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İstanbul'daki İklim Aktivizminin Performatif Estetiği

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ÖZET

Bu tez, yeni bir iklim rejiminde olduğumuzu kabul ederek, İstanbul'daki iklim protestolarının performatif pratiklerini iklim estetiğinin üç biçimi olan bilim, siyaset ve sanat üzerinden incelemektedir. Yeni iklim rejiminin 2015 Paris Anlaşması ve sonrasındaki politik gelişmelerle başladığını öne süren Bruno Latour'un üç forma ayırdığı iklim estetiği tarihsel ve kavramsal çerçevede sunulmuştur. İlgili kavramsal içerikler ayrı ayrı ele alınmış, ilgili pratikler de bu içerikler üzerinden incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın ilk bölümünde, iklimin performatif estetiği açıklanarak; bilimsel, politik ve sanatsal içerikler sırasıyla paylaşılmaktadır. Rancière'nin duyumsanır olanın estetiği üzerinden insan - dışı varlıklarla kurduğumuz ilişkinin iklim rejimindeki rolü tartışıldıktan sonra iklim estetiğinin bu üç farklı formunun Gezi Parkı direnişi sonrasında İstanbul'daki sanat ve iklim aktivizmi pratiklerinde nasıl kesiştiği değerlendirilmiştir. Yeni iklim rejiminde sanatın iklim kriziyle kurduğu ilişki, çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde somutlaştırılan pratikler üzerinden tartışılmıştır. Bu pratikler sırasıyla: 2019'da gerçekleşen 16. İstanbul Bienali, "Yedinci Kıta", İstanbul Kadın Müzesi'nin "Bana Bırakacağınız Gelecek: Kız Çocukları ve İklim Krizi" sergisi ve Yokoluş İsyanı İstanbul'un "Hurdahaş" performansıyla 16. İstanbul Bienali protestosudur.

Anahtar kelimeler: *iklimin estetiği, iklim aktivizmi, iklim adaleti, performatif estetik, İstanbul'daki iklim aktivizmi pratikleri*

ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the performative practices of climate protests in Istanbul through three forms of climate aesthetics; science, politics and art, by recognizing that we are in a new climate regime. Conceptual contents were handled separately, and related practices were examined through this content. First of all, by explaining the performative aesthetics of the climate; scientific, political and artistic contents are shared respectively. After discussing the role of our relationship with non-human beings in the climate regime through Rancière's concept of aesthetics, how climate aesthetics intersect in art and climate activism practices in Istanbul after the Gezi Park resistance is evaluated. The relationship between art and the climate crisis in the New Climate regime is discussed through the practices embodied in the second part of the study. These practices are respectively: 16th Istanbul Biennial, "The Seventh Continent", "Which Future Will You Leave Me: Girls and the Climate Crisis" exhibition and an activist performance by Extinction Rebellion Istanbul called "Hurdahaş" and the protest to the fossil fuel sponsorship in the 16th Istanbul Biennial.

Keywords: *aesthetics of climate, climate activism, climate justice, performative aesthetics, practices on climate activism in İstanbul*

INTRODUCTION

We have entered a new climate regime¹. The conditions of this new regime are determined by how we deal with the climate crisis, economic crisis and corona virus epidemic. Dictionary.com, a well-known digital English dictionary, defines the climate crisis as "a term used to show a greater sense of emergency and urgency about climate change."(Dictionary.com, n.d, para1) United Nations' General Secretary Antonio Guterres spoke about this sense of emergency at the Climate Action Summit in September 2019 and said, "The climate emergency is a race we are losing, but it is a race we can win." It would be also worth to point out that today, while we are dealing with a global epidemic, the UN explains climate change as the defining crisis of our time, and adds that "... it is happening even more quickly than we feared." (The UN, n.d, para1) Moreover, by going back to the definition of Dictionary.com, obvious rationale behind the crisis can be revealed frankly, "the climate isn't just changing – it's causing a crisis and, if humans don't do something about now, the consequences may be catastrophic." Such description also explains why we need to show a greater sense of emergency when it comes to climate change. If the lack of action to prevent climate change continues, possible catastrophic consequence will happen soon enough to concern for the near future of life on earth. Certain impacts of global warming have been recorded by scientists and it reveals that the impacts are getting more and more destructive as a result of the aforementioned lack of action. UN, again, mentions the devastating consequences under the title of "The Climate Crisis – A Race We Can Win,"

"No corner of the globe is immune from the devastating consequences of climate change. Rising temperatures are fueling environmental degradation, natural disasters,

¹ I use this presupposition with reference to Bruno Latour's book "Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime". According to Latour, it is the challenge of the new climate regime to establish today's politics through the relationship we have established with the Earth instead of the concept of territory. (Latour, 2018)

weather extremes, food and water insecurity, economic disruption, conflict, and terrorism. Sea levels are rising, the Arctic is melting, coral reefs are dying, oceans are acidifying, and forests are burning.” (The UN, n.d., para 1)

Accordingly, we can say that the climate crisis has direct impacts on ecological, economic and social life. The conditions of this new climate regime are predominantly determined by these impacts and how we plan to respond and prevent them. In order to consider these conditions from multiple perspectives, we can and should ask what is new in the climate regime. First of all, we can say that the critical importance of science's role in the struggle against climate change has increased with each assessment report released by International Panel for Climate Change. Historically, the climate regime which is facilitated by the United Nations more than 30 years, have failed to urge nation - states to take binding and effective steps in their climate policies. We have not been able to fully transition to the new conditions of this new regime yet. Nevertheless, the urgency and scale of the crisis reveal the necessity of collective climate action both in using the possibilities of all means at the global level and in areas where these tools are inadequate.

Due to the lack of the necessary political action on the climate crisis, we can discuss the present and future of the new climate regime through activism. In this thesis, it is argued that we have entered a new climate regime and asks a practical question: “After 2015, what would be the meaning of performative practices on climate activism in Istanbul in terms of the aesthetics of the climate?” Considering that Istanbul has a proven climate movement that is part of the international climate regime, general and local discussions can be opened on these practices. There is a new climate movement performed by creative actions and climate strikes all over the world (Şahin, 2019), beyond that, the new climate regime, which includes social issues such as the rise of climate-denier political leaders, the refugee crisis, is historically local compared to the Anthropocene epoch. It focuses on the last 50 years through the crises that are derived from political inaction on climate change and ecological destruction. As the climate crisis is one of the most important factors determining the current political structure, the new climate

regime points to an irreversible period. The features of this new regime are being discussed mainly with the practices of art and activism at the global level, I hope that the examples in Istanbul can contribute to this discussion.

The theoretical first chapter of this thesis, which consists of two chapters, can be divided into three parts. First of all, by explaining how performance has developed linguistically and conceptually over 50 years, the performative aesthetics of activism in the new climate regime is discussed in a theoretical framework. The concept of performativity of Judith Butler, who says that performative act is political, and Karen Barad's criticism to representationalism are mentioned. In the second part of the theory, instead of considering aesthetics as a measurement of an art regime, through Jacques Rancière's definition as "sensory dimensions of human experience" we can consider how non-human beings participate or their roles in this experience. Bruno Latour divides climate aesthetics into three intersectional forms as science, politics and art, and evaluates each aesthetic form through the relations of human and non-human beings. The historical and conceptual contents of these three different aesthetics are discussed separately in detail, and the 6 propositions brought by Latour for art and activist practices which are at the intersection of these three aesthetics, are mentioned.

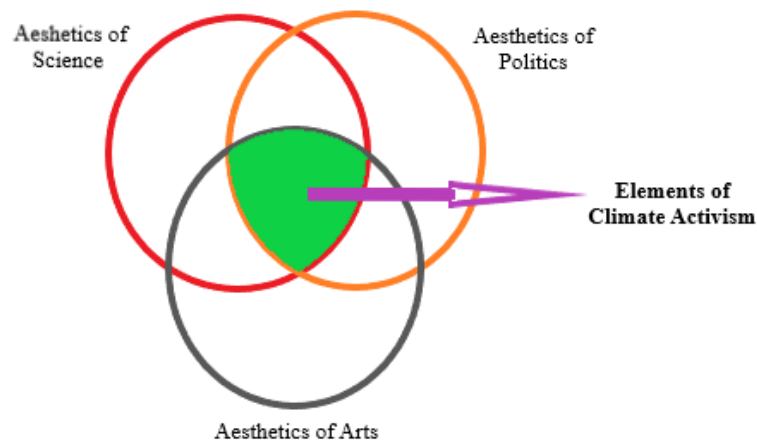


Figure 1. The intersection of three forms of the aesthetics of climate

These 6 propositions, in a presentation made by Bruno Latour to the Performance Studies Department of a university in Melbourne, can be considered as a guide to contemporary artists dealing with the climate crisis, and as a methodology for expressing and sharing such a complex issue. In the last and third part of the first chapter, the climate activism practices in Istanbul after 2015 are interpreted through the waves of social movements and art works shared. In this last section, the differences between creative activist actions, which are a part of the new climate regime, with works of art that touch on our relationship with nature are mentioned. They are also compared in terms of communication they constitute.

The extent to which art and activist practices related to the new climate regime in Istanbul correspond to the theoretical content discussed in the first chapter has been evaluated through Bruno Latour's 6 propositions. These practices are the 16th Istanbul Biennial held in 2019; the exhibition of " Which Future Will Leave Me" by Istanbul Women's Museum; and protests of Extinction Rebellion Istanbul. More specifically, for the 16th Istanbul Biennial, interviews were made with the Biennial curator Nicolas Bourriaud and 5 different artists. The works were examined during the exhibition period and the interviews were also published in the Yeşil Gazete's² [Green Newspaper] Biennial file. In these semi-structured interviews, curators and artists were asked to share their approaches to the climate crisis and to the art that deals with it. In particular, the motivations of artists to work on the role of non-human beings in the climate crisis were tried to be reflected by using communication tools beyond words. Questions about the environment and identity issues that took place during the exhibition were directed to Bourriaud, the exhibition curator, as it is part of the climate regime. However, no communication was made with the visitors of the exhibition and representatives of the organizing institution. Another published semi-structured interview was held with Meral Akkent, the curator of the "Which Future Will You Leave Me?" exhibition organized by the Istanbul Women's Museum. All these

² Yeşil Gazete is (like *Grist*), "a non-profit, independent media organization dedicated to telling stories of climate solutions and a just future."

interviews were conducted in the light of the questions prepared during the research phase of the thesis. Finally, a detailed assessment has been made on Extinction Rebellion, an important part of the new climate movement with the manifesto they read in London in November 2018, and its organization in Istanbul. This assessment first focuses on the workshop that took place in Vienna in the summer of 2019 with activists from different countries of Europe, including one of the founders of the movement, Stuart Basden. We can say that this workshop was a two-day training and experience sharing meeting on the creation of the horizontal organization structure of Extinction Rebellion and the determination of its action repertoire. I would like to point out that I participated in the sessions where the activist group's understanding of creative action and how they determined their strategies were discussed for two days.

It should be mentioned here that the 16th Istanbul Biennial interviews were completed a few months before the pandemic. Artists outside of Istanbul answered the questions via e-mail. The interview with the curator Nicolas Bourriaud took place at the İKSV building in Istanbul with the participation and contributions of Alper Akyüz, the advisor of this thesis. Face-to-face meetings lasted a little over an hour. Istanbul Women's Museum "Which future will you leave me?" During the physical exhibition of the project, although the pandemic continued, I had the opportunity to go and visit. The exhibition also continues online. The online interview with the curator of the exhibition, Meral Akkent, through semi-structured questions, also lasted about an hour. I believe these practices response the discussion of the theory framed at the first chapter: First of all artists from 50 different countries addressed the climate crisis at the 16th Istanbul Biennial; secondly, in the exhibition "Which Future Will You Leave Me?" activist young girls and artists took part in an art project that prioritizes archiving with the support of different institutions; and lastly, an activist group by the ordinary people, using the possibilities of creative action to draw attention on the importance and urgency of the climate crisis.

