

The Construction of Space and Audience in Contemporary Public Art Practices:

Three Examples from Istanbul

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TEŞEKKÜRLER

Tez danışmanım Çetin Sarıkartal'la çalışma fırsatını bulmuş olmam büyük bir şans. Öncelikle hayattaki duruşu, bana yaklaşımı ve bu işi birlikte yaptığımızı sürekli hissettirmesi benim için çok önemliydi. Başından sonuna kadar konuya yaklaşımımı şekillendirmekte ve bakış açımı genişletmekteki katkısı için özellikle teşekkür etmek istiyorum. Kendisiyle tanışmış olmak, tartışabilmiş, sorabilmiş, ve daima bir cevaptan fazlasını alabilmiş olmak bu çalışmaya inanmamı ve devam edebilmemi sağlayan en önemli etkenlerden birisi oldu.

Eleştiri ve Kültür Araştırmaları yüksek lisans program koordinatörü, hocam ve tez danışmanım Işıl Baş'a öncelikle yüksek lisans yılları boyunca derslerde ve ders dışında beni teşvik ettiği akademik projeler için teşekkür etmek istiyorum. Ayrıca tez dönemimde ve öncesinde karşılaştığım her türlü sorunu çözmekteki yardımları, önümde kalan kısıtlı zamanda tezimi bitireceğime inancı, ve verdiği cesaret için kendisine çok şey borçluyum.

Çetin Sarıkartal ve Işıl Baş'la birlikte, destekleri, geri bildirimleri ve yönlendirmeleriyle tez savunmalarımı zevkli, zenginleştirici ve yüreklendirici birer deneyime dönüştüren Didar Akar, Ahmet Ersoy ve Kim Fortuny'ye de çok teşekkür ederim.

Ayrıca birileri daha var ki onlar hayatta ve tez yazarak geçirdiğim yaz ayları boyunca boğulmamamı, devam edebilmemi ve yanımda olduklarını hissettirerek gülebilmemi sağladılar.

Annem ve babam her konuda ve daima bana inandılar ve destek verdiler. Ne olursa olsun yanımda olduklarını biliyorum.

Kardeşim her zaman benimleydi. Her anlamda ve her türlü işte yükümü yarı yarıya hafifletti, kardeş payı.

Hayatımın her döneminde iyi ki Anıl vardı. Teze başlayabilmemi de o sağladı, sonra mailler yazdı. Ve öyle bir zamanda geri geldi ki, bitmeyecek sandığım tez bitiverdi.

Engin’le beraber yaşadığımız günler oldu. Hem o yazdı hem ben yazdım. Sıkıcı şeyler de eğlenceli oldu.

Cenk her akşam aramayı hiç aksatmadı, ararsam buralardaydı.

Ogeceoradaolanlardan kimse onları unuttum sanmadı. Orada olduklarını biliyordum. Sokak sokak dolaşmak, köpeği gezdirip kahvede oturmak çok güzeldi.

Yanımda olan herkese teşekkürler.

ABSTRACT

The Construction of Space and Audience in Contemporary Public Art Practices:

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by

Beril Sönmez

Temporary art projects taking place outside conventional art institutions like museums and galleries have become common and popular practices in urban areas especially within the last decade. The selection of a public space to make and display “art” opens a new ground to discuss and reconsider contemporary art practices in various aspects. The main question of the present study is to understand in which extent contemporary public art practices can contribute to overcome the hygienic distinction between the realms of art and everyday life by opening a different level of interactivity where these two separate realms are juxtaposed.

This study argues that public art practices can be considered as suggestions about an overall and multi-dimensional transformation in the field of art. Two main axes based on which the transformatory potential of public art practices can be studied are the construction of space and audience. The construction of space, publicity and audience are critical issues in public art practices since different constructions of these concepts in different projects can result in totally diverse practices. Considering that there are multiple manifestations of public art the present study highlights temporary public art projects in which space is conceived in terms of spatial practices of the agents using that space, interaction with the audience is

emphasized, people living around or passing-by are considered as creators and participants of the project together with the artists. The whole project, in that sense, refers to a process during which space, artwork and participants are mutually constructing each other. Furthermore, this study points out that public art practices have also the potential to suspend social hierarchies by underlining the possibility of different subject positions for each contributor at least during the project period. In other words, public art practices are claimed to have the potential to open an alternative platform of changing positions, new sociabilities, interactivity and play.

Based on this theoretical framework, specific examples selected from Istanbul are studied in detail in terms of the continuities and discontinuities with museum and gallery practices. With reference to space and audience construction of these three public art projects this study exposes in which dimensions they propose to challenge and transform established definitions of the art world, and to what extent they managed to diverge from conventional art practices and offer new alternatives of making and experiencing art.

KISA ÖZET

Çağdaş Kamusal Sanat Pratiklerinde İzleyici ve Mekanın İnşaası:

İstanbul'dan Üç Örnek Proje Üzerine Bir İnceleme

Beril Sönmez

Özellikle son on yılda, müze ve galeri gibi alışılmış sanat kurumlarından çıkıp kent mekanına yayılan geçici çağdaş sanat sergileri/projelerinin giderek yaygınlaşmaya ve popüler hale gelmeye başladığı görülmektedir. Sanat yapmak ve/veya sergilemek üzere müze ve galeri dışı bir kamusal alan tercihi çağdaş sanat pratiklerini farklı açılardan yeniden düşünmek ve tartışmak için yeni bir alan açmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın temel sorusu, kamusal alanda sanat pratikleri yoluyla, sanat ve gündelik hayatı yanyana getirerek bu iki alan arasındaki ayrımı kırmamanın ne kadar ve nasıl mümkün olduğudur.

Bu çalışma, kamusal alandaki sanat pratiklerinin, sanat alanı için bütünlüklü ve çok katmanlı dönüşüm önerileri olarak ele alınabileceği düşüncesi ile yola çıkar. Kamusal alanda gerçekleştirilen sanat pratiklerinin barındırdığı dönüştürücü potansiyel bu sergilerin/projelerin izleyici ve mekan kurguları üzerinden incelenebilir. Mekanın, kamusal alanın ve izleyicinin nasıl kavramsallaştırıldığı çok çeşitli kamusal sanat sergilerinin/projelerinin ortaya çıkmasında belirleyici özelliklerden biridir. Bu çalışma mekanı, mekansal partiklere dayanarak anlayan/tasarlayan, gündelik hayat pratiklerine ve izleyici ile etkileşime vurgu yapan, hatta izleyiciyi ve sanatçıları ortak yaratılan bir projenin katılımcıları olarak kurgulayan dönemsel kamusal sanat pratiklerini öne çıkarmaktadır. Bu projelerde

projenin tamamı mekan, sanat eseri ve katılımcıların birbirlerini sürekli olarak inşaa ettikleri bir süreç olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda kamusal sanat projelerinin var olan sosyal hiyerarşilerin dönemsel olarak askıya alındığı ve katılımcılara alıştıkları özne konumlarının dışına çıkabilme imkanı veren süreçler yaratabileceğini iddia etmektedir. Bir diğer deyişle, kamusal sanat akışkan özne konumları, etkileşim, farklı sosyallikler ve oyunun mümkün olduğu alternatif bir platform ortaya koyma potansiyelini taşımaktadır.

İstanbul'da gerçekleşen üç kamusal sanat projesi yukarıda çizilen çerçevede ele alınmış, müze ve galeri pratikleri ile olan benzerlik ve ayrılıkları üzerinde durulmuştur. Bu projelerin izleyici ve mekan kurguları incelenerek alışılmış sanat pratiklerinden hangi boyutlarıyla farklılaşmayı amaçladıkları, bunu ne ölçüde gerçekleştirdikleri, sanat yapma ve deneyimlemeye dair nasıl alternatifler sundukları ve sanat-gündelik hayat ayrımını ne ölçüde kırabildikleri ortaya konmuştur.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Aim of the Study

In this study I will try to examine the construction of space and audience in contemporary urban public art practices in challenging the mainstream definitions of artist, artwork and audience embodied in conventional art institutions like museums and galleries. It is also investigated whether or not public art practices are capable of suggesting and opening a different level of interactivity where “everyday life” and “art world” juxtaposed. In order to analyze to what extent these potentialities and claims of public art are fulfilled I will focus on three current public art projects in Istanbul: 1) Sanat Akmerkez’de II, 23 November-23 December 2004, Istanbul (Art in Akmerkez II, 23 November-23 December 2004, Istanbul); 2) Art-Alan II: Sıradışı Hayatlar, 03-30 April, 2005, Istanbul (Art-Space: Extreme Lives, 03-30 April, 2005, Istanbul); 3) Oda Projesi (The Room Project), 1997- 2005. I will refer to many examples from different projects by Oda Projesi. However, I prefer to discuss Oda Projesi as a single public art project having a consistent approach to all of the issues raised above.

1.2. Research Question

The underlying question in conducting this research is to understand in which extent contemporary public art practices can contribute to overcome the hygienic distinction between the realms of art and everyday life. To grasp their potential role

in such a transformation public art practices can be studied based on two main axes: the construction of space and audience.

In order to carry out this analysis, it is necessary to operationalize the central concepts included in the essential research question. So, the research question can be divided into more specific key questions: How does public art change the artists' understanding of his/her position towards his/her audience? How does space is conceptualized in different public art practices? How can different conceptualizations of space be the indicator of alternative understandings of art making? Are public art practices more inclusive of audience contribution? Does public art enable its audience to become participants in an "unfinished process/project"? How are subject positions of producer and receiver conceptualized through public art practices? Does public art carry the potential of interactivity through which both the artist and the audience as creators of the same project discover a multiplicity of fluid subject positions in relation to one another? How does the understanding of difference between spaces of art and everyday life transpassed through urban public art projects? Can public art create a temporary field of performances and sociabilities by altering the understanding of art, urban space and everyday life? Each of these key questions will be the analytical tools to be applied on the examples of the three public art practices selected.

1.3. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Modernism implies an understanding of art as an autonomous aesthetic realm that acts as an alternative to everyday life. The idealism of modernist art is that the art object is in and of itself, and the divinely talented artist is completely

differentiated from the lay public. These art objects are to be displayed in museums which are the sacred and crystallized representations of that prestige attributed to artists and artworks. Institutionalized forms of high art like museums and galleries not only have their own public and conventional rituals of contemplating these art works based on some “aesthetic criteria” but also, carry a didactic mission to educate the lay public, to make them learn and appreciate “art.”

After the 1960's many schools of art, artists and art critiques basically focused on the binary oppositions like art and life, high art and low art/pop art, high culture and mass culture. Art practices like minimalism, performance art, fluxus, happenings, land art questioned both the commodification of the artwork and the space-artwork relationship. They brought site-specificity to the foreground by challenging the so-called neutral spaces of museums and galleries. Modernist formalist art tradition is challenged by rejecting a fixed, transhistorical meaning of art. Within the new understanding of the artwork as an “unfinished project,” the emphasis was more on its audience, rather than its creator; in other words, the reception of the artwork in a specific context became the primary concern. Therefore, the artist as the ultimate genius creator, the universal subject as spectator and “the white cube” as the space of a defined performance are deconstructed. The artist, the work of art, its space and the audience started to be considered as mutually transforming each other in the process.

As a result of the proliferation of discourses about site-specificity and the position of the audience, positions of museums and galleries as art spaces are reconsidered and the white cube is conceptually renewed to be interactive. Furthermore, art practices in urban public space are claimed to be the “real” alternatives to the mainstream art practices by carrying in themselves the possibility

to reconstruct the triad of artist, artwork and audience in relation to the specific urban context. Situated in completely different spaces and open to multiple viewpoints, examples of public art can break the rituals performed in museums or galleries. Public art's audience, having different social and cultural backgrounds, perform and react in different ways during their encounter with artworks or performances on the streets, in shopping malls, in squares or cafés. Although it is one of the main aspects of public art practices, there are other important aspects to be considered in order to have a broader understanding of its dynamics.

Although there is an undeniable difference between galleries and streets in terms of audience, it is more important to understand the potential that carries public art in transforming the definitions of making art in general, but specifically, the definitions of the artist, artwork, audience, and space separately and in relation to each other. Many of these issues are discussed within the discipline of art theory and new suggestions and criticisms emerge at least at a discursive level, which makes contemporary art a constantly changing field.

In accordance with those radical transformations in art theory, public practices of contemporary art are getting more and more popular and spread out to big cities all around the world. Museums and galleries as modern projects had once emerged in many different cities creating a “global network of art.” In a similar fashion, public art which was a marginal area just a decade ago, started to be a common practice, incorporating various manifestations, in urban areas. Istanbul as “the culture center of Turkey” has now become one of the nodes of that network of art and culture with its Biennial, various international exhibitions, the brand new Museum of Modern Art in addition to many art practices at national and local levels. Following the same track, contemporary art practices in Istanbul are extending out of

museums and galleries to urban public spaces. It is highly possible to encounter temporary public art exhibitions in different quarters of Istanbul. However, every art practice that takes place at outdoor spaces cannot be defined as “public art” practice constituting an alternative to mainstream art practices. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the concept of public art and discuss this issue on the selected examples from Istanbul in order to grasp what each of them suggests as contemporary public art practices.

This study, while investigating the construction of space and audience of three public art examples from Istanbul, it simultaneously tries to clarify what is public art as a new/alternative way of making art. Public art, as it will be described throughout this study, problematizes the conventional art practices in many different ways. Public art refers to a multi-layered transformation: the transformation of art world conventions, everyday life-art distinction, the conceptualization of space, the understanding of spatial practices, the established definitions of artist and audience, the conceptualization of subject positions and performance. If the definition of the artwork and the position of the artist are not questioned, it will result in the reproduction of the established definitions, roles, and expectations from the artist and audience under the name of public art. In other words, if the expectations of a hygienic space, of a contemplative audience, of a didactic mission remain constant, the probable result will be the duplication of gallery space and a construction of open-air temporary museums in urban public spaces. For the art practices outside galleries/museums to be designated as “alternative public art practices” they should acquire an attitude to redefine the whole process of art making by reconsidering the concept of artwork, space, artist and audience. From this perspective the examples from Istanbul, all of which labeling their projects as public art projects, will be

comparatively analyzed in terms of their position within contemporary art practices, what kind of an alternative they suggest, and how they construct their projects. The construction of space and audience will be the key issues based on which the concept of public art, and selected examples from Istanbul will be examined throughout this study.

1.4. Methodology and Authorship

My own experience of some of the public art practices was my starting point in deciding to study this field. The multidimensional perspective that the field of cultural studies adopts is what this study will require as a basic methodological perspective. Thus, cultural studies' framework allows me to analyze via an interdisciplinary point of view the current public art projects in the specific context of Istanbul in terms of author-destination/creator-receiver dichotomy, art-space-everyday life relationship, the possible sociabilities performed through these practices in the urban everyday life.

This study does not aim to reach a full explanation or understanding of the public art practices in Istanbul. It does neither focus on the artworks themselves specifically which would be the domain of art history. This theoretical study, therefore, concentrates on everyday urban life's juxtaposition with contemporary practices of art for urban public spaces in Istanbul through a detailed examination of the material gathered on especially three of them, combined with related theoretical discussions.

To have a broader picture of the large scale of temporary public art projects in Istanbul I deliberately choose three projects realized in three different public spaces

of Istanbul. They reflect different perspectives of realizing a public art project: their way of conceptualizing the exhibitions, their aim to organize the exhibition, their expectations from the project and the audience, and their choice of public spaces vary significantly. Sanat Akmerkez'de II took place in Akmerkez, one of the biggest shopping malls of Istanbul. It is in Etiler, a district where mostly members of the high socio-economic class live. The artworks were installed within shops (mostly on the windows), in the food court and also on the corridors of the shopping mall. Art-Alan II: Sıradışı Hayatlar is at the Asian side, at Kadıköy which is one of the lively districts of Istanbul, day and night. Specifically, Kadife Street is a popular place for mostly young people where many cafés, bars, and cinemas are situated. The works were installed in the bars, cafés and also on the street. Performances took place on the street as well. Oda Projesi is in Galata, an old neighborhood in the European side of Istanbul. It is a mixed area where people from different ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic status live. Most of the projects take place in a courtyard where common people of Galata live. Oda Projesi has a flat in one of the buildings of that courtyard which is used as a multipurpose place for the projects.

This study's approach necessitated the adoption of different research methods. First of all, an ethnographic study is conducted for Sanat Akmerkez'de II and Art-Alan II. I have personally been at each of the exhibitions for several days during the exhibition period. I made observations and took photographs. I talked with many people having different backgrounds and positions: people visiting the exhibitions, people working or living in those places, people who were there for other purposes like entertainment or shopping. During those short conversations, I did not use voice recording because after a couple of trials I realized that people felt uneasy although I had already explained my aim. Therefore, I sometimes took notes

during the conversations if they let me do so; otherwise I took notes after the conversations. I managed to remember some crucial keywords that they used and I paraphrased the rest of the dialogues. During my observations, I heard people chatting about the works or about the exhibition in general, so I wrote them down as well because I believe, they will complete some missing points in my research. For Oda Projesi I did not follow their projects as observer because the practices of Oda Projesi do not take place in Galata anymore since the last year. Galata is going through a gentrification process and many people were forced to leave their places. Oda Projesi, like their neighbors, was exposed to this process and had to leave their place in that courtyard. Now, they have an office in the Garanti Platform Contemporary Art Center and they prepare new projects for ninth Istanbul Biennial. I will refer to several projects conducted by Oda Projesi since these projects are based on the same understanding of public art; therefore I will consider Oda Projesi as a single public art project model, as they consider themselves. I gathered various visual and written documents to compensate the lack of my personal observations.

In order to understand what the aim of these art practices was, how they define themselves, what the expectations from the projects are, there were two main ways for data collection. First of all, an unstructured and in-depth interview is conducted with one of the coordinators for each project. These interviews are recorded and transcribed. Because it would be very difficult to find each artist of the three projects one by one, it was a better way to meet with the coordinator, have general information and also information about the artists from them. All the coordinators have also participated in the exhibition as well. Secondly, the catalogues of the exhibitions and projects are provided in which there are forewords of the coordinators. Additionally, many articles are gathered about these projects published

in their official websites, in newspapers, and also in journals and magazines.

For Sanat Akmerkez'de II I attended an exhibition tour with Server Demirtaş, who was one of the 80 artists participating in the exhibition and was one of the members of Advisory Council. He was also responsible of the exhibition tours that were done twice during the exhibition period. I attended one of those tours at the 18th of December. We both visited the exhibition and also talked about it for several hours. It was even better than a mere interview because I could also witness the way exhibition is “explained” or “presented” to the audience. Unfortunately, we were only three people except Server Demirtaş – this could give an idea of the interest of the audience to the exhibition – but still I could get various information about some of the artists’ attitudes, the process of installation of the exhibition, Sanat Akmerkez'de I which took place in the previous year, the aim of the this year’s exhibition and related expectations. There was another activity that I attended, a “live painting workshop” by Özdemir Altan, included in the exhibition program, which is supposed to continue throughout the exhibition period and at the 18th of December there was its opening. I took notes about this activity and took photographs during the opening. In addition, in the catalogue, there are forewords by Zeynep Akdilli Oral, the general manager of Akmerkez, Erhan M. Ersöz and Tomur Atagök who are the other members of the Advisory Council. I also used as an additional source, a newspaper article which includes some comments of different artists involved in this project and I also get an idea how this project is presented in media.

For Art-Alan II, apart from my routine visits to the exhibition area, I interviewed Özgül Arslan who was the exhibition coordinator and also participated in the exhibition with her own installations. I will use the descriptions of the exhibition on the official website of Art-Alan II. There are also short texts written by

the artists. I gathered some visual material about the performances in the opening day and also a VCD of the performances done by two Japanese artists, Jun'ichiro Ishii and Chihiro Akutsu. From this visual material, I can get various pictures of the audience and artists' attitudes. I also gathered news and articles in newspapers and magazines about this project. Following the transformation of the space was not very difficult for me because Kadıköy, Kadife Street is one of those places I sometimes visit when I go out. This facilitates the comparison of the place before and during the exhibition.

For Oda Projesi, I interviewed Güneş Savaş, one of the three members of Oda Group. In this interview she provided me with a detailed explanation of many of their projects, their starting point, how the project evolved in the process, and their changing vision of art production. I also got catalogues, maps, postcards that were their project materials given to the participants in different projects. She also gave me a DVD in which I found some parts of their projects. Based on the visual material, I can grasp the attitudes of the participants, artists, and their interaction. Some time before starting this study, I heard about the Oda Group and their special place in Galata and I visited their courtyard where most of the projects are realized. During my visit, there were not any ongoing projects. It turned to be an advantage for me because I had the chance to compare the place with the one that is in the video records and have an idea in what sense the space has been transformed. I have also four articles written on Oda Projesi.

I believe, the combination of my own impressions on my encounters with the artworks in the exhibitions, my observations and interactions with the visitors or the public in general, my familiarity with the exhibition spaces before the projects, the interviews with the coordinators, the textual analysis of the written material about the

projects and the additional visual material on specific instances of the projects will be sufficient to conduct a comparative study of these three contemporary public art practices from a multidimensional perspective.

1.5. Summary of the Chapters

The second chapter is focused on the conventional art institutions' ideology, practice, and suggested performance. The birth of museums as a modern project, and the construction of gallery space as a "white cube" will be examined as the consolidators of the same approach to art. A brief section about fairs and festivals will also be necessary to complete the picture. The investigation of the construction of museum and gallery spaces, fairs and festivals as their alternatives, their respective conceptualization of audiences, and the ideological narratives in which they are embedded are significant issues to understand the position of public art and its claims to challenge this tradition. Then, critical art movements and specific artists are covered to clarify the path to the emergence of public art. Meanwhile, the renewing process in which museums and galleries are involved with changing artistic environment is also mentioned. The concept of public art will be introduced, as an outline of its several dimensions, to provide the basis for an analytical and critical discussion in the following chapters.

The third chapter concentrates firstly on the concept of space. Site-specificity in art, Lefebvrian understanding of social space and de Certeau's focus on practices in the construction of space will be covered. To clarify the use of the term of "public" in public art practices the concept of publicity will be discussed. Questions like "what is public space?" and "who is the public?" will be raised referring

exclusively to the field of public art. The discussions on space and publicity make a detailed study of the concepts of artist and viewer positions and performance indispensable. With reference to “new genre public art” the possibility of shifting the emphasis to a cooperative process and interactivity in art making will be explained. And lastly whether or not public art practices are capable to suggest suspending established identities and social hierarchies will be discussed.

Based on the discussions in chapter two and three a specific analysis of three public art projects from Istanbul becomes possible in the forth chapter. Each example will be worked on by comparing it to conventional art practices in museums and galleries referring to the issues raised in the second chapter. Specifically these three examples will be studied based on their construction of space and audience as the indicators of whether or not they are offering alternative art practices from within people’s everyday lives and based on interactivity. “Are they challenging art world conventions and social hierarchies reproduced in that system?” is a question to be inevitably asked as well.

The last chapter will summarize what public art can suggest in today’s urban public life and art world by underlining the conclusions arrived at different stages of the study. This study’s limitations and its expected contribution to the field of cultural studies will be added. In order to make suggestions for further studies on similar topics the dichotomies and conflicts of the public art practices will be mentioned. What can be the other dimensions of public art to be studied following this study will also be suggested as a final point.

2. FROM MUSEUMS TO PUBLIC ART PRACTICES

Contemporary art practices in urban space at the beginning of the twenty first century encompass the exhibitions in art museums or galleries, a multiplicity of public art practices and fairs and festivals. The coexistence of different art practices is, of course, not specific to this century but it is important to note here that these institutions or practices are in constant transformation depending on the cultural, socio-political and economic conditions of the period. In addition, developments in different art practices have important effects on each other. An attempt to understand contemporary public art practices, therefore, requires referring to museums, galleries and festivals as well. Each of them suggests specific cultural practices, different definitions of work of art and different conceptions of artist and audience positions. Tony Bennett in the introduction to *The Birth of the Museum* uses the term ‘showing and telling’ to describe the way museums, galleries and modern fairs are engaged in the practices of exhibiting artifacts and/or persons to embody and communicate specific cultural meanings and values. The construction of space that these art institutions rely on and the environment of reception that they prepare for the audience are two main ways of communicating cultural values to the public.

They are [...] institutions which, in being open to all-comers, have shown a similar concern to devise ways of regulating the conduct of their visitors, and to do so, ideally, in ways that are both unobtrusive and self-perpetuating. Finally, in their recognition of the fact that their visitors’ experiences are realized via their physical movement through an exhibitionary space, all three

institutions have shared a concern to regulate the performative aspects of their visitors' conduct.¹

Public art's alternative stance to mainstream art practices lies in its proposition of a different understanding of space and a new set of relations between the artist, the audience, and artwork which becomes concrete in the performances. Therefore, the construction of space and performance in and of these art spaces are the key terms for this study to show public art's position in relation to other practices, to point out the continuities and discontinuities among them.

