

The Communication Dimension of Art: Reflections of Curatorship in Turkey

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Abstract

This research, centered on the field of communication, aims to examine the communication dimension of art and the reflections of curatorial practices in Turkey within the framework of the significant intellectual approaches of the time, namely the Frankfurt School - Critical Theory, focusing on Adorno's "negative dialectics" and Benjamin's concepts of "aura" and "mechanical reproduction." Tracing the development of curatorial phenomena upon this theoretical foundation within the historical journey of art, the study opens a discussion on its roles in the field of communication today. It seeks to explore the role of curating and how it should be and aims to determine to what extent it fulfills the role of being a "communication bridge enabling art to connect with the public," all within the context of communication.

Following the curator figure that emerged in salon exhibitions in the eighteenth century and its journey to the present, the study elucidates the position of art, the artist, and society in the triangle within various exhibiting spaces such as biennials, museums, art platforms, and different exhibition venues. It aims to reveal the versatile competencies curators should possess to fulfill their role in the dynamics of the present day. The evolution of art from the modern period to the digital age is explored within a theoretical framework, examining the philosophical dimension of the subject. The communication aspect of art, the status of the artist, cultural globalization, and the state of postmodern art are investigated as part of the journey of art as a communication medium from the past to the present. The definition and history of curating, milestones worldwide, and their reflections in Turkey are examined in this thesis, aiming to reveal the curator's role in the communication field through the synthesis of research findings.

Keywords: Aura; communication; cultural industry; curatorship; mechanical reproduction; negative dialectics

INTRODUCTION

This research study titled "The Communication Dimension of Art: Reflections of Curatorial Practices in Turkey" traces the development of the curatorial phenomenon within the historical journey of art, opening a discussion on its roles in the field of communication today. As art evolves beyond a mere aesthetic experience into a new phenomenon with active communication, meaning making, and thinking processes, its function extends beyond the science of beauty to become a potential mediator of communication, interaction, and enrichment of social communication among societies. The concept of curating, which took place in the art scene in the eighteenth century, was initially referred to as an exhibition commissioner responsible for preserving and improving museum works.

With the advent of contemporary art, the roles and definitions of curating have undergone changes and developments, and reflections have occurred in Turkey in line with global developments. The concept, widely accepted in our country in the mid-1990s, essentially reached a different turning point with the onset of the 2000s. Emphasizing the communication aspect of art, this research provides a significant framework to explore how curatorial practices in Turkey are reflected in societal dynamics and discover the roles they undertake in mediating art communication.

This study aims to investigate curators' role at the current point in their historical journey, exploring what this role should be and how it should be. It also aims to bring a new perspective to the field, conceptually and through its discussion questions, by discussing the communication dimension of art through the roles undertaken by curators and sharing its results. In doing so, it seeks to open a new area in communication literature.

The study progresses by examining the position, role, and impact of curating within the triangle of art, artists, and society on the journey of art to determine how contemporary curating should be and identify the transformations that have occurred. The study seeks to answer questions such as "Is the curator a communication bridge that brings art to the public, a position that enables access to many artists and artworks, brings institutions and artists together, and guides and influences the communication aspect of art and the artist's style? What should be the ideal profession of curating, which is an actor in the art market?"

The milestones of art are presented with a comprehensive conceptual framework discussing the theoretical background, the adventure of art, and the communication dimension of art in the

context of cultural globalization from modernity to the postmodern era. Theodor Adorno's theory of "cultural industry" is examined in conjunction with the phenomenon of modernity. In attempting to convey the contradiction between art and popular culture through Adorno's "negative dialectics," the concept of the commodification of culture is explored, and a philosophical discussion is opened with Benjamin's ideas of aura and mechanical reproduction. Art as a communication medium examines the transition from craft to art, the conceptual dimension of art and artwork, the relationship between aesthetics and art, and the communication dimension. In the context of cultural globalization, the study explores the artwork within cultural globalization, attempting to explain the changes in art communication during this temporal journey.

The study is structured around the concept of "curatorship." The definition and history of curatorship, providing general descriptions, examining the etymological origin, detailing the milestones of curating worldwide, and elaborating on its development in Turkey. It focuses on the intersection of art and curating as the focal point of art communication, museums, galleries, public spaces, biennials, and digital platforms are examined, and examples from around the world and Turkey are provided. The meaning and roles encompassed by curating extend from the modern to the digital era.

The purpose and scope of the discussion responses to interview questions. In this section insights obtained from in-depth interviews conducted within the sample and the responses to interview questions, along with detailed opinions of the interviewees, are thoroughly presented.

The conclusion section presents the study's purpose, and contribution to the literature referring to the concepts introduced in the theoretical part of the thesis, hypotheses are discussed, and the position of the curator figure that emerged in salon exhibitions after discussions with curators in the current art scene, within the triangle of art, artist, and society, is explained based on significant results obtained in the interviews. The study discusses the role of "being a communication bridge that brings art to the public" undertaken by the curator, attempting to highlight the versatile competencies that a curator should possess while undertaking this role in the dynamics of the present day.

Milestones of Art from the Modern Times to the Digital Age

Modernism led to the formation of everyday lifestyles, with people transitioning to more individualistic lifestyles and developing an independent social structure in conjunction with

urbanization. Modernity signifies a radical transformation and the construction of a new world in philosophical, political, economic, social, and cultural realms, where significant advancements in science and technology occur and the importance and priority given to religious beliefs and values diminish (Giddens & Pierson, 2001). Modernity, which first emerged in the Western world in the 18th century, is built upon four elements: political, economic, intellectual, and social differentiations that arise from transformations (Akyüz, 2020). In the modern era, as recent economic and political structures are established, and nation-states come to power, the individual becomes prominent in the social structure (Kırılmaz & Ayparçası, 2016). During the Renaissance period, significant innovations took place in the field of art, and works focusing on the world and human beings rather than the sacred were produced. The humanism that emerged during this period highlights the individual as a person with personality and selfhood. Marshall Berman's (2004) perspective on modernity is a vital example for understanding modernity's approaches. He considers modernity by dividing it into three periods. The first period is the phase of understanding modernity, and one cannot see the actions that permeate their practical lives. He explains the second period through the French Revolution. He interprets the significant changes in every aspect of life as explosions influenced by the revolution, stating that modernization and the concept of modernity took root throughout the 19th century. He points to the final period as the distance covered and achievements of modernity in the fields of culture, art, and thought, almost encompassing the entire world in the 20th century.

