, “I don’t make my sculptures by casting or carving them. Instead, I see the sculpture itself as the carving of space, and I use it to shape space” as a sign of this perceptual transformation towards space. (Antmen, 2010) In the 1960s, many artists turned the sterile white cube space into a kind of studio, and galleries becoming an extension of the studio is significant in this context.

Effect of The Sense on Perception

When it comes to spatial perception, the visual perception created by light and surface materials is also related to a person’s field of vision and distance. In the visual perception process of space, color is not only an important physical perception component but also needs to be evaluated together with psychological perception and aesthetic dimensions. As the most powerful message of space, color affects not only visual comfort but also vital comfort. Color can change the dynamics of a space; with color direction, the “directionality or non-directionality” of a space can be emphasized, and with optical illusions made with color, the space can be made to feel more dynamic or static than it is. (Gezer, 2012)

Light, color, and texture are important elements in recognizing and perceiving mass. A highly reflective, glossy surface texture can reduce the perceived mass effect, whereas a different surface texture can create the opposite effect. Correct color selection and usage can aid in visually separating an object from its environment. Light can alter the perception of objects through the shadows it creates. In summary, through the use of color, texture, light, and shadow, mass surfaces can acquire distinct characteristics.

Another aspect of spatial perception is dimensional perception. Dimensional perception is the perception of space based on the foundation and organization of the space. In their study on the form and perception of space, Sadalla and Oxley created two different spaces with walls made of gray contrast plates and varied the lengths of these spaces in a 1:1 convex room and a 1:9 convex corridor. As a result of the study, it was revealed that when convex forms are involved, a space that is short and wide in terms of openness is perceived as more spacious dimensionally. Although both rooms have the same area width, the rectangular one is perceived as wider. (Sadalla and Oxley, 1984)

Stamps, Krishnan, and Willits point out that the structure of bounding surfaces is one of the most important factors affecting the dimensional perception of space. In their research, they found that the use of furniture with open bookshelves or shelves, as well as textured materials on the surfaces that make up the space, creates a more spacious and expansive perception of the space than when the surfaces are smooth. (Stamps et al, 2009)

Size is one of the factors that affect spatial perception. The “Ames Room,” designed by American optometrist Jr. Ames in 1956, can be given as an example of this phenomenon. The Ames Room does not have normal proportions, but depending on the angle from which it is viewed, it can appear normal. As people move around inside the space, they appear to shrink or grow in size. Spatial perception can be manipulated by altering the size of the space.

Tactile perception is also one of the factors that affect spatial perception. Braque, who has worked on spatial perception, expresses the differentiation between visual and tactile space as follows, “In tactile perception, space separates the viewer from the objects, while in visual space, objects are separated from each other.” (Hall, 1966, p.57)

The light’s interaction with the surface of the materials it hits, and thus the transparency, translucency, opacity, glossiness-mattness, and roughness-smoothness of the material’s

surface, determine whether the light is fully absorbed (appearing as a black surface), fully reflected (appearing as a white surface), or partially absorbed and partially reflected (appearing as a colored surface). When it comes to spatial perception, the visual perception created by light and surface materials is also related to a person's field of vision and distance. In the visual perception process of space, color is not only an important physical perception component but also needs to be evaluated together with psychological perception and aesthetic dimensions. As the most powerful message of space, color affects not only visual comfort but also vital comfort. Color can change the dynamics of a space; with color direction, the "directionality or non-directionality" of a space can be emphasized, and with optical illusions made with color, the space can be made to feel more dynamic or static than it is. (Gezer, 2012)

As the number of senses used increases, the accuracy of perception also increases. Our auditory perception assists our sense of vision. Von Meiss describes the interaction between sounds and our visual perception as follows: "No matter how wide, well-lit, or spatially well-composed a classroom is, it becomes a torture chamber if the echoes inside have exceeded certain limits. An acoustically 'dead' church loses its religious character. A gravel path leading to a house announces the visitor's footsteps to the homeowner." (Altuncu et al, 2013, p.118)