The first chapter of this study is dedicated to understand the art world's conventional institutions like museums and galleries and their respective conceptualization of art practices in different periods. Douglas Crimp's term "art as an institution" refers to "the productive and distributive apparatus and also to ideas about art that prevail at a given time and that determine the reception of works."² The definitions of art and art institutions, the prevailing discourse on which they rely, and the reception of artwork are historically constructed concepts. Power relations that determine the construction of these concepts should be discussed to achieve a broader understanding of the position of a specific art practice within that system.

2.1. Modern Politics of Vision: Public Museums

The idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this

¹ Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 6.

² Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 19.

whole idea belongs to our modernity. The museum and the library are heterotopias that are proper to western culture of the nineteenth century.³

The establishment of public museums in Western Europe in the nineteenth century is an important component of a broader process that is defined as modernization. Like many institutions of the modern bourgeois nation states museums carry in themselves and reproduce the basic premises of enlightenment project and modernization. The concept of “museums as governmental instruments” emerged around the beginning of the nineteenth century, which reveals the reorganization of social space and cultural practices to support new ways of exercising power of that specific period. Michel Foucault underlines this shift from seventeenth century conception of museums and libraries as the expression of an individual choice to the nineteenth century museums and libraries as public spaces.⁴

Tony Bennett in *The Birth of the Museum* uses Foucauldian terms of juridico-discursive and governmental (disciplinary) forms of power as the key terms through which the transition from the private collections to public museums could be understood. In the former “the prince constitutes a transcendental principle which gives to the state and governing a singular and circular function such that all acts are dedicated to the exercise of sovereignty - to the maintenance and extension of the prince's power- as an end itself.”⁵ By contrast, there is no single unifying principle in the latter, but it is characterized by multiplicity of objectives which it pursues. These objectives do not derive from the interests of some unifying central principle but they have their own authorization and rationality. The laws in the juridico-discursive

³ Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” *Diacritics* (Spring 1986): 26.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 22.

model are replaced by a multitude of tactics in governmental power.⁶ “The governmentalization of culture” means the use of culture as a resource to influence and progressively modify the population’s thoughts, feelings and behaviors. The practices of high culture in feudal or monarchical systems were open to public only in certain periods and only for the display of the power of the prince. Museums, in the nineteenth century are detached from their earlier private, restricted and socially exclusive form and become public.

The public art collection also implies a new set of social relations. A visitor to a princely collection might have admired the beauty of individual works, but his relationship to the collection was essentially an extension of his social relationship to the palace and its lord. The princely gallery spoke for and about the prince. The visitor was meant to be impressed by the prince’s virtue, taste, and wealth. [...] In the museum, the wealth of the collection is still a display of national wealth and is still meant to impress. But now the state, as an abstract entity, replaces the king as host. This change defines the visitor. He is no longer the subordinate of a prince or lord. Now, he is addressed as a citizen and therefore a shareholder in the state.⁷

The construction of public museum space and its corresponding narrative create the illusion of a coherent whole. It can be a universal narrative or a national narrative. A broad range of different museum types emerged depending on different specialization fields. Since the nineteenth century is the century of “scientific knowledge and specialization of disciplines” each new discipline established its own museum with its own narrative. As Tony Bennett states museums are “sites for the development and circulation of new disciplines (history, biology, art history, anthropology) and their discursive formations (the past, evolution, aesthetics, man).”⁸

⁶ Ibid., 22-23.

⁷ Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach quoted in Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 38.

⁸ Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 59.

The universal story of mankind, from the “primitive” to “modern and civilized”, a linear path of progress, is reproduced in each of these narratives. The construction of space, the display of the objects in the museum space, reflects this path of evolution which is supposed to be followed by the public. In the case of national museums, the construction of the recent past is important in preserving the emergence of the nation-state. This is often part of the modern project of “nationing” the population. Bennett, at this point, mentions that most of the time the universal histories are annexed to national histories in order to relate the national history to the universal story of civilization’s development.⁹ Douglas Crimp also focuses on the primary function of the spatial ordering of the objects in the museum with a corresponding fiction. Without the fiction “there is nothing left of the museum but a ‘bric-a-brac’, a heap of meaningless and valueless fragments of objects.”¹⁰

The ordering of the objects, the classificatory system in the museum space is deliberately designed as “rational and scientific” in order to increase its capacity to educate the audience. The didactic mission assigned to public museums aims to construct a “civilized population of citizens” from the populace of the empire. Carol Duncan in *Civilizing Rituals: Inside the Public Art Museums* focuses on the audience’s performance through which this didactic mission is enacted. Since the museums appear as environments structured around specific scenarios, Duncan sees the totality of the museum as a stage setting that prompts visitors to perform in different ways, depending on the narrative/scenario constructed through the organization of space in the museum.¹¹ Duncan refers to museums as the realm of the production of secular knowledge, replacing the position of churches of the traditional social orders. To control the production of knowledge means to control the highest

⁹ Ibid., 76-77.

¹⁰ Crimp, *On the Museum’s Ruins*, 53.

¹¹ Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 1-2.

values and truths that the community will rely on. Performing the modern museum for the visitor, in fact, is the experience of being “modern”. The process of learning the “dos” and “don’ts” of ritual activity and comportment in art museums is an important part of being “civilized”: “Like most ritual space, museum space is carefully marked off and culturally designated as reserved for a special quality of attention – in this case, for contemplation and learning.”¹² In other words, for Duncan, the beneficial outcome that museum rituals are supposed to produce is the sense of enlightenment, or a feeling of having been spiritually nourished or restored.¹³

One of the results of museums’ becoming public is the creation of a self-regulating public. Although one of the aims is to “lift” the cultural level of the population, the broader end fulfilled by the public museums is their achievement in constructing the “man” both as the object of the sciences that are made visible in the museums and also the subject of the knowledge that is available in the museums.¹⁴ Unlike the nineteenth century punishment system in which the punishment execution is removed from the public gaze to be enacted behind the walls, the exhibitionary institutions transferred the objects and bodies from the enclosed and private domains in which they were previously displayed to a restricted public into progressively more open public arenas. Museum becomes a place both to see and be seen, to know and be known:

Ideally, [museums] sought also to allow people to know and thence, to regulate themselves; to become, in seeing themselves from the side of power, both the subjects and the objects of knowledge, knowing power and what power knows, and knowing themselves as (ideally) known by the power,

¹² Ibid., 10.

¹³ Ibid., 13.

¹⁴ Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 7.

interiorizing its gaze as a principle of self-surveillance and, hence, self-regulation.¹⁵

The category of modern public museums includes art museums which share the basic functions assigned to public museums from the nineteenth century onwards as collecting, preserving, studying, interpreting, exhibiting, instructing, and creating a public watching over itself. Specifically focusing on the art museums reveals the monolithic myth of modernism and high art that is codified in their construction. The concept of high art is mostly related to the creation of a distinct realm of art, alienated from everyday social realities. The academy, artist's studio, and the art museum are remote from public's daily life. Only museum goers have access to the works of art. Douglas Crimp, referring to Hegel's idealism and his contributions to the construction of art museums in Prussia, quotes from Hegel who stated "Art invites us to intellectual consideration, and that not for the purpose of creating art again, but for knowing philosophically what art is."¹⁶

Douglas Crimp proposes to see art's seclusion in the museums with reference to the modern epistemology of art. Art is made to appear, in the museum buildings, as autonomous, alienated, something apart, referring only to its own history and dynamics.¹⁷ Carol Duncan supports Crimp by saying that:

The question of displaying art objects for special settings for contemplation emerged as part of a new and, historically speaking, relatively modern way of thinking ... If art objects are most properly used when contemplated as art, then museum is the most proper setting for them, since it makes them useless for any other purpose.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid., 63.

¹⁶ G. W. F. Hegel quoted in Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, 302.

¹⁷ Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, 13.

¹⁸ Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*, 14.

According to the modernist view, art object carries inherent aesthetic value in itself. Therefore, wherever it is displayed, its fixed and transhistorical meaning could be and should be reached by the audience.

The role of the art museum in determining the production and reception of art in modern culture is to construct a coherent universal knowledge of art history and provide the audience with the necessary information to recognize both the masterpieces and their artists. Artist becomes the creator, endowed with a special talent which distinguishes him or her from the lay public. Therefore, authenticity and originality are the myths that art museums rely on. In the age of mechanical reproduction, in which the copies of masterpieces are seen and even owned by everybody anytime, the museums are the places where the obsession of seeing the original is satisfied: “The museum has no truck with fakes or copies or reproductions. The presence of the artist in the work must be detectable; that is how the museum knows it has something authentic.”¹⁹ It is possible to see the original artwork in the museum but in such an isolated space that the object loses both its link to the material conditions of its own epoch and of those of today.²⁰

The museological devices that are used to highlight the artwork in the museum space have important contributions to the elevation of the status of the artwork in the spectator’s eye. “Contained within its gold frame, illuminated in its own special glow by a small picture lamp, provided with a discrete wall label, protected by a velvet rope,”²¹ the artwork becomes isolated, safe, and untouchable. The devices, enhancing the artwork’s “aura”, make the object more distant than it physically is from the viewer.

¹⁹ Crimp, *On the Museum’s Ruins*, 111-112.

²⁰ The sense of time created in the museum can be expressed as an eternal, suspended present. Museums due to their creation of that sense of present, appropriate the artworks in that constructed space.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 247-248.

The binary opposition between an ordinary object and the artwork and lay public and the artist, low and high forms of art, popular and high culture becomes concrete in and through the museum space. These binary oppositions are not inherent in the practice of art. But on the contrary, the understanding of art, constructed through discourse in art history or art criticism, and in art institutions like museums and galleries defines and reproduces the field of art as a separate realm. Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock state that “Art history views the art of the past from certain perspectives and organizes art into categories and classifications based on a stratified system of values, which leads to a hierarchy of artforms.”²² They claim that by the mid nineteenth century, with an economic and social system dictating new definitions of the artist and artwork, the division of “high art” and low art became clear. If the art history makes this division by creating categories, museums and galleries repeat it by their construction of space corresponding to art historical narrative. The performative environment of museum and gallery spaces creates, reproduces and circulates the portrait of the prototype of modern civilized subject or citizen to a wider social body.

2.2. The White Cube: Gallery Space

The history of modernism is intimately framed by that [gallery] space; or rather the history of modern art can be correlated with changes in that space and in the way we see it. ... An image comes to mind of a white, ideal space that, more than any single picture, may be the archetypal image of twentieth century art.²³

²² Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, “Crafty Women and the Hierarchy of the Arts,” in *Aesthetics: The Big Questions*, ed. Carolyn Korsmeyer (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 44.

²³ Brian O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999), 14.

The terms art gallery and art museum are often used interchangeably although the term museum most of time reminds the display of artworks in historical buildings whereas the gallery is white and empty. Especially the museums of modern art in the last decades have an architectural structure closer to galleries. The reason behind using these terms interchangeably relies less in their physical characteristics than the ideology behind that. This section aims to point out their similarities as well as their differences. Carol Duncan in *Civilizing Rituals: Inside the Public Art Museums* states that with the term museum she refers to both of them. Tony Bennett also mentions that museums and galleries are parts of the same exhibitionary complex: “Playing a pivotal role in the formation of modern state, they are important elements of the set of educative and civilizing agencies.”²⁴

Michel Foucault’s definition of the museum as “a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages”²⁵ is shared by Brian O’Doherty who defines the gallery as a place untouched by time and its vicissitudes:

The outside world must not come in, so windows are usually sealed off. Walls are painted white. The ceiling becomes the source of light. The wooden floor is polished so that you click along clinically, or carpeted so that you pad soundlessly, resting the feet while the eyes have at the wall. The art is free, as the saying used to go, to take on its own life.²⁶

Gallery space is constructed as totally separate from the life praxis and this distance is kept with the rules that the viewer obeys, at least learns. This is what is called the “hygienic” distinction between art and life based on the transcendental conception of aesthetics. Nothing from the daily life going on outside the walls can

²⁴ Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 66.

²⁵ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces”: 26.

²⁶ O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, 15.

come in. Daily practices like eating, drinking, laughing, singing, dancing, even speaking in a normal voice are not performed in a gallery. The two basic characteristics of the gallery space are its being devoid of time flow and spatial change. This creates the feeling of entering a different world for a short time. This sense of being in an unusual place is supported by the above-mentioned rules. By referring to an “unchanging space” I do not mean the physical characteristics but the construction of space remaining intact. Likewise Duncan explains that:

Although fashions in wall colors, ceiling heights, lighting have over the years varied with changing museological trends, installation design has consistently and increasingly sought to isolate objects for the concentrated gaze of aesthetic adept and to suppress as irrelevant other meanings of the objects might have.²⁷

This aesthetic value is independent from the viewer’s contribution. Not only the viewer cannot perform like in daily life but is taught that she cannot give any other meaning to these “special” works of art than they inherently possess. Once the work of art is displayed in a gallery it acquires the label of “good art” immediately. Even, any object, hung isolated on a wall and looked through the aesthetisizing lens of gallery space can be perceived as a work of art. Brian O’Doherty sees it as “modernism’s transposition of perception from life to formal values.”²⁸

The power of the art object is magnified with the territory it is given in the gallery space. The term territory is deliberately chosen by O’Doherty to emphasize that works of art cannot have a place, in the sense of site specificity, in a placeless

²⁷ Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, 17.

²⁸ O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, 15.

gallery space.²⁹ But they have more and more emptier spaces around them in the galleries. Similarly Duncan states that:

The wish for ever closer encounters with art have gradually made galleries more intimate, increased the amount of empty wall space between works, brought works nearer to eye level, and caused each work to be lit individually. Most art museums today keep their galleries uncluttered and, as much as possible; dispense educational information in anterooms or special kiosks at a tasteful remove from the art itself. Clearly, the more “aesthetic” the installations – the fewer the objects and the emptier the surrounding walls- the more sacralized the museum space is.³⁰

The white walls on which the paintings are hung or the sculptures are surrounded by are considered to be “empty” as if the artworks were in a void. However, the wall participates to the production of “neutrality” in the gallery space.

The claim to be a “neutral” space has many implications. This apparent neutrality of gallery space frames the artwork with several qualities. Being neutral not only means suspension of time and pushing the audience to a certain distance from itself but also making the artwork apolitical. The artwork loses its contact both with the period it is created in and also with the current daily life of the public. The audience has a limited communication with the artwork in such a space. Robert Smithson, an artist working in the area of land art, states that:

A work of art when placed in a gallery loses its charge, and becomes a portable object or surface disengaged from the outside world. A vacant white room with lights is still a submission to the neutral. Works of art seen in such spaces seem to be going through a kind of aesthetic convalescence. They are looked upon as so many inanimate invalids, waiting for critics to pronounce them curable or incurable. The function of the warden-curator is to separate art from the rest of society. Next comes integration. Once the work of art is totally neutralized, ineffective, abstracted, safe, and politically lobotomized it

²⁹ I do not refer to the works that deliberately challenge the “placelessness” of the gallery.

³⁰ Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, 17.

is ready to be consumed by society. All is reduced to visual fodder and transportable merchandise. Innovations are allowed only if they support this kind of confinement.³¹

Twentieth century art is marked by capitalist power relations and consumer culture. What Smithson emphasizes is the submission of art practices to capitalist order and their transformation into merchandise. Even the innovations that are made in this field remains within the well-developed boundaries of the modern bourgeois art system. Galleries are institutions that guarantee that hegemony in the cultural sphere. Lucy R. Lippard argues that not only artworks but their artists are also commoditized. The buyers of the artworks according to Lippard are not the real collectors.

The present gallery-money-power structure is so strong that it is going to be very difficult to find a viable alternative to it. The artists who are trying to do non-object art are introducing a drastic solution to the problem of artists being bought and sold so easily, along with their art. [...] The people who buy a work of art they cannot hang up or have in their garden are less interested in possession. They are patrons rather than collectors.³²

This embeddedness of the art galleries within the capitalist system is where they differ from art museums. According to Lippard, museums remain acquisitive than being commercial. However, it is necessary to acknowledge the increasing trend in the last decades when museums are becoming more and more commercial³³. Brian O'Doherty's definition of gallery space summarizes its main characteristics as mentioned above:

³¹ Robert Smithson, "Cultural Confinement," in *Art in Theory*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 970.

³² Lucy R. Lippard, "Postface", in *Art in Theory*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 920.

³³ I will elaborate this point, that is the transition that museums are going through, in the following sections.

Aesthetics are turned into a kind of social elitism – the gallery space is exclusive. Isolated in plots of space, what is on display looks a bit like valuable scarce goods, jewelry, or silver; aesthetics are turned into commerce – the gallery space is expensive. What it contains is, without initiation, well-nigh incomprehensible – art is difficult. Exclusive audience, rare objects difficult to comprehend – here we have a social, financial and intellectual snobbery which models (and its worst parodies) our system of limited production, our modes of assigning value, our social habits as large. Never was a space, designed to accommodate the prejudices and enhance the self image of the upper middle classes, so effectively codified.³⁴

Gallery space's cultural and ideological baggage has been decoded throughout the twentieth century and challenged both by artists themselves through their artistic practices and by art critics and theoreticians. It has been demonstrated that art's neutrality is an illusion and it stands for the reproduction of the ideology of a defined community. Through the configuration of space and the order established for a designed performance this ideology is diffused to the public.

2.3. Who is the Spectator Subject?

Museums and galleries have been defined as microcosmic reconstructions of the dominant modern bourgeois ideology. Looking at art constitutes just a small part of their functions. The analysis of the target population of these conventional art institutions reveals in more detail the politics of museum and gallery constructions during the last two centuries. The audience should be studied in relation to the other components of the art system. Art world is a network of relations including producers, supporters, consumers, institutions like museums, galleries and art

³⁴ O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, 76.

academies, art critics and art journals. The category of consumers, that is the audience, gained importance only during the last decades in which, the reception of cultural products has become primary. To focus on the conventional art institutions' definition and production of audience will first, complete the previous discussion of museum and gallery spaces and second, provide the opportunity to compare it later with the contemporary public art practices' construction of audience.

During the period in which the private collections of the king were becoming public certain rules and proscriptions governing attendance at museums disclose the dichotomy between the claims of this newly emerging public institution and the practices. The museum's openness to a newly defined, undifferentiated public had been a "democratizing" act, at least in principle. The museum space is constructed through a discursive configuration of mixing together the publics, elite and popular, which were previously separated in relation to their attendance to cultural activities. The claim was to address to a new public of free and formal equals. However, in practice the museum space is "hijacked by all sorts of particular social ideologies: it was sexist in the gendered patterns of its exclusion, racist in its assignation of the aboriginal populations of the conquered territories to the lowest rungs of the human evolution, and bourgeois in the respect that it was clearly to bourgeois rhetoric of progress."³⁵ The concept of progress here does not only refer to the universal human evolution but also to the progress that lower classes will make by imitating upper classes' so-called "civilized" habits.

Bennett, in order to exemplify how the museums function in differentiating populations refers to the early periods of museum establishment in Western Europe. First of all the conception of public, then, was a limited one: even though during

³⁵ Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 97.

public days unrestricted access was supposedly given, some people from the streets were not allowed into the museums. Even when open door policies became more recognized, there were different days for different classes of visitors regulated by varying prices of admission. The policy to lower the admission prices aimed to encourage working class attendance. From the instructions in the booklets, it was obvious that the aim was to teach working classes how to present themselves in the museum space.³⁶ The museum seemed to be formally free and open. However mainly the low socio-economic classes were chosen as objects for reform. Museums were offering a “space of supervised conformity” through which working class acquired and internalized new forms of behavior.³⁷

The critical question was and is raised about how the same institution can be both high/elite and didactic. It is possible to argue that, with reference to Hopper-Greenhill’s arguments, the public museum was shaped into being as an apparatus with two deeply contradictory functions: it is an elite temple of the arts and a utilitarian instrument for democratic education.³⁸ Museum is the embodied versions of the cultural myth of universal and high art. At the same time, with its policy of creating free, equal and modern citizens it pulls a whole population inside the museum space. Then, through several strategies it recreates the distinction between high and popular culture, those who “understand” the artworks and those who do not. The new group of people that are allowed to get in, that is the lower classes, should learn to appreciate the value that each piece carries, to be fascinated by the talent of the artist, art history apart from the behaviors appropriate inside the museum or gallery space. This expectation of a passive position from the audience before works

³⁶ Ibid., 70-72.

³⁷ Bennett also mentions how successful this project was. “The consequence, viewed in the light of related developments over the same period, was that different classes became less visibly distinct from one another.” Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 169.

³⁸ Eileen Hopper-Greenhill quoted in Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 89.

of art derives from the definition of art as autonomous, high and distant from the lay public.

There are many important grand-scale studies conducted about museum and gallery attendances. They are based on several criteria but mostly the critical dimension has been socio-economic class that museum-goers belong to. Their income levels, types of occupation, education level have all been investigated. Martha Rosler, for example, has analyzed the distinction traditionally drawn between the onlookers and those who “understand” and “own” the artworks. The vast majority of the traditional working class people are included in the onlookers who know of high culture mostly through rumor and report. They are either taught in school or they may have retained a churchly feeling about art. Museums reproduce the capitalist social order and its maintenance of the naturalness of class distinctions by discriminating lower class people. Mass audiences know that there is a restricted body of knowledge that must be used to interpret the codes of art at the same time that they recognize their outsider status.³⁹

One of the most extended studies conducted about audience attitudes is Pierre Bourdieu’s studies about the relations of class and culture or class and taste. He conceptualizes two different aesthetic dispositions: the popular and the bourgeois. Bourdieu devised systematic surveys to understand the dynamics that result in different cultural needs for different groups within a society. Surveys showed that all cultural practices (museum visits, concert-going, reading etc.), and preferences in literature, painting or music, are closely linked first to educational level and secondarily to social origin. Bourdieu draws our attention to the relationship between the capacity to see and knowledge.

³⁹ Martha Rosler, “Lookers, Buyers, Dealers, and Makers: Thoughts on Audience,” in *Art After Modernism*, eds. Brian Wallis and Marcia Tucker (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art Press, 1999), 313-321.

A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is the code, into which it is encoded... [Therefore, the encounter with a work of art] presupposes an act of cognition, a decoding operation, which implies the implementation of a cognitive acquirement, a cultural code.⁴⁰

The pure gaze, having the eye, understanding the work all refer to the historical construction of an autonomous field of artistic production which includes an understanding of a work of art in and of itself. Bourdieu uses the distinction between the production of art that imitates nature and the one that contains reference to its own history. The aesthetic disposition that the latter requires is “inseparable from a specific cultural competence.”⁴¹ This mastery does not merely come from the education but also from a contact with works of art. Most of the lower class members are distant from both of these. Based on their statistical studies carried out for their book *The Love of Art*, Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel claim that there is a huge difference in museum attendance between people who got primary education or less and those who received secondary education or post-secondary education. They also argue that there is a significant difference between working classes and middle classes or upper classes in terms of the relationship between occupation and museum attendance.⁴² Since activities of high culture are positioned as the “real” culture of civilized people the lower classes feel intimidated and inferior while others experience cultural ownership and belonging. Through the practices of museums and galleries, discursive categories created by art history and art theory, the means by which these are circulated, commonsense knowledge about the available art training

⁴⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, “From *Distinction*,” in *Aesthetics: The Big Questions*, ed. Korsmeyer, 151.

⁴¹ Ibid., 152.

⁴² Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, *The Love of Art* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 152-153.

and educational institutions even those who had never been in a museum or gallery are led to feel ignorant in the field of art.

Tony Bennett, admits that museums served as an institution to improve lower class people to a “higher level” of education, behavior and living. It had a homogenizing vision in its construction. But at the same time, considering Bourdieu’s studies which reveal that museums and galleries are attended mostly by upper class and educated people it can be said that the ruling elites had appropriated the galleries as key symbolic sites through which they differentiate themselves from the masses. It also operated as a discriminatory institution as well. Bennett concludes that:

Museum is neither simply a homogenizing nor simply a differentiating institution: its social functioning, rather is defined by the contradictory pulls between these two tendencies. Yet, however imperfectly it may have been realized in practice, the conception of the museum as an institution in which the working classes might be exposed to the improving influence of the middle classes was crucial to its construction as a new kind of social space.⁴³

Both museums and art galleries, simultaneously homogenizing and discriminatory, are where “ideal” pieces of art, in an “ideal” space are displayed to the contemplation of an “ideal” viewer. The audience is not only people who are out there seeing the work but also those whom you want to address with a work of art.⁴⁴ The ideal viewer of the modern art institutions has “no face, is mostly a back. It stoops and peers, is slightly clumsy. Its attitude is inquiring, its puzzlement discreet. He – I am sure it is more male than female – arrived with modernism, with the

⁴³ Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 28.

⁴⁴ Rosler, “Lookers, Buyers, Dealers, and Makers: Thoughts on Audience,” in *Art After Modernism*, eds. Wallis and Tucker, 323.

disappearance of perspective... [H]e is not you or me. Always on call.”⁴⁵ In art criticism, this description of the viewer as an anonymous being in the gallery is strengthened discursively in sentences like “the viewer feels...”, “the observer notices...” or “the effect on the spectator is...” According to Brian O’Doherty “the presence before an artwork means that we absent ourselves in favor of the Eye and the Spectator”. By the Eye he means the disembodied faculty that relates exclusively to formal visual means. The Spectator is the attenuated and bleached-out life of the self from which the Eye goes forth.⁴⁶ Here, he emphasizes the “life-erasing transcendental” characteristic of the white cube. The Spectator does not carry his or her social and cultural background; the universal modern, civilized, bourgeois subject is depicted through the white cube.