Modernity and the Industrialization of Culture: The Conceptual Dimension of Culture

The Frankfurt School, considered one of the most important intellectual movements of the twentieth century, is also known as Critical Theory. Adorno's negative dialectics approach and examination of the contradiction between art and popular culture have contributed significantly to understanding cultural industrialization. In one of his most important works, "Dialectic of Enlightenment," written in collaboration with Max Horkheimer, Adorno critically discusses how enlightenment and the culture industry influence society (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2014). According to Adorno (2001), the culture industry eliminates the liberating function of art and education, reducing individuals to passive consumers and offering them a standardized culture. Adorno's criticisms of culture suggest that instead of fostering individual development, culture blinds people to their abilities, prevents them from using their knowledge and skills, and oppresses them. He emphasizes that only through art can we escape this detrimental situation. The speed of technology has further increased the influence of mass communication tools in

today's world, bringing societies and individuals closer together and simultaneously making cultural products easily accessible everywhere. Culture has become increasingly industrialized and commodified within the capitalist system influenced by modernism. Adorno (2001) states that high culture and low culture, which have been kept separate throughout the ages, are being combined with the culture industry, and he argues that those influenced by the culture industry have their levels of consciousness and unconsciousness speculated upon, being in a state of secondary and mechanized appendages. Adorno (2012) argues that within the culture industry, artworks are subjected to various influences and that the partial autonomy of art is systematically undermined, consciously or unconsciously, by executive boards and authorities. Seeing art as a refuge, Adorno believed in its power to diminish the effects of mass culture. The purpose of art as a refuge could be to regulate culture, proposing a coherent way of life instead of looking back and carrying crystallized aesthetics and forms (Dellaloğlu, 2003). Adorno (2012) explains that enlightenment's freedom power bestowed upon human reason creates a new form of domination that permeates every aspect of culture. He clarifies that the technical concepts in the culture industry and the techniques in artworks are fundamentally different. In art, strategy refers to the object's inherent structure, while in the culture industry, it signifies a mechanized production technique for dissemination. Therefore, the method remains external to its object. Adorno argues that art and philosophy should not be objects of culture but rather subjects that shape culture. The Institute, which enjoys quoting Stendhal's statement "Art has promised happiness," (2021, s. 183) has evaluated the theme of culture surpassing society positively and negatively. Adorno's understanding of art is expected to arise from the concept of negative dialectics, which explains the transformation of culture into ideology. Through his approach to negative dialectics, Adorno (2002) critiques the Enlightenment, instrumental reason, and the culture industry, regarding art as a realm of freedom. He states that this realm has been narrowed due to its social function and has the potential to become an ideological tool. Adorno (2001) believes that for art to reflect the correct anticipation of future society, the form, content, and function of artworks should harmonize their subjective and objective elements. He also asserts that aesthetic compromise alone is insufficient. Adorno (2014) evaluates the success of artistic work by its ability to contain contradictions, to protest purely and uncompromisingly, and to advocate for utopia while asserting the political nature of aesthetics.

In his work "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Benjamin (2018) reflects on the position of artworks of the era within social life and the potential new meanings that could arise in the production of contemporary paintings using mechanical reproduction

techniques, which emerged around the early 1900s along with the development of photography and cinema. He states that artworks have consistently been reproduced throughout history, but with technological advancements, the artwork can be reproduced "through technical means." Benjamin (2018) describes the reproduction of artworks through the possibilities of technology and their proliferation to reach a broader segment of society as a democratic approach. He views the technical reproduction of the artwork as a democratic act that liberates the artistic creation from being solely an aristocratic object of pleasure, enabling it to be shared with society. Benjamin likens the authenticity of an artwork to a nucleus that possesses qualities not found in nature. The material presence of an artwork constitutes its historical witness; if the material presence distances itself from people due to reproduction, its historical witness also suffers. Of course, this weakens the authority of the artwork's reproduced copy created through technical means. In this process, Benjamin (2018) states that what disappears is the "aura" - a unique atmosphere. It is the artwork's aura that loses its power. The aura related to the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the artwork is considered together with its historical and cultural context. With the advancement of technology, artworks became reproducible and consequently lost their originality. Therefore, according to Benjamin, artworks in the modern age are devoid of aura. Benjamin (2018) defines traditional artwork through its aura and the presence of something not currently present. He argues that reproduction creates a new existence by detaching the artwork from its tradition, and this new existence is connected to mass movements. The process of change in the social function of art and the transformation in its production are interconnected, and the loss of authenticity in art has also altered its function. According to Benjamin, artistic criticism based on infinite value and mystery regarding creativity and genius has become outdated due to its traditional perspective. On the other hand, the artwork in the age of mechanical reproduction reveals how the present is shaped by the past (Dini, 2021). Benjamin's concept of kitsch value points to the artwork's aura and is associated with authenticity and autonomy attributed to great artworks. Benjamin (2018), who also believes in the democratizing effect of reproduction, thinks that artworks that change hands and can be moved from museum halls to living room spaces are not autonomous and can be seen in everyday life.

RESULTS

Art as a Communication Medium from the Past to the Present

The Renaissance period is considered the beginning of fine art. The concept of art as "beautiful" has evolved towards modern art and contemporary art today. The Renaissance is a term that signifies a rebirth, both in art and in other aspects of life (Ağırbaş, 2017). The concept of the artist was first used during the Renaissance period (Shiner, 2020). Art had not yet acquired an independent quality during the Renaissance, and producing wholly original or desired works was impossible. However, artists' names began to be mentioned for the first time, and their status changed. In the 18th century, art and craftsmanship separated, and their meanings and functions changed. This period was primarily characterized by a significant change due to the Enlightenment. In 18th-century art, these characteristics became separate. Artists utilized individual and significant qualities such as inspiration, imagination, and genius, while mechanical attributes such as mastery, imitation, adherence to rules, and service were employed by craftsmen (Shiner, 2020). The uniqueness of art is generally unparalleled. Leonardo Da Vinci created only one Mona Lisa, and Osman Hamdi Bey painted The Tortoise Trainer only once. The 18th century witnessed the rise of non-religious art exhibitions, concerts, and literature, as well as the diversification of society. With this growth, the audience became increasingly anonymous (Gombrich, 1997). The art-loving segment expanded, and this situation changed the way we define art. The evolving art scene began to be discussed in clubs and cafes, finding support where familiar tastes could be freely pursued. It created a cultured middle-class and noble bourgeoisie society that can be described as the fine arts community (Shiner, 2020). With the formation of the art market, culture becomes a commodity, but the bourgeoisie's taste does not come to the fore (Bell, 2009). Art has an underlying economic dimension. It has a historical reality that extends until the invention of aesthetics in the modern understanding of art. After declaring its autonomy, art has freed itself from the external purposes it must serve. Art transformed from "Fine Art" to "Modern Art," and this transformation influenced its function and social role (Sarı, 2018). In the era of modern art, there were numerous movements with different themes, perspectives, and styles of representation. This period is characterized by artists expressing their new ideas about art individually and collectively with a shared understanding.

Before this century, fine arts did not have modern thinkers on aesthetics or art, and the decline of the unity between religion and culture and the rise of aesthetics as an independent domain characterized the emergence of the concept of fine arts and institutions (Pooke & Whitham, 2018). Respect for experimentation increased and self-became the most highly valued virtue. The imitation of nature was rejected, diversity and democracy increased through

individualization in art, and ideas and creativity took precedence (Fischer, 2020). Fischer (2020) argues that art aims to help individuals integrate what they love about other people's lives and achieve integrity—to make them feel good by embracing the possibilities of their own lives within that integrity.