CHAPTER 1: AESTHETICS OF CLIMATE REGIME

1.1 PERFORMATIVE AESTHETICS

The aesthetics of climate involves certain experiences of catastrophes which are the consequence of climate change but it adds non – human beings to the experience of sensory dimensions. At this point, the aesthetics of the climate differs significantly from the climate crisis. The climate crisis, primarily points to the sense of climate emergency. On the other hand, the aesthetics of climate reinterprets the binary oppositions that directly affect historical relationship between culture and nature. This reinterpretation explores what it might mean to end the degradation of nature as a result of human domination and supremacy over nature, and the possibility of a more equal relationship between humans and non-humans. Societies, built on fossil fuels that are extracted from the ground and burned into the atmosphere, causes a major crisis that we are facing today. We can still get out from the state of emergency and prevent climate change by the tools of the established global climate regime. It was precisely for this reason that Antonio Guterres called on nation-states at the end of 2020 to act through the necessary political will and declare climate emergency. In 2021, saying that current international climate regime has enough sources to keep global warming at 1,5 degrees may mean pursuing great hope; but still, not impossible. (IPCC, 2018)

The rapid and intense effects of human-induced climate change are transforming the role of non-human beings. In this sense, as the aesthetics of climate includes non - human beings to the sensory dimension of climate change, the role of non-human can be worth to consider by Rancière’s notion, “*distribution of the sensible*” (Rancière, 2010. Sensation primarily depends on the forms of the distribution of the sensible in a certain way and the sensible is not given to us, we sense objects that are shared and distributed in a certain way (Oranlı, 2016: 111).

“...the distribution of the sensible therefore establishes at one and the same time something common that is shared and exclusive parts. This apportionment of parts and positions is based on a distribution of spaces, times, and forms of activi-

ty that determines the very manner in which something in common lends itself to participation and in what way various individuals have a part in this distribution.” (Rancière, 2010)

In her sampling of this definition, Imge Oranlı says that the presuppositions about which communities in the world have the capacity to speak (logos) are based on the existence of a group that is not included in these assumptions and excluded from this field. The sensible is never given (inherent) to us; we sense things through certain divisions and distributions. In this sense, rethinking the relationship between human and nature, and considering the role of non-human beings within the distribution of the sensible is one of the main contents of the aesthetics of climate.

As any other activism climate activism is performative. How we feel the climate crisis will directly affect the aesthetics of the climate regime. The aesthetics of the climate cover the scientific and political content of the human-induced climate change and artistic and creative expressions at the same time. To understand the climate crisis, we need all aspects of climate aesthetics.

According to Bruno Latour, Anthropogenic climate change has three different forms of aesthetics: science, politics and arts. Noting the means and forms of sensing the aesthetics of the climate within these singular elements as follows, he presents such aesthetics on the basis of relational conception:

“Aesthetics of science³: no sensitivity to any change in climate without instrumentations and the vast machine of multiple scientific disciplines.

Aesthetics of politics: no common representation of human and non – human entities without the highly complex procedures of activist and politicians building common concerns

³ By climate science, Latour refers to the natural sciences. It can be considered as the scope of the IPCC's activities.

Aesthetics of arts: no sensitivity for the contradictions, complexities; novelty and size of entanglement of humans and non –humans” (Latour, 2016)

The brief explanations of climate aesthetics under these three headings show that the climate regime itself is a field of cultural studies in the academic field.

As Latour stated, while science consists of examining global warming within the framework of natural sciences through technological machines, today climate science carries out its research with an institution that has no example before, and its outputs are the subject of the priority demands of climate activism. In other words, the aesthetics of climate science points to a field beyond the mechanical relationship science establishes with climate change. Similarly, the aesthetics of climate politics points to a political space beyond the international climate regime established under the umbrella of the United Nations. Thus, Latour historically localizes the new climate regime within the Anthropocene by marking it with its aesthetics. We can consider that this marked regime is embodied in climate activism practices.

The intersection of three forms of the aesthetics of climate activism comprises scientific truth, political demands and art of change. In this context, we see that the climate movement, which has a wide range of demands from keeping global warming below 2 degrees to climate justice, has a rich repertoire of activism accordingly. As climate justice movement is basically a call to act against climate change, its discourse may also involve a demand and search for an alternative to historically constructed binary oppositions like culture and nature. Beyond the discourse, those critical approaches can be embodied by the climate activism which is performative. Judith Butler uses the term to indicate how binary gender identities are socially constructed and it is performative through the collective actions of agents. Her discourse on performance and performativity provides us a system of thought in terms of our relationship with nature.

In this sense, from the three layered aesthetical approach of Bruno Latour to Judith Butler’s term of “performative,” (Butler, 1990) the performative aesthetics

of climate activism is a contextual definition to make an interdisciplinary reading of climate justice activism. The aesthetics of climate justice movement is performative.

1.1.1 Performative Turn

The notion of “performative” which first emerged in the performance studies has hermeneutic and historical content. Then, it also used in theoretical framework of such diverse academic areas like contemporary art, dance, gender and cultural studies, media etc. It was the end of 1950s when very first the emergence of performance studies flourished thanks to sociologists and anthropologists like Erving Goffman or Isaac Singer. Interdisciplinary content of performance defined by Goffman,

“A “performance” 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. Taking a particular participant and his performance as a basic point of reference, we may refer to those who contribute to the other performances as the audience, observers, or co-participants. The pre-established pattern of action which is unfolded during a performance and which may be presented or played through on other occasions may be called a ‘part’ or a ‘routine.’”(Goffman, 1956)

The interdisciplinary content of the definition and practices, make performance a field to explore within the study. Moreover, such performative shift in arts was affective to derive renewed ways to perform art. Erika Fischer – Lichte reminds the first *performative turn* in music by the audio-events and pieces by John Cage. It was 1952 and pianist David Tudor played nothing in the piece 4’33’’ to demonstrate that even silence can be performative. Lichte mentions that by the dissolution of boundaries in arts the relationship between the art/ists and participants changed and it was mostly the *events* that determine the relation rather than just a “work of art.” The group of artists including Joseph Beuys,

called themselves FLUXUS in early 1960s named their artistic works and experiences in third event with multiple wordings: *Actions / Agit Pop / De – collage / Happening / Events / Antiart / L'autrisme / Art total...* Accordingly, after theorising 'performance' as an aesthetic process Lichte underlines four properties of performance:“(a) *ambivalence – it is active and pathic, creative and destructive at the same time; (b) no performance is predictable, so it is emergent in character; (c) perception – of audience and performers – as a process (d) the transformative power of performance*” (Velten, 2012: 257). Such properties have common ground with the current conditions of climate and ecological activism. Jim Aulich notes that “Contemporary organized protests are carefully choreographed.” He gives an example on how activists agreed on the practical requirements of the protest, more importantly how they negotiated with the authorities. (Aulich, 2020: 276)

Another development of “performative turn” was hermeneutic and the neologism of the term performative emerged by John L. Austin. (Velten, 2012) He introduced the term to the English language during his lectures “How to do things with words” held at Harvard University in 1955. Austin explicitly divided the act of speech into three categories: locutionary act, illocutionary force and perlocutionary force. Locutionary act is “uttering a grammatically sensible statement” and illocutionary forces of speech acts dominantly contain the meanings of verbs like arguing, stating, promising and so on. And lastly, “the perlocutionary force of utterance consists of effect of the speech.” (Horanyi, 2014: 377)

According to Austin a proper purpose of the speech is to fulfil the functions of these three categories. In other words, a speech should be an act to refer directly the act itself. To give an example, he says it would have no validity for someone to give the name "Mr. Stalin" to a boat he had just seen. Obviously, if this person is not the person chosen to name the boat, his words will make no sense either. The term "performative" was hermeneutically derived from the functions of speech act at the first place. However, the concept of performance will soon be

interpreted in other areas than the use of languages in the examples we have given above in music and contemporary art. Later, these comments will contribute to Judith Butler's concept of performativity, who says that gender identities are constructed by performative acts. (Butler, 1990)

Importantly, concentration on the 'power of words' in Austin's speech act connected notions like *representation of the subject* or *delegation of speech* which are also crucial for movements like climate justice. Today, one of the most circulating slogans of climate activism, "unite behind science," reflects climate science's liability to "secure the efforts of others." In the case of climate science, the communication between scientists and the public is an aesthetic experience mostly determined by media tools. Instead of searching for a political representation, climate justice activism urges individuals and politicians who are informed by climate science - to take action for "the matter" of crisis. Moreover, the question of representation is indefinite and outstanding when "the matter" is non-human. Karen Barad, mentions significant shift from the representationalism to "performativity" after 1990s. She asks, "How did language come to be more trustworthy than matter?" Climate science has leading role since the beginning of 1980s when the scientific communication shifted to the more reachable concerns of "scientific matters of climate reality." Indeed, such an understandable language of existential scientific truth apparently couldn't be enough to necessary political will. It's neither language nor any representation of injustice – but "performative alternatives ... shifts the focus from questions of correspondence between descriptions and reality (e.g. do they mirror nature or culture?) to matters of practices/doings/actions" says Barad and offers, "an elaboration of performativity – a materialist, naturalist, and posthumanist elaboration – that allows matter its due as an active participant in the worlds becoming, in its ongoing 'intra-activity'" (Barad, 2003 188).

1.1.2. Performativity

Beginning of 1990s was a historical moment for the “performative turn” thanks to the crucial intellectual contributions from different fields. Functions of performance had been considered and discussed incrementally by social movements and academics. Butler’s theory on the construction of gender as a social identity was momentous turning point. She introduced such an aesthetic use of performative acts in her phenomenological analyses on gender and performativity by well – known book “Gender Trouble” and articles. (Butler, 1990: 25)

The use of performance in social sciences and performative act connected 20th century's discourse of struggles, such as the LGBTI+ rights and climate justice movement while breaking certain norms. Erika Fischer - Lichte says that performance redefined two relationships; first the relation between subject and object and second between signifier and signified as the elements of performance. (Lichte, 2008)

Lichte underlines Judith Butler’s difference with Austin’s and previous performative act in the embodiment of the cultural codes. “Butler stresses the performative constitution of identity that occurs in the process of embodiment, defining the latter as “a manning of doing, dramatizing and reproducing an *historical* situation” she writes. For Butler, socially constructed identities which is defined by “shared experience” or performed in “collective action” are not the only function for such definition. Individuals as gendered bodies act “within a bodily space, restricted by certain demands” says Lichte and continues that such restrictions enact individual interpretations for embodiment of the performance in a given “stage directions.” Lichte’s theatrical reference to the practices of social roles as a performative act is crucial to address the aesthetical dimensions of embodiment (Lichte, 2008: 19).

Accordingly, performative act expanded from the identity construction means to the contemporary intersectional politics and non-binary activist practices. Post-dance choreography approach of Marten Spangberg and civil disobedience actions by the new climate justice movement is strongly considerable as the two sides of aesthetical experience of anthropogenic climate change: art and politics. Danish choreographer publishes books by the collaborations of academicians, dancers and writers from other fields as well. As these books have free access, also funded by certain NGOs rather than publishing companies or academic magazines (Spangberg, 2018).