This description of the ideal spectator does not totally match with what is happening in practice. Like many other modern projects which failed to create homogenous societies from equal, undifferentiated, civilized individuals, museums and galleries’ attempts to create an ideal, unified Spectator experience also fails. There is a multiplicity of experiences of diverse people in their museum and gallery visits. Although the construction of space of the museums and galleries are prepared to detach people from all that are related to their everyday lives, people enter the gallery space and interpret the space based on their previous experiences, cultural backgrounds, beliefs, values and perceptual skills gained through membership in different communities. Therefore, on the one hand it has to be acknowledged that museums and galleries are institutions through which people’s identities are shaped in their encounters with artworks, rules and regulations, booklets, other spectators and also through the construction of physical space and the preferred performances.

⁴⁵ O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, 39.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 9.

It is also true that these spaces are constructed differently from everyday life spaces, the objects inside are assigned higher values compared to ordinary objects, so the audience is exposed to the so-called progressive, didactic, regulative effects of museums and galleries. But on the other hand, first, identities are not all-encompassing, stable, unchanging constructions but they are constantly changing in different social settings in different instances and second, the audience is not a passive receiver who can be entirely manipulated to be the ideal citizen that is aimed to be created. If an in-depth study based on audience responses in museums and galleries is conducted, it can reveal how the museum-goers react, respond, accept or challenge the construction of ideal spectator, and how they reconstruct themselves through their unique experiences of these spaces.

Another important point is the art galleries' being commercial spaces, and their respective expectation of audience. Art galleries embedded in hegemonic capitalist order, rely more on a consumer audience. Very rich collectors have vital importance for art galleries. There is a network based on cash flow among the gallery directors, curators, artists and collectors. There are also many people below the high bourgeoisie who buy artworks for decoration, entertainment and status. They constitute an important part of the art market. The non-buying audience, on the other hand, has a negligible effect on what kind of contemporary art gets supported and produced.^{47 48} These people are just "visiting" what is exhibited. The paradigm of the gallery, as mentioned before, is one in which the works are made with no relation to their future audience and space is accordingly designed. Martha Rosler underlining the commercial value of the gallery sees an invisible motto above the gallery door

⁴⁷ Rosler, "Lookers, Buyers, Dealers, and Makers: Thoughts on Audience," in *Art After Modernism*, eds. Wallis and Tucker, 318-319.

⁴⁸ One example of the non-buying audience's effects can be the money they spend in museum and gallery shops.

“Abandon worldly concerns (except if you are buying), ye who enter here.”⁴⁹ Inside the white cube, where the artwork is isolated and the outside world is not allowed to come in, the extraordinary value given to the artwork contributes to its becoming commercial since owning this high masterpiece determines the status of the individual in the society. Douglas Crimp reminds Walter Benjamin’s term of “the disintegration of culture into commodities” to discuss the institutional “overvaluation” of art created by the “idealist conception of art, the classificatory systems imposed on it, the construction of a cultural history to contain it” secured by conventional art institutions.⁵⁰ The conception of the audience as various categories of buyers is indispensable in these modern bourgeois art institutions.

2.4. Fairs and Festivals

Opposite these heterotopias that are linked to the accumulation of time, there are those linked, on the contrary, to time in its most fleeting, transitory, precarious aspect, to time in the mode of the festival. These heterotopias are not oriented toward the eternal, they are rather absolutely temporal. Such, for example, are the fairgrounds, these marvelous empty sites on the outskirts of the cities that teem one or twice a year with stands, displays, heteroclite objects, wrestlers, snakewomen, fortune-tellers, and so forth.⁵¹

Museums and galleries in their space construction and strategies of subjectification of the public prove their embeddedness in the dominant social order. Fairs and festivals are pointed out as the alternatives to these institutions. Rooted in the Middle Ages, fairs and festivals have been transformed in time; therefore have changing roles in changing social orders. In this study only a partial picture of the

⁴⁹ Ibid., 323.

⁵⁰ Crimp, *On the Museum’s Ruins*, 212.

⁵¹ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces”: 26.

fairs and festivals can be given. The critical role of them for this study derives from their ambiguous position between museums, galleries and public art practices. Foucault locates museums and fairgrounds in two opposite poles in their time and space construction. The absoluteness of the museums comes from their being a temple of accumulating time without being touched by it. The festivals, on the other hand, are like a moment in time, impossible to perpetuate. While museums, according to Foucault, are built in the city, presenting and representing the hegemonic order, fairgrounds are mostly in places far away from the city center. Museums and festivals can be understood as the concretized forms of binary oppositions like center-periphery or order-chaos.

This kind of analysis, that is, a one to one correspondence between museum and order and festival and chaos can only be a starting point which needs to be elaborated. A diachronic perspective reveals that fairs and festivals, their construction of space, what they meant for the public altered much in time. Until the nineteenth century fairs and festivals were emblems for the disorderly forms of conduct associated with all sites of popular assembly. The tendency to regulate the public, according to Tony Bennett, first gave rise to a new public space, the fixed-site amusement park, which carries the opposing values that Foucault attributes to museums and fairs. Through pacifying the public's conduct, amusement parks acquired the position between museums and fairs which were antithetical to one another in terms of time and space conception.⁵²

To elucidate the transformation of the fair into a sphere of regulation Bennett refers again to the process of modernization. During and after the French Revolution many festivals took place in spaces like amphitheatres which provided a scopic

⁵² Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 3-5.

reciprocity to the public. Modern festivals are intended to serve as an instrument of civic self-consciousness to become a ‘citizen’ in a ‘democratic’ environment. Traditional riotous assemblies like fairs and festivals were associated with carnivalesque⁵³ inversion and marked by spontaneity, misrule and chaos whereas modern festivals rely more on an overdetermined context and civic function.

Yet, by the end of the century, fairs were to be actively promoted as an aid rather than a threat to public order. This was partly because the mechanization of fairs meant that their entertainments were increasingly brought into line with the values of industrial civilization, a testimony to the virtues of progress.⁵⁴

Festivals, and fairgrounds, once “tolerated” by the modern social order, turn out to be safe spaces and fair going an ordinary activity of leisure time.

The claim about the appropriation of festivals by the modern disciplinary order is partially shared by many theoreticians but it is also relevant to mention the socially and politically generative aspects of the festivals. If the potentiality of the festivals are ignored by only referring to how they are surrounded and even dominated by power relations, the agency of the public will be erased totally as intended by the dominant ideology. Both museums and festivals can be considered as instruments of modern social management but festivals differ from museums in many ways. Ivan Karp in his discussion of the festivals in *Exhibiting Cultures* and Richard Bauman and Patricia Sawin in their study on folk life festivals mention many contradictory characteristics of museums and festivals. Although “the festival’s field is organized in terms of power relations, structures of authority and legitimacy, and differential control over values” an understanding of the participants

⁵³ I used the term carnivalesque in a Bakhtinian sense.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 74.

in festivals not as passive objects but as active subjects is crucial.⁵⁵ Museum space allows restricted experience by limiting the interaction between the art objects and visitors. Multiple messages are communicated through exhibition spaces like rareness, preciousness or authenticity, high cultural and financial value carried in the art objects.⁵⁶ Whereas in the festivals, according to Bauman, Sawin and Karp a totalizing participation, that is involvement rather than contemplation is encouraged.

We might contrast the relatively authoritarian learning experience implied by the classical museum setting, in which one member of the museum set – the audience – receives the experience provided by the exhibition makers with the more democratic and nonjudgmental participatory and sensory aesthetic of the festival.⁵⁷

Ownership and possession are other keywords to differentiate museums and galleries from fairs and festivals. Museums and festivals have diverse styles and claims to authority:

[E]lite culture claims its authority on the basis of its possession of cultural resources and experience. Connoisseurship and training are claimed as central elements in the construction of exhibitions and the selection of object. Even where the purpose of an exhibition is didactic rather than aesthetic, the authoritative claim is based on possession of knowledge and those cultural resources we call ‘collections.’ [...] Festivals, on the other hand, do not emphasize differences in taste or ownership among their participants. Festivals that display folk performers do make something of differences in skill and knowledge, but they characteristically assert that such knowledge and skill derive from nonelite settings and are available to everyone who comes to the festivals. The central issues that are implicitly contested between

⁵⁵ Ivan Karp, “Festivals,” in *Exhibiting Cultures: Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, eds. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 290.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 282.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

museum exhibitions and festivals are ownership of culture and how it is defined.⁵⁸

Festivals are places where what is displayed can not be referred as “art object” but as performances or experiences provided by the space design of the activity. There is no such a claim of distant and transcendental work of art, beyond the everyday life of the “public”. On the contrary, festivals are popular art practices that anyone can join in anytime. Therefore, the performative ground is wide open.

Theoretical discussions on the fairs and festivals exhibit diverse inclinations. Fairs and festivals and their effects on society and individuals are highlighted and considered both as transformatory and disciplinary. Richard Schechner in his article “The Street is the Stage” acknowledges that the existing social order “tolerates” fairs and festivals as “temporary relief from itself”. Festivals in modern times have strict calendars, and they are confined to designed neighborhoods. They are mostly monitored by the police. However, according to Schechner “to allow people to assemble in the streets is always to flirt with the possibility of improvisation – that the unexpected might happen.”⁵⁹ Festivals are both restricted and controlled by the state power and also provide opportunities to enact social relations more freely. People feel free to perform in very different ways from their daily lives.

Both museums and festivals are the platforms where daily routines are suspended, but in different manners and for different purposes. In the museums, the visitor finds herself in a totally isolated, hygienic, ordered space. The order of things within that construction is grounded on clear-cut premises of modern episteme: A universal, rational, didactic, classificatory, and discriminatory and bourgeois space ordered by certain specific rules different than everyday life. This does not mean that

⁵⁸ Ibid., 283.

⁵⁹ Richard Schechner, *The Future of Ritual* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 47.

daily life is totally devoid of disciplinary practices of hegemonic powers. On the contrary, everyday life itself consists of a certain set of rules and relationships, which is historically and politically constructed as well. But museums and galleries are institutions where the ideology is so well and concretely structured that it lets less space for inversion. Fairs and festivals have a completely different relation to daily routines. Opposite to museums and galleries fairground is a space where all that was forbidden in daily life is allowed during the festival. Roles are temporarily altered. In the festivals, in other words, everyday life habits, roles, performances are challenged and broken down temporarily. Social relations of power, socio-economic status, gender positions, dressing habits and behaviors can be totally upside down.

Schechner, on the other hand, explains how in modern times state apparatus takes over from festivity the function of guaranteeing social solidarity. Rectangular and linear parades replacing the more vortexed and chaotic choreography of carnivals: “With rare exceptions, today’s festivals and carnivals are not inversions of the social order but mirrors of it.”⁶⁰ Like two sides of the same coin, festivals can be considered as art practices instrumentalized by power and ideology, and also potential arenas to inverse the existing order through altering urban space’s daily construction and shifting established identities for a certain period of time.

2.5. Way to Public Art

While state ideology enlarges its power over different alternative practices like festivals, new ones like various public art practices emerge. Since there is a mutually dependent relationship between power and resistance, on the one hand,

⁶⁰ Ibid., 48.

alternative activities are becoming institutionalized thereby letting the dominant ideology take control of these activities, on the other hand various challenging practices in different fields come out. Many contemporary art practices have emerged as a challenge to the mainstream understanding of art institutionalized in museums, galleries, as well as in art theory and art history. Public art practices are one of the main ways to problematize the essential definitions of art, space, artwork and audience. The transformation of the art world, in theory and in practice, has not taken place all of a sudden. There are many artists and art movements throughout the twentieth century preparing the development of the practices of art in public spaces.

Public art in its broadest definition means making and locating art outside conventional art spaces. It encompasses very diverse art forms like graffiti, monuments, community murals, land art, street furniture, performance art and many others all having the common point of being sited outside museums and galleries. Although these art forms may not all share this aim, positioning the artwork outside the art institutions, nevertheless, indicates a deviant attitude. In order to be able to contextualize public art practices at the beginning of the twenty first century it is necessary to trace the roots of similar critical attitudes towards the established order of the art system.

The two main axes on which the transformation of art practices in twentieth century has taken place are the alteration in the definition of “artspace” and the conception of “audience”. The following chapter is dedicated to investigate each of them in detail. For the time being I will summarize significant moments of change in the field of art corresponding to space and spectator position. 1960’s are in general considered to be the breaking point of the modernist art tradition and the passage to a “postmodernist” understanding of art. However, this periodization can result in the

omission of previous noteworthy artistic acts or art movements. Since the beginning of the twentieth century basic forms of high art, painting and sculpture have been problematized by avant-garde gestures. New techniques like collage and assemblage, the use of “object trouvé,”⁶¹ have emerged as a challenge to the “creativity” of the artist. In these art forms the artist does not create the object but brings several found objects or pieces of objects together. Similarly the concept of representation has started to be questioned in such forms as abstract painting that make the identification of the viewer with the depicted objects or figures impossible. Through shapes that do not look like a definable object or person abstract painting reveals that painting is just colors and shapes on a canvas. Abstract sculpture carries the same function as well. Cubism, futurism and surrealism have prevented the viewer’s sense of contemplating a unified object in an identifiable space from a single point of view. They replaced the one dimensional, fixed gaze of the viewer with several perspectives at once. The objects or figures are dismantled and reassembled as being reduced to cubes, cones or spheres. They introduced the concept of time and movement into painting and created dream-like spaces in which the viewer can not find a direct representation of an existing place, thereby losing her sense of a united space. In a similar fashion the introduction of “object trouvé” into painting, the introduction of “ready-made”s in gallery spaces by Marcel Duchamp are an important gestures to question the high status assigned to the artist as the creator.

The position of the artist was also in transformation as the result of earthshaking crises experienced during the first decades of the twentieth century like the First World War. Dada movement defines art as a social and political act and the artist as the actor. The main aim of the Dada movement is not solely to renew the art

⁶¹ Literally means “found object”.

practice only but the whole way of life as well. The emphasis for Dadaists was always on the process of making art, and not on the end product. The artists were open to try new ways of making art by rejecting all previous art schools that were institutionalized and served to the interests of high social classes. Marcel Duchamp, sometimes considered within the Dadaist movement, always rejected to be included in any art movement. He questions the habits and assumptions of the art world. Ready-made objects detached from their daily use and put in a gallery space are the means through which the question of “what gives the status of artwork to an object” is raised. Issues like the signature of the artist, the space of display, uniqueness or originality are called into question. According to Duchamp, socio-political, artistic or philosophical issues raised by the artist are more important than the artwork itself.

Especially in the problematization of the gallery as the ideal and neutral art space Duchamp has an important role. He made the gallery itself “the primary material to be altered by art.”⁶² By using the ceiling and the floor of the gallery space he draws the attention to the space itself. In his work called “One Mile of String” a piece of string passed from every corner of the gallery space. This kind of gestures by Duchamp “depends for its effect on the context of ideas it changes and joins. It is not art, perhaps but artlike and thus has a meta-life around and about art.”⁶³ There were many artists who continue to focus on the gallery space with specific projects. Yves Klein, in 1958, exhibited an empty gallery space called “The Void”. “Shortly thereafter Arman responded with an exhibition called “The Full” (1960) in which he dialecticized Klein’s positing of a transcendental space that is in the world but not of it by filling the same gallery from floor to ceiling and wall to wall with garbage.”⁶⁴ Christo Javacheff, in 1969, wrapped the whole building of the Museum of

⁶² O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, 10.

⁶³ Ibid., 70.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 10.

Contemporary Art in Chicago. The focus on the context of the artwork initiated a series of gestures. These gestures could be done only once and shifts the attention towards the established assumptions about the conventional art spaces.

Apart from these artistic acts directly targeting the gallery space there emerged multiple art movements and new concepts, especially after the 1950's that lead to the redefinition of the arena of art. Installation art is one of the key concepts for this study in terms of its handling of the concepts of space and audience. The term "environment" used in 1958 by Allan Kaprow is closely related to the concept of installation art. Environment is defined in art dictionaries like three-dimensional work of art, often of a temporary nature, in which the viewer can enter.⁶⁵ In the following years the term installation is used for an assemblage or environment constructed for a specific place again for a specific period of exhibition. Installations are designed in complete dependency with their sites and in relation to the audience through not only contemplating but also participating. Both Duchamp "One Mile of String" and Kurt Schwitters' "Merzbau" are pointed out as the early examples of installation art. However, especially throughout 1970's, many artists with different attitudes towards the socio-political environment of Europe developed diverse examples of installation art.

The period after 1960's is marked by Vietnam War, Prague Spring, and movements for a more democratic, egalitarian and free environment like feminist movements, black movement, protests against United States' hegemonic capitalist power, constant technological developments and expansion of the mass communication systems. The field of art in 1970's is open to include many new techniques. Artists start testing their powers as a political force. "The idea of being a

⁶⁵ It is also indicated that "in practice exhibiting authorities often prevent" the participation of the viewer. Julie H. Reis, *From Margin to Center: The Spaces of Installation Art* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001), xii.

social or political activist could include being an active participant in a work of art.”⁶⁶ The fundamental idea behind many art movements like Minimalism, Fluxus, Earth art, Video art, Performance art, Body art, Installation art, Happenings, Conceptual art or Process art is to unite previously differentiated fields of art and everyday life into a single shared area. Each movement or artist calls attention to different points on the common ground of establishing a relationship of reliance between the artwork, artist, space, and audience. This meant a total rejection of the formalist modernist art tradition. Traditional art object created and completed in artist’s studio, located in the hygienic environment of a gallery waiting for contemplation and appreciation based on transcendental aesthetic criteria by the educated eye of the educated spectator subject is not valid anymore. “[T]he traditional art object – controllable, containable, portable, preservable, and hence marketable – is passed.”⁶⁷ The concept of marketable art object was one of the main concerns of most of these artists. Many artists tried to sponsor themselves for their projects. To be independent of capitalist power relations dominating the art system was a vital issue in their works.

Despite the emphasis on the dissociation of art from the marketing system, resistance to traditional art historical approaches, challenge to museum practice, and value placed on the resistance to preservation and collection, the gradual assimilation of alternative art practices into mainstream museums and galleries was unavoidable. This move from margin to center has “far-reaching effects on the works created and on museum practice.”⁶⁸ While museums repositioned themselves in accordance with the changes in the world of art, art in public space remains the bearer of the potential alternative stance. Richard Schechner says that outdoor spaces like streets,

⁶⁶ Ibid., 72.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 94.

⁶⁸ Ibid., xv.

courtyards, walls, beaches, rooftops, plazas are the spaces where the celebration of experiencing the transformation of some “official” space into a playfield is possible.⁶⁹

Before going into the definitions of public art I will briefly mention the transformation that the museums have undergone during last decades. This transformation is very closely related to the emphasis put on the audience. But it is meaningful to see this transition based on two dynamics. The first one is related to the rise of consumer culture after 1960's. For the museums it has become increasingly important to attract more people. One important component of establishing the middle class way of thinking and living, partly provided by the museums and galleries, was to create “citizens” who consume while getting “educated” and “enlightened”. Copies of the masterpieces and many other commodities, “cultural artifacts”, started to be sold within the walls of the museums. Restaurants and cafés where the clients will feel a sense of being distinguished became indispensable for contemporary museum designs.⁷⁰ Art world remained closely tied to commodity production and the motivation of change has often been economic. People coming to visit an art museum or an art gallery were conceived as the consumers of the knowledge provided and the commodities “offered” inside. Arthur C. Danto in *Beyond the Brillo Box* discusses the “polydimensional” museums of today and quotes from Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach:

[T]he museum's opening statement now consists of a large gallery of modern art, three new restaurants, a space for special exhibits, and a large gift-and-

⁶⁹ Schechner, *The Future of Ritual*, 49.

⁷⁰ These examples can be observed in IstanbulModern: Museum of Contemporary Art, opened in 2004.

book store... It is now possible to visit the museum, see a show, go shopping, and eat, and never once be reminded of the heritage of Civilization.⁷¹

As the power of nation-states diminishes, the function of the museums to give the national or international heritage of the mankind is supported and even surpassed by the concept of being “civilized” through consuming. Centre George Pompidou is given as the example of surmounting some of the basic premises of classical understanding of museums. Its architectural structure permits to “simply ride the plexiglas escalator up to the observation deck, take in the magnificent view of Paris, stop at the adjacent snack-bar, and depart without having set foot in a gallery.”⁷² People have started to spend time in a museum building without seeing the collections. Thus the mere fact of being in the museum carries a symbolic value. The actual articulation of the museum to existing social hierarchies is strengthened by the inclusion of shops, cafés and restaurants. This again reveals the dichotomy embedded in the museums as institutions to democratize the access to artworks for everybody while discriminating the lower classes by emphasizing the “upper” status assigned through various strategies to the museum-goers.

The other wave of change in the museums, again depending on the primary role attached to the audience functions through audience researches. Data gathered via questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups are used in order to hear what the audience is saying, how they receive and respond to the exhibitions and other services within the museums. However, these practices’ main aim is to “gain some purchase on who is learning what in their institutions.”⁷³ In other words, these

⁷¹ Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach quoted in Arthur C. Danto, *Beyond the Brillo Box* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1998), 201.

⁷² Danto, *Beyond the Brillo Box*, 200.

⁷³ Steven D. Lavine, “Audience, Ownership, and Authority: Designing Relations between Museums and Communities,” in *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*, eds. Ivan Karp,

practices can be compared with researches done in big corporations for profit maximizing and customer satisfaction. Tony Bennett in *The Birth of the Museum* qualifies them as populist practices “envisioning the museum’s future as part of the leisure industry, urging that the people should be given what they want.”⁷⁴ These new techniques only reveal and reinforce the amalgamation of the museums with modern bourgeois ideology.

The foremost issue in the transformation of the museums for this study is the gradual assimilation of the alternative art practices into museums and galleries. Many of these art movements were against the institutional structure of the art system but they have been quickly assimilated into the canon of modern art. Julie H. Reiss gives the example of minimalist and installation art in general which are put in museums, therefore “the question of an object’s recognizability as art is rendered trivially rhetorical by museums when they display minimalist work as tokens of a movement and a period.”⁷⁵ The value given to spectator participation during the last decades made museums and galleries include more and more works based on audience active participation. Technological developments also have an important role in increasing interactive practices in the museums. Spectator who walks in the gallery or museum should guess what to do with artworks. There are diverse examples like “touch and feel” or “touch and see” kind of exhibits, interactive computer based displays, video art that requires active contribution, installations based on specific acts to become active like moving an object, drawing or writing something, or performances demanding audience participation. In order to make these practices possible several attempts are made to render the museum experience more relaxed. “The guards were

Christine Mullen Kreamer and Steven D. Lavine (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 139.

⁷⁴ Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 105.

⁷⁵ Reiss, *From Margin to Center: The Spaces of Installation Art*, 66.

given special instructions to allow people to sit or lie on the floor and to stay in any of the rooms as long as they wished.”⁷⁶

Many temporary exhibitions are presented in museums beside their fix collections. These attempts are to explore if a museum can be used as a situation for ‘live’ experiments. This is completely different from the usual activity in a museum of just looking. As a result of this transition there will be a space dedicated to new, experimental work in the museums. When the number of people participating in interactive works in museums is considered it cannot be said that these practices turn out to be prevalent in museums. People are accustomed to contemplate the works, therefore; they are shy to engage in new practices in museums, especially if they are technologically based interactive works.⁷⁷ Even though these interactive works and settings in galleries and museums function, their nature is so limited that it is not possible to talk about a free ground for the audience. The relationship of the audience with the work is foreseen and structured by the artist and the curator. This does not mean that there will be no different response than the expected ones. But I claim that the gallery and museum environment cannot be as “open” as non-art spaces. About the tendency to make the museum an interactive ground it can be said that although “they [interactive works] did not represent a permanent change in the way the institution operated,”⁷⁸ they transform, slowly but constantly, the structure of conventional art institutions.

The influence of different art practices on each other is very meaningful to understand the dynamics shaping current and future practices. However, the renovation of the museums can be interpreted as the expansion of the museum

⁷⁶ Ibid., 99.

⁷⁷ From a recent presentation entitled “Urban Regeneration, Museums and Public Life” by Kevin Hetherington in Istanbul Bilgi University on 11.05.2005.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 101.

ideology to contain multiple challenging art practices against itself and so, to make them ineffective. According to Reiss “Once inside the museum’s doors, the most subversive works could be subject to a tame interpretation by the institution, which would affect the way they were understood by the public”⁷⁹ and he continues later by saying that installations are losing their cutting-edge character when they are in the domain of mainstream museums. At this point I can go back to my interrogative argument about the art projects in public spaces carrying much greater potential to open up new ways of thinking and experiencing art, identities and urban public space.

2.6. The Question of Public Art

Public art balances at the boundaries [...] In both reality and rhetoric, it operates in the seams and margins.⁸⁰

The striking question to ask is whether the idea of a museum in a traditional sense is compatible with multiplicity of art practices with completely new techniques, new conceptualization of the artwork, audience and space. If the answer is negative, the possible alternative is the streets. In fact, a detailed exploration of what lies beneath the concept of public art has a vital meaning. Otherwise, public art will be reduced to “art outside the museum or gallery building.”⁸¹ To be located outside the museum or gallery buildings is considered mostly as a necessary condition for public art. The dimension of location should be analyzed in order to

⁷⁹ Ibid., 104.