The twentieth century witnessed profound changes; following world wars, traumas, and hardships, a new world form was established, changing the center of power from Europe to America. While art, art movements, and outstanding artists had formerly been associated exclusively with the Western European continent as the epitome of cultural richness, a new vision emerged in America after these challenges. One of the reasons for the emergence of the phenomenon of Contemporary Art in America could be attributed to this aspiration. Serving as an indicator of modernity, it promised a new form of freedom for artists, rewriting all rules and embracing a newfound disorder and ordinariness. In contemporary art, the boundaries of traditional art domains are transcended, giving prominence to performing and theatrical arts. Particularly in 20th-century art, the narrative of the ordinary transformed with the utilization of everyday materials in art creation. In the present day, the definition of art is changing, acquiring a quality that greets us everywhere, all the time. The function of art involves the production of the world's existence, acknowledging the constant flux of reality. It becomes lowered and elevated, seen differently (Sarı, 2018). Today's artwork is a holistic creation based on our time's thought patterns and relationships. In this way, the definition of art and artwork depends on the artist. Marcel Duchamp stated that integrating the artist with the capitalist economy and transforming art into a commodity resulted in art being sold rapidly and efficiently, with production taking place quickly without intricate work, keeping up with society's fast and complex pace (as cited in Kuspit, 2010). According to Ranciere, contemporary art includes music, literature, cinema, dance, photography, and other fields. However, in the past, there were oil paintings and portraits on the walls (as cited in Çankaya, 2017). Contemporary art, which reflects the understanding of art in our time, leaves the reception entirely to the viewer in works where artists create using different materials and techniques, unlike traditional art. As a result, an artwork can evoke other emotions and impressions in each viewer.

Postmodernism: Journey from the Modern to the Postmodern

In the phenomenon of contemporary art today, the scope of art has expanded, thus changing the definition of art and the meaning and function of the artwork. The phenomenon of art is more like a shared square that reflects different people's lives, thoughts, and production styles rather than a specific geography or period. With changing production, consumption, and reception

conditions, art has transitioned from a strictly regulated field to a relative one. The artist's independence and the artwork's style are emphasized. In this way, it has helped embody contemporary art concepts within a multicultural structure and supported the individual's existence. Modern art brings together cultural values derived from the coming together of different cultures and the material and spiritual entities shaped by these values in the art market. Along with the changing reality, the definition and form of art are also changing, and the artist is adapting by creating new works that meet the demands of the times. The purpose of contemporary art can be defined as presenting multiple meanings and different perspectives. It is also a way to bring new opportunities and life to our world. These concepts encompass the realities of the 21st century and come from other realities (Sarı, 2018). Art is a planned narrative that focuses on communication.

The countercultural climate characterized the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, evolving into postmodernism, which was dominant in the 1980s, 1990s, and beyond. As cultural theory developed in the 1960s, a distinct character emerged. The 1960s witnessed significant changes, including the rise of consciousness and various movements, such as the civil rights movement. The profound transformations of the 1960s saw the fusion of political and cultural radicalism similar to the late 19th century, blending anarchism and aestheticism (Eagleton, 2006). Postmodernity is a collective time and space within modernity's broader time and place. It is defined by those who dislike its boundaries, modernity, and the problems it has created, listing both its successes and unsolvable problems (Heller & Feher, 1993). According to Adorno (2001), the field of aesthetic expression finds itself in a difficult position due to the separation of high culture, including art, from popular culture. He argues that the culture industry and popular culture are the same concepts; these products produced by industrial technology are cultural products. Consequently, all these cultural products make concepts such as standardization, mass production, and consumption for the sake of consumption applicable to the culture industry (Fiske, 2021).

Eagleton's definition of postmodernism aims to explain the change that has taken place since modernism. Eagleton (2020) argues that one may talk about a convinced concern that the typical products of the postmodern era are cheerful, fake, and unfriendly, where they respond in contrast to flashy ability, commercial, and asset forms of high modernism by simply joining them. Its behavior through developmental habit impolite presence of reproduction and Eagleton (2020) emphasizes "...its calculated deathlessness undercuts all varieties of metaphysical seriousness. This opens onto a sometimes-harsh pathos and a shaking aesthetic."

The cultural identity of the nation-state characterizes a global mass culture and is dominated by modern means of production. Hall (2014) states that visual and graphic arts, television, cinema, imagery and visualization, mass advertising, and popular culture dominated this period. Western technology, the monopolization of capital, technological production increase, and the concentration of advanced labor, stories, and visual representations have continued to be power sources for mass culture. The center of global mass culture is the West, and its language is English.

Globalization is a phenomenon that affects every aspect of life. With the development of technology in international, economic, and political domains, the world has become a global market. It continues to impact social life and has profound economic effects. When considering the significant impact of globalization on culture, we can say that the changes in art and contemporary art are an integral part of globalization. The innovations in the art world due to globalization make it possible for contemporary art to have a new identity. The globalization of the art world has led to a new form of modern art encompassing multiple cultures and disciplines. Additionally, it is independent of space and time, utilizing technology and transcending time. Art becomes more active through the integration of cultures and develops strong interdisciplinary connections (Güner & Gülaçtı, 2019). The rapid development of new communication technologies, mass media, and social integration makes globalization more effective and faster in its cultural integration. Globalization has transformed the homogeneous nature of modern culture, uniting humanity in a single human history. Art is vital in reshaping modern society to achieve cultural liberation (Artun, 2019). When considering that the era of contemporary art emerged during the period of globalization, we can speak of a global art village where art travels through international fairs and biennials, cultural interaction progresses both at the international and local levels, and new period works and movements can be closely followed.

In the twenty-first century, art and social sciences have coexisted and influenced each other. Art has shifted from "What is beauty?" to "What is art?" Art is not solely about aesthetics; it also engages with political, social, and worldly issues. The question of "What is art?" has become more prominent. The value of art, whether it is a displayed and used object, who and how determines its use, which it should encompass, and under what conditions it continues to be considered art, remains a subject of discussion (Akay, 2005). Contemporary Art is the final step in understanding art's transition from modernity to postmodernity. Contemporary Art primarily emerged as an art genre after 1990. Art galleries are essential in America, the center

of Contemporary Art. This period marks the development of gallery culture in our lives. The growing gallery culture has also expanded the art market. International art fairs, biennials, and other international events have spread worldwide during this period, providing artists with selling platforms. Art fairs are not solely for sales; they enable access to many artists and their works worldwide. With the advent of the postmodern era, painting did not disappear. On the contrary, canvas paintings still constitute a significant portion of the market. Sculpture follows painting, albeit with a smaller share, along with other visual arts. Contemporary Art is not confined to a single style or reality. Collage works can be figurative, abstract, or a combination of both. Contemporary Art is both entertaining and critical.