Spangberg refuses to define his works as performance where it is all about to being an entertainer. He prefers *choreography* as “a tool for organising time and space.” His practices of art meet with Karen Barad’s early writings on *performative alternative* (Barad, 2003: 189) in terms of language and experience. In her article on posthumanist performativity, Barad criticizes persistency on representation(alism) both in art and politics by indicating the ineligible but academically granted role of language. Relevantly, Spangberg is also keen about practices and initiatives “that neo-liberalism doesn’t know how to cope with, at all” (Winship, 2013: para 6). In his article called “*I love Movement Research*” which is a contribution to his last open-source, company-free project - he mentions Italian philosopher Franco Berardi to express how “the word” has been financialized and the “meaning itself has become an economic opportunity” (Berardi, 2018: 309). Berardi argues that experiences within the form of intimacy; physical proximity and ways of moving that cannot translate into words, propose something authentic.

As Karen Barad underlines the necessity and Berardi reveals the possibilities of performative alternatives; Spangberg’s contemporary expressions both in *Movement Research* and his choreographies are directly referencing to “performative aesthetics” as experience.

Therefore, we can say that climate activist groups like Extinction Rebellion⁴ apply similar *performative aesthetics* to carry the truth to be experienced. Since November 2018 that they declared their will to act according to ecological breakdown and climate crisis in London, their non-violent civil disobedience or creative action strategies and demands spread across plenty of cities all over the world. They choreograph their peaceful occupation or non-violent convivial demonstrations to take politicians' and public attention to the emergency of climate crisis and ecological breakdown. The aesthetics of climate protest involves performative acts that are directly referable to Lichte's embodiment, Barad's performative alternatives and the forms of experience as Berardi mentions above. More importantly, those climate protests as performative acts may have such potentials to create open spaces for experiencing a state of mind / a human presence beyond binary oppositions...

1.2 AESTHETICS OF CLIMATE ACTIVISM

The democratic coexistence made through the aesthetics of protest that creates the people. The plurality of society is a spatially and temporally extended phenomenon, says Judith Butler. (Young, 2016: para 1) The sovereignty of the people is a performative embodiment where the popular sovereignty declares itself, rather than practicing restrictive means of speech acts. Accordingly, Butler proposes to think about the assembly of bodies as a performative act and enactment upon two approaches to "popular sovereignty": first, as a performative exercise; second, "...necessarily involves a performative enactment of bodies, sometimes assembled in the same place and sometimes not." Primarily, the aesthetics of climate change – its science, politics and relation with arts, determine the conditions of *the assembly of bodies*. (Butler, 2015: 177)

4. Extinction Rebellion "is a decentralised, international and politically non-partisan movement using non-violent direct action and civil disobedience to persuade governments to act justly on the Climate and Ecological Emergency," What is XR? accessed January 6, 2021, <https://rebellion.global/about-us/>

Latour's structure for three different forms of the aesthetics of climate can be descriptive in this sense. By considering different forms of climate aesthetics separately, their intersectional features can also be made more visible.

1.2.1 Aesthetics of Science: No sensitivity to any change in climate without instrumentations and the vast machine of multiple scientific disciplines

Science of climate change has two main dimensions we can consider: the history of climate science and the unique international structure of climate science.

1.2.1.1 Brief History of Climate Science

It's been more than a hundred years since we have general scientific knowledge on the causes and impacts of global warming. Scientific developments in physics and chemistry during the 19th century were also significant for climate science. Whilst the subject of modern science was the existing shapes on Earth and previous changes in its surface, scientists also developed the necessary equipments and knowledge about the elements of the climate. Historical findings began in 1824 by Joseph Fourier's (Kurnaz, 2019: 130) calculation of requisite temperature for living conditions on Earth. Through his finding, he reveals that the atmosphere maintains heat in balance which is necessary to sustain current life on Earth. In 1856, Eunice Newton Foote from USA found out that carbon dioxide is one of the greenhouse gases that absorb the infrared rays. Unfortunately, well – known scientist could not get the chance to publish her works in any proper scientific journal. Hence, rather than Foote's early findings, most sources of climate science history refer John Tyndall's sophisticated works which reveals that burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas - mainly emits carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. (Madra & Şahin, 2020: 114) The last scientific breakthrough in the 19th century took place in 1896, when the Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius (Kurnaz, 2019: 140) discovered that halving the sum of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere would cause a dramatic drop in Earth's temperature. He also reveals similar reaction of the temperature in the case of an increase in carbon dioxide.

For instance, if the proportion of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere doubles, the Earth's average temperature will increase at approximately the same rate.

In 1938, a steam engineer Guy Steward Callendar (Callendar, 1939: 223) found out global temperature had been raised approximately 0.3 degrees due to the increase in carbon dioxide from fossil fuel burning (Hawkins, 2013 para 9).

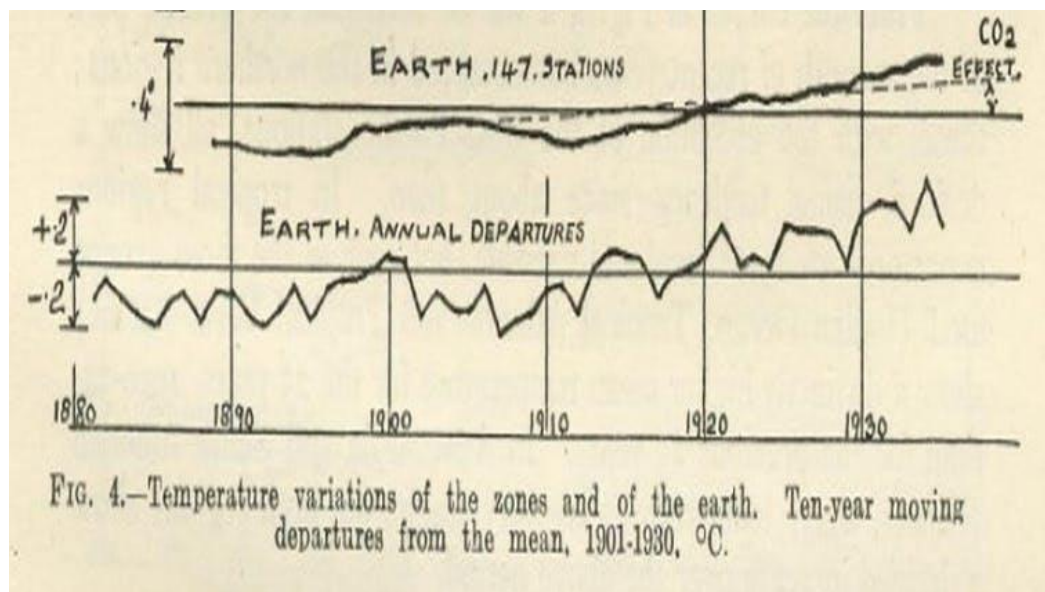


Figure 2. "Callendar's original graph showing an increase in global temperatures." (Hawkins, 2013)

Even though the core of his findings is not different today, climate change was not on the priority of related science communities and authorities. Accordingly, the scientific approach to the climate change at the first half of the 20th century was a kind of continuation of previous hundred years. After the Second World War, in 1950s, Charles David Keeling discovered the technique for measuring carbon dioxide in the atmosphere which was 310 parts per million (ppm) when he reported his very first measurements at the Manua Loa Observatory in Hawaii. From today, we can easily say that it was one of the most important scientific developments of 20th century. (Kurnaz, 2019: 140) Afterwards, the measurements had been visualised as "Keeling Curve" firstly by Keeling himself and then developed by scientists of the Observatory to show the history of atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations.

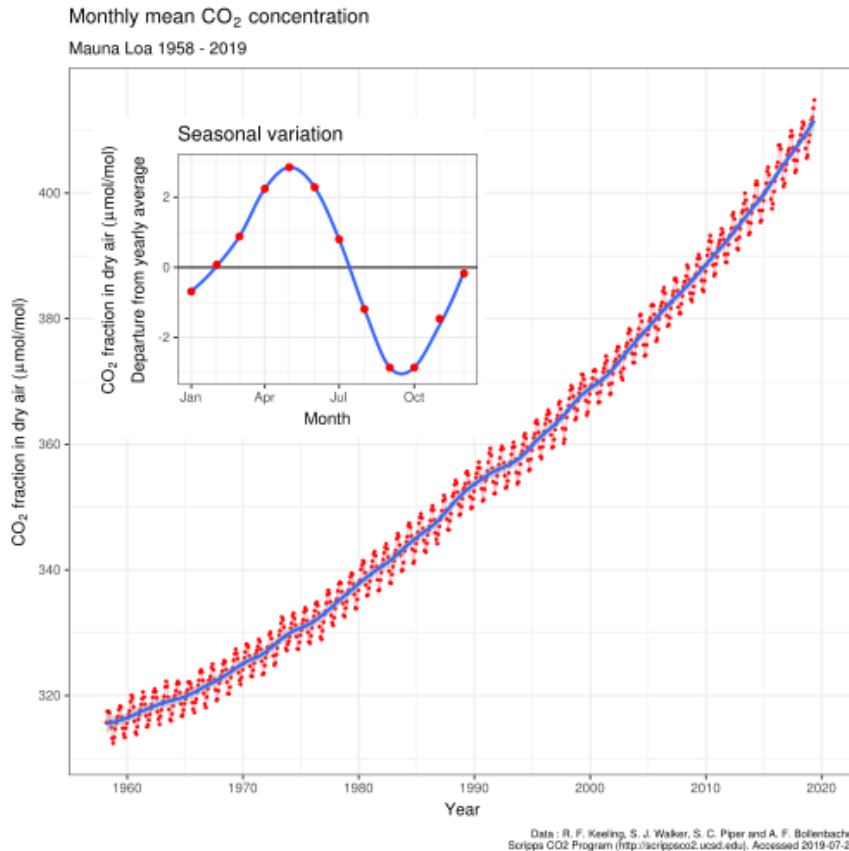


Figure 3. Atmospheric carbondioxide concentrations from 1958 to 2020 (Wikipedia)

This figure, the Keeling Curve of last 70 years reveals plenty of crucial turning-points for climate science. It was 1972 when the report called *Limits to Growth*⁵ which published by the Club of Rome, predicts that if we continue to increase our consumptions due to developmental economic models, “the limits to growth on the planet will be reached within the next 100 years.” Thus, 1972 was a turning-point for dealing with environmental problems in the international level. Since the establishment of United Nations, the first global meeting on the human environment held in Stockholm by attendance of 113 nations (The United

⁵“The Club of Rome: The message of this book still holds today: The earth’s interlocking resources – the global system of nature in which we all live – probably cannot support present rates of economic and population growth much beyond the year 2100, if that long, even with advanced technology. In the summer of 1970, an international team of researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology began a study of the implications of continued worldwide growth.” The limits to Growth, accessed January 6, 2021, <https://www.clubofrome.org/publication/the-limits-to-growth/>

Nations, 1973 43). After the mid-1970s, by the increase in environmental damage and ppm of the carbon level in atmosphere, several scientific developments due to climate change had been recorded.

In the *Keeling Curve* above, there are two points (one in the vertical line and the other in horizontal) that are historically important for climate science. In the horizontal line which is for following years after the first measurement, it was 1988 when scientist James Hansen warned politicians about the *human – caused global warming* in his testimony before US congress (Holthaus, 2018: para 6 – 7). His testimony is still considering as a ground – breaking speech by many scientists today based on what science knows at that time. He underlined that climate change is a human-caused phenomenon.