⁸⁰ Patricia Phillips, “Public Art: A Renewable Resource,” in *Urban Futures*, eds. Malcolm Miles and Tim Hall (London: Routledge, 2003), 122.

⁸¹ This argument lies on an understanding of a physical definition of space. The mere fact of being inside and outside the museum walls can not explain the dynamics of public art. The discussion about the understanding of space will be done in the second chapter in detail.

disclose different components of public art and to see to what extent location is constitutive of it. At least, in an in depth discussion of public art, location is an indispensable element to work on but it can not be regarded as sufficient.

The map of public art is difficult to delineate as Malcolm Miles says and it is a challenging attempt since different cases of public art evoke different social, political and cultural implications.⁸² Public art as a practice referring to a varied range of issues is simultaneously explored and questioned throughout this study which gives the opportunity to see both its potentials and limitations.

There are multiple definitions given for public art from different perspectives. According to Suzanne Lacy there can be alternative histories of public art: “One version of history, then, begins with the demise of [...] sculptures glorifying a version of national history that excludes large segments of the population. [...] In the most cynical view, the impetus was to expand the market for sculpture” and the alternative history for public art can be drawn, based on the activities of various avant-garde groups, activists groups, who redefined the concept of audience and engaged in collaborative methodologies.⁸³ In other words, the term public art is used to refer to both artworks that are permanently located in different sites like streets, squares, plazas or parks and temporary projects and exhibitions that are conducted in public space in collaboration with the public. Permanent artworks are generally considered under the literature of monumentality, in relation to national identity, and collective memory or within the theoretical framework of space, architecture and urban planning. It can also be studied from the perspective of everyday life practices based on the spatial practices created by the allocation of an urban site to that work.

⁸² Malcolm Miles, *Art, Space, and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 84.

⁸³ Suzanne Lacy, “Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys,” in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Suzanne Lacy (Seattle, Washington: Bay Press, 1995), 21-25.

However, the present study frames itself by focusing only on the short-term projects and exhibitions. Since the three cases selected for this study are all temporary projects the focal point will be the transient aspect of public art and the dynamics it evokes.

Although throughout the whole study I will refer to several definitions of public art and the issues addressed through these practices, my main focus in this preliminary discussion about public art is to reveal in what sense it is not possible to come up with a definitive, clear-cut, and all encompassing definition of public art. Such a definition would contradict its essential characteristics. Patricia Phillips in her article called “Public Art: A Renewable Resource” states that “Public art balances at the boundaries [...] In both reality and rhetoric, it operates in the seams and margins.”⁸⁴

Public art can only be handled in its multidimensionality. First of all, public art is a hybrid practice in terms of the multiplicity of techniques and the plurality of perspectives and disciplines combined. In other words, motivations behind public art practices, processes that it undergoes, material used, possible outcomes, its form and content and its location can widely vary. Phillips supports this argument by saying that despite contrasting methods, intentions, contexts, and conditions art practices like performances, interventions, installations, testimonials done on the subway platforms, train terminals, building elevations, churches, or on the human body are identified as public art. Public art “occupies the inchoate spaces between public and private, architecture and art, object and environment, process and production, performance and installation.”⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Phillips, “Public Art: A Renewable Resource,” in *Urban Futures*, eds. Miles and Hall, 122.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Secondly, public art, from the preparation to the end of the project, incorporates artists, curators, art critics, people living in the neighborhood, visitors, passers-by, local authorities, public bodies at national and/or international levels. In that sense there are a number of dynamics operating throughout the whole process. Before the realization of the project it is required to have permission from the local authorities like the municipality. Not only permanent works but also temporary projects have a close connection to urban planning, not in an architectural but in a broader sense: Multiple public art practices simultaneously or successively present in different locations of the city mean a different conceptualization of city space and urban practices.

Financial support is a complex and problematic issue for public art. Funding for the projects can be found from the municipality or from donations coming from different sources, personal or institutional. Sometimes artists find out ways to afford their projects by themselves and sometimes public art projects occur as a part of international art networks like biennials. There are also examples of public art realized under the sponsorship of a private corporation. Some of these practices indicate a certain dependency on the state apparatuses, national or transnational corporations and/or the established art system. Each public art project can be read in its unique stance based on its relation to power and ideology. But it should be noted that alternative stances claimed against the institutions of hegemonic modern bourgeois ideology, specifically the dominant narrative of museums and galleries, can be a relevant dimension to discuss public art practices.

Another dimension which makes it difficult to give a precise definition of public art is the dimension of time. Time has a crucial role to differentiate permanent public art from the temporary ones. But a more important effect of time on the

artwork, even in a temporary project, is the exposure of the work to several interventions throughout the period of display. Art in public space faces dynamic, contextual and circumstantial factors compared to works inside the museums or galleries. One of the claims to be discussed behind the public artworks is that they are devoid of the transhistorical quality attributed to conventional artworks. The meaning of the artwork is not considered as an inherent quality of it, expected to be recognized but as coming from the audience. Mel Gooding explains public art as a practice “to surprise people into creative interaction with the work, into constructing its meanings in relation to their own lives in their own time and place” and gives the example of “Iron:Man” in Victoria Square by Antony Gormley who says that “It will be an unnamed work (by preference) until time and usage give it a name. It will become not what the artist or dominant iconography make it, but what the people of Birmingham perceive it to be [...] It will, I hope act as a focus of public feeling.”⁸⁶ The unpredictability and the incalculability of the process and the outcome are crucial points to be considered for public art.

There is a commonsense impression about art in public spaces about their being “inferior” compared to artworks in museums and galleries. This impression is a result and a proof of the dominant art discourse based on museum and gallery practices. Since these institutions, simultaneously to their claim to be public, form and support a distinct realm of art, hard to understand for the public; art outside these institutions are treated as “easy to understand” or “for any member of the public, for casual observer”. Public artwork is believed to lack such a “high” status of being a masterpiece. In that sense, whether art in public space means a user-friendly work is an important issue. The premise behind public art is that there is nothing pre-given to

⁸⁶ Mel Gooding, *Public: Art: Space* (London: Merrell Holberton Publishers, 1997), 15.

be “understood” and the artwork is to be created throughout the whole process together with a heterogeneous audience.

Public art is regarded as independent of the framework provided by the art institutions. Public art is not detached from urban life like artworks in museums and galleries. It is claimed that artwork in public space is in relation to the present, past and future of the city, that is, it “actively belongs” to the city. If it has the potential to activate the space, stimulate people and momentarily create a microcosm, an idiosyncrasy, an aberration,⁸⁷ then, it is necessary to investigate what makes public art challenging, suggestive, and innovative?

To open up a discussion about public art necessitates to treat each of the dimensions claimed to characterize this practice, such as its position with respect to museums and galleries, its ephemeral character, dependence upon a particular site and situation, its concentration on the audience reception and experience, and its potential to destabilize established order of living in a specific location by altering daily routines can be considered as major constitutive elements of public art. This brief overview brings the discussion back to the primary concern of the conceptualization of space. What makes public art public? Is it its mere location outside conventional art spaces like museums and galleries? Can public art be possible inside a museum which is claimed to be a public space as well? A reexamination of the construction of space in public art projects and the dynamics brought by site-specificity will be illuminating to refine the understanding of art in public spaces.

⁸⁷ Phillips, “Public Art: A Renewable Resource,” in *Urban Futures*, eds. Miles and Hall, 128.

3. SPACE AND AUDIENCE IN PUBLIC ART

3.1. Public Art as Spatial Practice

Every story is a travel story – a spatial practice.⁸⁸

Late twentieth century witnessed a “spatialization” of social sciences. In fact a salient transition has since been taking place: from a period in which space as something dead, fixed, undialectical and immobile was opposed to an understanding of time which was qualified with richness, fecundity, life and dialectic⁸⁹ to an era which is marked by an increased interest in concepts like place, location, spatiality, site, site-specificity, social landscape, cultural geography. Michel Foucault describes this transition as:

The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and of suspension, of crisis and cycle, themes of ever-accumulating past, with its great preponderance of dead man and the menacing glaciation of the world. [...] The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein.⁹⁰

Thus, in the last decades of the twentieth century the generative aspect of spatial analysis for the studies of social, cultural, economic, and political issues came to the foreground.

⁸⁸ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1984), 115.

⁸⁹ Michel Foucault, “Questions on Geography,” in *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), 70.

⁹⁰ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces”: 22.

Space became a critical dimension to understand artistic practices too. The most important transformation in art during the last century has perhaps taken place in the space-artwork relationship. For example, with minimalism the viewer's attention is drawn to the space that the work occupies. Douglas Crimp names this displacement as "the wedding of the artwork to a particular environment."⁹¹ Site-specificity is a concept emerging in opposition to the idealism of modern painting or sculpture which had the claim to be siteless, autonomous and homeless. This is the modernist point of view that makes the circulation of the "self-referential" artwork possible. From that point of view, due to its "inherent" quality of being a work of art, assigned independently from the context in which it is produced or received, an artwork can travel from the artist's studio to the gallery space, to a collector's house or to a museum. However, when the work is conceived for the site, built on the site, and has become an integral part of the site it can not be removed from its specific location since such an attempt would completely destroy the artwork. This kind of an understanding of dependency to the site erases the commoditization of the artworks as luxury commodities as well. One important feature of the site-specific art practices after 1960's was to challenge the integration of the art world to the capitalist consumer system.⁹²

The relation of the term site-specificity to public art requires a more detailed inquiry. A site-specific work can be specific to a street, a plaza, a shopping mall, or a gallery. Site-specific works do not directly mean art outside the gallery or museum space, and each and every work in a public space is not site-specific. Nick Kaye in his work called *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation* declares that "[i]f one accepts the proposition that the meaning of utterances, actions and

⁹¹ Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, 16-17.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 154-156.

events are affected by their 'local position', by the situation of which they are a part, then a work of art too will be defined in relation to its place and position."⁹³ The relation to a site, a situation or a position can be defined in various ways. In its substantive use the word site means the place or position occupied by some specific thing. It also has a transitive meaning which is to locate and an intransitive one which is to be located.⁹⁴ The reason these definitions are important is that they show the change of emphasis in defining a site. The first, in the context of public art, refers to a physical understanding of space in which the work is located; the second highlights the viewer's act of locating the work and himself/herself; and the third refers to the artwork's being located by the artist. Kaye borrows from Crimp the argument that the minimalist object emphasizes a transitive definition of site, in which the viewer confronts his/her own effort to locate the work and so, his/her own action out of the gallery's function as the place for viewing. Kaye continues by pointing out that site-specificity should be associated with an underlying concept of site, rather than any given particular kind of place or formal approach to site. He identifies site-specificity as the "working over of the production, definition and performance of 'place'."⁹⁵ To conceptualize the term "place" as interdependency between its definition, production and performance refers to a broader understanding of place, that is, to an understanding which would trace the way to the concept of space.

Admitting that there can be no single conception of a multidimensional term like space, Henri Lefebvre in his introduction to *The Production of Space* explains how the definition of space had been one-dimensional in social sciences until very

⁹³ Nick Kaye, *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation* (London: Routledge, 2000),

1.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 3.

recently: “Not so many years ago, the word ‘space’ had a strictly geometrical meaning: the idea it evoked was simply that of an empty area. [...] To speak of ‘social space’, therefore, would have sounded strange.”⁹⁶ He comes up with multiple senses of the word space, some of which relevant to interpret the space construction of art practices in public spaces. Apart from Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau’s reflections on the relationship between place and space are one of the basic tools to open up the discussion. Both of these philosophers’ studies on everyday life in relation to spatial practices allow broadening the perspective to evaluate public art’s potential to break down the detachment of art world from everyday life.

There are separate spaces that parcel daily life into separate domains which are also interconnected in special ways. When it is said that “I am studying in my room” or “there is an artwork at the corner of the street” everyone knows what is meant since “[t]hese terms of everyday discourse serve to distinguish, but not to isolate, particular spaces, and in general to describe a social space. They correspond to a specific use of that space, and hence to a spatial practice that they express and constitute.”⁹⁷ Lefebvre’s term social space relies on his emphasis on the negation of the space as merely physical phenomenon. He refers to physical, mental and social spaces. Physical space is defined as a practice-sensory activity and the perception of “nature”; mental space as logical and formal abstractions created by the philosophers’ theoretical practices; and social space as the space of society, of social life. The main distinction for Lefebvre is the distinction between ‘ideal’ space which has to do with mental categories and ‘real’ space which is the space of social practices, although he underlines that “[i]n actuality each of these two kinds of space

⁹⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 1.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 16.

involves, underpins and presupposes the other.”⁹⁸ Space, considered in isolation is an empty abstraction, that is, physical space has no reality without the energy deployed within it. Otherwise, the concept of space would be reduced to an empty space prior to whatever ends up filling it.⁹⁹ The multidimensionality of space was also claimed by Foucault: “The space in which we live [...] is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things. [...] We live inside a set of relations.”¹⁰⁰ In their theorization of space, both Foucault and Lefebvre draw attention to its social dimension which can be summarized in Lefebvre’s words as “(social) space is a (social) product.”^{101 102}

Lefebvrian understanding of production of space has important implications and also complementary levels. An important implication is that every society produces its own space.¹⁰³ There is a process of appropriation of space by the people. An urban space cannot be conceived as a collection of individuals, buildings, vehicles, trees (and public artworks). There are peculiar relationships it embodies; it has a certain rhythm of daily life. Individual or collective actions of the subjects are incorporated in social space which encompasses people and things in their coexistence. Social space makes the emergence and acting out of new actions possible while it shapes and limits many actions at the same time. “From the point of view of these subjects, the behavior of their space is at once vital and mortal: within it they develop, give expression to themselves, and encounter prohibitions; then they

⁹⁸ Ibid., 14.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 12-15.

¹⁰⁰ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces”: 23.

¹⁰¹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 26.

¹⁰² Lefebvre also criticizes Foucault for being imprecise concerning the relation between theoretical realm and practical one. According to Lefebvre Foucault never bridges the gap between the space of the philosophers and the space of the people who deal with material things. Ibid., 4.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 31.

perish, and that same space contains their graves.”¹⁰⁴ Social space is both the outcome of previous practices and the base of prospective actions.

Regarding the way in which this (social) production of (social) space occurs, Lefebvre mentions a conceptual triad as complementary levels of it: spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces. Spatial practices (or perceived space) stand for the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation. The spatial practice of a society constructs the society’s space. “It propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it.”¹⁰⁵ There is a close association between the daily routine and urban reality. Spatial practice engenders a cohesion and continuity, a kind of guarantee for a specific level of performance. Representations of space (or conceived space) mean the conceptualized space by scientists, planners, social engineers who identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived. It is the order imposed by the “knowledge”. Representational spaces (or lived space) are linked to the clandestine and underground side of social life. Dynamism, fluidity and relationality qualify representational spaces: “Representational space is alive: it speaks. [...] It embraces loci of passion, of action and of lived situations.”¹⁰⁶

Any analysis of an artwork cannot exclude a detailed understanding of space in relation to the construction of space in that specific location; the spatial practices, daily routines; and the dynamism created by the coming of that specific work to that location. Space cannot be taken as an abstract model otherwise “the perceived-conceived-lived triad loses all force” since it will be reduced to an ideological mediation which cannot grasp the concrete.¹⁰⁷ The city is not just an abstract

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 34.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 38.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 42.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 40.

construction but it is a social product, the life that takes place there. Installation of an artwork in a park or a performance in a street is always in relation with the life that takes place there. That specific place is created and recreated constantly in practice. According to Michel de Certeau, a street which is geometrically defined by urban planners is transformed into a space when it is walked through. This statement implies a stability in the concept of place whereas a dynamism, a movement in the concept of space. De Certeau's space is a practiced place.¹⁰⁸ The concept of place is conceived as an ordering system and space consists of practices. Walking is the most common example used by de Certeau as an example of spatial practice. Walking in the city, pedestrian movements are "innumerable collection of singularities. Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together. In that respect, pedestrian movements form one of these 'real systems whose existence in fact makes up the city'. They are not localized; it is rather they that spatialize."¹⁰⁹ If space is considered not as given but as perpetually generated, an artwork located in a train station or in a square creates a new spatiality through the potentiality of spatial practices it brings. The coming of an artwork in the train station or the square which were already defined by the daily practices opens up a multiplicity of new experiences of that space.

While spatial practices may realize many possibilities of a single place, a spatial practice although subject to the place, can never wholly realize this underlying order. De Certeau from a Derridean perspective asserts that "[t]o walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper."¹¹⁰ The walker of de Certeau is always in the practiced place, constantly acting out and perpetually performing the contingencies of a particular spatial

¹⁰⁸ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 117.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 97.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 103.

practice, can never resolve the multiple and conflicting spaces of the city into the place itself.¹¹¹ The pedestrian constantly appropriates the ensemble of possibilities and interdictions, she actualizes some of these possibilities, she invents others, that is, she makes a selection. Some of the places can even be condemned to inertia or to disappear depending on the spatial practices. According to de Certeau, the city itself becomes an immense social experience of lacking a place. Experiences of constant moving which are “broken up into countless tiny deportations (displacements and walks), compensated for by the relationships and intersections of these exoduses that intertwine and create an urban fabric, and placed under the sign of what ought to be, ultimately, the place but is only a name, the City.”¹¹² If de Certeau refers to the city as a network of residences temporarily appropriated by pedestrians, the concept “City”, independent of its use in everyday practices becomes questionable. In the light of these theoretical discussions, the consideration of the placement of an artwork in or outside of a building remains too reductionist, depending purely on the physicality of that location. Instead, when space is thought about as elusive, realized in events and practices, what matters is to see the interaction of the artwork with the urban texture, encompassing not only physical aspects but also people living around or passing by as well as daily routines at that location.

Following an examination of the concept of space, site-specificity reaches a more refined definition. Site is defined in its use, that is, it is always being produced in multiple, diverse and transforming practices. It is in continuous change, its meaning is never fixed. About site-specificity or the uniqueness of a place Doreen Massey states that “[t]he uniqueness of a place, or locality, in other words is constructed out of particular interactions and mutual articulations and social

¹¹¹ Kaye, *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation*, 5.

¹¹² de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 103.

relations, social processes, experiences and understandings are actually constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that as the place itself. [...] Instead then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings.”¹¹³ On the other hand, it is always possible to describe a place in its particular use, for example a café as a place to have a drink and a chat; give its architectural elements and mention its social and cultural context such as in which neighborhood it is located. These descriptions seem to have the status of the “proper meaning” of that space whereas it is one of the narratives constructed about that place which omits the multiplicity of its current use.

In addition, while focusing on the relationality of a space it is impossible to underestimate the ideological load of different places whether it is a museum, a street or a café. The way in which a certain definition of a space is given is ideological. The very relationship of these definitions to power and ideology can be examined as well. Space’s central role in the “technology of power” was highlighted by Foucault: “Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power.”¹¹⁴ The construction of space is an indispensable element in Foucault’s analysis of the power-knowledge relationship. On the other hand, De Certeau, admitting the vital role of the ideological order of space, asserts that no matter how panoptic a place could be, spatial practices carry something surprising, transverse and attractive. Spatial practices can exist only within spatial organizations, but they are not in a total conformity with them, they have the potential to create

¹¹³ Doreen Massey, “Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place,” in *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, eds. Jon Bird and others (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), 66.

¹¹⁴ Michel Foucault, “Space, Power, Knowledge,” in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During (New York: Routledge, 1993), 168.

ambiguities within them.¹¹⁵ In other words, he believes that a spatial practice while being conditioned by the defined ideological order, slips simultaneously into it and has the potential to alter it. “Things extra and other (details and excesses coming from elsewhere) insert themselves into the accepted framework, the imposed order. One thus has the very relationship between spatial practices and the constructed order. The surface of this order is everywhere punched and torn open by ellipses, drifts, and leaks of meaning: it is a sieve-order.”¹¹⁶ The dialectical relationship between power and resistance can be exemplified in public art practices. If the public artwork is thought as the “extra”, it is possible to claim that the artwork subverts the space while space affects the artwork. Therefore, there is a temporary period during which artwork and its site are constructing each other in their practices.

3.2. Exploring “Publicity” in Public Art

Once the relationship between artwork and space is established, another critical issue comes to light. What is the source of the quality of “publicity” attributed to an artwork? In other words, what are the dynamics by which space is defined as “public”? The distinction of public and private, or public space and private space requires a reexamination with reference to public art practices. The main assumption is that the publicity of the artwork derives from its location. Public spaces can be enumerated as streets, parks, squares, market places, restaurants, subway stations, theatres, and so on, by their virtue of accessibility. Works of contemporary art in these spaces are encountered by diverse publics who have in general no contact with art in museums or galleries. However, it should be noted that

¹¹⁵ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 101.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 107.

these spaces' accessibility varies. There is a significant difference, at least in terms of accessibility between an ordinary street and a movie theatre. Museums and galleries are also mentioned as public spaces but accessibility can be questioned as discussed in the first chapter. Even the term "access" can be discussed since accessibility can refer to wide range of activities like passing by, spending time, working there, or even the right to have a say about that "public" space. Admitting that this study's focal point is artworks, many questions specific for this topic could be developed at the levels of production, display or reception of art practices to clarify the "publicity" of the artwork. Can a private experience be described as the production of the artwork in the studio? Or can an artwork be labeled as public depending on its interest in public policy or by its communication of critical ideas? Or can publicity be defined in the detachment of the artwork from the capitalist bourgeois ideology embodied in conventional art institutions? Or does it refer to a cooperative production of the artwork and the undefinability of its reception in its multiplicity? Looking for answers to these questions requires first to focus on the categories of private and public and how these notions once rigidly conceived started to be considered as more flexible.

The distinction of public and private has its roots in the discursive constructions of modernism. A definable, cohesive "civic life" having identifiable social and physical characteristics versus a private life domain containing intimacy, secrecy and mysteriousness was depicted and this opposition was supported by other binary oppositions like open space-closed space or visibility-invisibility. However, this kind of a distinction between public and private became more and more ambiguous throughout the second half of the twentieth century. It has to be remembered that the distinction of public and private can be made only with respect

to something/someone else. It is contextual, historically constructed and culture specific. Patricia Phillips, to explain the difficulty of defining the location of the art practices in contemporary world order, refers to the blurring of the boundaries between public and private and states that:

It is commonplace to think of buildings, subways, railroad stations, public schools and plazas as public sites. In spite of increased security systems and regulated access, tradition and convention claim these kinds of places as open and available for one and all. Concurrently, it is generally acknowledged that the home has acquired public attributes through new media and communications technology. The radio, television, Internet, and other instruments make the home a live circuit to global phenomena.¹¹⁷

Although public and private have ceased to be entirely reliable distinctions it is meaningful to have a glance at one of the most marking theories about public space which was developed by Jürgen Habermas. Especially his work entitled *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* is referred by most of the contemporary theoretical discussions on public sphere. Habermas related the emergence of the liberal model of bourgeois public sphere in early modern Europe with the process of the developments of nation-states. Concepts like democracy, universal rights, rational man, equality and unity were the ingredients of that kind of a public space.¹¹⁸ He characterized bourgeois public space as an arena of discursive relations conceptually independent of the sphere of state and sphere of the private.¹¹⁹ According to Glahn, from a Habermasian perspective, public space is universally accessible and it is an

¹¹⁷ Phillips, "Public Art: A Renewable Resource," in *Urban Futures*, eds. Miles and Hall, 126.

¹¹⁸ Jürgen Habermas, "Civil Society and The Political Public Sphere," in *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, eds. Craig Calhoun and others (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 358-376.

¹¹⁹ Philip Glahn, "Public Art: Avant-Garde Practice and the Possibilities of Critical Articulation," *Afterimage* 28, no.3 (Nov/Dec 2000), 10. Also see Margaret Crawford, "Blurring the Boundaries: Public Space and Private Life," in *Everyday Urbanism*, eds. John Chase, Margaret Crawford, and John Kaliski (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1999), 24.

autonomous area of critical reasoning. Bourgeois public sphere is detached from the exclusionary mechanisms of power and ideology, that is, from state apparatuses and private enterprise.¹²⁰ And the more culture industry, ideology and the forces of capitalism permeated culture, art and leisure activities' domain the more people became the victims of this consumerism. A public space carrying an outside position necessary for critical distance or a public space as the victim of the consumer culture are totalizing and normative descriptions which reduce public space to an ideal, fictive, homogenizing category. This description also bears significant exclusions since the rational and critical subject of the public space is a middle-class masculine subject. This underestimation of the heterogeneity of the public space and its fragmented, incoherent, multi-layered aspects results in a noncontentious understanding of public space. However, in the last decades, reconceptualizations of public space started within various domains of social sciences. In other words "the universality of an idealized bourgeois public is rejected in favor of multiplicity of public arenas and discourses."¹²¹ Public space started to be conceived as a site of varying types of competition and contestation. The framework of this new understanding is drawn by highlighting lived experience. If spaces are practiced places, it is necessary to study specific performances of different people in specific occasions in order to grasp the dynamics, the controversial and multiple aspects of public space. According to Oscar Negt and Alexander Kluge a counter public sphere is made possible by the inclusion of those material experiences that have been excluded from it. The way to include the "experience" in the understanding of public space is to focus on "the modes of communication (publicity)" instead of

¹²⁰ Glahn, "Public Art: Avant-Garde Practice and the Possibilities of Critical Articulation": 10.