A Conceptual Approach to Curatorship: Curatorship from the Past to the Postmodern Era

The emergence of the curator as a figure should be evaluated within the historical processes spanning from ancient Roman times to modern periods. It is necessary to examine the etymological origins and historical transformation of the curator, who encompasses managerial and custodial duties in the art history journey. The term "curator" was first used by the Roman Empire. Individuals in various public positions were considered "curators" (caretakers or guardians). Curators were obligated to care for mentally ill family members until they reached the age of twenty-five, as well as children under the age of 18. Curators were also appointed for individuals with incurable diseases, as well as spendthrifts who could not manage and spend their money. It was observed that women were also spendthrifts during this period (Madzowski, 2019). This word is derived from the Latin word "curator," which means "a person who attends to a task," and is derived from the Latin verb "curare," meaning "to take care of, attend to, or treat (Nişanyan, 2017). The old French word "curer/curateur," derived from Latin, carries a mission of healing and restoring the patient's health. The evolution of the curator's role is closely linked to the growth of collecting as a pastime for affluent individuals (George, 2020). The curator's duty was to protect and preserve the object or subject, keeping it in the best possible condition. They served as intermediaries between the system holding the entity and those being managed (Tearle, 2012). While Walter Benjamin (2018) observed that curatorship referred to the individuals responsible for museum collections in modern times, he emphasized that many of these collections were spoils of war, representing the historical narrative written by the victors.

Today's curator is the person who interprets and selects artworks to be displayed in an exhibition. They also have roles as producers, brokers, exhibition planners, and managers.

Additionally, curators are expected to write wall texts, catalog essays, and other supporting materials for the exhibition. They may also be responsible for creating digital content following the latest web and social media trends. In the 21st century, curators are expected to engage with the media and the public and conduct interviews and speeches. Curators can participate in events supported by sponsors, businesspeople, or donors, supporting seminars and educational programs, and collaborating with universities and schools to develop academic programs. As curatorship continues to grow and evolve, curators must adapt to new challenges and opportunities. They are pioneering explorers who explore new aesthetic and cultural worlds while keeping track of history, cultural values, and agendas (Graham & Cook, 2010). A contemporary art curator is a person who manages the production, interpretation, and presentation of art. They also initiate the relationship between the artist, the viewer, and the institution, working to enrich the meaning of art by considering its societal and cultural context. "Keeper" describes the person responsible for artworks, collections, or antiques. In some museums today, the same expression defines a more responsible curatorial position, including research, writing, and special assignments (George, 2020). Although the term "curator" is commonly used to refer to individuals who organize exhibitions in its simplest form today, its etymology and the different roles it has acquired throughout history define a much more comprehensive and equipped person. When organizing collections or exhibitions, the curator's responsibilities encompass selecting, arranging, and presenting objects that meet the audience. It also involves preserving collections, ensuring the longevity of objects, and documenting them for accessibility across generations. The curator is responsible for all these processes and works within museums, galleries, biennials, or independently, determining how collections or individual works will be presented, interpreted, and received within a specific context and theme.

We can observe the rise of curatorial practices with the introduction of museums into our lives. A good example is the opening of museums reflecting modernist ideals for the public domain. For instance, the Louvre Palace, previously used by the aristocracy but transformed into a museum after the French Revolution, heralded a change in the context of art production and exhibition. The beginning of the modern era, extending to the present day, can be attributed to the collecting activities of the Medici family, prominent figures of the 16th century, as a cornerstone of museology. This family, which initiated the era of modern collecting and museums, played a crucial role in selecting and exhibiting artists and artworks (Artun, 2006). Palazzo Medici hosted the Renaissance in the 15th century, and in the 16th century, the family's

collections were moved to the Uffizi Gallery. It is said that the journey of the modern art market began during the Medici era. Vasari, the architect of the Uffizi, also assumed the role of displaying the collection during that period, akin to the role undertaken by contemporary museum curators (Gahtan, 2014). The term "curation" has become widely used nowadays, and the word "curator" is also employed to define the curation of an exhibition, collection, or website. Additionally, it signifies the promotion of community involvement through open work, interaction, and research (American Alliance of Museums, 2022).

The short history of curatorship can be divided into two parts. World War II marked a turning point in the history of curatorial work. In the pre-war period, individuals referred to as museum curators were responsible for organizing and preserving collections. The task of interpreting art and preserving artworks was given to individuals who performed the protective function associated with the etymological roots of the word "curator." In the post-war period, roles such as museum curators and exhibition writers began to be discussed. In the 1960s, we see the term being debated in its current sense. It is a broad field that encompasses discovering new artists and movements, shaping educational institutions, and shaping courses, programs, and symposiums (Madzowski, 2019). In the 18th and 19th centuries, significant collections were added to the cultures of advanced nations worldwide. During this period, the terms museum director, curator, and keeper were used interchangeably, but the term curator was the most commonly used to describe the person responsible for the museum. Curators are recognized for their expertise in the visual arts and aesthetics. This characterization began to take shape in the mid to late 19th century and became more distinct by the mid-20th century. During this period, the role of museums changed. Museums transitioned from places that stored collections to spaces promoting interaction and education. These spaces now serve as where curators and artists can collaborate to create new meanings. At the same time, several figures in the art world emerged and started producing large exhibition projects that went beyond simply showcasing a collection (George, 2020). In the era of new curatorship, connections were established between works. Artists working in similar styles and artistic and historical themes were brought together. Harald Szeemann was a pioneering curator. For the first time in history, a company supported contemporary art. In 1969, a groundbreaking exhibition titled "When Attitudes Become Form" brought together new and diverse relationships based on a central theme. This exhibition criticized curatorial work, focusing more on curatorial concepts and the balance between art, artists, and curators. Szeemann was known for opening the way for independent commercial ventures, alongside working with institutional capital. As curating began to play an

essential role in the art world towards the present day, it expanded beyond organizing exhibitions and involved collaborating with artists in creating new works to provide ideas and guidance. In an evolving and growing global structure, curating has changed exhibition methods and transformed spaces to ensure that art reaches a broader audience. Additionally, it has supported efforts to manage the communication process and make a broader segment of society aware of art. The documentation exhibitions, one of the most significant curatorial images, emerged in Germany in 1955 as one of the largest and most important exhibitions of the time, aiming to revitalize a city devastated by World War II and change the Nazis' attitude towards modern art. One of the exhibition's most influential artists, Daniel Buren, stated that Szeemann had changed his attitude and now believed that the exhibition was the curator's exhibition or that the curator created the exhibition. Szeemann's exhibition included many kitsch elements that proved that art was what the curator defined as art, not what an artist created (Madzowski, 2019). This exhibition established the institutional definition where an exhibition's conceptual and organizational aspects were the responsibility of a single person, setting the framework for curating through Szeemann's success (Madzowski, 2019).

In the post-1990s period, when contemporary art peaked, curatorial practices increased, and their history came to the forefront. Hans Ulrich Obrist, a Swiss curator who is one of the most influential curators in the world today, was responsible for the Serpentine Gallery in London. He organized exhibitions and programs not to historicize artworks but to understand their unknown aspects better. Curators play a vital role in understanding the art and culture of the past and present, whether they interpret them in a traditional or contemporary manner (George, 2020). Hans Ulrich Obrist (2014) states that a curator's role is to fill gaps, bridge between people, institutions, and other communities, and create temporary communities to connect different individuals and practices, fostering interaction among them. Curators of contemporary art today manage all experiential processes of exhibitions, acting as organizers who bring together artists, space, concepts, and the intellectual dimension by planning and implementing them. According to Obrist, the longevity of an artwork lies in what makes it sound (as cited in Sims, 2022). Emphasizing the importance of finding ways to bring art into unexpected places, such as hotel rooms, mountain peaks, trains, and magazines, in a way that delivers the show to people, Obrist suggests the need to involve the audience in art. He indicates that new forms of participation must be found to reach a broader audience. Obrist (2014) states that art becomes art when it comes to the public, mentioning that in the 1930s, the United States developed many programs to bring art to every school, public space, and mural. In the current period, he encourages

experimentation with technologies such as video games that allow artists to bring art to a new audience.