Moreover at the same year, an international institution “*The International Panel on Climate Change*” (IPCC)⁶ had been established by the UN Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization. When Keeling himself drew the curve of increase in the level of carbon dioxide within the atmosphere, he did not know the critical point of 350 ppm. Few years after his death, climate scientists agreed on the 350 ppm which is in the vertical line to render when we reached that point, should be the upper limit to intercept from climate change. Today, it is approximately 420 ppm.⁷

1.2.1.2 IPCC and Climate Activism

6 IPCC, “Created in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the objective of the IPCC is to provide governments at all levels with scientific information that they can use to develop climate policies. IPCC reports are also a key input into international climate change negotiations.” (About “IPCC,” t.y., para 1)

7 The amount of carbon in the atmosphere can be trackable almost daily on the Mauna Loa Baseline Observatory website, www.gml.noaa.gov/obop/mlo/

International Panel on Climate Change is a unique entity as an intergovernmental organization that runs scientific researches. It's the second dimension for the aesthetics of climate science. Yet, does a climate activist have to know about its structure and working conditions of IPCC? Actually, activists agree on the sufficient level of basic knowledge on climate science.

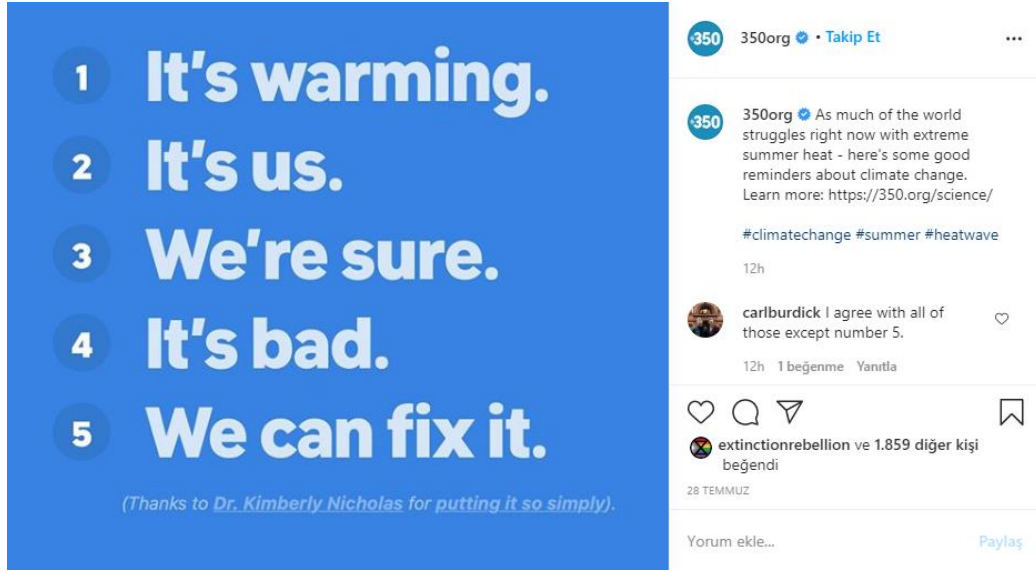


Figure 4. An instagram post of 350.org, July 2020. (@350.Org, n.d.)

Climate science has indispensable role at the first three matters and it warns us for up-coming fourth; it would simply be disaster if we don't act before the point of no return. 350.org is an international non-governmental organization, founded in 2008 by Bill McKibben to act on climate justice. Since then, the NGO has been working on to demonstrate the importance of not to exceed the 350 ppm carbon level. Every five points above have scientific backgrounds; based on scientific analysis of the reports which are written by IPCC directly refer to the reason and the impacts of climate change. The reports are published periodically, also accessible and understandable for any interested reader. The IPCC reports are usually more than 500 pages, that's why after every main chapter there is also a "summary for policy-makers" which underlines crucial points of the scientific findings. Most correspondents, writers, climate justice activists, politicians, and professionals in civil society read and make reference to this part of the report.

Levent Kurnaz distinguishes climate science from the other fields due to its structure and the role of reports that are published by the IPCC. He says that an entity like the IPCC is unique in modern science, and it was set up to conduct and evaluate scientific studies on climate change to understand what these research and findings will mean for the future of life on/of Earth (Kurnaz, 2019: 195). In his book “*Son Buzul Erimeseden*” [*Before the Last Glacier Melted*] Kurnaz details the selection process of collaborators and different critiques to main assessment reports. At first, IPCC announces the deadline for scientists’ applications and asks for recommendations of the governments. Afterwards, the decision process is initiated by the IPCC itself (Kurnaz, 2019: 214-218). As the IPCC is the main reference guide of climate science, collaborators are not paid during or after the writing of the reports. While Kurnaz finds this selection process open and reliable, he also mentions general critics to the IPCC and its reports. Briefly, he mentions that if we consider the speed in the rising of the emissions, publishing a report in 6 or 7-year period would not answer our necessary problems. In 1st September 2020, young climate activist Greta Thunberg quoted a sentence from the lead author of a very recent report which reveals that ice – sheet losses are on track of the worst case scenario. 6th assessment of the main IPCC report (AR6) will be published in 2021 according to the calendar and the last worst case scenario was written in 2014. On the other hand, whilst those reports have to be approved by each government including economically fossil fuel oriented counties like Saudi Arabia. Thus, one may easily assume that the language of the reports would be written by the most optimistic approach. Additionally, Kurnaz also underlines that the language of the reports are dominantly determined by developed countries and their global companies. Thus, relation between the scientific developments and the politics render itself in this point. According to Kurnaz, since the mid-1800s science has been determined that the global warming will be human – caused. More recently, we can more clearly see and experience that political actions have direct impacts on global warming.

In order to understand and explain the crises of the period we live in, it is necessary to look at the general scientific characteristics of the relation between human and nature. 10,000 years ago the ratio of humans and their pets to the total biomass of vertebrates was 0.4 percent; today it is 96 percent with the sixth mass extinction and continues to increase (Barnes, 2017: para 8). The name Anthropocene, which draws attention to the dominance of human existence and began to be expressed with this logic in the 19th century, is generally accepted today. Chemist Paul Crutzen and lakes expert Eugene F. Stoermer first used the Anthropocene in a scientific paper in 2000. The idea that an irreversible process was entered into considering the human factor and that this is a new geological age was accepted in a little while (Crutzen& Stoermer, 2000: 17). The references to the name Anthropocene (i.e. the human epoch) can cause some controversy. The sixth great extinction is taking place today as the diversity lost or dramatic extinction of non-human species. If we consider that previous extinction happened when the earth hit by a meteor 65 million years ago, which ended dinosaurs, this one is different because it caused by humans, writes Elizabeth Kolbert. (Kolbert, 2016) Based on the defining points of this phenomenon, we can say that such a human effect has more than one accepted narrative. The very first seeds of the current settled agriculture, the relationship between human and nature, were sown 8 thousand years ago. In terms of production, the seeds were also determinative on culture which sees nature as a resource. Hence, the Anthropocene and its alternative narratives focus on the decisive influence of Eurocentric historiography and origins of colonialism in terms of human and nature duality. Scientists from different research fields agree on the importance of the first industrial revolution. The extent of ecological destruction and climate change in the last 50 years has made the characteristics of the Anthropocene more pronounced and transformed the phenomenon into a faster and more severe crisis. One of the first facts that scientists look at is the amount of carbon emissions, as the use of fossil fuels has been proven to increase the amount of carbon in the atmosphere, which in turn causes a certain temperature rise. Today we know that the average global temperature of 2020 is 1.2 degree higher than it was before the

industrial revolution (WMO, 2021). On the other hand, it is clear that today we never read this scientific data as such a warning. According to the current report prepared by the IPCC, keeping warming at the level of 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial revolution era is vital. (IPCC, 2018: 175) All the measures and decisions we take and do not take will first determine the existence of life on the planet and then the forthcoming conditions.

In the aesthetics of climate science, the sensory perception of the climate crisis takes place primarily through the technological tools used in the researches. This critical role of climate science developed through time by technological developments. Begin with the point in the mid-1800s, scientific findings showed that global warming will be human-induced, as Levent Kurnaz underlines. In the new climate regime, we are faced with a discourse that we can call as climate denialism which is effective at different levels of policy-making processes and defends the developmental economy by focusing the use of fossil fuels. Especially in the United States, climate science denial has been used by populist politicians to engage in serious opposition or manipulation in relevant policy-making areas over the last 30 years of the climate regime, and has been successful at times. In response, leading scientific journals announced that they endorse Democratic candidate Joe Biden against Donald Trump, a climate denier, ahead of the American Presidential election in November 2020. The editorial article of *Scientific American*, one of the reputable journals, in which they announced their support for a presidential candidate for the first time in their publication history, focused on environmental damage of Trump's administration and climate denialism in his policies (*Scientific American*, 2020). *Nature*, on the other hand, said that "We cannot stand by and let science be undermined" and stated the ex-president's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and the actions taken under his leadership have deepened the climate crisis (*Nature*, 2020: para 5).

The aesthetics of climate science beyond the boundaries of natural sciences through technological machines intersect with the politics and art of climate, and this intersection area is gradually expanding.

1.2.2 Aesthetics of Politics: no common representation of human and non – human entities without the highly complex procedures of activist and politicians building common concerns

The aesthetics of climate policies can be discussed with a two-dimensional content, just like in climate science. The new climate regime adds non-human beings to the "sensory dimensions of human experience" (Oranlı, 2016) while interpreting the aesthetics of politics. The aesthetics of climate politics primarily questions the relationship between human and nature by reinterpreting history written over Cartesian dualism. Bruno Latour problematizes the political representation of non-human beings with his expansion in the title. The international climate regime established by the United Nations as an intergovernmental entity to prevent human-induced climate change has enabled the necessary negotiations to start. Briefly, we can say that today there is an international climate regime established by the UN and the aesthetics of climate policies includes sensory interpretations of this regime with its history.

1.2.2.1 International Climate Regime

The international climate regime is a political structure in which climate change actors play a role at different levels within the structure of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The structure, working style and decisions of the UNFCCC are decisive in terms of climate policies. The climate policies specified in the relevant contract are carried out by governments and non-governmental actors.⁸

Climate policy is strongly linked to science but does not necessarily include an activist element. In terms of the performative aesthetics of climate activism, the

⁸ “The UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994. Today, it has near-universal membership. The 197 countries that have ratified the Convention are called Parties to the Convention. Preventing ‘dangerous’ human interference with the climate system is the ultimate aim of the UNFCCC.” What is UNFCCC? accessed January 6, 2021 <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-convention/what-is-the-united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change>

UNFCCC is also important because non-governmental actors and climate justice activists also take contractual action.

Anthony Giddens's opinions on why we need the United Nations in climate change politics are valuable in this sense (Giddens, 2009: 250). First, he underlines the political power of Nation-States. It is still impossible for any other organization to approach UN's level in terms of legitimacy. Thus, what states do in interaction with each other and with intergovernmental organizations will become even more important in the future. The scale of climate change shows that the causes that led to this crisis are not the responsibility of a single nation-state. Therefore, the way out of the climate crisis and climate justice will be possible with a supranational and global determination. In this context, the new climate regime requires the best use of the international structure of the United Nations. Second, certain business responses to carbon emissions are equally important and need to be directed. Ending fossil fuel use is primarily a political choice. The differentiated responsibilities and roles of climate actors regarding the making and implementation of this decision are determined by the United Nations Framework Convention. Finally, as the UN's most important role, it offers a range of opportunities to local, national and transnational groups spreading around the world to influence climate change policies. The United Nations works to increase the impact of civil society on climate policies with the training, capacity development and project support it provides in different areas of climate change. The first two reasons put forward by Giddens also refer to the UN's international structure suitable for the political actors of climate change to act according to the historical responsibility on the issue. And the last role of the UN has a strong connection with the climate justice movement mentioned in the Paris Agreement.⁹

⁹Noting the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth, and noting the importance for some of the concept of "climate justice", when taking action to address climate change, Paris Agreement, 2015.