Başak Şenova and Her Perception of Space

Just as artists have different approaches, curators also have different approaches. Some curators start with the space, some with the artworks, and some with the artists. Başak Şenova starts with the space. She has expressed this by saying, "I have difficulty with exhibitions that do not have a specific space, and I get lost in exhibitions without a space." (Başak Şenova, personal communication, 2022)

"A curator is the person who develops the conceptual framework of an art project by working with the artists and their works, and who is often responsible for the research and production phases of the process, which culminates in an exhibition or event. They are responsible for all stages of the project, from spatial design to budgeting, public relations, and documentation." (Başak Şenova, personal communication, 2022)

According to Şenova, although exhibitions are platforms for critical thinking, they are closely related to the concept of control. Therefore, designing an exhibition also means designing the

audience's perception. For this reason, she looks at every project with a new production perspective and opposes the idea that curating is only about exhibiting artists' works. (Başak Şenova, personal communication, 2022) For her, the process begins with research. After gathering theoretical and practical data, readings, and discussions, the project starts to take shape. Throughout the process, ideas, obsessions, artists, their thoughts and works, and how works relate to the space become clearer. Başak Şenova always prefers to publish a book documenting this process. She believes that the book plays a significant role in the project's sustainability because it documents the exhibition process, how the conceptual framework worked with the pieces, and the works' presence in the space.

Generally, the artists that Başak Şenova works with are those who produce work after long research processes that extend over some time. Therefore, the collaborative processes lead to other processes and the formation of new collaborations each time. She believes that relationships that are easily consumed by both curators and artists will have very short-term effects, but long-term collaborations can form sentences. (Başak Şenova, personal communication, 2022)

Many curators accept spaces as they are and organize artworks based on this foundation, but Başak Şenova exhibits a different attitude. Instead of accepting the space as it is, Şenova chooses to transform it, thus making the space a part of the exhibition and discourse.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the perception of exhibition space and the utilization of exhibition space have been examined by drawing on Brian O Doherty's book "Inside the White Cube," which explores the transition from salon exhibitions to the era of the white cube. Subsequently, the components that influence spatial perception and the interplay between Başak Şenova's understanding of space and the concept of space have been discussed and analyzed.

In classical modernist galleries, a neutral atmosphere with a workshop or salon-like feel was maintained, evoking a sense of distance between the viewer and the artworks. Displaying artworks within frames in a way that prevented physical interaction with the audience contributed to a rather cold perception of the gallery. The "Salon des Refuses" and "Salon des Independents", established by independent artists after the French Revolution, were the first examples of galleries that stood out as venues for exhibiting artworks that involved critical

approaches to the art of the period, tradition, and evaluation methods.

Moreover, in this study, it is explained that for Başak Şenova, a modern and successful curator of our time, gallery/space arrangement is not just an architectural task, but a concept that requires the touch of an artist and should be approached as a designer.

Based on the information, ideas, and analyses derived from this study, it is evident that the concept of space has undergone significant transformations within the realm of curatorial practice from the past to the present. Furthermore, it continues to evolve and shape itself as an enduring concept. Within the scope of this research, the investigations conducted shed light on the multifaceted significance of space for its users and inhabitants, elucidating the profound implications it holds for individuals. Moreover, the study examines the potential of modifying spatial perceptions as a means to elicit diverse emotional and cognitive responses from individuals.

According to the findings presented in this study, it can be argued that artists who possess the ability to transcend conventional paradigms, exemplified by the likes of Başak Şenova, have succeeded in establishing a collective apprehension of the inherently subjective notion of spatial perception. Consequently, these insights underscore the hitherto underacknowledged potency and potential for advancement inherent within the realm of curatorship, an area of contemporary art that warrants greater recognition. In light of the information gleaned from this research, it becomes evident that curatorship, as a concept, stands as an inherently malleable and robust construct, poised to evolve and flourish in response to the ever-evolving demands and challenges of the artistic landscape.

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