The Emergence and Development of Curatorship in Turkey

In the Ottoman Empire, which closely followed the Renaissance period and subsequent modernist movements, Halil Edhem played a significant role in converting the rare cabinets of the dynasty into modern national museums. Halil Edhem's brother, Osman Hamdi Bey, played a crucial role in a long and complex transformation process. He studied archaeology, established the Sanayi-i Nefise (Fine Arts) School, and became the head of the Imperial Museum (Müze-i Hümayun). Osman Hamdi served as the curator for the Turkish Pavilion at the Vienna Exhibition and founded the Asar-ı Atika Collection. Osman Hamdi was the son of İbrahim Edhem, a painter and bureaucrat who served as the contemporary and progressive minister (nazır) and grand vizier. İbrahim Edhem possessed a modern and advanced perspective. He created the Usul-i Mimari-i Osmani Collection, which combined Ottoman art with a national historical narrative, for the World Exhibition in Vienna (Artun, 2019). The collections of Yıldız Palace and Dolmabahçe Palace also contributed to the museum tradition of the Ottoman Empire. Under the mayorship of Osman Hamdi, Pera was transformed into an art center. Istanbul started hosting exhibitions in the mid-nineteenth century. Private academies, workshops, and galleries were established, making collecting famous. Parisian-style structures were created with passages, stores, and restaurants resembling those in Europe. Notable museums established during this period were Abdullah Bey Mektebi, the Museum of Natural History, and the Anatolian Zoology and Botanical History Museums at Saint Joseph High School, which gained fame in Europe. Halil Edhem made significant contributions to the establishment of the Topkapı Palace, which was later transformed into a museum after the foundation of the Republic. Edhem turned the Museum-i Hümayun into a modern Istanbul Museum, where he exhibited Elvah-i Nakşiye and served as the curator. The copies of European artists' works and the artworks of Turkish artists of the era were displayed together. Edhem aimed to create local history with Elvah-i Nakşiye and formalized his role as a curator by presenting the "Museums Conference" at the First Congress of History in 1932. He referred to the Istanbul Museum as the best museum in Europe (Artun, 2019).

The history of curatorial practice in Turkey developed a century after the art center of the time, Europe. While public art exhibitions began in Europe in the mid-18th century, a Pera-centered art world in Istanbul started with Şeker Ahmet Paşa, a soldier who became an artist, organizing exhibitions in the late 19th century (Graf, 2023). Şeker Ahmet Paşa curated the first artist

exhibitions in 1873 and 1875 (Süzer, 2023). In the early 20th century, the interest in exhibition practices continued to grow, and exhibitions such as Galatasaray Exhibitions in Beyoğlu, Şişli Atölyesi Exhibitions, and Istanbul Painting Sculpture Museum Exhibitions in 1937 were seen as significant exhibition events organized by artists in Turkey. However, there were still not as many exhibitions as compared to the West. By the 1950s, considering the post-World War II world and Turkey's situation, Maya Gallery became the first commercial gallery to open in 1950. Subsequently, Taşkent Gallery in 1964, Gallery Baraz in 1975, and Maçka Art Gallery in 1976 became important exhibition spaces of the time. In the 1980s, art began to embark on a journey of institutionalization. The establishment of galleries such as Uart Gallery in 1981, Gallery BM in 1984, Gallery Nev in the same year, and Mine Gallery in 1985 strengthened the art scene. The art competition titled "Contemporary Artists and Istanbul Exhibitions," initiated in 1980, was organized by the Atatürk Cultural Center and the Istanbul Painting Sculpture Museums Association. Today, Akbank Sanat manages these exhibitions (Graf, 2023). While contributing to the accessibility of art, it also plays a significant role in developing the art market with the mission of nurturing young artists.

In the 1990s, contemporary art began to develop in our country, and during this period, the infrastructure and institutions for contemporary art started to develop gradually. The system supporting art production had not yet fully matured. The works of today's artists in Turkey, encompassing the most creative products presented to the world in the last 20 years, have been admired by their counterparts across the globe" (Tanrıyar, 2021).

Madra gained valuable experience by coordinating the 1st and 2nd Istanbul Biennials in 1987 and 1989, respectively. While witnessing the development of art, she closely followed the art scene in Europe and observed that the Istanbul Biennials marked the beginning of Turkey's international art relations. The two biennials significantly boosted the contemporary art scene in Turkey. Since 1987, Madra has organized over 100 international European exhibitions, curated various exhibitions, and brought many artists to the Venice Biennale (Bildirici, 2010). Madra has been referred to as the general coordinator in both biennials and has not been termed a curator. Although curatorial practices began in Turkey with the Istanbul Biennials, art institutions, and the gradually emerging art market have not yet officially recognized the profession of curating in our country. Even Vasif Kortun, who assumed the curatorial process in the Third Istanbul Biennial, was defined as a director during this period, and the title of curator gained legitimacy for the first time in the fourth biennial organized by René Block (Graf, 2023). In 1990s Turkey, prominent curators included Ali Akay, Başak Şenova, Levent

Çalıkođlu, Necmi Sönmez, Beral Madra, Vasıf Kortun, and Erden Kosova. Institutions such as Akbank Sanat, Milli Reasürans Gallery, and Borusan Sanat Gallery were significant institutional structures for the curators' professional practices during this period (Pehlivan, 2023). Independent curators working outside institutional structures set out to organize exhibitions entirely at their discretion, establishing and using their communication networks, finding sponsors, and having the freedom to create and exhibit within their contexts. In the same period, in the late 1990s, Art Management departments were established at Istanbul Bilgi University, Yeditepe University, Yıldız Technical University, and Culture University, contributing to the training and academic background for art managers and fostering the development of more professionals in the field.

When examining the journey of contemporary art in Turkey, it is observed that the Istanbul Biennials constitute the fundamental tool in developing curatorial practices. Contemporary art reaches much broader audiences, and curatorial roles find a more prominent place, contributing significantly to the recognition and prestige of the profession (Graf, 2023). By the millennium, many non-profit art galleries and museums had opened, providing substantial contributions to the emergence of significant curators. Institutions such as Proje 4L, which transformed into the Elgiz Museum in 2001, Garanti Platform Contemporary Art Center, which opened the same year, Salt in 2010, Siemens Art Gallery in 2004, Depo in 2005, and Plato Sanat in 2010, played crucial roles as essential art institutions in succession. In addition to these, other critical institutional structures, such as Sabancı Museum in 2002, Istanbul Modern in 2004, and Pera Museum a year later, have organized exhibitions under the direction of Turkish curators. Levent Çalıkođlu and Ali Akay worked on exhibition projects at Akbank Sanat for many years, and in recent years, Hasan Bülent Kahraman has taken on this role (Pehlivan, 2023). In the current art market, curatorial practices in Turkey have not yet reached a fully mature level of professionalism. The developing art scene in Turkey is not yet comparable in saturation to the art centers of the United States or Europe, such as France or Germany. Art centers in Turkey are predominantly concentrated in Istanbul.