¹²¹ Ibid., 12.

conceptualizing it as a “site of communication (public sphere).”¹²² In other words, it is emphasizing the “how” of communication and interaction instead of the “where”.

Acknowledging the fact that the category of public space is useful as a theoretical approach or analytical tool does not mean to disregard the constructed and fictive nature of that distinction. Public space points out an abstract sphere. Instead, a new conceptualization of public space at the level of daily routines and practices would be revealing of its complexity. Margaret Crawford explains the fragmented fabric of urban space by the existence of microcities defined by visible and invisible boundaries of class, race, ethnicity, gender and religion. She underlines the heterogeneity of the urban space: “The multiplicity of identities produces an intricate social landscape in which cultures consolidate and separate, reacting and interacting in complex and unpredictable ways. Spatial and cultural differences exist even within these groups.”¹²³ Although it is possible to find many common points between different practices the crucial point is to emphasize that one among the multiplicity of simultaneous activities can not claim to represent the totality of public space. However, there are many public art projects (what many theoreticians working on public art called “traditional public art”) which address a singular universal, homogeneous audience. Spaces of their display are the physical outside. Lucy R. Lippard, in her article “Looking Around: Where We Are, Where We Could Be” refers to these kind of traditional outdoor art as “parachute” or “plunk” art since the artwork is removed from the gallery and dropped into the site. She explains that these practices only serve to extend the space of art institutions and reduce the concept of

¹²² Oscar Negt and Alexander Kluge quoted in Glahn, “Public Art: Avant-Garde Practice and the Possibilities of Critical Articulation”: 10.

¹²³ Crawford, “Blurring the Boundaries: Public Space and Private Life,” in *Everyday Urbanism*, eds. Chase, Crawford, and Kaliski, 26-27.

public space to physical accessibility.¹²⁴ As the idea of public space in its mere physicality is replaced by the concept of relationality, public art will be understood through the response and reception of the audience for each work separately. According to Patricia Phillips “[a]lthough there are a small number of memorable examples public art can even be in galleries, museums, and other private settings”¹²⁵ since the emphasis in public art is in the relationship of the audience, artwork, artist and space¹²⁶. Even within the museum or gallery space it is possible to totally displace the conventions of museum or gallery performances to such a point that the artwork can create a new situation defined by the diversity of the performances of the audience. Therefore, an attempt to understand the dynamics created by public art requires to shift the critical attention “toward the actual audience that experiences and defines the work”¹²⁷ instead of being entrapped by an abstract notion of public or public space. Malcolm Miles first underlines that public art’s location is not a physical site assumed to grant access to an undefined public and mentions that for the development of new practices of public art the recognition that there is no ‘general public’ but only a diversity of specific publics is central.¹²⁸ Once the definition of the concept of space is drawn based on social production and practices it is not possible to think of publicity as simply physical. Therefore, both of the discussions on the concept of space and publicity, since they are closely related to

¹²⁴ Lucy R. Lippard, “Looking Around: Where We Are, Where We Could Be,” in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Lacy, 114-130.

¹²⁵ Patricia Phillips, “Dynamic Exchange: Public Art at This Time,” *Public Art Review* 11, no.1 (Fall/Wind 1999): 4-9.

¹²⁶ Philip Glahn’s example about projects by Group Material in 1981 in New York can be used to illustrate Patricia Phillips’ statement. The project was called “The People’s Choice” and it consisted of cultural objects chosen and thereby defined as such by the residents of the community. The objects gathered communicated a diversity of experiences and aesthetics generally excluded from galleries. By introducing the art gallery to neighborhoods and their inhabitants which were not usually found in the art world the project produced a public sphere within parameters different from those of the traditional ideal. Glahn, “Public Art: Avant-Garde Practice and the Possibilities of Critical Articulation”: 10.

¹²⁷ Phillips, “Dynamic Exchange: Public Art at This Time”: 4-9.

¹²⁸ Miles, *Art, Space, and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures*, 84.

one another, pave the way to a discussion on the audience relationship and interactivity as the determining factor for public art practices.

3.3. Questioning Subject Positions: Participation and Performance

The role of the audience has been a major issue in the field of artistic production for a long period of time. The understanding that communication starts from the artist, proceeds through the artwork toward a receptive audience has been problematized throughout the twentieth century. During the last decades the privilege given to the reception of the spectator has almost become the dominant discourse in social sciences although what is meant by reception widely varies according to different approaches in different disciplines. Similarly the role ascribed to the spectator for public art practices can not be generalized. In order to clarify the distinction concerning audience contribution among a variety of practices called “public art” Suzanne Lacy introduced the concept of “new genre public art” in the book entitled *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* in 1995. The concept of “new” in this title does not refer to a strict chronological periodization (although it is undeniable that this kind of art projects suggesting alternative ways of interaction with the audience became numerous after 1990’s) but to an alternative understanding of artist-audience relationship. Lacy’s term of “new genre public art” refers to the interactive, community-based projects based on participation and collaboration of audience members in the production of a work of art.¹²⁹ These projects are defined to be less concerned with the creation of an art object than with a cooperative process which transforms the positions of both the artist and the audience. Mary Jane Jacob,

¹²⁹ See Lacy, ed., *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*.

one of the contributors of this book, states that “Indeed, it is this change in the composition of the audience, and their position at the creative center, that makes this public art so new.”¹³⁰

This kind of an alternative art practice makes reference to the dissolution of the concepts of the autonomy of the object as a bearer of aesthetic value, the myth of transcended artist or individual genius and the complementary passive role of the viewer. A shift in focus has taken place during the last decades from the formal structure of the work to the received effect. This very claim also asserts that the meaning of the artwork is not fixed but it is always in constant production. The authorship of the artist and the self-sufficiency of the artwork are left behind in order to emphasize the contribution and collaboration of the audience in the continuous production of the artwork and to indicate the multiplicity of the meanings that the artwork carries. The question of authorship had been called into question during the twentieth century by various philosophers. Walter Benjamin in his article “Author as Producer” underlined that there is no possibility of transcendent production or autonomous artist. The artist, as an individual, is produced by cultural, social, historical conditions rather than existing as an autonomous entity in a fictive “outside” of the social order.¹³¹ However, Benjamin did not completely erase the concept of author. Roland Barthes, on the other hand, in “The Death of the Author” challenged the idea of the author as intention. The author can not be conceived as the past of his work, the author is born simultaneously with the work. The biographical information of the artist as a key to understand the work is irrelevant as well since the work loses its origin; it is produced here and now. Barthes, to overthrow the myth

¹³⁰ Mary Jane Jacob, “An Unfashionable Audience,” in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Lacy, 59.

¹³¹ Walter Benjamin, “Author as Producer,” in *Art After Modernism*, eds. Wallis and Tucker (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art Press, 1999), 297-311.

of the artist as the origin and the audience as the destination of the artwork, asserted that “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.”¹³² He pushed the role of the reader/viewer into an active producer rather than a passive receiver. Michel Foucault in his article “What is an Author?” rejected the primacy of the artistic authorship: “The author is not an indefinite source of significations which fill a work; the author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses.”¹³³ He claimed that instead of authenticity and originality questions like who can appropriate, use or circulate the work are becoming prominent. As the position of the artist became controversial the receiver’s role became favored in the interpretation of an artwork. The transition from an intact and autonomous concept of work to the dynamic of interaction overthrows the definition of the artwork as a finished object. Thus artwork becomes an “unfinished process.”

When the concept of the viewer and the way artwork is received come to the foreground the concept of the viewing subject can also be questioned. The notion of an autonomous, definable, contemplating viewer complements the concept of self-sufficient object to be viewed. According to Johanna Drucker “[a]s the discrete boundaries which isolated objects from its contingencies of viewing and production are blurred, the concept of the viewer as existing a priori to and separate from the situation of viewing is called into question.”¹³⁴ The receiving subject is also constructed by the situation. By referring to Nick Kaye’s notion of event and performance as the key concepts to understand site-specific art it is possible to claim that audience and artwork are constructing each other during the event created. If the

¹³² Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *Modern Criticism and Theory*, ed. David Lodge (London and New York: Longman, 2000), 150.

¹³³ Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?,” in *Aesthetics: The Big Questions*, ed. Korsmeyer, 331.

¹³⁴ Johanna Drucker, *Theorizing Modernism: Visual Art and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994),

artwork is created in practice it is necessary to focus on the performances of the audience and the artist.

Adopting the perspective of performance studies is enriching to grasp the relationship between artwork, audience, artist and space. As Richard Schechner proposes:

[a]ny event, action, item, or behavior may be examined 'as' performance. Approaching phenomena as performance has certain advantages. One can consider things as provisional, in-process, existing and changing over time, in rehearsal, as it were.¹³⁵

A whole public art project can be read as a performance, as a provisional process changing over time. If space is understood in its constant experience by people, artwork in its constant production by the audience and audience is not a priori to the encounter with the artwork, the subject-object opposition of established art can be substituted with a subject-to-subject encounter. Introducing the concept of performance in this analysis serves to modify "the fixed relation between subjects and objects and between exhibition and reception by interjecting into an aesthetic frame performing and viewing subjects capable of fluid action and interaction."¹³⁶

The way a public artwork can be studied from the perspective of performance studies totally matches with the claims of new genre public art. Schechner, to illustrate the approach of performance studies, gives the example of a painting: A painting can be studied based on the ways it interacts with those who view it, different reactions and meanings evoked in the audience, how the meaning of the painting changes over time, the circumstances in which the painting was created and exhibited, how the space displaying the painting affects it. "To treat any object,

¹³⁵ Richard Schechner, "What is Performance Studies Anyway?," in *The Ends of Performance*, eds. Peggy Phelon and Jill Lane (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), 361.

¹³⁶ Kristine Stiles, "Performance," in *Critical Terms for Art History*, eds. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 75.

work, or product as performance means to investigate what the object does, how it interacts with other objects or beings, and how it relates to other objects or beings. Performances exists only as actions, interactions and relationships.”¹³⁷ New genre public art differentiates itself from the traditional public art practices¹³⁸ by its emphasis on the audience performance and contribution. Adopting Schechner’s point of view I consider public art projects in their openness to establishing relationships to the environment and the public rather than in terms of the object produced. If the project is designed as a shared project with different people who are not “artists”, the main assumption behind such a conceptualization is to challenge fixed and stable identities of the artist and the audience. In order to reveal the public art projects’ potential of creating opportunities to realize and experience the fluidity of subject positions I go back to the basic questions like who is the audience for public art projects, what is its nature, and whether it is possible to define the audience.

The issues related to audience, in general revolve around the question of museum or gallery attendance. However, it is on the streets that a work of art meets an uninformed public, many of them unwilling to go to museums and galleries. In the previous sections, the use of the term “public” has been problematized in order to make clear that what is meant by public art does not necessarily refers to the art practices in conventionally accepted public spaces. Instead, it is the engagement to a collaborative process that makes art projects “public.” Every work put on the streets does not necessarily question the established artwork-audience relationship, that is, it is not necessarily “public” in that sense. On the other hand, it is obvious that a

¹³⁷ Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 24.

¹³⁸ Suzanne Lacy defines traditional public art as installations and sculpture sited in conventionally accepted public places, usually put to enhance these venues. She refers to what Judith Baca called “cannon in the park” that is, the display of sculptures glorifying a version of national history that excluded large segments of the population. Lacy, “Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys,” in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Lacy, 19-21.

collaborative art project meets a more diverse audience when it is in the streets, within the everyday lives of “common people.” Patricia Phillips states that:

Its [public art’s] democratic, if often unrealized and imperfect, potential is to insinuate art, aesthetics, questions, and ideas in the daily lives of ordinary citizens. People choose to visit galleries or museums with an expectation to encounter some form of art. People rarely end up in museums by accident. Presumably, public art accommodates and acquires deliberate, as well as fortuitous, encounters. Some people choose to go out of their way to see public art (just as they might to go to an exhibition in a gallery), but often public art is witnessed as an unintended consequence of transit through the city – during a routine commute, errand, or new route that brings people into art’s vicinity.¹³⁹

The performances of those who encounter the artwork can widely vary. People can actively seek it out, it can be engaged or overlooked, it can be damaged or it can be transformed due to multiple reactions from the audience. Each encounter with each different work of art can be studied in its uniqueness. In addition, apart from the diverse audience who encounters the work while they are doing something else, new genre public art also emphasizes the very people with whom the artist cooperates and creates the work together. Suzanne Lacy while she exemplifies different types of audiences she takes the level of interaction and contribution as the criterion. There are collaborators and codevelopers who have invested time and energy in their work, that is, artists and community members. Without their contribution the work could not exist. There are other participants, those who are the volunteers, performers, inhabitants of the neighborhood, those who come intentionally to see the art project, and passers-by. Suzanne Lacy also underlines that “[b]ecause of the open-ended invitational properties of a community-based artwork

¹³⁹ Phillips, “Public Art: A Renewable Resource,” in *Urban Futures*, eds. Miles and Hall, 130.

and the time involved in creating it, those attending the final presentation or exhibition are often more engaged than, for example, museum-goers.”¹⁴⁰

Audience participation is indispensable for the concept of public art defined throughout this study. It can be said that all art takes its audience into consideration, even if only in the mind of the artist working for some imaginary audience. The significant point here is in the emphasis on audience’s response and whether or not this response is followed by the artist. The artist, in public art practices, perceives the artwork as an unfinished product and, therefore, tracks its relationship with the audience, focusing on the interactive process created through the artwork. “Public art insists that critical analysis consider responses and reactions of the viewer who shape, modify, perpetuate and complete (at least provisionally) its meaning.”¹⁴¹ It should be added that the responses will be multiple and unpredictable.

For an analysis of public art’s audience multiple ways can be followed. The concept of habitus by Pierre Bourdieu can be relevant to give a broad picture of the diversity of the audience, how the participants from different backgrounds act and react differently in the situation created by the artwork in a specific site. Habitus can be defined as durably installed generative principles of “regulated improvisations” associated with a particular class of conditions of existence. These systems of durable, transposable dispositions are constituted in practice. These practices reproduce in turn the conditions which produced the generative principle of habitus in the first place. Bourdieu posits that:

Because the habitus is an infinite capacity for generating products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions, and actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and

¹⁴⁰ Lacy, “Debated Territory: Toward a Critical Language for Public Art,” in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Lacy, 179.

¹⁴¹ Phillips, “Public Art: A Renewable Resource,” in *Urban Futures*, eds. Miles and Hall, 132.

conditional freedom it provides is as remote from creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from simple mechanical reproduction of the original conditioning.¹⁴²

Practices are not unilaterally determined by the habitus but they emerge at the site of conjuncture between the habitus and the field which informs and limits practices. Judith Butler paraphrases Bourdieu's definition of habitus as "those embodied rituals of everydayness by which a given culture produces and sustains belief in its own obviousness" and she underlines mutually formative relation between habitus and field. Habitus is not a subjective phenomenon which encounters an objective field.

The habitus is the sedimented and incorporated knowingness that is the accumulated effect of playing that game, operating within those conventions. In this sense, the habitus presupposes the field as the condition of its own possibility. [...] Indeed, the rules and norms, explicit or tacit, that form that field and its grammar of action, are themselves reproduced at the level of habitus and, hence, implicated in the habitus from the start.¹⁴³

In other words, a social field can not be reconstituted without the participatory and generative doxa of the habitus and the habitus presupposes the field from the start, and is itself composed of rituals compelled by the structuring force of that field. It is possible to conceptualize a player, created by the game, plays the game and by playing it assures its existence.¹⁴⁴ Assuming that each member of the audience has a habitus or has established daily routines, in public art practices both the community with whom the work is created and other participants in their encounter with the

¹⁴² Pierre Bourdieu, "Structures, Habitus, Practices," in *Rethinking the Subject: An Anthology of Contemporary European Social Thought*, ed. James D. Faubion (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995), 34.

¹⁴³ Judith Butler, "Performativity's Social Magic," in *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Shusterman (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 117.

¹⁴⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 257.

work bring their habitus into the work. As Çetin Sarıkartal states the response of the audience would develop in relation to the habitual experiences of his/her daily behavior and consciousness, though the assumed habitus would be questioned during the experience with the artwork, artist and the overall situation.¹⁴⁵

As opposed to a modernist understanding of art in which the reception of the artwork is homogenized and no place left to individual contributions and diversity of meanings, the public artwork is conceived as the ground in which different people from different habitus meet, contribute and cooperate. This is an unfinished process open to the heterogeneity of the participants. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and distinction were used to study museum attendance in different museums in Europe as well in *The Love of Art*. Bourdieu and Darbel's studies were based on the criteria like socio-economic class membership, defined mostly by income levels, types of occupation, education level, modes of consumption. How people from different economic and cultural habitus meet and interact, how these positions were constantly transformed during the encounter with the artworks or with different people were not studied. However, public art projects' significant difference is its emphasis on a more fluid understanding of subject positions. The concept of habitus is still necessary as an introductory step. In a community-based public art project a preliminary analysis based on what kind of people with different habitus on art got together for the artwork is meaningful. Someone who is well-educated in art and equipped with the required intellectual skills and the inhabitants of the neighborhood in which the project takes place contribute to the same project. In that case, the claim of public art projects goes further than bringing people from different habitus together. The artwork serves to open an interface where daily routines are broken and new

¹⁴⁵ Çetin Sarıkartal, "Encounter, Mimesis, Play: Theatricality in Spatial Arts" (Ph.D. diss., Bilkent University, 1999), 3.

positions are created in interaction through the production of the artwork. People who have not much in common meet in a situation pregnant to new performances and sociabilites.

Habitus is not conceived as fixed and stable, nor is it equally and identically valid for each member of the same socio-economic group/class. In relation to this point, Bourdieu notes that “there are acts that a habitus will never produce if it does not encounter a situation in which it can actualize its potentialities.” He mentions the possibility of the use of the “interdependence of habitus and situation” in art. When “a habitus (chosen, intuitively as a principle generating a particular style of words, gestures, etc.)” is brought together with “an artificial situation designed to trigger it off,” this may lead to “the production of practices which may be completely improvised.”¹⁴⁶ However, according to Bourdieu, although in certain situations some improvised practices are possible, the ultimate field is the market, that is, the world is structured according to “categories of the possible (for us) and the impossible (for us), of what is appropriated in advance by and for others and what one can reasonably expect for oneself.”¹⁴⁷ His studies on the museum attendance show how potential opportunities theoretically available to all in museums are not realized and there is a significant difference between people from different habitus in museum attendance. Bourdieu declares that “only in imaginary experience (in the folk tale, for example) which neutralizes the sense of social realities, does the social world take the form of a universe of possibles equally possible for any possible subject.”¹⁴⁸ Public art practices’ potential to create opportunities, not theoretically but practically

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 155.

¹⁴⁷ Bourdieu, “Structures, Habitus, Practices,” in *Rethinking the Subject: An Anthology of Contemporary European Social Thought*, ed. Faubion, 43.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 42.

available to all, can not be grasped if Bourdieu's perspective is not complemented by Bakhtinian "carnival" or Schechner's concept of "play."

The subversion of hierarchical distinctions imposed by the dominant ideology, an "imaginary experience" in Bourdieu's words, becomes possible if a Bakhtinian perspective of carnivalesque is adopted. According to Bakhtin, a temporary suspension of all hierarchical distinctions and barriers among men and of the prohibitions of usual life is possible in carnival times when the high and low, upper class and lower class, daily conventions and their parodies, daily performances and performances of the festival/carnival are blended.¹⁴⁹ The limited period of time, starting with the conceptualization of the public art project as a co-production of artist and the audience can be considered as a period in which daily conventions of the both parts are altered. The artist should leave his/her established role in the social arena and each participant, due to the invitational design of the project, enters into an uncommon performance different from the passive role of the audience. Such designs for public art projects are the means to elucidate the potentials and alternative conceptualization of subject positions. As Butler suggests the very process of subject-formation is a continuous and unending process which includes the embodied practices, ritualized and sedimented through time, and also the linguistic utterances establishing discursive constitution of the subject. Positions are fluid according to Butler since positions are temporally reproduced effects dependent on unstable forms of rearticulation.¹⁵⁰ Each rearticulation can be considered as performances in different situations.

Erving Goffman's definition of performance indicates how a performance is dependent on the uniqueness of the occasion and other participants: "A performance

¹⁴⁹ See Michael E. Gardiner, "Bakhtin's Prosaic Imagination," in *Critiques of Everyday Life*, ed. Michael E. Gardiner (New York: Routledge, 2000), 43-70.

¹⁵⁰ Butler, "Performativity's Social Magic," in *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*, ed. Shusterman, 125.

may be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants.”¹⁵¹ With reference to Goffman, Schechner opens up the paradoxical dimension of performances: Performances are made from bits of restored behavior but every performance is different from every other. Restored behavior refers to physical or verbal actions that are not-for-the-first-time. Every kind of performance – of art, rituals, or ordinary life – is the result of endless variations of fixed bits of behaviors that are recombined. But at the same time, no event can exactly copy another event. Not only the behaviors of the actors but also the specific occasion and context make each instance unique.¹⁵² Goffman’s concept of “frame” is very similar to terms like setting or context. As Bennett M. Berger says in the foreword he wrote for Goffman’s *Frame Analysis*, frame is the definition of the situation within which the interaction occurs.¹⁵³ It is “a way of organizing experiences” and it refers to inevitably relational dimension of meaning. Each move in social encounters, according to Goffman, can modify the definition of the situation.¹⁵⁴ When a public art project is realized in a neighborhood a new “frame” is bought temporarily to the site in which the whole routine of the neighborhood, including people’s performances, interaction, spatial practices are temporarily transformed. However, it should be noted that only a project that is designed to include the inhabitants and the visitors can create such an effect. A public art project which puts interaction at the center, and takes the issue of collaboration and communication as starting point has the capacity to give birth to

¹⁵¹ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1959), 15-16.

¹⁵² Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 22-23.

¹⁵³ Bennett M. Berger, “Foreword,” in *Frame Analysis* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), xiii.

¹⁵⁴ Gary Alan Fine and Philip Manning, “Erving Goffman,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Major Contemporary Social Theorists*, ed. George Ritzer (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 53-54.

strong resonances in everyday lives of the public, of the artists themselves and on the perception and experience of space.

In the light of these theoretical discussions, a public art project that challenges fixed and pregiven subject positions, aims to transgress the boundaries by breaking the conventional daily performances of the participants and established use of space can be considered as innovative and suggestive. Otherwise, many projects duplicating the existing, dominant social hierarchies and conventional roles of artist and audience remain within the established norms of the art world.

Due to many audience-centered public art projects the marginalized groups left outside of the art world gain a voice. The difference that is aimed to be created is not a shift in the socio-economic status of marginalized groups. As Lucy R. Lippard notes artists engaged in public art practices do not live in an illusion to change the world directly and immediately. These art projects function at several levels.¹⁵⁵ Public art projects, as the result of their questioning of subject positions, construction of space and problematizing conventional concepts of the established art tradition constitute a challenge to the dominant world order. If public art projects are considered as Bakhtinian carnivals, a resistance comes to the light within and through these projects. Assumed and unquestioned conventions of everyday life are revealed and broken. Beyond existing social forms a new transitory form of social configuration is made possible through these public art projects. "An ideal and at the same time real type of communication, impossible in ordinary life, is possible."¹⁵⁶ "A temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order"¹⁵⁷ (Bakhtin 1984: 10-11) is what makes public art projects challenging. Richard

¹⁵⁵ Lucy R. Lippard, "Trojan Horses: Activist Art and Power," in *Art After Modernism*, eds. Brian Wallis and Marcia Tucker (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art Press, 1999), 344.

¹⁵⁶ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 92.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

Schechner's use of the term "play" is close to Bakhtinian "carnival." "Play is a mood, an activity, an eruption of liberty. [...] Play can subvert the powers-that-be, as in parody or carnival."¹⁵⁸ Public art projects can be seen as a play since they create a different actualization of space in which people can alter their daily roles. Play is full of creative world-making, according to Schechner, and "play is characterized both by flow – losing one self in play – and reflexivity – the awareness that one is playing."¹⁵⁹ Public art practices create events in which participants and the artists are engaged in experiences different from their everyday lives, so that people become aware of and question their routines and assumed identities. Social hierarchies become more visible and striking after experiencing the play or the carnival. One of the public art projects' most important feature is therefore their ephemeral nature, like "play" or "carnival." "To be radical means to be emancipatory, idealistic and transformative, as well as ephemeral, provisional, questioning and transgressive."¹⁶⁰ Public art projects' challenging nature would disappear once they become permanent. Here I use the term permanency in two senses. First, if the artwork becomes permanent in a site, it loses its challenging effect since it will become part of the everyday routine of that site. In that case, the dynamics of these works should be studied differently from temporary public artwork. Secondly, if the term "public art" becomes one of the established concepts of the twenty first century's art world, it will again lose its radical position. A practice becoming established and conventional will engender its own hierarchies, order, dominant discourse and practices. In that case, what will be radical will position itself in terms of what is imposing and

¹⁵⁸ Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 79.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 80-81.