With the first World Climate Conference in 1979, climate science emphasized that climate change is a global problem. The establishment of the IPCC in 1988 and its first assessment report which was published in 1990, were instrumental developments in the signing of the UNFCCC in 1992. The assessment reports published approximately 6 years apart have also been effective in determining the dates and structures of the UNFCCC. It is seriously questioned whether the content of the relevant agreements is sufficient to determine policies for the solution of climate change, as it is a global crisis.

UNFCCC creates its own structure with the parties' conferences (COPs) and agreements (Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement) that have been held since the day it was established in order to make emission declarations and to regulate climate policies. Countries also participate in the international climate regime through this structure and make their contributions. Among these countries, Turkey became a party to the convention in 2004, 12 years after the establishment of the UNFCCC. Turkey's signature of the Kyoto Protocol, which was signed globally in 1997, which was the policy-making understanding of that period, took place in 2009 (Baykan, 2013). Climate movement in Turkey, on the other hand, joined the global demands for a binding international agreement on the fight against climate change in 2005 and became a part of the global climate movement. Climate activist groups determined their actions according to the calendar of international climate negotiations. (Baykan, 2013)

1.2.2.2 Brief History of International Climate Regime

The rapid increase in the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere as a result of the use of fossil fuels compared to the pre-industrial revolution pointed out the necessity of managing and preventing human-induced climate change. Ümit Şahin emphasizes that it is known that greenhouse gases accumulated in the atmosphere as a result of burning fossil fuels at the beginning of the twentieth century will change the climate. Stating that climate negotiations

have a 5-stage history, Şahin reveals that global warming could only become an international policy in the 1990s (Şahin, 2020: 38). Especially in 1988, the testimony of climate scientist James Hansen at the American Congress played an important role in the visibility of climate science, which is described as "post-normal science" in terms of the emergence of the new climate regime in policy making processes (Sinclair, 2018).

International climate negotiations started with the first World Climate Conference held by the World Meteorological Organization in Geneva in 1979. The conference, attended by 350 experts from different disciplines such as agriculture, water resources, energy, ecology, economy and sociology, developed a climate program and called on countries to adapt to this program urgently. The objectives of the program, in which 53 countries and 24 international organizations participated, were determined:

- “- To take full advantage of man's [sic] present knowledge of climate;
- To take steps to improve significantly that knowledge;
- To foresee and prevent potential man-made changes in climate that might be adverse to the well-being of humanity.” (Zillman, 2009)

In the following process, with the establishment of a scientific structure such as IPCC in 1988, the First Assessment Report was published in 1990 and the Second World Climate Congress was convened.

During this international climate regime has been established and a policy-making area has been opened for the actors of climate policies. The interest of international organizations, private sector, NGOs, professional organizations, academia and media, which are non-governmental actors besides governments, on climate change has gradually increased.

The Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 was another landmark. As a result of the summit, 197 countries became "Parties to the Convention" by ratifying the agreement known as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The ultimate goal of the UNFCCC is to “prevent 'dangerous'

human intervention to the climate system by stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations (UNFCCC, n.d.; para 4). Therefore, with the approval of the UNFCCC, the parties accepted different responsibilities according to the current and retrospective greenhouse gas emissions of the countries. Accordingly, the UNFCCC provides relevant policies to be implemented under the structure established by the agreements and aim to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions. With the adoption of the UN Framework Convention, the structure of the international climate regime as we know today- was formed. After the UNFCCC came into force in 1994, annual international summits called the Conference of the Parties (COP) began to be organized. "The Convention, Protocol, Agreement, COP decisions, calls, action plans and many international mechanisms, committees and funds under the climate regime are common but differentiated responsibilities and aim to 'protect the climate system from dangerous human intervention" says Şahin and states the main purpose of all these complex mechanisms as "...to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere as a result of human activities and to monitor whether they are present. The technology and financing required to achieve this goal is to meet the commitments made by countries to achieve these goal problems such as monitoring their failure to bring them, how to develop these commitments and their compliance with the principle of global equity, and similar problems are tried to be resolved by mechanisms established within the regime." (Şahin, 2020: 38)

Together with the UNFCCC; the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement are the defining developments of the current international structure of climate regime. The Kyoto Protocol was signed in 1997 for the parties to the convention to achieve the related objectives within their own responsibilities. The main purpose of the protocol is to ensure that countries keep their greenhouse gas emissions at a certain level between the years 2008-2012, according to their common but differentiated responsibilities (Şahin, 2020). And the Paris Agreement, on the other hand, is an agreement in which the roadmap is determined for the parties

approved the agreement to realize their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to keep global warming below 2 degrees.

Environmental organizations responded to the content of the Kyoto Protocol in a short time and conveyed their requests to the governments to fulfil their responsibilities. Although USA signed the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, the Senate did not approve it and the Protocol could not achieve the desired transformation. Nevertheless, with the development of environmental awareness, there was a civil society movement whose influence increased and developed until the 2009 Copenhagen Summit (Şahin, 2009: para 12). Correspondingly, in its 4th Assessment Report published in 2007, the IPCC emphasized that between 1995 and 2006, the 11 hottest years of the last century were experienced. In the last century, it stated that human-induced global warming was from 0.4 to 0.8, unfortunately the increase in this trend between 1995 and 2006 approached to 1 degree.

With the global financial crisis in 2008, the report was not seen by the relevant governments that had to see it, and at the COP15 in Copenhagen, the climate negotiations were truly manipulated, especially by the pollutant countries. On the streets of Copenhagen and in global environmental organizations, the situation was the other way around. First of all, an alternative summit was held in Copenhagen under the name of *KlimaForum*, which proceeded in parallel with COP15. At the summit, also known as the "Summit of the Peoples", a declaration was published emphasizing what should be done in the negotiations that remained fruitless. The first paragraph of the declaration started as follows:

"There are solutions to the climate crisis. What people and the planet need is a just and sustain- able transition of our societies to a form that will ensure the rights of life and dignity of all peoples and deliver a more fertile planet and more fulfilling lives to future generations. "(KlimaForum, 2009: para 8)

Emergency calls for action were made jointly by different non-governmental organizations and individuals participating in the forum. The calls that highlighted

the need to completely exit fossil fuels and pay historically polluting countries' climate debt were as follows:

“- A complete abandonment of fossil fuels within the next 30 years, which must include specific milestones for every 5-year period. We demand an immediate cut in GHG of industrialized countries of at least 40% compared to 1990 levels by 2020.

- Recognition, payment and compensation of climate debt for the overconsumption of atmospheric space and adverse effects of climate change on all affected groups and people.” (KlimaForum, 2009: para 11 – 12)

The Copenhagen Summit in 2009 was a critical turning-point for climate movement for two reasons. First, as a global movement with a primary and urgent issue, it has become more evident within the other movements. The connection of the global climate movement with the civil rights movement of the 1960s became even more visible. In the local areas, collective action with environmental movements has started to increase rapidly in the struggle against ecological destruction. And secondly, the climate movement has also embraced the role of communicating the facts of science to the peoples, as governments flee from the fight against climate change and intergovernmental negotiations such as the Copenhagen Summit have resulted in disappointment.

At the 16th conference of the parties held in Cancun after the Copenhagen Summit, it was discussed how COP15 was actively sabotaged by the USA and the European Union (Democracy Now, 2010: para 6). The climate movement, especially journalists and activists such as Bill McKibben, underlined the necessity of strengthening civil society, as governments did not take any real steps to prevent climate change in their own interests. In 2012, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the UNFCCC establishment, the RIO + 20 summits was organized, again in Brazil. Speaking to the Açık Yeşil [Open Green]¹⁰ program,

10 One of the long-running programs of Açık Radyo, Açık Yeşil is a radio program broadcast with the motto "environmental-ecology agenda of life, politics and the street". Selected broadcasts of

Semra Cerit Mazlum states that after the Copenhagen Summit, whether similar conferences have achieved their purpose is measured by whether multilateralism is protected. While it is said that the negotiations for the international climate regime will continue to secure the principle *common but differentiated responsibilities*, Mazlum stated that the civil society was still in the post-Copenhagen syndrome and kept the expectations below (Madra & Şahin, 2020: 182).

Governments' lack of political will on climate change has prompted civil society to take action behind the concept of *climate justice*. The "People's Climate March", which took place in 2014 with the participation of 400 thousand people, demonstrated the meaning of climate justice with the position the demonstrators took place on the street.



Figure 5. Sane Energy Project, Photograph: peoplesclimate.org

We can say that Avaaz and 350.org, the non-governmental organizations called everyone to march with the announcement "It's an invitation to change everything", also prepared the choreography of the climate justice movement

the program prepared and presented by Ümit Şahin and Ömer Madra have also been published as a two-volume book.

'narrative while distributing the demonstrators. Indigenous people as one of the most impacted communities also led the change and were on the frontline of the People's March. The people's climate march demanded action primarily for climate justice, with the slogan "to change everything we need everybody."



Figure 6. Demonstrators make their way down Sixth Avenue in New York during the People's Climate March Sunday, Sept. 21, 2014. Photograph: Jason DeCrow/AP

It should be noted that People's Climate March took place on September 21, 2014, just two days before the climate summit, which was held on September 23, with the call of the former United Nations Secretary-General Ban-ki-Moon to governments. For this reason, simultaneous demonstrations and marches were held in different cities such as Berlin, Paris, Istanbul and London to influence decision makers by supporting the march in New York. Bill McKibben, in his

article published in the Rolling Stones magazine during the march preparations in May 2014, wrote for the purpose of the show, "When world leaders gather in New York this fall to confront climate change, tens of thousands of people (and maybe you) will be there to demand they take action before it's too late." This summit was seen as an important step in governance to the Paris Agreement to be negotiated in December 2015. The sound of the streets in New York City in that day was a calling to the governments for reducing their emissions under a just agreement whilst there was still time to prevent climate change.

In the Paris Agreement, which entered in to force in 2016 "climate justice" was included as an element that determines the content of the agreement, *"to ensure the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans and biodiversity is considered Mother Earth by some cultures and emphasizes the importance of some concepts. 'Climate justice' as we take action to address climate change."* (Paris Agreement, 2015: 1) In this respect, the Paris Agreement sets certain principles and financial transformations to ensure a just transition between the countries that are historically responsible (polluters) of the climate crises and certain communities like indigenous people that will be affected the most by the climate crisis.

As a result of a colonialist economic growth, we can say that the concept of "climate justice" was born as a result of the inequalities created by the "polluting" countries that use fossil fuels the most. Today, indigenous peoples, women and children are the most affected by the climate crisis, especially in the countries of the Global South. The role of these communities in the causes of the climate crisis is incomparably less than the developed Global North countries. Therefore, countries that have historically burned the most and expanded their use of climate change-causing fossil fuels have a climate debt to societies most negatively affected by the crisis. The demand for climate justice therefore demands that the inequalities arising from the climate crisis be allocated.

Today, what we call climate regime after the Paris Agreement implies a political regime beyond a United Nations' system established in 1992. Political

developments such as Donald Trump's presidency and the UK's exit from EU membership through Brexit were the most important developments in the name of the climate crisis. In other words, both the destructive point of the climate crisis and the impact of different policy areas, the so-called climate regime has now expanded beyond the United Nations and its processes. The cause - effect relationship established by climate change, especially with the refugee crisis, and the resulting rise of populist politicians has become one of the prominent elements of the new climate regime.