The Junction of Art and Curatorship and Art Communication

The Junction of Art and Curatorship and its meanings for Art Communication is a varied examination that crosses different platforms within the art world. Art plays a significant role in museums. These roles can be categorized into aesthetic, economic, and mystical. The frame and context in which the artwork is viewed constitute the aesthetic role. Museums also protect and privilege the painting, adding prestige and commercial value. When a museum elevates the

exhibited objects to the status of art, it assumes a mystical role (Artun, 2005). Museums, which have become widespread institutions serving the education and development of society, house art, history, and natural collections from around the world (Şahin, 2021). In addition to documenting and recording collections, museums also conduct research and publishing activities, contributing to individuals' educational and cultural advancement (Karşlı, 2017). Museums simultaneously exhibit different artists' works, contributing to art's uniqueness and originality (Artun, 2005). The formation of the art market includes the tasks and competencies of curators, who bring together different artists under one roof, shape the stages of production, distribution, and consumption, and bring together journalists, galleries, and museums while also being art managers and administrators with an understanding of budgeting, investment, and pricing strategies. Curators can also work with support from public authorities, the institutions they work for, and businesses in the tourism and entertainment sectors (Artun, 2005). According to British architect Price, museums of the twenty-first century achieve transformative change while maintaining their silence by utilizing calculated uncertainty and conscious incompleteness (Obrist, 2014).

Contemporary museums today welcome visitors and encourage active participation, fostering a more transparent understanding. Efforts directed towards developing exhibitions, curating activities related to exhibitions, and implementing various programs are all aimed at engaging the audience. Different communication channels are promoted to bring contemporary museums closer to their audience. While museums are promoted through digital channels, traditional communication methods such as public relations, promotional activities, and multi-channel marketing are also utilized. Adult and children's workshops, curated alongside exhibitions, transform the content of artworks and narratives into products available in museum shops, such as books, pens, toys, decorative items, jewelry, and bags, which can be integrated into daily life. These products interact with the audience through various communication tools. Activity and education programs related to temporary exhibitions in museums have served as communication tools, creating a museum experience by facilitating the transmission of information to the audience (Hooper & Greenhill, 1999). The globalization of art and museology, coupled with the active use of digital channels, has encouraged the contemporary art scene to promote art production. Exhibitions and artworks have been adapted to manage communication more accurately to reach a global audience.

Art galleries are closely related to art history, collecting, and the beginning of exhibition practices. Art galleries are specifically designed spaces for selling, promoting, and exhibiting

artworks. They also serve as cultural intermediaries between the art market and the art world. Art galleries originated simultaneously with museums in Europe. Art galleries are independent organizations that exhibit art for commercial purposes and are not managed by the government or the church (Önsal, 2012). They act as bridges between artists and collectors. They assist artists in promoting their work, receiving criticism, and obtaining financial support. Collectors who purchase artworks from art galleries are individuals who support both the artists and the art. In the 17th century, art galleries were first established in Europe. During this period, the Academie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture (Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture) was founded in France, and official exhibitions known as Salons were organized as part of it. Salon exhibitions are considered prestigious public events that present artworks according to academic rules. Salon exhibitions also had an impact on the development of the art market. Towards the end of the 19th century, with the rise of modern art movements in Europe, the role of art galleries became significant (Ağlargöz & Öztürk, 2015). The center of the art market, especially in Europe during the 20th century, shifted to America, focusing on New York. In America, significant architectural structures were constructed, and the collections of major capital owners began to be exhibited in these spaces (Gün, 2022). Due to the lack of support from official institutions and museums, modern artists began working with private art galleries. They preferred galleries to explore new forms and contents. The formation of art galleries in Turkey can be traced back to the Republican era. During this period, the modernization process accelerated in Turkey, and art was valued as an essential part of modernization. In the Republic's early years, painting and sculpture museums were established with state support, and state painters were sent abroad for training. In the 1930s, the first private galleries started to open in Turkey. Pioneering galleries such as the Maya Art Gallery in Istanbul and the Milar Art Gallery in Ankara became operational during this period. These galleries exhibited Turkish artists' works and introduced foreign artists' works to Turkish audiences. After the 1950s, the number of art galleries increased in Turkey, and the art market began to develop. Helikon Society and Art Lovers Society Galleries in Ankara, Maya, Taksim, Yapı Kredi, Şekerbank, İş Bankası Galleries in Istanbul were established during this period. These galleries contributed to the development of Turkish art and brought artists and collectors together. In the 1980s, with Turkey transitioning to a governance style characterized by liberal policies, private banks opened their art galleries. In the 1980s, the number of art galleries in Turkey increased, and the art market grew and became more vibrant. During this period, galleries such as Maçka, Urart, Mine, Akbank, Garanti, and Borusan were opened in Istanbul (Uslu, 2021). These galleries

provided local and foreign artists with exhibition opportunities and participated in international art events. Today, there are hundreds of art galleries operating in Turkey. Art galleries contribute to promoting and developing Turkish art and serve as cultural intermediaries in the art world. It is possible to view galleries and artists as partners within the scope of produced artworks. Artists enter into agreements with galleries for a specified period under the contract, collaborating on creating, exhibiting, and selling artworks. These agreements aim not to restrict but to protect and develop artists, selecting appropriate platforms to showcase their works, connecting them with the right audience, and standardizing the selling prices of the artworks, thus advocating for their efforts (Gün, 2022). Artists are not always obliged to work with a gallery, and with the advancement of technology, they may choose to exhibit their works on digital platforms. With the development of NFT platforms in the metaverse realms, artists may also choose to participate in these areas. However, these platforms may not offer advantages such as the advisory support provided by galleries to artists or the ability to integrate into a collector relationship network.

When looking at contemporary art productions, it is impossible to categorize artworks within a specific area. These productions operate independently of space and discipline since they do not belong to any particular discipline. According to Stefen Wright, “Contemporary artworks cannot be understood within geographical or symbolic area restrictions” (as cited in Akay, 2019, p. 36). While museums and art galleries are among the primary places where artworks are exhibited, artists and curators are also interested in free spaces to share art in various locations with the audience. Accessible spaces are not affiliated with any private or public institution, and they are also referred to as the art market, where the venues are not explicitly organized for the sale or promotion of artworks.