¹⁶⁰ Ian Borden, "What is Radical Architecture?," in *Urban Futures*, eds. Malcolm Miles and Tim Hall (London: Routledge, 2003), 118.

dominant. For the time being, audience-centered public art projects can be seen as a “resistance.”

The relationship between space, performance, everyday life and public art projects can be established by conceptualizing this created zone as a terrain of conflicts between the tactics of resistance and strategies of dominant systems. Here, I use the terms “tactic” and “strategy” in a de Certeauian sense. Michel de Certeau emphasized the transitory tactics in everyday life as resistances, some kind of sabotage against the strategies of an imposed order.¹⁶¹ The social practices’ effects, intentionally or unintentionally, break the constantly operating and renewed order. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett states that “Michel de Certeau’s distinction between the strategic and the tactical defines the difference between urban planning and the urban vernacular. [...] Think of the vernacular not as master plan, but a local improvisation; not a strategic plan, but a tactical strike.”¹⁶² A public art project can be seen as an urban vernacular. Because of the fact that these activities are open to a multiplicity of performances, changing subject positions, a reconstruction of the space in its plural experiences they can be considered as radical and transgressive. If “performance (broadly conceived) gives form to space,”¹⁶³ these art practices by creating new encounters, interactions, and exchanges carry the potential to produce a new space of multiplicity of performances, transgressing the existing social hierarchies. Simultaneously, conventional art institutions extend their policies to include the challenging art practices and, international corporations are increasingly willing to make use of these kinds of cultural and artistic activities to gain prestige. Therefore, public art projects which insist to keep their challenging positions prefer

¹⁶¹ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xvii-xxiv.

¹⁶² Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Performing the City: Reflections on the Urban Vernacular,” in *Everyday Urbanism*, eds. John Chase, Margaret Crawford and John Kaliski (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1999), 19.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 20.

to remain outside the conventional institutions to maintain an independent artistic or political stance. Audience-centered/new genre public art projects which are galvanized with the everyday life of the audience and the artists are the bearers of new sociabilities, experiences and new forms of creative resistances against the hegemony of dominant social order and art world.

4. THREE PUBLIC ART PROJECTS FROM ISTANBUL

While studying on the specific projects that I have selected from Istanbul I chose to follow the way I experienced from the beginning of this study. First of all when I decided to work on art practices in public spaces I first looked around for projects which take place out of conventional art spaces. Therefore the first step in the examination of art in public spaces was the investigation of their difference with museums and galleries. Here, I will first go through the similarities and dissimilarities between the selected projects and museums and galleries' ideology. Then, while focusing on the differences I observed in these projects, all having the claim of being public art projects, I realized to what extent concepts of space and audience were important in public art literature and practice. In order to grasp different projects' conceptualizations of space and audience I studied these concepts in detail by referring to public art practices. Throughout the comparison of these projects' construction of space and audience I will refer to specific theoretical discussions that I brought in previous chapters. Although these projects can be studied from diverse vantage points, the aim in this study is to transfer the theoretical arguments developed in previous chapters on these examples from Istanbul. Sometimes the same piece of information (a theoretical point or data gathered from the interviews, catalogue or observations) is used several times since each time it is relevant to the different issues that I elaborate.

First I prefer to give a short definition of three projects with reference to the material conditions in which they take place in order to draw a general sketch of the physical characteristics of these sites and conventional use by the public.

Sanat Akmerkez'de II took place in Akmerkez, one of the biggest shopping malls of Istanbul. It is in Etiler, a district where mostly members of the high socio-economic class live and work. Akmerkez consists of a triangular shaped, three-floored shopping mall, three skyscrapers one of which is a residential one and the others are used by big corporations' offices. Akmerkez is the most expensive complex in Istanbul. Brands that have their shops in Akmerkez are a selection of the biggest brands in the world. To be in Akmerkez itself, is a prestige for both the brands and for the visitors. Most of the visitors are upper income level people coming either for shopping or for socializing but mostly for both. Upper class people who are working around come for lunch or dinner as well. There are also those who have low purchasing power, but come to consume the symbolic value that Akmerkez provides. The staff working in Akmerkez, like the people working in the food court, parking lot, in the shops, security and cleaning staff consists the rest of the Akmerkez "public." The construction of Akmerkez, with the physical setting, architecture, interior design, its size, its location, the consumption environment it provides embodies the vital points on top of which the existing modern capitalist ideology is founded. The exhibition in Akmerkez has been organized for the first time in December 2003 as a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the foundation of Akmerkez. A selection from the artworks of the "well-known" Turkish artists had been displayed. Sanat Akmerkez'de II is the second exhibition which includes 200 artworks of 80 Turkish artists. Paintings, sculptures and installations are displayed on the shops' windows, in the food court, on the corridors and some of them were hung down from the ceiling.

Art-Alan II: Sıradışı Hayatlar took place in Kadıköy, at one of the central districts of the Asian side of Istanbul. It is a very lively district especially because it

is a midpoint for transportation. It has become for several years a shopping and entertainment center. Kadife Sokak is a little street, usually very crowded, day and night. There are a lot of cafés and bars of different types like, rock, ethnic, chill out and so on, a big movie theatre, little dress shops, music markets, second hand book stores, a piercing and tattoo shop. This is a street where young people used to hang out. There are always many people who spend time in front of the shops, cafés and bars therefore the street is almost never deserted. When it is compared to other main places that young people prefer to go in Istanbul it can be said that Kadife Sokak is for mostly middle-class youth. The architecture of the street is quite old however shops, cafés and bars have a newer interior design. During the exhibition the works were installed on the street, in front of the shops and cafés, on the pavement, inside the cafés and bars, and some were hung down from the buildings balconies. This is the second Art-Alan exhibition. The first one also took place on the same street but mainly in Karga, one of the café-bars engaged in many art projects, professional and experimental. This time the exhibition is more expanded on the whole street. It includes 47 artists working on visual arts and 12 artists in the field of performance arts, and also video and music performances.

Oda Projesi is a group project, made of three artists, working in Galata since 1997. They adopted the name Oda Projesi approximately three years later than they started to work in public spaces. They rented a three-room flat in Galata, in one of the buildings in the middle of which there is a courtyard. Galata is one of the oldest quarters of Istanbul. It is close to Taksim, the center of the European side of Istanbul and near the pedestrian street, Istiklal. Inhabitants of Galata are mostly people who emigrated from eastern parts of Turkey and there are also people from different ethnic groups. There are some upper income level people living in Galata since some

places have Bosphorus view but mostly there are low income families living in small flats. Streets are narrow; buildings are old having little courtyards. Street life is lively and crowded. Oda Group does not live in the flat they rented but they use them for projects, also as a meeting point for the people living around. The courtyard is surrounded by old buildings but one corner and half of the one side of the rectangular courtyard is open to the street passing in front of the courtyard. There is a small grocery store at this corner. Oda Projesi has several projects that have taken place in the rooms of that flat, in the courtyard and also in different quarters of Istanbul as well. I did not choose only one of their projects because of a crucial reason which reflects the nature of Oda Projesi's working principle: They underline that their project is a "model", a model of art making which can be better grasped when several projects are examined. Throughout the analysis I will refer to different projects by Oda Projesi in order to illustrate my arguments.

At the beginning of my study the first and the only criterion that was common in all of the three projects was their selection of space to make or display art: A shopping mall, a street, cafés and bars and a courtyard were all "public" spaces. If they position themselves as public art projects their stance will be compared and contrasted with museum and gallery practices. Sanat Akmerkez'de II comes forth with the question whether shopping malls can be suitable for art exhibitions or not¹⁶⁴ and differentiates itself from museums and galleries by the amount of people the artworks meet: "This exhibition is conducted to make art reach more people."¹⁶⁵ It reminds the foundation of museums in the West. The royal collections which were available for a limited group of people had become public to reach a broader

¹⁶⁴ "Çarşılar da sanata ev sahipliği yapamazlar mı?" Tomur Atagök, in the catalogue for Sanat Akmerkez'de II, 2004, p.12.

¹⁶⁵ "Bu sergi sanatı daha fazla insana ulaştırmak için yapılıyor." in "Bu Sergiyi Günde 50 Bin Kişi Gezecek," Milliyet Pazar, 28 November 2004, p.3.

audience (Bennett 1995). Here, admitting that museums get only limited amount of people, bringing the artworks in a shopping mall will end up in reaching more people. This emphasis on the amount of people is obvious in Erhan M. Ersöz's response to the question about the contribution of this exhibition to the cultural field as "Two of the most popular museums of the world, Pompidou is visited by 5-6 thousand people per day and Louvre is visited by 7 thousand people. Akmerkez is visited by 50 thousand people per day. In other words, it is a very important activity."¹⁶⁶ Art-Alan II and Oda Projesi also start with a similar question like "Is art made or displayed only in galleries or museums"¹⁶⁷ However, the main interest behind this question is not necessarily the amount of people reached, although it is an important part of it. These two projects are interested in the nature of the public encountering the artworks. Özgül Arslan states: "The visitors of an exhibition in an art gallery are predictable. Here, besides conditioned visitors of the exhibition there are other eyes as well."¹⁶⁸ Güneş Savaş states that as a starting point they did not want to be stuck in galleries, they found a place that can be used as a workshop in a completely different neighborhood from the places they used to live and they found themselves working with the inhabitants of that neighborhood.

In their aim to increase the amount of people reached by the exhibition is related with the main aim: Sanat Akmerkez'de II is an exhibition which proposes to have a contribution in the development of people's intellectual capacity and the construction of a creative consciousness. This attempt to "lift" the intellectual level of the public is parallel to what Tony Bennett (1995) identifies in the ideology of

¹⁶⁶ "Dünyanın en çok gezilen müzelerinden Pompidou'yu günde 5-6 bin kişi, Louvre'u 7 bin kişi geziyor. Akmerkez'i ise günde 50 bin kişi geziyor. Yani çok önemli bir etkinlik." Erhan M. Ersöz, in "Bu Sergiyi Günde 50 Bin Kişi Gezecek," Milliyet Pazar, 28 November 2004, p.3.

¹⁶⁷ "Sanat sadece galerilerde ve müzelerde mi yapılır ya da gösterilir?" Güneş Savaş, interview by author, 3 May 2005, İstanbul, tape recording.

¹⁶⁸ "Galerideki sergiye kimlerin geleceği belli. Burada şartlanarak gelenlerin dışında başka gözler de var." Özgül Arslan, interview by author, 12 April 2005, İstanbul, tape recording.

museums. He called this use of culture as a resource to influence and progressively modify the population's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors "governmentalization of power." The organization committee regards this exhibition as "the social responsibility of Akmerkez to support the cultural mission." Since Sanat Akmerkez'de II started with such a claim the advisory council created a selection made up of "the most typical, important and authentic examples of Turkish painting."¹⁶⁹ This very process of selection by a group of "experts" also reflects a similar attitude to that in museums. The strategy they choose to increase the capacity to educate the public is to put these paintings on the shops' windows within a sticker-frame on which the name of the artist is written in large puntos. There were also installations mostly on the empty spaces on the corridors with a name tag besides them on the floor. Reflecting this didactic mission of the exhibition Tomur Atagök states: "They will get familiar with some artists that they know the names but have not seen the works."¹⁷⁰

Since the public is mentioned as a unified, undifferentiated unit this reminds the democratizing claims of the museums to serving bourgeois modernist rhetoric of "progress" for everybody, for equal citizens (Bennett 1995). The main issues to be taught to public by Sanat Akmerkez'de II can be enumerated as the names of the artists, to recognize their works, to raise the interest and sensitivity to art, and to create the habit to attend exhibitions, conferences, museums and galleries. What Duncan (2000) said for museums, the didactic mission's aim to construct "civilized" population of citizens is also valid for Sanat Akmerkez'de II. The main difference may be that museums aimed to construct the citizens of newly established nation

¹⁶⁹ "Türk resminin en tipik, özgün ve en önemli örneklerini seçmeye çalıştık." Bubi, in "Bu Sergiyi Günde 50 Bin Kişi Gezecek," Milliyet Pazar, 28 November 2004, p.3.

¹⁷⁰ "İsimlerini duyduğu ama yapıtlarını görmediği bazı sanatçıları tanıyacaklar." Tomur Atagök, in catalogue for Sanat Akmerkez'de II, 2004, p.13.

states therefore, imposed the modern subject identity mostly based on a national narrative. In Sanat Akmerkez'de II case, the citizen that this exhibition aims to create is an urban (cosmopolitan), mostly upper class, educated and especially consuming subject who is aware of the cultural and artistic activities. Otherwise the selection of the space for such an exhibition would not be Akmerkez. The selection of Akmerkez is explained as “Akmerkez is not only a shopping mall but also a meeting point, an indispensable part of modern life”¹⁷¹ therefore, it is possible to establish a parallelism between the experience of this exhibition and museum experience since as Duncan (2000) said performing the museum is the experience of being “modern”.

The didactic attitude is not mentioned in Art-Alan II neither in the official text in the website nor by Özgül Arslan during the interview. The aim is not to make artists and their works known by the public. The names of the artists were written in small name labels when it is possible to put in next to the artwork. An important point that I noticed during my observations is that some people were looking for some information about who are the artists. This tendency to learn who the artist is may point out the established habit to get the artwork as knowledge rather than an experience. The lack of information available for the audience can be considered as a potential for the audience to improvised Oda Projesi has an attitude against the intention to “instruct” the public. Güneş Savaş says: “We organized painting workshops with children but this was not to educate or to change something. We never intended to teach something.”¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ “Akmerkez sadece bir alışveriş merkezi değil aynı zamanda çağdaş yaşamın vazgeçilmez bir parçası, bir buluşma noktası.” Zeynep Akdilli Oral, in the catalogue for Sanat Akmerkez'de II, 2004, p.5.

¹⁷² “Biz çocuklarla resim atölyeleri düzenledik ama bu eğitmek, bir şeyleri değiştirmek için değildi. Biz herhangi bir şey öğretmeyi amaç edinmedik asla.” Güneş Savaş, interview by author, 3 May 2005, İstanbul, tape recording.

Another important issue in Sanat Akmerkez'de II is about the merge of consumption with art. As Zeynep Akdilli Oral says “[w]hen it is considered that art and design have become inseparable for years, it can be said that artworks displayed in shops’ windows become more attractive and concepts of shopping and art integrate in the best way.”¹⁷³ The main scenario provided by Sanat Akmerkez'de II is to become familiar with contemporary Turkish artists and artworks while socializing and consuming. It is known that during the last decades there were several acts and practices to break the commoditization of artworks. Art movements aiming to produce artworks that can not be bought or sold had emerged. However, in Sanat Akmerkez'de II the installation of the artworks in the shops’ windows reveals one of the main aims of the exhibition to enhance the dependency between art and capitalist system or art and consumption. The artwork placed in the shops’ windows carries at the same time the function to exalt the ordinary commodity as well. As Erhan M. Ersöz states: “Artworks affected the way shops’ windows are contemplated. Artworks placed in shops’ windows where usually ordinary commodities were displayed, pulled attention to windows and therefore, to the shops [...] The support given to commercial life and the interactive relationship between art and commodity presentation made this activity more meaningful.”¹⁷⁴ Robert Smithson (2003), with reference to the art practices’ transformation to merchandise, said that galleries were the institutions that guarantee the hegemony in the cultural sphere. Sanat Akmerkez'de II defines itself as a new practice in the art scene. However, it remains

¹⁷³ “Sanat ve tasarımın yıllardır ayrılmaz bir bütün olduğu düşünülürse, mağaza vitrinlerinde sergilenen sanat eserlerinin çok daha dikkat çekici bir hale geldiğini ve alışveriş kavramı ile sanatın bu mekanlarda en iyi şekilde bütünleştiğini görüyoruz.” Zeynep Akdilli Oral, in the catalogue for Sanat Akmerkez'de II, 2004, p.5.

¹⁷⁴ “Sanat eserleri mağaza vitrinlerine bakışı etkiledi. Normalde günlük tüketim objeleri yerleştirilen vitrinlere yerleştirilen sanat eserleri kişilerin dikkatlerinin vitrinlere dolayısıyla dükkan içlerine yönelmesine yol açtı. [...] Ticari yaşamın desteklenmesi ve sanat ile ürün sunumu arasındaki interaktif ilişkinin birbirlerinden besleniyor durumda olması bu etkinliğe özel bir anlam katıyordu.” Erhan M. Ersöz, in the catalogue for Sanat Akmerkez'de II, 2004, p.7.

within the well-developed boundaries of modern bourgeois art system, and even it sustains this relationship. Although Ersöz gives this statement as an achieved end, based on my observations and dialogue with the visitors, they rarely notice first the artwork and come in front of the shop or enter in the shop. In general, the contrary occurs; while they were looking to the commodities in the windows it happens to them to notice the artwork. Even when people notice the artwork if they did not intended to buy something from the shop they look at the painting from a distance and pass by. Since during my observations there were not many people who seemed to be interested in artworks I can guess that the effect of that project on the income of the shops is probably not significant except the art lovers who came to visit the project had probably bought something. I spent several days in Akmerkez and I did shopping as well.

In the example of Art-Alan II Özgül Arslan does not refer to an aim like supporting the shops, cafés, and bars on the street through the project. Art-Alan II has not a discourse against the commoditization of artworks neither. Although it is not the aim of the project it has different effects on the places on the street. Özgül Arslan says that the street is already a lively street, the difference in the amount of people coming was remarkable in the opening, and during the music performances in the bars. During these days they probably got more customers than the usual. In the case of Oda Projesi, one of the important points that the project underlines is to remain distant from the galleries and their interwoven relationship with big corporations. She also says: “Banks and international corporations became monopolies and standardized. I did not mean that it is not possible to create good works from that point but they work with the same curators and within a closed community all the time. They will be out of energy. This city has much more

energy.”¹⁷⁵ The aim to be independent of capitalist bourgeois art world brings the problem of financial support for public art practices. Oda Projesi since 1997 supports itself even if it poses big problems for the three artists. They had to work in other jobs to gain enough money to meet the expense of their projects. When they go to foreign countries they get the money from these organizations. And since the last year they receive the amount for their rent from a foreign institution. Art-Alan II also had great financial problems. The necessary amount of money is gathered from the coordinators and some of the artists, the owners of cafés and bars on the streets. When it comes to Sanat Akmerkez'de II there was not a financial problem since it was the Akmerkez management which asked for the second exhibition: “Since last year the activity ‘Sanat Akmerkez’de’, organized to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Akmerkez, aroused a big interest in both our visitors, shops and the media this year we organized ‘Sanat Akmerkez’de II’.”¹⁷⁶ Erhan M. Ersöz also explains: “It should be considered normal that the suggestion for a second exhibition came from Akmerkez. Today, there is a limited, even no institutional support for art and Akmerkez had an important material and moral contribution through this first step. The extent of this contribution will be better understood in time.”¹⁷⁷

Another dimension about the relationship of artworks with the capitalist bourgeois order is the vital role that the collectors play to sustain the art world.

¹⁷⁵ “Bankalar ve uluslararası şirketler çok kalıplaştı, tekelleşti. Buradan bir yere gidilemez demiyorum ama hep aynı küratörlerle kapalı bir çevre içinde çalışıyorlar. Fazla bir enerjileri kalmayacak. Bu şehir çok daha fazla enerjiye sahip.” Güneş Savaş, interview by author, 3 May 2005, İstanbul, tape recording.

¹⁷⁶ “Geçtiğimiz yıl Akmerkez’in 10. yıldönümü kutlamaları çerçevesinde düzenlediğimiz ‘Sanat Akmerkez’de’ etkinliğinin gerek ziyaretçilerimiz ve mağazalarımız gerekse basın tarafından çok büyük ilgi görmesi üzerine bu yıl ‘Sanat Akmerkez’de II’ etkinliğini düzenliyoruz.” Erhan M. Ersöz, in the catalogue for Sanat Akmerkez’de II, 2004, p.7.

¹⁷⁷ “Böyle bir etkinliğin [...] bu yıl ikinci kez tekrarlanması önerisinin bizzat Akmerkez tarafından gelmesi çok normal karşılanmalıdır. Bugün sanatı destekleyen kurum yok denecek kadar sınırlıyken Akmerkez bir ilk adım atarak maddi ve manevi olarak çok önemli bir katkı yapmıştır. Bu katkının boyutu ve önemi ileride çok daha iyi anlaşılacaktır.” Erhan M. Ersöz, in the catalogue for Sanat Akmerkez’de II, 2004, p.7.

Martha Rosler (1999) mentioned how the distinction between people who “appreciate” the works and those who “own” them is present in modern bourgeois art discourse. In Akmerkez catalogue, among the main aims of the exhibition is to create future collectors: “People coming for shopping will see the artworks, will enter within the interaction area of art, not immediately but in future they will acquire one or more artworks, they will invest in contemporary art practices.”¹⁷⁸ Here, again it is clear that Sanat Akmerkez’de II aims to create a population who knows and buys the artworks.

From this point I can move to the concept of artwork constructed by Sanat Akmerkez’de II. This exhibition positions itself by bringing the artworks from the galleries to the everyday life of the public. “While in museums artworks are displayed on white walls and an intellectual and emotional relation is established between the artworks and the viewer, in Akmerkez artworks are brought in front of people coming to the shopping mall for completely different purposes. Artworks are displayed on the corridors and sitting areas, in shops’ windows where various commodities are displayed.”¹⁷⁹ This explanation refers to the concept of high art as autonomous and alienated, and remote from the public (Crimp 1997). Sanat Akmerkez’de II claims that museum is not the only proper place for displaying artworks and brings the artworks in the middle of people’s daily activities. Brian O’Doherty (1999) mentioned that galleries are detached from life praxis since many activities like eating or drinking are forbidden. Whereas Akmerkez differentiates itself by making people’s life easier by gathering all the necessary activities into a

¹⁷⁸ “Alışverişe gelenler, sanat yapıtlarını görecek, sanatın etkileşim alanı içine girecekler; şimdi olmasa bile ileride muhakkak bir hatta birçok sanat yapıtına sahip olacaklar, çağdaş sanat yapıtlarına yatırım yapacaklar.” Tomur Atagök, in the catalogue for Sanat Akmerkez’de II, 2004, p.13.

¹⁷⁹ “Sanat eserleri müzelerde yanyana beyaz duvarlarda sergilenip, izleyici ile aralarında duygusal ve entellektüel bir bağ kurulurken, Akmerkez’de birçok ticari objenin sunulduğu vitrinlerin önünde, oturma ve dolaşma alanlarında başka bir amaçla gelmiş insanların önlerine getirildi.” Erhan M. Ersöz, in the catalogue for Sanat Akmerkez’de II, 2004, p.7.

single building. So, Akmerkez offers a “better” and more “relaxed” experience of the artworks. Mustafa Altıntaş, one of the artists, says “An exhibition in a shopping mall is a great idea since people are bored in galleries and they are afraid of the prices of the artworks.”¹⁸⁰

The paradoxical stance of Sanat Akmerkez'de II about the way artworks are presented is noteworthy. The artworks are put in a shop window next to other commodities or it is hung from the ceiling among other decorations or installed on the corridors among other stands. Here, this attitude can be regarded as an attempt to make the high artwork an ordinary object. An artwork once put in a museum building gives the feeling that it is difficult to understand, it is something high. However, seeing an artwork on a shop's window has the potential to give the sense that the artwork is psychologically available, that is, not so difficult to understand. However, at the same time there is an emphasis on the high status of the artwork as well. The modernist formalist understanding that the art object carries an inherent aesthetic value is kept. It means that wherever it is displayed it possesses the fixed and transhistorical high value. While the artworks to be displayed were selected the artists were asked about where they wanted their work to be displayed. Devrim Erbil stated: “I want my paintings to be displayed in a respectable place that they deserve.”¹⁸¹ and Hakan Onur said: “It does not matter for me where my paintings will be displayed since an artwork is always an artwork.”¹⁸² This higher value assigned to artworks is supported by what Douglas Crimp called museological

¹⁸⁰ “Alışveriş merkezinde sergi çok iyi bir fikir. Çünkü galeride insanlar sıkılıyor ve resim fiyatlarından korkuyor.” Mustafa Altıntaş in “Bu Sergiyi Günde 50 Bin Kişi Gezecek,” Milliyet Pazar, 28 November 2004, p.3.

¹⁸¹ “Resmimin hak ettiği saygın bir yerde sergilenmesini isterim tabi.” Devrim Erbil in “Bu Sergiyi Günde 50 Bin Kişi Gezecek,” Milliyet Pazar, 28 November 2004, p.3.