On the other hand, climate negotiations are markedly affected by two important developments. First of all, the climate strikes initiated by Greta Thunberg in August 2018 and turned into a global action over time increased the visibility of the climate crisis. Second, with the postponement of the 26th Conference of the Parties due to the COVID - 19 outbreak in December 2020, many elements of the process have been postponed or moved to the online platform.

Here, the development that needs to be noted in terms of the climate negotiations is the important transformation in the role the USA has taken with the change of president. Climate denial has been an important element of the Trump administration's four-year presidency, one of its first decisions to leave the Paris Agreement. Climate denialism has been one of the key elements of the Trump administration's four-year presidency, one of which is to leave the Paris Agreement. In response, scientists openly endorsed Democratic Party candidate Joe Biden against Trump's second nomination. In addition, after returning to the Paris Agreement, Biden organized an online climate summit before the completion of his administration's first 100 days and announced that the US had doubled its climate targets.

1.2.2.3 Aesthetics of Climate Politics

Aesthetics of climate politics can be expressed and developed through the narration of the Anthropocene which expands our "sensory dimensions of human experience" by questioning the role of non-human entities.

As Chakrabarty puts it that non-human beings are not political actor or democratically representative subjects, the new climate regime requires us to question their role (Chakrabarty, 2009; 197). How to perform the political representation of non-human entities has become a necessary question despite of its deficiencies, and therefore thinkers such as Latour point to the performative acts of politicians and activists. In the midst of such vital crisis, the climate justice activists, artists, and politicians can include non-human entities in any kind of practices within policy-making processes (Latour, 2017: 13). Conceptually, the lack of representation of non-human beings in a political regime can also mean a lack of democratic participation for the different communities most affected by the climate crisis as well. In this sense, the performative aesthetics of climate activism may open creative spaces to experience a political representation of human and non – human entities.

We can say that the performative acts of climate activism are part of the "aesthetics of politics." Therefore, we can interpret these acts through Jacques Rancière's concept of aesthetics. First of all, according to Rancière, when politics is degraded to the use of power or the possession of power, its aspect that demands equality and reconstructs equality becomes invisible and inexperienced (Oranlı, 2016: 115). The suggestions in Aristotle's Politics as Rancière mentions are also critical in terms of climate politics. According to Aristotle, politics has its own subject and the way it (the subject) relates to politics is also unique. What distinguishes political governance from other systems is that it is "the rule of equals" and how the way that the equal subjects of politics are organized directly enables them to participate in the act of ruling which defines the citizen. Traditional political theory, on the other hand, accepted the conditions of this participation as given, and did not problematize the organization of the participants in the act of ruling and being governed. İmge Oranlı states that, in

Rancière's opinion, politics has an inherent aesthetic dimension. Politics, according to Rancière, is aesthetics by making visible what was previously excluded from the field of perception and making what was previously unheard audible.

The primary narrative of the Anthropocene is based on human's effects on the geological transformations of the earth as a result of the relationship between human and nature. Therefore, in this narrative, there are also non-human beings among what is excluded from the sensed in the aesthetics of politics. However, it should not be forgotten that, in terms of Aristotele's "the rule of equals," history involves the process of creating inequality between *the equals*, and these inequalities also determined our relationship with nature. There are schools of thought that reference the process of degradation of nature, such as the "critical theory". At the current point of "the rule of equals," climate justice movement constructs its discourse through post-colonial studies.

"Our footprint was not always that large. Humans began to acquire this agency only since the Industrial Revolution, but the process really picked up in the second half of the twentieth century." says Dipesh Chakrabarty (2009: 210). The historian of postcolonialism, points out that conventional historiography does not dwell enough on the human-nature relationship and stresses the importance of expressing the human role in the climate crisis. He also points out that the historical approach to bilateral relations is also Western-centred,

“Humans have become geological agents very recently in human history. In that sense, we can say that it is only very recently that the distinction between human and natural histories—much of which had been preserved even in environmental histories that saw the two entities in interaction— has begun to collapse. ... Now it is being claimed that humans are a force of nature in the geological sense. A fundamental assumption of Western (and now universal) political thought has come undone in this crisis." (Chakrabarty, 2009)

Bruno Latour, along with Chakrabarty, also emphasizes the importance of the last 50 years for the reinterpretation of the Western-centred concepts of democracy

and freedom, which are built through the use of fossil fuels (Latour & Chakrabarty, 2020: 419 – 454). From this point of view, it will be interesting to read last 50 years over the new climate regime. Such a reading can also give us an idea of the extent of the new climate regime. Developed countries, also known as polluters, have both placed fossil fuel-centred economic growth at the centre of the political system and promoted it to other countries. For instance, we can say that the historical basis of the Maastricht Agreement, in which Europe decided to establish a political union, is the European Coal and Steel Community which was established with the Treaty of Paris in 1951. Today, they commit to get out of coal, with an agreement named after the same European city.

When we look at these developments from the dynamics of the new climate regime, we can say that there are two different refractions on our perception according to Bruno Latour,

1. The way we make sense of our historical relationship with the soil
2. The relationship between science and politics

First of all, the political systems that regulate the relationships between different communities basically depend in some way on how we make sense of our relationship to the land. And our attitude towards this relationship determines the functioning of the political system with the means of governance built through nation-states. At this point, Latour, while accepting the historical roles of these systems, says that they are a position determinant beyond the positions of left and right politics in the new climate regime: Gaia. Even in 1972, when NASA took the picture of *blue marble*, what we can feel about the earth we live on was determined separately by science and politics. But actually, the place we live on and the globe are different layers. This experience, which we call life, takes place in a thin layer that we call "critical zone" that contains a holistic cycle with the human. This zone, which covers the atmosphere with its thin layer above the ground, gives us the idea that James Lovelock mentioned in his Gaia theory: life on the planet is a holistic and living organism. The interaction of life elements

within this organism with each other provides sufficient experience to call for crises in the Anthropocene epoch. At this point Latour will argue that the narrative of Anthropocene is ending the clear divide between science and politics. He bases this second refraction in the new climate regime mainly on three features in the Anthropocene narrative. In an interview he gave in 2014, he says that the "well, we are just doing science" discourse, which dominates the world of science alongside scientists who argue that science and art have always been intermingled, is now mooted. Today, we can say that from the last American presidential elections, climate science has begun to discuss this issue, as Latour points out (Davis and Turpin, 2015: 44). Second, says Latour, scientists' explanations are now framed as a warning and continues, "It is very, very difficult to maintain the old idea of a division between statement of fact and statement of value when you say that 'there is now 440 parts per million carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.' So, the division between fact and value ... is weakened." The third and the last reason of this new form of relation between science and politics is that they are interrelational through their content like never before.

Gaia as a human-independent concept was interesting 10,000 years ago because it is generally the localization of nature. On the other hand, Anthropocene, "is a kind of fabulous acceleration that one of the many connections inside Gaia around the question of the human." (Davis and Turpin, 2015: 48) In Greek, *Anthropos* means "human being." Based on this clear meaning, we can say that the term Anthropocene refers to a "human epoch." *Anthropos*, also translated as the son of man in the Greek New Testament, is also used as "Adamas," which means soil in Hebrew.

In the last 50 years, we have begun to experience the sixth mass extinction as a result of our relationship with nature, and this includes another important development of the Anthropocene narrative. Geological transformations on the planet have hitherto changed relatively more independently from human activity; scientists named these changes according to the most distinguishing features of the period. Chakrabarty also explains the increasing effect of human on geological

transformations, as well as the relationship we establish with non-human beings, which scientists have expressed when describing the Anthropocene. So the distinctive feature of Anthropocene is mentioned in its name: *human impact*. Anthropocene explains human and its actions by reducing it to its biological existence; this excludes, for many thinkers and writers, the historical situation of the "role of equals", as Rancière puts it in the aesthetic of politics. Writers such as Jason Moore, who emphasized that human actions should be handled through the conditions of the political system - here, it is capitalism - within a certain historicity and the social inequality and conflicts that it carries to the present, propose the term "Capitalocene" as an alternative. And Donna Haraway uses the phrase "Species Man does not make history" in her criticism of the Anthropocene. "Human as a species;" says the feminist writer, "... doesn't make history." (Haraway, 2016: 49) Referring to more than one effect left incomplete by the Anthropocene, she preferred to use the gendered word Man in a sentence, starting with a capital letter. According to her, if a geological transition period, a new epoch, is now sensing and questioning with the social, its story deserves a better narrative. The author's proposal asks if a non-western-centered content can be written as an alternative to major narratives such as the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene; and expresses an invisible network between different species, from the smallest to humans through creative action and storytelling. She also emphasizes the importance of spreading all these narratives we experience with non-human beings in order to make visible the ability to respond of even the smallest creatures.

Critiques directed to the Anthropocene and some of the alternative term proposals having these criticisms are Chthulucene, Plasticene, and Plantationocene. While speaking of a fabulous acceleration as stated by Bruno Latour, the contribution of these interpretations contains references beyond human epoch primarily refers. In other words, using the term Anthropocene includes critiques to it as well.

In addition, the aesthetics of the anthropogenic climate regime challenges the distinction between culture and nature through the relationship that human

establishes with non-human beings. Art, on the other hand, offers creative possibilities to the sensory experiences of this relationship and interpret its challenges, along with its critical content.

1.2.3 Aesthetics of Arts: No sensitivity for the contradictions, complexities; novelty and size of entanglement of humans and non –humans

The last form of the *aesthetics of climate*, arts has a relational context with climate science and the politics of climate regime separately. It is also significant to see its function through climate activism. The creative act within the arts is an indispensable element of climate activism to determine its discourse. It empowers different forms of performative acts like non-violent action, direct action, civil disobedience; and various practices of democratic participations for different communities and non-humans.

The role of art in the new climate regime is shaped by the relationship between science and politics. First, in any climate-denial regime, art that produces on the anthropogenic climate crisis will inevitably find itself in the position that climate science has found against Trump. All the processes that make up the relevant artistic practice are the possibilities of a trend, despite or against climate denialism. However, art practices dealing with the climate crisis, on the one hand, include experience in the struggle for human and environmental rights; on the other hand, producing art in the new climate regime is still something new. The reason for this has to do with sensing the two refraction dynamics that Bruno Latour cited for the aesthetics of climate politics as mentioned above. To put it ambitiously, Anthropocene art opens areas of sensory experience for the role of non-human beings in the aesthetics of climate politics.

1.2.3.1 Art and Climate Science

Art has functional roles through communication and education in its relations with climate science. Latour mentions that artists are increasingly interested in complex content of climate science which is not easy to learn. Artistic practices can bring this complex content to the public and questions the meaning of scientific knowledge or just offers to experience such practices. In other words, we need a kind of transference from the scientific findings to the artistic experience to comprehend the scope of climate change and its science.

Julia Bentz explains how the integration of climate science in art courses, expression with art, and learning through art can be practicing. Apparently, art can be a “platform for introducing and communicating the issue and a medium to facilitate dialogue and express learning” and catalyses of transformation (Bentz, 2020: 1597)

Climate engagement <i>in, with, and through</i> art		
<i>In art</i>	<i>With art</i>	<i>Through art</i>
<p><i>Art as platform for introducing the issue/as communication</i></p> <p>Characteristics: Aesthetic, attractive, accessible communication of climate change; goal oriented</p> <p>Examples: Illustrating climate change with comics, infography, or documentaries</p>	<p><i>Art as medium to facilitate dialogue and express learning</i></p> <p>Characteristics: Participatory, experiential, community engaging; process and goal oriented</p> <p>Examples: Providing creative experiences related to climate change including art-&-science labs and participatory art</p>	<p><i>Art as means of transformation</i></p> <p>Characteristics: Co-creational, transdisciplinary, open-ended; process oriented</p> <p>Examples: Using art as a process to discover meanings of climate change, and to deepen and embody experiences e.g. through dance, storytelling, or independently creating an artwork prompted by an open-ended and personally relevant climate-related question</p>

Figure 7. “Climate Engagement” (Bentz, 2020: 1597)

It was not a concern of climate science to increase public awareness. Hence, the communication tools were just interviews or press releases when it seems necessary to inform the public. Today, there is a significant shift from the socially distance perspective to “education should address climate change” motto. Art and

its practices have become considerable more often for the communication strategies of climate science.