Biennials, which utilize alternative exhibition spaces and encompass different districts and areas of the city, including its history, become the most extensive international exhibitions. In this sense, the Istanbul Biennial possesses the characteristic of being the biennial with the highest impact in its region. The diversity of curators involved in organizing the biennial, coming from different geographies and experiences, leads to a collective production under the biennial's umbrella, combining original exhibition methods and blending various research and working fields, incorporating many curatorial practices. The importance of biennials in curatorial practices lies in offering consultancy in research, production, and enrichment by bringing together many artists individually or through collective works within the framework of work and research programs (Örer, 2022). Through workshops and seminar series, biennials

simultaneously provide technical and intellectual contributions to the development of viewers, participating artists, and professionals. Due to its international dimension, the biennial preparation teams are extensive. After the curator is determined, the production, publication, designers, translators, editors, and exhibition installation teams become involved in the preparations. On the other hand, the biennial's institutional team includes sponsorship, media relations, marketing, corporate identity work, publications, financial affairs, human resources, archive team, and studio teams that continue to work within the process. All these teams, in line with the institutional identity created by design teams, apply the visual and auditory world they have developed for channels, and, in line with the guides and publications prepared by the business development teams, they set communication activities to support the accessibility of the exhibition to a broad audience. The biennial director puts forward strategies to ensure that all these processes take place in a timely and planned manner, preparing action plans and supporting the teams in case of need (Örer, 2022). The curatorial practices of contemporary art solidify their position in a structure that believes in the transformative power of art and contributes to this transformation with critical thinking.

The curator plays a crucial role in the exhibition of artworks, but their responsibilities are not limited to that alone. They should also have a good understanding of the preparation of museum collections, the economic and regulatory dimensions of the art market, storytelling abilities, managerial skills, expertise in preserving and valuing artworks, restoration, digitalization, catalog creation, high communication skills, and the ability to bring together common ground among different disciplines. They represent a profession that encompasses all these aspects.

Curators, whether working independently or affiliated with an institution, should archive document records, materials, and research related to their exhibitions plan the preparation process comprehensively, including budget items, suppliers, exhibition layout plans, artist interviews, rankings, critical opinions and interviews, press coverage, visitor statistics, feedback obtained from research, documents to be obtained from the bank, insurances, contracts, and so on. After the exhibition's opening, curators should plan interviews, tours, public access, special group events, sponsor events, press interviews, networking activities with other curators and writers, and daily and weekly exhibition visits (George, 2020). Cultural changes are happening rapidly today, and the presence of artists and curators on the international stage continues to evolve. The evolving and changing world of curating provides a rich learning environment for curatorial students. Their learning practices should be enriched, and their development should be supported through practical applications.

A curator should be competent in managing the interaction between the audience and the artist, balancing their needs and shaping the framework of their relationship in a way that sparks curiosity. They should be able to sustain their creativity and communication by staying connected to artists, audiences, and global networks. A curator must acknowledge and embrace the realities of the digital world, understand and respond to the demands and needs of the audience, and facilitate the transformation of museums to be relevant in the present day. Only through such efforts can art and everyday life intertwine more closely. A successful curator should possess organizational skills, be able to think creatively and analytically, follow technological advancements and utilize the latest technologies, have excellent communication skills, and be meticulous and diligent. They should be equipped with technical and social skills, functioning as a critic, manager, preserver, and historian.

DISCUSSION

The entry of the concept of curating into the art environment, along with the journey of art in the world and Turkey, should be examined in conjunction with the influence of artistic, social, and cultural events. The effects of trends emerging with periodical conditions have led artistic circles to engage in new and alternative quests. Thus, the profession of curating has occurred and has changed over time. In a society where culture has become industrialized, the commercialization of artworks has caused artworks to be perceived as commodified and industrial products. This transformation, especially after the emergence of independent curators, has led curators to play an active role in every step, from the understanding of exhibiting art to the selection of artists. In the present day, the curatorial profession has undergone significant changes and transformations, assuming a different role and identity. With the developments that have occurred, a new process has begun, and along with this new process, curating as a profession, curator-artist relationships, and the position of curators in terms of communication have been intensely debated.

This study focuses on curating, which plays a significant role in visual arts. It examines the art phenomenon, the communication dimension of art, the intersection of art and curating, and the artist-curator relationship process from a communication perspective, from the past to the present. In the study, alongside the historical journey, the position, role, and impact of curating in the triangle of art, artist, and society are examined, and present-day curating is determined by exploring how it should be. With this aim, questions arise such as "Is the curator a communication bridge that ensures the encounter of art with the public, a position that enables

access to many artists and artworks, brings institutions and artists together, and guides art and artists in terms of communication, and does the curatorial profession, which is an actor in the art market, ideally, how should it be?" The study aims to reach the most concrete and general answers to these questions.

The study involved conducting ten in-depth interviews with individuals who are permanently or project-based employed within institutions responsible for forming the art market in Turkey and housing market players, well-known and most frequently hosting exhibitions by the public. The interviews were carried out with individuals involved in curating painting exhibitions between the years 2020-2023 at prominent institutions Akbank Sanat, İKSV, İstanbul Modern, Borusan Contemporary, Salt, Pera Museum, and institutions under the Vehbi Koç Foundation, including art galleries and museums Arter and Meşer.

The history of art began seventy thousand years ago in caves, whereas the history of exhibitions and curatorial practices has existed since the mid-18th century. The global inception that shaped the contemporary meaning of curatorial practice dates to the 1960s. However, this process started later in Turkey, formally using the term "curator" in the late 1980s. It was officially recorded during the 4th Istanbul Biennial in 1995, curated by Rene Block. Curators are inevitably in the spotlight, especially in large exhibitions like biennials. Several reasons contribute to this: In group exhibitions, the number of artists can range from tens to hundreds, and these artists are often from different nations involved in the international art market. Curators are responsible for the institutions they are part of, the artists they collaborate with, the public, and media organizations. Therefore, while curators are seen as representatives of exhibitions, it is also possible to view them as representatives of artists and even their institutions. Due to the rapidly changing dynamics of the media, limited human resources, and the need to access information sources to create news quickly, curators are often featured in the press rather than artists.

Curators act as communication tools that unite art and the public, contributing to themes and artist invitations that facilitate access to many artists and their works worldwide. An important example of this is biennials. While the artist communicates with society using her work, the curator's role in filtering, contextualizing, and expressing the purpose of the exhibition influences the communication dimension. Due to their effectiveness and openness to communication, curators may provide more valuable insights than the artist's narration. Especially in group exhibitions where the number of artists is considerable, individual

communication with each artist and obtaining opinions about their works may not be feasible. However, since the curator collaborates with all artists on the content and is familiar with the process and concept, she/he will accurately represent the exhibition more accurately. The scope of curators' work varies depending on the projects they undertake and the institutions they work with. There is no commercial purpose in institutional environments such as museums, while galleries or contemporary art fairs may have sales goals. In biennials, curators' names are prominently displayed because they are selected for the biennial by an advisory board, and the entire concept, conceptual framework, and artist selections take shape after the curator's selection. Curators play a foundational role in biennials, bringing together all the artists, working together throughout the project, and shaping the content and production. A good curator is expected to operate in this way.

Curators' educational backgrounds should not be limited to art history alone. The structure of the cultural codes of the society in which the curator is involved and its political history should be investigated. Therefore, these qualities can be characterized as curiosity and skills rather than formal education. It is believed that this area is better handled by someone with experience and skills rather than something learned from teaching.