¹⁸² “Resmimin nerede sergileneceği benim için önemli değil çünkü yapıt nerede olursa olsun kendini gösterir.” Hakan Onur in “Bu Sergiyi Günde 50 Bin Kişi Gezecek,” Milliyet Pazar, 28 November 2004, p.3.

devices: lamps enlightening the works, big name labels, frames, red stripe used to separate the works from other things. These material serve to highlight the artwork, makes it safe, isolated and untouchable like in museums. Even though the artwork's availability in a shopping mall could decrease the distance of the artwork from the audience, these museological devices reestablish this distance. In addition, they create little islands of high art spaces within a popular public space like a shopping mall. Differently from galleries there are no big white walls in Akmerkez. Duncan (2000) talked about the increasing amount of empty space between works which makes the installation more aesthetic and the museum space more sacrilized. In Akmerkez the opposite was the case, the shopping mall is itself too decorated. One of the visitors told me that she did not noticed that what is hung from the ceiling was an artwork but she thought that it was one of the usual decorations of Akmerkez. It is obvious that the works which are not surrounded by the red stripe or which are not accompanied with a name label can be perceived as a decoration. What was interesting was the sentence written on the sticker that was put all around: "Attention! It is forbidden and dangerous to touch the decoration" like it is written in the museums. The point that an art object in public space cannot be differentiated from a non-art object is an important question to be raised for public art practices. Public art has risen as a response to the separation of the art world from everyday life but it should be noted that if an artwork is lost within other objects in everyday life it is also an issue to be worked on as well. Another point that is reminded by these museological devices is the authenticity and originality of the artworks. Museum relies on this theme of originality, presents itself as the only opportunity to see the original (Crimp 1997). The original works of the important Turkish artists are made available by Sanat Akmerkez'de II which is presented as an offer not to miss.

Art-Alan II contained mostly art objects that were done by the artists in their studios and placed in the site. For some of them the idea was first found during the project's preparation period and then applied by the artist at the site. There were also several performances. Some art objects next to which it was possible to put a name label had one but the others had not. None of the installations were separated by a stripe or something else. There was no material to remind the higher value of the artworks, they were not made untouchable. During my observations I saw many people who were spending time in front of them, they were touching, shaking, removing some of them. An attempt to make people buy these works was out of question. There were many works that cannot be bought as a result of their nature, for example the one that was applied on the pavement. Özgül Arslan said that in galleries you cannot even touch the works but in this project there are works that people touch, write on it or paint it. However, I can give two examples related to the high status given to objects installed and in what sense they were conceived as separate and distant from the public. Özgül Arslan told me that one of the artists became mad when he/she saw that his/her work was damaged, that is, he/she was expecting some sensitivity, the sterile environment that the galleries provide to protect the works. Özgül Arslan complained about this attitude of the artist. The second example is a performance project for which two Japanese artists coiled an old Volkswagen up with a string. However, people tried to dismantle it, especially during the night. The performance took a couple of days. When the performance was not enacted anymore the Volkswagen was supposed to remain as coiled up. And Özgül Arslan told me that they decided to write on a piece of sheet to stick on the Volkswagen: "This is an artwork. Please do not touch". The coiled car became a mystified art object. However, there was an artistic gesture by the Japanese artists

which had received a response from the audience. They highlighted the old Volkswagen which had become almost invisible to the inhabitants and passers-by since it was there for a long period of time without any remarkable change. People noticed the car and the strings on it and gave a response with another improvised performance. Which one was art, the gesture of the artists or the car itself? It is an important question. If it was the gesture, after that the performance had ended the car could be left to turn back to its old condition if people insisted in dismantling it. However, in that case the object of the gesture becomes the “untouchable” art object. Taking these different attitudes into consideration it can be said that Art-Alan II had some paradoxical attitudes.

Art-Alan II is a project which also put an accent on the fact that people do not think of music performances or performance arts or videos as artworks. To break the conventional definition of art based solely on art forms like painting or sculpture is an important part of bringing the exhibition to the everyday lives of people so that they can see and experience it. Oda Projesi has also an aim to break the definition of artwork in many people’s minds as distant and distinct from their lives. They believe that it is possible to make art by “drawing attention to ordinary ways of living.” That is why they chose to work within everyday life. Oda Projesi is a project which does not focus on the object created, neither to the “high value” attached to it. “We were not interested in producing an object in a space or making people see the object or learn something. We always looked for establishing new relationships.”¹⁸³ Therefore there was nothing to buy, there was no space for an art collector in the case of Oda Projesi. The only thing that can be collected from such a project is the memory of

¹⁸³ “Mekanda bir nesne üretmek ve nesneyi insanlara göstermek ya da öğretmekle ilgilenmedik hiç. Daima yeni ilişkiler oluşturabilir miyiz diye yollar aradık.” Güneş Savaş, interview by author, 3 May 2005, İstanbul, tape recording.

this particular project that was attended. The originality of the artwork, one of the myths of modernist art tradition, is overthrown by Oda Projesi as well. They consider themselves as a model. The importance of their work does not come from the originality; each work will be unavoidably original in the sense of being unique. They are producing a model of making art so, Güneş Savaş states that they can help to anybody who is willing to work like them.

To focus on the formal visual features of the artwork originates from modernist view of the artwork as well. From this perspective the aesthetic value is present in its visual perception and recognition of its formal qualities. The formal characteristics of a work are the qualities distinguishing the work of art from other objects. In Oda Projesi case, there was no art object at all to focus on its formal features. In Art-Alan II there were several art objects however, there was no reference to their formal characteristics. Sanat Akmerkez'de II had several references to the importance assigned to the formal structure of the artworks. An exhibition tour is organized twice during the exhibition period. I attended one of them in which Server Demirtaş was the guide. During the tour mostly we spend time in front of the paintings in shop's windows. Server Demirtaş several times referred to the use of colors, light, whether it is figurative or abstract, shape of the frame, several techniques applied and so on. Some of the terms would seem totally strange to a listener who is not familiar to this field. Robert Smithson (2003)'s point about the reduction of the artworks to a visual material and transportable merchandise is again comes to light. Sanat Akmerkez'de II relies on the understanding that in the encounter with the artwork the meaning comes from the formal characteristics of the artwork inherent in itself.

Many physical characteristics of Sanat Akmerkez'de II demonstrate to its visitor how similar its construction is to an exhibition in an art gallery or museum. Besides the experience it offers, in its catalogue the aim to create a gallery or museum like experience is clearly expressed next to the opposite claims to be different from a usual art gallery. First of all, in the catalogue there is a list of aims. Tomur Atagök enumerates several thoughts and actions expected to be evoked in the minds of the visitors: "They will think about why there is a limited number of visitors of art museums and why IstanbulModern: Museum of Modern Art was opened in 2004 with delay. They will wonder whether or not Turkey has a museum of contemporary art. There will be a necessity to open big galleries and art museums inside the shopping malls like in Japan. State and local governments will support private institutions for such activities. Istanbul will have more lively contemporary art spaces."¹⁸⁴ In addition Erhan M. Ersöz describes the ideal behind this exhibition as to establish a permanent art gallery in Akmerkez in which artworks will be displayed and sold and he adds: "I want to express my gratitude to the shareholders and directors of Akmerkez Gayrimenkul Yatırım A.Ş. to give the opportunity to display 200 artworks of 80 artists at 100 shops and common areas of Akmerkez to 50 thousand people, to construct the biggest art gallery in Turkey and to make this important cultural activity happen for a second time."¹⁸⁵ Therefore, Sanat Akmerkez'de II, in which artworks are placed in different corners of the shopping

¹⁸⁴ "Türkiye'de neden sanat müzesinin sınırlı izleyicisinin bulunduğunu ve İstanbul Modern Sanat Müzesi'nin 2004 yılında gecikerek açıldığını düşünecek, Türkiye'nin bir çağdaş sanat müzesinin bulunup bulunmadığını merak edecek, Japonya'da olduğu gibi alışveriş merkezlerinde büyük galeri ve sanat müzesi açma gereği duyulacak; devlet ve yerel yönetim, bu tür girişimler için özel kurumlara destek verecek, İstanbul daha yoğun yaşanan çağdaş sanat mekanlarına kavuşacak." Tomur Atagök, in the catalogue for Sanat Akmerkez'de II, 2004, p.13.

¹⁸⁵ "80 sanatçıdan 200 adet eserin 100 mağaza ve genel alanlarda her gün Akmerkez'e gelen ortalama 50.000 kişiye sergilenmesine, Türkiye'nin en büyük galerisinin inşa edilmesine ve ikinci kez bu önemli kültürel hizmetin oluşmasına olanak sağlayan başta Akmerkez Gayrimenkul Yatırım A.Ş. ortaklarına ve yönetimine [...] şükranlarımı bir kez daha sunarım." Erhan M. Ersöz, in the catalogue for Sanat Akmerkez'de II, 2004, p.7

mall, does not even aim to create a different experience for the audience but just to prepare the ground for a future art gallery in the shopping mall. And the main difference underlined here is to make a more easily available art gallery. People who are already coming to the shopping mall as a part of their daily life will also find an art gallery, therefore these people will not only become educated and more culturally competent but also will support the development of the local art world by buying the artworks. Shopping malls are referred as “cathedrals of consumption” by many social theoreticians and museums and galleries are referred as “elite temple of arts”. In that case Akmerkez can be seen as an elite temple to consume both arts and other commodities and services all at once. This merge of consumption and art is witnessed within the contemporary art museums in which there are new shops, cafés and restaurants. It can be said that there is an inclination of creating big complexes in which the public can be served in multiple ways.

All the qualities that Brian O’Doherty (1999) used for art galleries can be adapted to Sanat Akmerkez'de II: A social elitism, a social, financial and intellectual snobbery. Such a project in Akmerkez is designed to accommodate the prejudices and enhance the self-image of the upper middle class like O’Doherty said for art galleries. From that point it is relevant to move on to the construction of audience for Sanat Akmerkez'de II. The audience addressed by these three projects widely varies. They can be compared in multiple ways. First of all it can be said that the target audience of these projects can be read by regarding the aims of the projects. For example, one of the important aims of Sanat Akmerkez'de II is to create educated citizens. This implies a distinction between those who follow the artistic activities and have some knowledge in that field and those who do not. This very judgement can be considered as a discrimination based on cultural capital in Bourdieu’s terms.

In the case of Art-Alan II, even if there is no direct reference to educate people, Özgül Arslan pronounced controversial value judgements about being knowledgeable about art. On the one hand, she complained from the waiters and waitresses of the cafés and bars who “do not understand what is going on” and on the other hand, she said that “those who have not been in galleries and museums carry a greater potential to be open to and creative in new public art practices.” For Oda Projesi the hierarchy established in people’s mind about art practices is an issue to work on. They deliberately work with those people who say “I do not understand”¹⁸⁶ in order to be in communication with them and to break their self-image and understanding of art. The critical point in the case of Oda Projesi is that they see and acknowledge the differences without having a judgemental stance.

If I take Bourdieu (1984)’s studies done on the museum attendance in Europe it is seen that people with higher income and education levels attend museums more often than people with lower income and education levels. Sanat Akmerkez’de II presents itself as showing a “social responsibility” by creating an opportunity “for everybody” to have access to the artworks. This attempt supports Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital, taste and distinction and the way these are linked to educational and economical level of people. If through education and enough exposure to artworks people can acquire cultural competence Sanat Akmerkez’de II creates an environment which will provide the education service together with consumption activities (like museums and galleries also do) which will always seem like a democratizing act but will sustain the sense of difference between people. This exhibition does not attempt to focus on these distinctions, works on them, or problematizes them. Audience is not the whole population who are directly

¹⁸⁶ “Ben anlamam.” Güneş Savaş, interview by author, 3 May 2005, İstanbul, tape recording.

experiencing the works but also those whom the project aimed to address. When the discursive constructions in the catalogue are examined it can be found that like Bennett (1995) had argued for museums, the public addressed by the exhibition is presented as a non-differentiated public since the shopping mall is open to everybody, at least in theory. However, the selection of Akmerkez as a space for this exhibition demonstrates that there is a deliberate choice made to address upper income level people. There are hundreds of people working in Akmerkez who also met the artworks like the visitors even if they were not targeted by the organizing committee and the artists. When Tomur Atagök was listing the aims of the exhibition he uses the words: “those coming for shopping”¹⁸⁷ as the public. And he also refers to buy at least one artwork, therefore addressing high income level people. People who are working for different services in Akmerkez are totally ignored. There is no reference to the heterogeneity of the public that can get the opportunity to encounter the works through the project but there is a reference to a greater amount of upper income level people as the target art audience.

The construction of the audience as faceless and unified public ignoring the diversity in it is also witnessed in Sanat Akmerkez'de II. I experienced during the exhibition tour how the disembodied spectator subject having the Eye (O'Doherty 1999) is aimed to be created. Server Demirtaş asked about the participants' background but most probably it was done with the aim of understanding the level of knowledge about or familiarity with the art world or art theory. The participants are conceived as the spectators who are trying to get the “real” meaning inherent in the artwork. Although he asked about what we are thinking, the experience of the viewer at the encounter with the work is not referred at all. During the exhibition tour I was

¹⁸⁷ “Alışverişe gelenler” Tomur Atagök, in the catalogue for Sanat Akmerkez'de II, 2004, p.13.

not talkative not to manipulate the ordinary flow of the tour. Just once I started to explain what I had experienced with one of the installations. Server Demirtaş told me that it was a very interesting interpretation but the lady with whom we had the tour together was always asking what the artist wanted to express. She was a perfect example of that autonomous, modern, civilized, bourgeois subject that is aimed to be created, ready to learn more and more about contemporary art. One of her first sentences during the tour was that she was completely incompetent in understanding these abstract works. She was a fifty years old upper middle class woman who used to attend painting courses. She took some notes about Demirtaş's explanations and critiques of the works. She did not seem to be interested in what I was telling them about the installation, she never talked about her experiences, sometimes she confirmed Demirtaş's interpretations and made several statements about the formal qualities of the paintings.

Before going into the construction of audience of Art-Alan II and Oda Projesi it is necessary to bring the significant issues about the concept of space since in an alternative conception of the audience the understanding of space plays a crucial role. If three projects will be compared in terms of their construction of space questions like how do they define space, how do they read it, what kind of experience of space do they propose will be relevant questions. Site-specificity is an important point to start to compare. Site-specificity was defined by Douglas Crimp (1997) as the wedding of the work with the environment. In Sanat Akmerkez'de II's case works are taken from the galleries or from the collections or from artists' studios to the shopping mall. As Crimp said modernist art tradition defining the artwork siteless and homeless makes possible the voyage of artworks to different sites. This exhibition based on such a modernist perspective brought the works and isolated

them from the specific characteristics of the site. First of all, Erhan M. Ersöz's response to the question about the placement of the works was meaningful: "There is no conscious and planned choice. An important criterion was the size of the artworks. But by coincidence certain paintings looked good in some windows. And some others were in total contrast with the window."¹⁸⁸ When artists were asked to decide a site for the placement of their works Bedri Baykam said "I did not mention a specific choice about the shop. I have never thought that my painting should fit the shop."¹⁸⁹ This means that his work carries a value independent of its site. The artworks in this exhibition were mostly already produced works, only some of the artists created works with the idea of this exhibition in mind, like Mustafa Altıntaş. He said: "I made a special painting for this exhibition. I would not want my painting displayed in a refrigerator shop. I preferred Mavi Jeans since it matches with the subject of my painting."¹⁹⁰ and Doğan Paksoy said: "I give a painting that I had done before for this exhibition. for the shop I preferred AyYıldız since there are nude women figures in my painting as well."¹⁹¹ Here it is remarkable that these artists only refer to the physical characteristics of the site in terms of being coherent with the work. However, when the work is conceived, and produced on the site the change in the placement of the work means to destroy the work. These kinds of site-specific works cannot be commoditized neither, since it is not possible to buy or sell them.

¹⁸⁸ "Ortada bilinçli ve planlı bir tercih yok. Büyük etken eserlerin büyüklükleri oldu. Ama tesadüfen bazı resimler vitrinlere çok yakıştı. Bazıları da tezat oluşturdu." Erhan M. Ersöz, in "Bu Sergiyi Günde 50 Bin Kişi Gezecek," Milliyet Pazar, 28 November 2004, p.3.

¹⁸⁹ "Mağaza konusunda bir istekte bulunmadım. Resmimin de hiçbir zaman mağazaya uygun olması gerektiğini düşünmedim." Bedri Baykam, in "Bu Sergiyi Günde 50 Bin Kişi Gezecek," Milliyet Pazar, 28 November 2004, p.3.

¹⁹⁰ "Sergi için özel bir tablo yaptım. Tablomun bir buzdolabı mağazasında asılmasını istemezdim. Konuyla uyumlu olduğunu düşündüğüm için Mavi Jeans'i uygun gördüm." Mustafa Altıntaş, in "Bu Sergiyi Günde 50 Bin Kişi Gezecek," Milliyet Pazar, 28 November 2004, p.3.

¹⁹¹ "Sergi için elimdeki bir resmi verdim. Mağaza olarak AyYıldız'ı seçtim çünkü resimlerde de çıplak kadın figürleri kullanıyorum." Doğan Paksoy, in "Bu Sergiyi Günde 50 Bin Kişi Gezecek," Milliyet Pazar, 28 November 2004, p.3.

There were some installations that were created only for Akmerkez but apart from these, this understanding of site-specificity can not be found in Sanat Akmerkez'de II.

Art-Alan II includes several works produced specifically for this exhibition. The example of the sculpture called “man drinking beer” which placed on the street was referred by Özgül Arslan as a project produced only by considering the practices of this street. Japanese artists’ performance of coiling the old Volkswagen up with a string was an idea developed by the artists after they noticed that there was a Volkswagen left on the street. Then, the owner of the car was found, and the permission got for the performance. She also mentioned that the reason this exhibition includes music performances was the usual practices of the street which are marked by different music types. These kind of works taking the practices of the street as a starting point can be considered as site-specific works. From Nick Kaye (2000)’s perspective site-specificity is the relation to the local position, to the situation. Although Art-Alan II does not directly refer to the concept of site-specificity, its relation with physical or practical conceptualization of space, it can be said that the understanding of site did not stuck in the limited framework of physicality. The concept of site-specificity in Art-Alan II is not reduced to an object-background relationship like it is in Sanat Akmerkez'de II.

Oda Projesi has a very clear attitude about their conception of space and site-specificity. To understand Oda Projesi’s model of art making it is necessary to refer to Lefebvrian social space or de Certeau’s understanding of space. Oda Projesi underlines and works on the concept of space in its actualization, in its active utilization. In that sense it is close to Lefebvrian space which is socially produced. When several projects of Oda Projesi are considered it can be seen that the same area

was used in each project in a completely different way. The emphasis was not on how the space is changed by the furniture put inside or removed from there but on the event created in that space which reorganizes the relations of the subjects to each other each time. Space for them is not a void to be filled in but they try to get the energy going on in the room or in the courtyard. On the one hand, their projects make reference to the multiplicity of experiences possible in a certain space and on the other hand they also mention the daily use of space, a rhythm of the daily practices of that space. Lefebvre (1991)'s of spatial practices and lived space are helpful to grasp Oda Projesi's construction of space. Daily routine, urban reality is based on spatial practices but lived space refers to the appropriation of space by lived experience. The courtyard is made up of several activities of the daily routine. An art project going on in the courtyard makes this space a completely different space for a short period of time. An example will be illuminating. Güneş Savaş talked about a project realized by a guest artist Eric Göngrich. The name of the project was "picnic city" since the very starting point for the artist is the plural ways in which Istanbul is appropriated by the inhabitants, spontaneously. By bringing a piece of cloth and something to cook, people are able to make a picnic next to the high way. For the project they brought some kind of a green plastic carpet in the middle of the courtyard and an invitation is made to the inhabitants to join the courtyard together with something they had cooked. There was during the whole day a slide show of Istanbul dias of one of the artists. Different people met there, watched the slide show and chatted about Istanbul. An occasion was created. The experience of the courtyard is turned out to be something else for a limited period of time. Oda Projesi considers the space as something fluid, a constantly produced place. Space is not pre-determined in that sense, is realized in practice (de Certeau 1984).

Güneş Savaş mentioned also that Oda Projesi had different projects on the same area and each project had always had a residue, a memory that affected the next project in some way even if the next project was something completely different. Previous projects had an effect on the future projects but in each project they faced with new boundaries as well, it was possible to generate a new ground of relationalities each time. The statement that Lefebvre offers about the generative and at the same time limiting quality of space can be relevant at that point. Social space is the result of previous actions and the origin for new ones. While the possible relationships of people and spaces is clearly mentioned in the text at the official website of Oda Projesi, Sanat Akmerkez'de II has not mentioned the use, appropriation or transformation of space and Art-Alan II has not focus on the concept of space neither. Usual and established use of the space can be made visible by offering totally different spatial experiences operate in that area. Oda Projesi suggested new experiences challenging daily use of that area. The establishment of a local radio station in the middle of the courtyard can be given as another example. The presence of this radio station created new experiences of that space. Although the area of broadcast is limited to the buildings around, the whole flow of experiences within that neighborhood altered when people could listen what is going on in the courtyard from their homes, when people could come to talk or sing or become the DJ of the radio any time they want. In Richard Schechner (1993)'s terms these projects can be considered as an experience of the transformation of space into a playfield.

In Sanat Akmerkez'de II the artworks are installed in such a way that the coming of the artworks did not offer a new way of experiencing the space. The installation of the works duplicates the act of contemplation that people used to do in

their daily tour of the shopping mall. People used to contemplate each other, windows, constantly renewed and appealing decorations and so on. The artworks are placed in the windows, on the corridors or hung down from the ceiling like the commercial posters, stands and decoration material are placed. There was no attempt to lead people to a new experience in the same shopping mall by turning it into a different ground. Such an attempt will be “too challenging” for an exhibition design which avoids to disrupt the daily consumption routines of the visitors. The aim is to introduce more material/commodities/artworks into their shopping time. Just like people becoming aware of the new trends during the shopping even if they do not buy anything, people are made to become familiar with the artworks even if they do not buy immediately. The installations are put behind the red stripe which is a prevention of a more embodied relationship with the works. Sanat Akmerkez'de II is, on the one hand, almost duplicating the space construction of museums and galleries in many terms and on the other hand, it did not aim to alter the spatial practices, in the Lefebvrian sense, of the shopping mall.

It is obvious that the mere selection of a public space as the exhibition site does not make this project a public art project. As Lucy R. Lippard (1995) mentioned, being outside the conventional art buildings refer to a physical understanding of space. The relationships that the projects construct for their public and the offered performance by these projects are to be studied in order to grasp the positions of these projects within current public art practices. To study the space means to focus on the life that takes place there. As Negt and Kluge (2000) underlined, the vital point is not only where the art practice takes place but also how it takes place, that is, how the modes of communication are established.

One of the important criteria in the audience construction of different projects is whether or not, after the works are installed, they follow the audience's responses. If the heterogeneity of audience and the multiplicity of their experiences with the works are ignored, it means that the project is repeating some kind of "life-erasing" characteristics of the gallery. In Sanat Akmerkez'de II there was no attempt by the artists or the coordinators to witness, to document or at least to take into consideration the responses that the artworks received. They were only interested in statistical changes in the number of visitors and the amount of increase in the shops' incomes. Art-Alan was more sensitive in following the responses of the audience. One main reason that the responses of the audience could be followed was that Özgül Arslan lives in the same street and she had deliberately wanted to do the exhibition close to her place to be able to follow it. Everyday she had time to make an exhibition tour. She was complaining about the artists' indifferent attitudes to audience-artworks relationship. "Not to put artworks in a gallery means to expect different reactions. I encountered many different reactions for example, positive or negative. But the artists do not do that. Some of the artists were not even interested in where their works would be placed."¹⁹² Of the responses coming from the audience she explained that "some do not notice the artwork, some do not consider it important, some make fun of it but there are also those who stop and look at it. We do not know what they think, or what are the different interpretations. It would be interesting to know how people tell about these artworks to their close friends."¹⁹³

¹⁹² "İşleri galeriye koymamak orada olacağından farklı bir tepki beklemek demek. Ben birçok şeye rastladım mesela, olumlu ya da olumsuz. Ama sanatçılar bunu yapmıyorlar. Hatta bazıları işlerinin nereye nasıl yerleştirileceği ile de ilgilenmedi." Özgül Arslan, interview by author, 12 April 2005, İstanbul, tape recording.

¹⁹³ "Bazıları farketmiyor, bazıları önemsemiyor, bazıları dalga geçiyor ama durup bakanlar da var. Elbette tam olarak ne düşündüklerini ya da farklı insanların yorumlarını bilemiyoruz. Acaba bunu samimi olacakları bir ortamda nasıl anlatırlar, bunu bilmek ilginç olabilirdi." Özgül Arslan, interview by author, 12 April 2005, İstanbul, tape recording.