According to Bentz, “Art has multiple potentials that can be harnessed for climate change education,” and she mentions, “its capacity to engage emotions and to expand imaginaries of the future to create hope, responsibility and care, as well as healing.” (Bentz, 2020: 1608)

She distinguishes roles of art within the education of climate change and its science as follows:

<i>In arts and humanities</i>	<i>With art</i>	<i>Through art</i>
<p><i>Art as platform for introducing the issue/as communication</i> Approach: Climate change used as a topic in arts and humanities courses: e.g., drawing, painting, illustrating climate change impacts or recommendations for sustainable lifestyles or reading about/watching documentaries on climate change</p>	<p><i>Art as medium to facilitate dialogue and express learning</i> Approach: Climate change is approached with the help of creative tools as a medium to explore and reflect on the broader social, political, economic and ecological context, e.g., art-&-science labs, group discussions, by using art to express experiences and learnings</p>	<p><i>Art as means of transformation</i> Approach: Climate change is explored through arts practices as an interrelated, complex, personal and collective challenge, e.g. by using art as a way to discover meanings of climate change, and to deepen and embody experiences. Practices may be co-creational, transdisciplinary and/or open-ended</p>

Figure 8. “Climate Change Education *in* Art, *with* Art and *through* Art” (Bentz, 2020: 1602)

The involvement of individuals/students *in*, *with* and *through* art creates a potential space to sensuous experience for the knowledge of climate change. It's important not to forget that institutions of education are not the only hubs for learning about climate science with/through art. (Bentz, 2020: 1602)

1.2.3.2 Art and Climate Politics

The relation between art and climate politics is “last 30 years” part of their historical relation since they invented to the modern world. Besides, the content of the relation is also exactly the same as Bruno Latour puts in a video speech. But still, what important about this last 30 years relation are that rapid changes in climate and developments in art. As historical moments of social changes in

20th century are crucial for the so-called *social – turn* of art, the relation of art with climate politics has similar aspects to consider.

Art historian Claire Bishop indicates three historical moments to contextualize the ‘*social-turns*’ of art in 20th century (Bishop, 2012: 11): Europe after the 1917, as the historic avant-garde started to be dominant in art world; followed by a second wave, a ‘neo’ avant-garde era which shares common social grounds with civil rights movements leading to May 1968 and forward; lastly it was the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989. Even though the first two movements have strong social content, art was still bounded by ‘the world of art’ says Bishop and she adds that after 1989, there was “a shared set of desires to overturn the traditional relationship between the object of art, the artist and the audience.” (Bishop, 2012: 10) By 1990s, various ways of participation to an art work had been adopted by different artists. The involvement to the creating, sharing or performing process changed the role of the *audiences*. Bishop presents it as “post – studio practices” that differ in the naming accordingly to the context of re/production processes: “socially engaged art, community- based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, interventionist art, participatory art, collaborative art, contextual art and (most recently) social practice.” Whilst these names refer to different practices of art, the social-turn of art is also strongly related to the social movements and their historical moments.

Art was always strong communication tool. In the times of limited distribution technologies novels were instrumentalized in the discussions about the relation between art and politics. By the time dominant artistic content shifts from novel to contemporary art, also affects the aesthetics of protests. Walter Benjamin analysed society by the tragedies in the fiction and Brecht was critical about the absence of poetry and drama during the discussions between expressionism and realism (Benjamin, 2016: 127). The growth in the distribution of films during and after civil rights movements gave cinema its historical role that it was a film school in Paris when the students’ protests of 1968 began. Late 1950s and 1960s were also crucial for the performative – turn to engage with interdisciplinary approach to the

relation of art and politics. Lastly, if the participatory art had been raised and contemporary art started to be dominated during 1990s. In this context, we can say that environmentalism and civil right movements include the historicity that will deal with the relations between climate policy and art.

The aesthetics of climate activism historically have two fundamental roots: firstly, it is environmentalist movements after 1968 dominantly led by anti – nuclear mobilization in Europe and the second is civil rights movements. By the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989, art was getting more and more involved in the activist practices and the distinction between different disciplines like arts, politics and even science (especially for the issue of climate change) was also getting blurred as Bishop mentioned. Reading the social movement’s historical turning –points after 1989 by a climate change oriented approach is crucial to understand the aesthetics of climate justice movement as well. Their turning – points are defined by similar historical moments.

The social movement scholars like Paula Serafini wrote in 2014 and mentioned that global protests after the fall of Berlin Wall were dominantly mobilized against neo-liberal politics of globalization. She distinguishes two waves of alter-globalization movements: the demonstrations against intergovernmental organizations like World Trade Organizations during the 1990s and then up-risings like Occupy Wall-Street after the financial crisis in 2008. (Serafini, 2014: 341) These protest movements played a fundamental role in reformulation of the aesthetics of protests and they also all have had environmental concerns in their mobilization motivations or demands. During the 1990s “Breath” and “Kill the Car” were the leading slogans of the *Reclaim the Streets* movement in the UK (Blanco, 2013: 2). Non-hierarchical mobilization of plenty different activist groups and their festive kind of demonstration skills were also the part of their protesting culture. In the introduction of the book *Aesthetics and Resistance*, Aylin Kuryel and Begüm Özden Fırat use Gregory Sholette’s “creative dark matter” which is a term to explain any practices of aesthetical experiences outside the corporate art world and its market. (Kuryel and Fırat, 2015) While this kind of

dark matter is out of sight of art historians, museums, and gallery managers who claim to be interpreting culture, somehow it seeps into the corporate art space. According to Sholette, "self-organizing dark matter" infiltrates different areas of social life, but does not interfere with the discourse of the art world. According to Fırat and Kuryel, if we are talking about the possibility of a new avant-garde today, we should look for it at the points where the boundaries of the existing fields within collective action and organization practices are blurred (Kuryel & Fırat, 2015: 20).

Accordingly, such unpredictable and self-mobilized actions have different sayings like: "activist art, art- activism, cultural activism, culture – jamming, the eros – effect, ethical spectacle, interventionism, kommunikationsguerilla, spafsguerilla, tactical media, and radical ridicule." (Kuryel & Fırat, 2015: 21) Beyond the strategies, there was – and still there is – the "dark matter" and its names apparently. Kuryel and Fırat underline the importance of reading the intense and fertile relationship between art and politics through social movements. Changeable artistic content due to the systems of distribution and communication technologies also offer deep and creative consideration possibilities on aesthetical experiences. In other words, the roles of artists and audience within a whole artistic creation are also crucial for communication strategies of social protests.

Whilst scholars wrote about "aesthetics of protests" before the Paris Agreement which approved in 2015, it was still early to mention climate justice mobilization as a new international social movement. Yet today, the global climate strikes led by young activist Greta Thunberg and other activists who are trying to draw attention to the sixth great extinction, climate crisis and social breakdown can be regarded as the new global movement and the third wave of social mobilization after 1989.

The aesthetics of climate activism is performative. The elements of climate activism can be performed within the intersection of the three forms which are science, politics and arts. A performative act of any relevant actor can also have

elements of climate activism if it coincides with the aesthetics of climate science and art. Science, politics and art intersect accordingly, they need each other to understand and explain the new climate regime.

Performative aesthetics of climate activism signifies the necessity of reconsidering binary oppositions due to the objectification and degrading non-humans.

Art historian T.J Demos considers environmental issues both as “...driver and consequence of injustice and inequality – including poverty, racism, and neo-colonial violence.” (Demos, 2016: 7) The inclusion of the concept of climate justice in the Paris Agreement made the connection of the climate crisis with social justice even more visible. He continues his remarks by mentioning the necessary engagement of art with climate justice activism within different fields like interdisciplinary science, critical philosophy and cultural studies. “The most compelling current artistic models,” according to his view, “join the aesthetic dimension of experimental and perceptual engagement with the commitment to postcolonial ethico-political praxis, and so with sustained attention to how local activities interact with global formations.”(Demos, 2016: 8) In this context, what Demos discusses is about the art and climate crisis within the intersections of Latour’s *aesthetics of the climate* and Dipesh Chakrabarty’s postcolonial reading of human collectivity: According to Latour, “Without the idea that we have entered into a New Climate Regime, we cannot understand the explosion of inequalities, the scope of deregulation, the critique of globalization, or, most importantly the panicky desire to return to the old protections of the nation – state – a desire that is identified, quite inaccurately, with the ‘rise of populism.’” (Latour, 2018: 2) He points out four events to identify the new climate regime by historical turning-points, (1) Brexit, (2) Trump’s election, (3) amplification of migrations (4) COP21, Paris Agreement. Apparently, climate regime is not on the side of climate justice. How we set our political life and relations as societies have direct effects on the degrading the nature. In this point, Chakrabarty underlines that human – centred approach of history creates a kind of sensorial lack for a

communicative relationship between the planet and the human. How we approach to the notion of the globe, he also says, is also strongly linked with the story of globalization. Our previous perceptions on the globe are cultural and all constructed by human-centred point of view. Postcolonial historian says that climate crisis calls for a thinking simultaneously on the history of species and globalization. In this context, the last (and the third) wave of social mobilization as climate justice movement comprises the historical dimensions of previous ones. Moreover, fighting against climate deniers has common ground with the struggles driven by the historical inequalities.

The performative aesthetics of climate justice activism also shares similar protest repertoire with non-violent demonstrations and civil disobedience. Hence, Demos sees the necessity of reconsidering the relation between art and politics through climate justice activism.

1.2.3.3 Decolonizing Nature *in - with - through* Arts

According to Heather Davis and Ettiennne Turpin, the editors of “Art in the Anthropocene,” as a sensorial phenomenon- this geological new epoch is primarily an aesthetic experience. Secondly, to understand so-called Anthropocene epoch we came up with frames through data visualizations, climate models, satellite imageries or other modes of Earth’s visuals that are complex in every type of content. And at last, they wrote that “art provides a polyarchic site of experimentation for ...a non-moral form of address that offers a range of discursive, visual, and sensual strategies that are not confined by the regimes of scientific objectivity, political moralism, or psychological depression.” (Davis & Turpin, 2015: 3) In this regard, Demos separates contemporary position of climate based artistic practices from previous environmental varieties. Instead of parochial environmentalist art-works of 1970s, he says, most artistic models today are engaging with the postcolonial ethico-political praxis and local activities that are interacted with global formations (Demos, 2013: 9).