The definition of curating bears similarities to its etymological meaning, encompassing notions of protection, preservation of artworks, stewardship, surveillance, and improvement. Although it has evolved, its core meaning remains unchanged, primarily focusing on preserving collections and artworks. Curators play a role in shaping the art market, and the art market in Turkey is still relatively small and lags behind Western civilizations. A curator has the responsibility of both stewardship and being a compelling storyteller. Business knowledge is crucial since the curator is responsible for the entire process. For instance, when borrowing artworks from abroad, the curator manages correspondence, contracts, and customs procedures. Interviewee 5 notes that the role of curating is often oversimplified today, emphasizing the need for individuals pursuing this profession to be well-equipped, hardworking, educated, and experienced, given the vast potential for art development in Turkey.

Curating is a field of resistance, that curatorial practice involves more than just organizing exhibitions or presenting artists' works; it requires an approach contrary to the existing and valid system capable of generating alternatives. In the 1990s, curators emerged to produce the new meaning of art, responding to micro-politics (body, identity, space, identity, etc.). In the 2000s, this situation advanced further as the globalization of art and capital progressed, reuniting with

capital at art fairs. Curating ultimately involves something related to the final product, a way of knowing and a process, a mechanism for producing knowledge. In other words, curators create knowledge with critical readings, repositioning, and reinterpreting until the viewer sees the artwork. The curatorial process, with its changing fundamental propositions over time, involves theory and practice, the curator conceptualizing the artwork, the artist translating that theory into production, and then the curator bringing that artwork into practice. It represents knowledge in the exhibition in terms of time and space.

The curator is a communication tool for bringing art and the public together, and is an ambassador of artwork, who establishes communication with art, artists, works, and society—a bridge that brings them together. The ideal curator concept involves individuals with holistic competencies, versatile perspectives, knowledge, experience, and various skills. However, curators working in independent, institutional, or gallery structures should highlight distinctive competencies that set them apart. It begins with establishing communication with artists and then shapes the entire narrative. The role of curatorial profession includes preparing exhibition texts and catalog texts, collaborating with exhibition designers to determine the arrangement of works, the flow of the visitation plan, the positioning of texts within the works, and designing the overall visitor experience.

The role of a curator has evolved from the responsibility of preserving a collection to shaping something contemporary. The profession is shifting towards creating and shaping existing things rather than merely displaying them, emphasizing the excitement generated by witnessing new productions in international exhibition structures such as documentaries or biennials. Curator is a communication tool that connects art and the public, facilitating access to many artists and their works worldwide and supporting collaborations between institutions and artists.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to discuss the views of Adorno and Benjamin on the culture industry and mechanically reproduced art in the context of the role assumed by curator, a significant figure in the contemporary art scene, by exploring its reflections in Turkey after the milestones worldwide. The definition of the value of an artwork, its presence in each space, and its uniqueness, as discussed in the critique of the culture industry, have been subjects of debate. In the evolving structure of art, the role assumed by the curator is frequently discussed today. Within the topics of the accessibility of art, the reception of artworks, and the democratization

through the pluralistic structure within the global system, the figure of the curator continues to serve as a communication bridge among art, the artist, and society.

Adorno's criticism, suggesting that the culture industry standardizes cultural products, leading to the loss of their originality and uniqueness, implies that curators' choices may contribute to shaping cultural products as tools for marketing and communication in line with demands. Therefore, this situation could harm the artwork's originality, uniqueness, and critical thinking. In this context, the relationship between the concept of the culture industry and curation provides a significant framework for contemplating how art interacts with industrial processes and how cultural products are selected, organized, and exhibited.

The phenomenon of curating gained prominence in the 1980s, during the postmodern and poststructuralist era when art was exhibited in museums, open spaces, and various locations. In the globalized context where we can witness the synthesis of the East and West, developed countries, and third-world countries, the popularity of art increased in the 1990s, and curators gained recognition in this regard, with the expression "curated by" becoming widely used. Within the cultural industry and influenced by globalization, art became industrialized as an object of popular culture, with works and copies spreading worldwide, transforming into a commercialized industry and turning the curator into a popular culture figure. This process of commodifying artists can be criticized. In the 1990s, the number of thematic exhibitions increased, and social events frequently formed the conceptual framework of exhibitions, shaping the intellectual structure.

When evaluating biennials and art fairs, which have paved the way for the formalization of curating within the phenomenon of globalization, these multinationals, sponsored, high-budget structures that enhance the accessibility of art, exhibit a stance in any case. They do not accept the existing as it is and instead present a new proposition. As far as society permits, the societal structure where the relevant art activity is organized remains independent within the political, cultural, and economic conjuncture. Building on the idea that art is a means of communication, it can be argued that the curator, as a communicator, plays an influential role in the reception of art, ensuring that correct messages are conveyed to society with appropriate expressions. When producing commissioned works for effectiveness, the curator simultaneously takes on a guiding role for the artist.

Benjamin (2018) has assessed the new perspectives that technological tools bring to art. He expressed that throughout history, works of art have been reproduced, but with technological

advancements, the reproducibility of artwork through "technical means" has become possible. Based on the development of this structure within the capitalist system, Benjamin (2018) describes the reproducibility of works of art through the possibilities of technology, diversifying and making them accessible to a broad segment of society as a democratic approach. The aura related to the uniqueness and originality of the artwork is considered in conjunction with its historical and cultural context. The exhibition features of the artwork also reach various dimensions.

Adorno (2001) argues that art and philosophy should not be objects of culture but should be able to shape culture. Referring to Stendhal's statement, "Art has promised happiness," Adorno (2022) emphasizes the need for the aesthetic realm to evaluate the success of the artwork, containing contradictions, protesting purely and uncompromisingly, preserving the ability to advocate utopia, and asserting that aesthetics should also be political. In this regard, if a curator successfully creates a conceptual framework that questions and challenges the order, along with the political stance that art will exhibit, and implements the narrative of the curated exhibition accordingly, they will have fulfilled their duty for the communication of art.

In this study, following a historical journey and interviews conducted with curators, the position of curating in the triangle of art, artist, and society has been explained, spanning from gallery exhibitions to biennials and even extending to digital platforms in today's journey of art. The role and impact of curating within the framework of the culture industry and mechanical reproduction concepts have been examined, attempting to outline how contemporary curating should be. The curator is a "communication bridge" facilitating the encounter between art and the public. However, in today's dynamics, the multifaceted competencies required for this role are emphasized, including communication and coordination skills, crisis management, critical thinking, being a good storyteller, and being an influential speaker and communicator. Curators, especially in large exhibitions such as biennials and within the structures of powerful institutions, hold a position that enables access to many artists and artworks. They unite institutions and artists, guide art and artists in communication, and influence the artist's style within the conceptual framework of new work production by exchanging ideas according to their preferences. The idea of the curatorial profession, as an actor in the art market, maybe to adapt to the dynamics of contemporary art while being equipped with an understanding of the historical and cultural concepts of projects it undertakes, being knowledgeable, collaborative, capable of bringing together all stakeholders on a common platform like a slice of a large pie, having strong communication with artists, supporting and interpreting the artist and the work

very well, and being able to construct and convey its communication correctly, versatile, foreseeing, living in the present, able to follow the future, and creative by effectively utilizing technology.

Preprint

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