Although Art-Alan II gives importance to the responses by the audience, it remains at the level of curiosity about how different people from different habitus react to the artworks. Art-Alan II is not a project that relies on the understanding of artwork as an unfinished process gaining its meaning by the experience of the audience. If this was the case, the exhibition construction would be different. An example of preventing the contribution of the audience to the artwork may be given. There was a photograph of an old man, printed in real life size and installed on the entrance stairs of one of the cafés. The old man in the photograph looked like sitting on the stairs. Özgül Arslan told me that 3 teenagers from the neighborhood put a handkerchief in front of the work, some coins and a cigarette on the handkerchief. She continued: “I watched them first to see whether or not they would damage the artwork. Then, I notice that they only made fun of it and I did not say anything. When they left I went there and I took whatever they put there.”¹⁹⁴ The contribution by these boys is not taken into consideration, even erased from the artwork. The coordinator who was complaining about the indifference of some artists had an attitude excluding the audience contribution as well. The boys made this old man a beggar, “living” on the street. Even though the material that they put in front of the work could not be kept there for a long time, the gesture of the coordinator is a good example to illustrate Art-Alan II’s construction of audience. In this project, subject positions were not questioned: artist and viewer positions are kept but with some flexibility like conceptualizing some works that the viewer could contribute. Some examples of these kinds of works are white plaster masks waiting to be painted on or covered toilet walls with paper waiting to be written on. However, there were no

¹⁹⁴ “Önce zarar falan verecekler mi diye baktım uzaktan. Ama sonra baktım ki eğleniyorlar bir şey söylemedim. Onlar gidince gidip ne koydularsa topladım.” Özgül Arslan, interview by author, 12 April 2005, İstanbul, tape recording.

cooperative works realized together with the audience. The way to break the artist position as “the creator” is to construct shared projects during which the fixed identities of artist and audience are broken. It is undeniable that the works placed outside the conventional art institutions are more open to contingencies and multiple responses, it faces dynamic, contextual and circumstantial factors (Gooding 1997). But this does not mean that every work put outside is challenging the artist-audience dichotomy. Sanat Akmerkez'de II had two works that were supposed to be interactive. One is a gravure workshop by Süleyman Saim Tekcan and the other was Özdemir Altan's collage. Both of them were installed in the food court, the most crowded part of the shopping mall. Huge machines of gravure and some examples from works by Süleyman Saim Tekcan were pulling attention of the visitors but what they did mostly was limited to approach the site and contemplate the machines and works. I spend several hours in different days I did not witness any workshop activities at all. I could not meet the artist neither, there was an assistant of him, who was bored since very few people were interested. The other “interactive” work, contrary to its description by the coordinators, demonstrated to what extent Sanat Akmerkez'de II relies on a discriminatory attitude between the portrait of the artist drawn as a distinct and higher subject and the audience. Özdemir Altan's project was supposed to create an assemblage and collage on a big canvas installed in the food court. I saw nobody among the population eating in the food court joining the production of the work. There was not such an invitational environment for the audience. Only a restricted and selected group of people contributed. The announcement for the opening of the painting was: “The opening for the huge painting by the famous artist Özdemir Altan in cooperation with a group of 30 people including well-known artists, children and amateur painters from different

occupations will be on Saturday 18 December 2004.”¹⁹⁵ The opening day was a duplication of an opening in an art gallery. The area in front of the work is surrounded by a red stripe again as if this time the whole spectacle was a “work of art” distinct and higher from the everyday life going on around. Since there was not much space and the food court was very crowded, tables of “ordinary” people were next to the table on which there were glasses of wine. Very well dressed artists and their companies are assembled in the limited area chatting and smiling. This spectacle was watched by other people who were curious about what is going on since there are also cameras coming from different TV channels. Artists were performing in that isolated world as if they were not seeing people around but at the same time the presence of the “ordinary” people around was what made them so “distinguished”.

The construction of Sanat Akmerkez'de II and Art-Alan II were mostly based on a subject-object relationship while Oda Projesi converted this model of established relationship into a subject-subject relationship. Oda Projesi constructs their projects on an understanding of fluid subject positions. People come with their habitus, daily behaviors and prejudices to a ground on which people have equal say in the production of the artwork. The project is not imposed on people. Güneş Savaş explained: “Since we took the energy of the neighborhood itself as the starting point for our projects, we never encountered a reaction like ‘who are these people, why are they engaged in such an activity’. They were the participants, directors, sources of the projects. Once an artist had come with an idea to construct a band for 23 April but we realized that people were not willing to do it, so the project was transformed

¹⁹⁵ “Ünlü ressam Özdemir Altan’ın, aralarında ünlü sanatçıların, çocukların ve çeşitli meslek gruplarından amatör ressamların yer aldığı 30 kişilik kalabalık bir grubun katkılarıyla gerçekleştirdiği dev resmin açılışı 18 Aralık 2004 Cumartesi günü gerçekleşecek.” in the press release distributed at the opening day to guests, 18 December 2004.

into a completely different one. We think that the critical difference lies between dropping the project to the neighborhood and creating it in cooperation with these people.”¹⁹⁶ In a shared project audience becomes participants and co-workers. Only in these kinds of experiences people can get rid of their usual identities and start to engage in fluid action and interaction (Stiles 2003). The interaction constructed by Oda Projesi in their projects not only takes inhabitants at the center but also takes the public coming to see the event or the passers-by into consideration as well. The project is designed to not make people feel excluded from the project but on the contrary, their contribution is considered as indispensable for enriching the project. For a project for eighth Istanbul Biennial Oda Projesi artists and a guest artist, Naz Erayda, asked from the inhabitants the recipes of their favorite meal. The first step was to make a book from these recipes. Artists also talked to a patisserie and a restaurant in the neighborhood close to the courtyard for a one week organization. The meals cooked by the participants were included in the menus and served in these places. People who asked for one of these meals had the opportunity to learn about the project and to come to the courtyard and meet people, ask for the recipe if he/she wanted. The participant who cooked the meal earned the amount of money decided together with the owner of the restaurant or patisserie since cooking this meal had a cost to the participant. The opening day in the courtyard a huge table was prepared with all the meals in the book were served. The artists, inhabitants, children, those who cooked the meals, people who came to see the event, people who encounter the event while they were passing by had the opportunity to meet and share a different

¹⁹⁶ “O mahallenin enerjisinden yola çıkarak böyle bir şey yapmaya başladığımız için hiçbir zaman kim bunlar, niye böyle bir şey yapıyorlar gibi tepkiler almadık. Projenin katılımcısı, yürütücüsü, ve kaynağı ve yönlendiricisi oldular. Bir sanatçı 23 Nisan bandosu kurmak fikriyle gelmişti ama mahallelinin o kadar da hevesli olmadığı ortaya çıktı kurulan iletişim sırasında. Proje tamamen şekil değiştirdi. Bir projenin o insanlarla birlikte çıkarılması ile getirip oraya bırakılması arasındaki farkın asıl önemli nokta olduğunu düşünüyoruz” Güneş Savaş, interview by author, 3 May 2005, İstanbul, tape recording.

experience. For the visitors who wanted to take one copy of the book of recipes (these were only photocopied books) to give the recipe of one of their favorite meal was obligatory. Therefore, hundreds of recipes were gathered during the whole project. As the last step of the projects a second book was created including all the recipes. It had become a multinational book since there were recipes of meals from many different cultures. Here the project's result is not the book but the lived experiences.

To construct and believe in these kinds of projects' potential to question social hierarchies it is necessary to conceive the subject and event (artwork) relationship as mutually constructing each other. In Butler's terms subject formation is continuous and unending and rearticulated in unstable and changing forms (1999). Oda Projesi is using the projects as means to expose the alternative conceptualization and experiences of subject positions, the potential for new sociabilities. In Sanat Akmerkez'de II and Art-Alan II the assumed habitus of participants are not questioned and challenged. Oda Projesi had worked for one of their projects with the architects and the inhabitants of Galata together. The architects were invited to represent the daily practices of the courtyard and the neighborhood, by drawing, modeling or any techniques they chose. A group of inhabitants were the committee to listen and evaluate their projects during a whole day in the courtyards. Güneş Savaş explained the focal point of the project as: "We focus on the experience of new relationships, the creation of third languages rather than the objects produced. The language that we use among us is different than the language of the inhabitants of that neighborhood. However, when each individual leaves its safe area and starts to create something together, he/she can realize and experience how the positions that

were internalized are changeable.”¹⁹⁷ Architects had difficulty expressing themselves and the committee members were shy in the first place but during the whole event they experienced and created this event from equal positions. For Oda Projesi the aim was not to claim that they are “the same” but they want to show how the boundaries separating people are transgressable. “Throughout these projects we did not tried to resemble each other. There was always a difference. We did not say to them ‘we are similar, we also eat on the floor like you’ It was obvious that we could hire a three-room flat just to work. We set the relationships acknowledging the differences between us. We have realized these differences due to and through the projects.”¹⁹⁸

Oda Projesi’s construction of subjects relies on an understanding that the subject is made up of performances, in interaction with other people in different occasions. The projects are the events through which the definition of the situation and the behaviors can be reorganized (Goffman 1959 and 1986) in such a way that people temporarily experience different positions. Here, the temporary nature of these projects carries a vital role in their potential to be innovative. This feature of public art projects can be understood with reference “carnival” and “play”. Oda Projesi’s works can be considered within the framework of a Bakhtinian carnival where assumed and unquestioned conventions of everyday life are revealed and broken. This transitory public art projects serve to suspend existing social forms and to replace them with a new form of social configuration. Oda Projesi was

¹⁹⁷ “Yoğunlaştığımız nokta kesinlikle üretilen nesneler değil orada yaşanan yeni ilişkiler, üçüncü diller. Bizim birbirimizle konuştuğumuz dil ve mahallelinin kendi arasında konuştuğu dil farklı. Ama her insan kendi güvenli alanından çıkıp birlikte bir şey yaratırken aslında kanıksanmış bu konumların nasıl değişebildiğini görebilir ve deneyimleyebilir.” Güneş Savaş, interview by author, 3 May 2005, İstanbul, tape recording.

¹⁹⁸ “Bu projelerde biz birbirimize benzemeye çalışmadık. Fark hep vardı. Biz de sizin gibiyiz, biz de yer sofrasında oturuyoruz demedik. Bizim 3 odalı bir evi sadece çalışmak için kiralayabildiğimiz aştı. Birbirmizin farklarını bilerek ilişki kurduk. Projeler sırasında ve sayesinde bu farkların farkına vardık.” Güneş Savaş, interview by author, 3 May 2005, İstanbul, tape recording.

constructing a play, in Richard Schechner (2003)'s terms, the courtyard becomes a playfield and inhabitants, artists and visitors become the players. Only such conceptualizations of space and audience lead a public art project to become an alternative to established art practices.

The main question for public art projects often focus on the question that if the change is ephemeral, how this projects can be transformatory. The response lies in believing that this ephemeral experience, this shared experience has the potential to make people realize that the assumed identities are not given and unchangeable. These projects lead people to realize their everyday use of space, everyday practices, assumed positions and therefore, these projects carry the potential to give birth to new ways of thinking. The fact that social hierarchies are erased during the project makes these hierarchies more visible in everyday routines of these people, of the artists and participants. Oda Projesi's projects, can be thought of as de Certeauian "tactic" since, through their reconstruction of space and audience in art practices, they first resist and challenge the imposed system of the dominant art world and second, the hegemony of social hierarchies sustaining the existing world order. These kind of public art projects are the creative resistances, at the level of everyday life, having the potential to result in new sociabilities.

5. CONCLUSION

In the light of the actual examples given in the previous chapter, I will now make a short review of the theoretical conclusions drawn from the arguments developed in different parts of the study.

First of all, the examination of the three public art examples from Istanbul has revealed that the term public art is a broad term under which many different art practices are assembled. The common characteristic of public art practices is their selection of space in making or displaying art. They differ themselves from art practices in conventional art institutions like museums and galleries by organizing their projects in public spaces. Since public art practices are presenting themselves as alternative and challenging practices to museums and galleries I first focused on these art institutions' ideology, construction of space and audience to get the opportunity to compare them with public art practices. Museums and galleries' separation of art practices from everyday life is claimed to be surmounted by bringing art in everyday life through public art. It can be discerned that throughout this study I argued that two important criteria should be examined in order to grasp the position of a public art practice with respect to established art practices: Its construction of space and audience. The conceptualization of space is a critical issue in public art practices since different conceptualizations of space can result in totally diverse public art practices. How public space is defined and used is an important criterion. The use of public space can point out many different motivations: In some public art projects a public space is used like a pedestal, in other words, an artwork is put in public squares or streets like an "ornament" or as an "untouchable" artwork to be contemplated by the passers-by. However, in other public art projects, a public space is conceived in terms of the everyday practices in that space therefore, while

the public space is conceived as “transformable” by the practices created through the public art project, the artwork itself is conceived as transformed and created during this process as well. These two opposite stances result in different public art practices. Public art, as described in this study, relies on an understanding of space that is not entrapped in its physicality. Space is conceptualized in the experiences of many agents using that space. Therefore, it can be argued that public art has the strength of transforming the space. But, this transformation requires a shift in the daily rituals performed in that space. A temporary redefinition of space is possible only through public art practices’ contacts with the everyday rituals. Thus, the audiences’ defined and established practices will be momentarily altered. At this point, the second issue comes to the light: the fluidity of subject positions. Public art practices have not only the potential to alter the positions of artist and audience by defining them as cooperators in the creation of a shared project but also to suspend social hierarchies for a while by underlining the possibility of different subject positions for each contributor at least during the project period. In that sense, public art practices are claimed to have the potential to open an alternative platform of changing positions, interactivity and play. Based on this theoretical framework specific examples selected from Istanbul are studied in detail in terms of their difference from museums and galleries, and their space and audience construction to expose to what extent these three public art projects diverge from established art practices and fulfill the potential that public art carries to bring about alternative art practices and to break the hygienic distinction of art and everyday life.

As it is explained in the first chapter, one important feature of art practices in museums is their didactic mission related to the modern bourgeois concept of “progress”. Sanat Akmerkez’de II repeated this attempt to educate the public, to

increase their intellectual capacity by making them exposed to a selection of important artworks by Turkish artists. Art-Alan II had not a claim to lift the cultural level of the viewers. Oda Projesi put clearly its stance against this didactic mission and they pay attention in their relationships with the audience not to repeat this educative, homogenizing act. The reference to a progress in the intellectual level and knowledge in art implies a discriminatory conceptualization of the audience. Like museums, Sanat Akmerkez'de II was, on the one hand, referring to an undifferentiated public, on the other hand making a tacit discrimination based on the competency in art.

It should be noted that to take place in public space makes the art practice reach much more people than it would meet in a museum or gallery building. It relies on the fact that museums and galleries, contrary to their being “public” art institutions, are attended only by a limited audience. It is undeniable that, these three projects are most probably encountered by more people compared to exhibitions in galleries since they take place in lively and crowded public spaces. To study the number of people encountering these projects was not one of the aims of this study since I only focus on how these projects regard the audience relationship. When the attitude of Sanat Akmerkez'de II is investigated it is clear that the core issue in organizing public art project was to increase the amount of people reached. However, Art-Alan II refers both to the greater amount of people reached and also, and more importantly, to the heterogeneity of the audience. Art-Alan II was concerned about the possibility of meeting people who cannot or do not go to museums and galleries. Oda Projesi, besides mentioning the possibility of reaching more people and a more heterogeneous public, focused more on “how” the relationship with the audience

should be organized in public art projects in order to differ from museum and gallery practices.

As it is revealed in the first chapter, museums and galleries are engaged in intricate relationships with capitalist and consumption-based social order. One of the ways to claim to be an alternative art practice seems to be the engagement in art practices out of the main institutions nourishing this relationship of dependency between artists, curators, collectors, big corporations. Sanat Akmerkez'de II, a good example of art practices in public space, can also reproduce the money-power-art relationship. Not only is this exhibition sponsored by Akmerkez Yatırım A.Ş. but also the target audience for this exhibition was the upper middle class Akmerkez dwellers. One of the important aims was to create future collectors and art-lovers. There was not such an aim to create or address to a potential art buyers in Art-Alan II. The nature of many works makes impossible to sell or buy these works anyway. Oda Projesi made a clear statement about how the art practices were dependent on the sponsorship of big corporations, stuck mostly in galleries and therefore, were missing the potential in everyday life. Oda Projesi is not engaged in art objects production therefore, there was no object to be bought. To address a potential buyer audience was out of question since they were producing event-like performances in which they are concerned only with the process experienced.

The selection of public spaces in three projects is diverse and revealing of their target audience. Akmerkez visitors are upper income level people and Sanat Akmerkez'de II did not mention people working in Akmerkez as potential audience. Art-Alan II took place in Kadiköy, Kadife Sokak, where the majority of the population is middle class young people. Oda Projesi works in Galata where low

income level people live. Oda Projesi deliberately chose this neighborhood to make the distinction between “art-audience” and “the others” visible.

Choosing public spaces for art practices gives the impression that the separation of art and everyday life is broken. However, this statement relies on a physical understanding of space. Both Sanat Akmerkez'de II and Art-Alan II support their positions as public art practices by being in the physical outside of museums and galleries. These exhibitions did not refer to the use of space by people, or an objective to transform the spatial practices. Furthermore, Sanat Akmerkez'de II was duplicating the space construction of the museums and galleries by for example using several “museumological devices” and did not challenge the space construction of the shopping mall at all. When the organization of the project is considered as a whole, it is clear that art objects are just placed among other commodities without reference to daily use of space in the shopping mall, how this daily use of space by people can be highlighted or made visible, how can people engage in different practices via these artworks. This stance can be considered as the re-establishment of a museum or a gallery in a public space, which can not be referred as an innovative or challenging art practice. Site-specificity is conceived as an object-background relationship based on a physical understanding of site. There was no reference to the event created by the coming of the work to this site, nor to the uniqueness of the artwork originating from its reception by the audience. Art-Alan II, although included some works which refer to the specific practices going on in that street it can not be said that this exhibition focused on a practical use of that space by the people. However, Oda Projesi constructed space as a social product therefore, focused on the practices, in other words, the actualization of space. Oda Projesi's projects were based on underlining the everyday use of space and the possibility to

alter it through reorganization of the interactions and relationships between people. Their practice-based understanding of space gives them the possibility to claim to create new spaces, new spatialities and new relationships. Through their interactive and collaborative projects the binary opposition between art and everyday life breaks down. This social conceptualization of space makes Oda Projesi different from other two projects.

A temporary redefinition of space is possible only through public art practices' contacts with the everyday rituals in that space. In that case, the audiences' defined and established habitus will be momentarily broken. Oda Projesi, different from the other two examples, had targeted to break the established habitus of people by directly playing on the space in its social practices. Only that way the space becomes another platform of changing positions, interactivity and play.

The feeling of art as a distinct and detached realm from daily life does not only depend on being inside the museum/gallery building or not. The conceptualization of artwork affects both the construction of audience and space. Sanat Akmerkez'de II reproduced the concept of artwork as distinct, high, and untouchable by its installation techniques and the materials used to highlight this effect like lamps, red stripes separating artwork from other things and people around. The construction of space of Sanat Akmerkez'de II through these devices results in an audience performance duplicating the museums and galleries. In Art-Alan II works are not isolated from the everyday use of space with such indicators. On the contrary, the exhibition presents itself as open and supportive of audience contribution by including interactive artwork in order to make people touch, write or paint some of them. Oda Projesi had an attitude completely against the art objects made in the studio and dropped in public space. This refers to the conceptualization

of space as a void to be filled in. Oda Projesi prefers to work together with the audience and underlines the process created through the artwork production. Their construction of audience is based on breaking the passive role assigned to the viewer in conventional art practices.

The emphasis that these three public art projects made in the experience of the viewer in their project can be revealing of their attitude about the role of the audience. Sanat Akmerkez'de II never mentioned the experience of the audience; instead the formal characteristics of the works, their importance in local art scene were explained in the exhibition tour by one of the artists. Audience is not considered in their embodied experience but in terms of their cultural capital to “appreciate” the works. Art-Alan II referred to the importance of audience responses and experiences however, when an unexpected and unpredicted response was witnessed the response of the audience was repressed, tried to be prevented. This shows that this exhibition’s construction of audience permits a limited interaction by the audience like the interaction expected in the so-called interactive works included in art museums and galleries. Oda Projesi’s main focus was on the experience and contribution of the audience since artwork was conceived as an unfinished project. Audience was redefined by Oda Projesi as the source, participants and co-creators of the artwork produced since they work in collaboration with them. Oda Projesi did not construct the audience in their assigned, established social status. Each art project is considered as an event through which the stability of space and subject positions is transformed. Oda Projesi’s construction of audience is based on the rejection of a pre-determined identity and on an understanding of subject made up of performances in different occasions. Relying on such a construction of audience means to redefine the artist’s position as well. The artist lost his/her higher status as the genius, and ultimate

creator. The audience's position as passive receiver is transformed into equal participants of the project with the artists. In that sense, Oda Projesi has the potential to transform existing roles in the established art scene and social hierarchies in the current world order.

In the light of these theoretical discussions, I conclude that only a public art project which challenges fixed and pre-given subject positions, aims to transgress the boundaries by breaking the conventional daily performances of the participants and established use of space can be considered as innovative and suggestive. Many projects duplicating the existing, dominant social hierarchies and conventional roles of artist and audience remain within the established norms of the art world even if these projects take place out of the conventional art institutions.

Art practices out of museum and gallery buildings are becoming more and more widespread, especially in big cities like Istanbul¹⁹⁹. Public art, incorporating various art practices is a new and rich subject to work on from different perspectives. Adopting a cultural studies perspective which combines many disciplines and research methods, this study positions itself at the intersection area of disciplines like art theory, sociology of art, urban studies, performance studies, sociology of everyday life. In such a wide area, this study is a preliminary one to be completed by future studies on public art.

Public art practices can be studied basically on two different levels: the way it is conceptualized and designed and the way it operates and is experienced by the people. At the former level, public art can be studied by focusing on the construction of the projects by the artists, curators or organizers, how they position themselves, what are their claims in engaging in such art practices, and parallel to or contrasting

¹⁹⁹ For example, in the ninth Istanbul Biennial many works are spread all around the city. Simultaneously with the Biennial there are numerous art projects in different quarters of Istanbul, which have significant effects on the urban life.

with their claims what kind of a ground they offer through these art practices. The second level on which public art can be studied is the reception by the audience. In that case, people's responses, that is, the way they challenge or appropriate the artworks, how they perceive the project, to what extent they engage in the project, what kind of differences take place in their daily lives or daily practices become the central issue of the study. This study limits itself by focusing mostly on the first level. Based on three examples from Istanbul, I investigated how these projects conceptualize space and audience since these constructions reflect whether or not they have alternative understandings of art and offer different opportunities for art making. In this study, data collected about people's responses to the projects are used as supplementary sources. One major study to be conducted following this one will be an extensive and detailed study of audience's/participants' responses to public artworks or art projects. Independent of the intentions by the artists or the curators a detailed observation and qualitative study based on people's experiences will be illuminating about how public art projects operate within everyday life. Regardless of whether the public art project duplicates conventional art practices and reproduces existing identity positions of artist and viewer or it is a challenging and innovative project based on people's interactivity and collective creativity, focusing on how the participants appropriate, use, damage, and entertain with the works in their everyday tactics will broaden the vision on public art practices.

This study was bound with a specific research question therefore many important points had been eliminated. One of the noteworthy issues to be discussed is the relationship between different art practices. Not only public art's influences on museums and galleries but also the effect of the changes museums and galleries

undergo during the last decades on public art practices can be investigated to reveal the mutually dependent relationships between them.

An important question to be asked about public art practices is how the increase in number of public art practices affects their transformatory and innovative character. Can public art practices become repetitive and established or do they always carry the potential to bring challenging questions about public art? Or, can they lose their cutting-edge position when they become pervasive? Even if people become used to art projects outside conventional art institutions each public art project can be examined in terms of the dynamics it creates in its specific space-artwork-participants relationships.

The present study paves the way for further in-depth studies about public art. By challenging established art conventions and positioning themselves at the opposite pole, many public art projects can be questioned about whether or not they become closer to social service projects. Can public art projects be considered as examples of new social movements or social service activities? In addition, blurring boundaries between what is considered to be art and what is not makes the reconsideration of public art practices with reference to aesthetic theory unavoidable. To conclude it is necessary to mention that this preliminary study is open to contributions from related fields like art history, sociology, aesthetic theory and performance studies.

FIGURES



Fig. 6.1 – Sanat Akmerkez’de II (23 November – 23 December 2004)



Fig. 6.2 – Sanat Akmerkez’de II (23 November – 23 December 2004)



Fig. 6.3 – Sanat Akmerkez’de II (23 November – 23 December 2004)



Fig. 6.4 – Sanat Akmerkez’de II (23 November – 23 December 2004)



Fig. 6.5 – Sanat Akmerkez’de II (23 November – 23 December 2004)



Fig. 6.6 – Art-Alan II: Sıradışı Hayatlar (03-30 April 2005)



Fig. 6.7 – Art-Alan II: Sıradışı Hayatlar (03-30 April 2005)



Fig. 6.8 – Art-Alan II: Sıradışı Hayatlar (03-30 April 2005)



Fig. 6.9 – Art-Alan II: Sıradışı Hayatlar (03-30 April 2005)



Fig. 6.10 – Oda Projesi (1997 – 2005)



Fig. 6.11 – Oda Projesi (1997 – 2005)



Fig. 6.12 – Oda Projesi (1997 – 2005)



Fig. 6.13 – Oda Projesi (1997 – 2005)



Fig. 6.14 – Oda Projesi (1997 – 2005)



Fig. 6.15 – Oda Projesi (1997 – 2005)



Fig. 6.16 – Oda Projesi (1997 – 2005)



Fig. 6.17 – Oda Projesi (1997 – 2005)

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