Social movement campaigners, political theorists, activists and artists act collectively beyond object-based and gallery-oriented opportunities and spaces. In this sense, Bruno Latour recommends *six rules* to the parties of any performative act intentions in his lecture titled, “On Sensitivity Arts, Science and Politics in the New Climate Regime.” 2016 dated lecture in Melbourne, after expressing the aesthetical dimensions of the Climate Regime, he reviews those six rules that should be considered by performance artists, scholars and activists:

- 1 *A renewed attention the atmospheric situation.* Solid and direct consequences of our actions to climate and ecology are impossible to render. Thus, a renewed attention to the atmospheric situation is essential.
- 2 *A renewed attention by artists to the complexity of science.* Considering the difficulty of learning climate science, artists generally have different attention to the complexity of science. Within the complex content of climate science, artists may discover an interesting chance to make convivial, humorous works of art.
- 3 *A search for a stage to express contradictions against the message based ‘ecological art’.* Latour prefers to focus on the power of theatre to build assembly where theatrical performance and political participation function simultaneously. Rather than customary image of a polar bear in a tiny ice, it would be affective to make people sensitive to the earth moving under their feet. He reminds the important role of discussion after such plays.
- 4 *A new attention to the difficulty of representing non-humans.* As we move forward rapidly to the sixth great extinction, what if endangered species had been represented in COP21 Paris Agreement? According to Latour, we were used to put them/non-humans outside of the assembly or as a decoration of the theatre. On the other hand, “*The Parliament of Things*” as he named, is the major challenge for performance studies. Thus, he moots theatrical simulation to perform such experience.

“A theatre is also an ideal place to dramatize and get out of dramatization. It allows

*to replay alternative spatio-temporal frames

*to make non-speaking entities speak

*to explore alternative plots

*to assemble the public (audience) in a different ways

*to imitate the models are built in science by adding new variables and explore alternative outcomes

*to explore ways for the audience to change attachments to the issue”

(Latour, 2016)

Latour states that people has general tendency not to believe in participation of non-humans in any kind of experience, they directly return to the notions of identity politics.

- 5 *A renewed link between non-academic & artistic skills.* Participation of people who do not necessarily perform artistic skills, attend to mobilize political campaign or don't have academic background is important in such performative simulations.
- 6 *A renewed interest for alternative figurations of the Earth.* Latour argues that the idea of “the globe” is not corresponding to the exact places we live and learn about living spaces. We actually live a tiny layer of the Earth which is called “critical zone.”

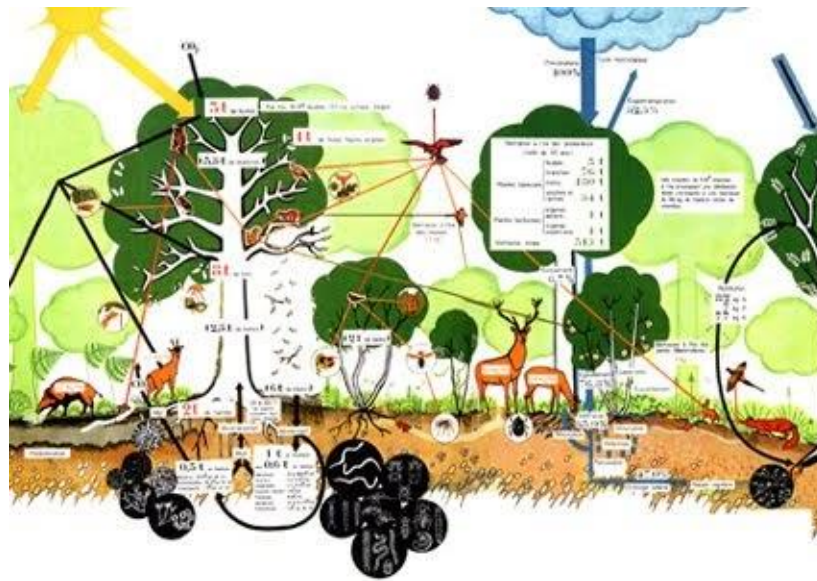


Figure 9. “A New Attention to the Soil” (Latour, 2016) (Paul Duvigneaud, *La Synthèse Ecologique* 1980)

In the lecture, he underlines the importance of a new attention the soil according to the sensitive cycle of life in critical zone –as the picture shows from the book *La Synthèse Ecologique* by Paul Duvigneaud in 1980. A nitrogen cycle is not visible, says Latour but it is crucial for life and affected by human actions dramatically.

In his recommendations, Bruno Latour mentions the significant functions of contemporary artistic skills and performance studies for the possibilities of alternatives to the non-binary visualization of life on earth we may say. When we think about our relationship with the globe or something related to the soil through the earth, this relationship is different from how the globe appears to us. In other words, he proposes to distinguish our perceptions about the globe from the critical zone which the life as we know exactly become possible. Such a perception shift to the critical zone from the globe will be functional to change our relationship with the soil. This perception change requires performative acts. In his speech to performance studies staff of Melbourne University, Latour primarily looks at the leaders’ performances of how they promise such change and mentions the wording by former French president François Hollande at the end of COP21,

“Vive les Nations Unites, vive la France, and vive la planete.” Another performative attitude was shown by Joe Biden at the climate summit which was organized in April by inviting the leaders of forty different countries. (UNFCCC, n.d.) “Earth Day” was chosen as the first day of the summit, and at the “on-screen conference,” leaders told American President Joe Biden about their updated national contributions through a giant screen. (The White House, April 2021) Ümit Şahin states that the return of the United States to the climate regime with such a demonstration has had a kind of 'improving the playing field' effect and some of the issues discussed since 1992 have not any political reliability or validity anymore. Related discussions had been based on differentiated responsibilities of countries regarding to their role on the climate crisis since the first industrial revolution. (Şahin, 2021)

With attitudes like Hollande’s, our identification of the soil preserves its nation – state perspective. Basically, we need to find an alternative way to engage with the earth beyond colonialist approach to soil.

Could Latour's proposition of rethinking Gaia and the meaning of the critical zone be an alternative?

Climate justice movement derives its feature of being the third (or new) wave after the fall of the Berlin Wall through the relationship with science, art and decolonialism. On the intersection of three forms of climate aesthetics, climate activism has function to create relevant spaces for experiencing sensory dimensions of the relation between human and non – human. We can embody this role of climate activism in their local practices through Latour’s six propositions.

The main matter of new climate regime is decolonizing nature, which is performative. Since the very first art work in human history, we can mention certain aesthetics of the climate since then. The aesthetics of climate marks the locality of the climate regime in the Anthropocene. In this point, Bruno Latour's three different forms of climate aesthetics is significant to understand new climate regime. Climate science, its politics and arts as three forms of climate aesthetics

reveal the problem of binary oppositions which determined human's relation with nature. Climate science knew that the global warming will be caused by human since 19th century. Historically, the least effective communities on climate change will be the ones affected the most from it. Controlling and degrading nature is mostly the historical knowledge of colonialism. This unjust situation is created by the colonial history. Decolonizing nature is performative, and depends on the major political decisions on distribution of the sensible. Therefore, the climate justice struggle is the third and new global social movement after 1989, as it adds the role of non-human beings to this distribution. The relationship of the climate justice movement with Anthropocene art may offer exciting possibilities for reflection on this role. We can say that it is meaningful to look at creative art and activism practices as they contain content at the intersection of three different aesthetics of climate and promise us a sensory experience about the Anthropocene at this intersection. At this point, Bruno Latour's 6 suggestions offer us a context in order to understand how decolonizing nature can be a process and to examine the role of art and activism in this process.

1.2.3.4 Climate Activism in Istanbul after 2015

In the second wave of alter-globalization social movements from occupy demonstrations to Arap Spring, took place after financial crisis in 2008, and Istanbul was one of the centre points within the global protest map. Diverse and multi – dimensional contexts of the protests intersected in terms of the legacy of urban culture. As David Harvey writes, there was always “the city” in the heart of change demands from Paris in 1789 to Tahrir square in 2011 (Harvey,2013). The climate justice mobilization is also predominantly an urban movement and the concept of *"the right to the city"* put forward by Harvey contains decisive elements regarding the relation of movement with art.

“... the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what style of life we desire, what aesthetic values we hold. The right to the city is, therefore, far more than a right

of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts' desire. It is, moreover, a collective rather than individual right, since reinventing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of collective power over the process of urbanization.” (Harvey, 2013: 4)

In this sense, we can say that the repertoire of the climate protests is urban – culture varieties or strongly link with the urbanization. Barış Gencer Baykan says that climate justice movement in Turkey, collaborative with local ecology resistances, dominantly mobilized urban – based¹¹. Baykan also writes about how the climate movement in Turkey has been mobilized since 2005 in the face of the state's inaction, lack of policy-making and denial of its global responsibilities. (Baykan, 2013) Thus, a collaborative momentum of the climate justice with the ecological resistance is on the one hand, and on the other hand, climate movement in Turkey also has its own agenda and mobilization due to international developments.

Gezi Park protests in 2013, therefore, are frankly part of the second alter-globalization movement which are historically crucial for right to the city as David Harvey mentions. In other words, Gezi Park up-rising was unique within Turkey's social movement history as an "environmental concerned" protest. Beside the ecological and anti-capitalist sensitivities of the protest, Zeynep Gambetti refers certain activities in Gezi Park during the occupation, “to combat the exclusion of the Other through ethnic, religious, gendered binaries, and the desire to experiment with direct participatory democracy.” (Gambetti, 2014: 92) She also underlines the role of creative activities like concerts or open lectures to gathering people, were crucial for such democracy experiments. Interestingly, years before Gezi protests, Clare Bishop mentions the “Oda Projesi” as a participatory experience of urban culture in Istanbul (Bishop, 2012: 20). According to Bishop, the social – turn of art during and after 1990s was not just about the change within the content of art itself. It was also the shift on the role of

11Barış Gencer Baykan, interviewed with scholar, November 2020.

individuals as spectators from passive to active participation to the difference stages of artistic creation. As a sample of non-object-based art, Oda Projesi was an art project of three artists living in Istanbul, Galata district between 1997 and 2005. During the project, the aim of the artists was to create a space in their three-room apartment for different groups who do not have any social connect in their daily life circumstances. Such an early ‘phenomenon’ in the art world of Istanbul, Oda Projesi opened an inter-human space and created time to experience togetherness of the Others, says Bishop. Nicolas Bourriaud says that urban culture was necessary for the invention of contemporary art and its social context in 1990s (Bourriaud, 2006: 160). The developments in transportation and communication technologies lead to greater human mobility and also distribution of the images. According to curator of 16th Istanbul Biennial, it was relational art that allows us to look inside our sense of humanity and to think from outside of current constructed structures.

“Exhibitions of contemporary art... create free spaces and periods of time whose rhythms are not the same as those that organize everyday life, and they encourage an inter-human intercourse which is different to the ‘zone of communications’ that are forced upon us.” (Bourriaud, 2006: 161)

Bourriaud says that art always has that necessary relationship with the other by creating a social interstice as Karl Marx mentioned “a self- sufficient form of production.” On the other hand, it’s challenging for art and its practices to offer such experiences on non-binary human and non-human relations within the institutionalized art world. He was criticized regarding to decolonization readings of art and nature. Those critiques through the role of art within the aesthetics of climate can be considered through the Anatolian environmental – concerned – art practices or climate justice activism. In her article, *Artistic Strategies for Raising Environmental Awareness in Anatolia* Berin Golonu reveals the interaction between urbanization and the ecological breakdown in rural Anatolia. (Golonu, 2013: 60)



Figure 10. Halil Altindere, still from *Mirage*, video, 7 mins, 20 sec, 2009 (Golonu, 2009)

Eray Çaylı, as well, interprets the ecological and gender concerned works of Cengiz Tekin from Amed. (Çaylı, 2020: 179) Golonu says that due to the significant lack of environmental education, “significant concern and support for environment causes only occurs when familiar modes of existence and ways of life are threatened.” (Golonu, 2013: 54) And Çaylı states that sensitivity felt on a particular issue and turned into action suppresses a deeper domination that is being experienced and renders it invisible. But he doesn’t refer to lack of education necessarily. He mentions a deeper sensitivity to the different forms of our relationship with nature through social dimensions. Moreover, he mentioned Istanbul Biennial of 2019 as a threat to public health through the lack of liable environmental concerns on the selected building of exhibitions and curator’s approach to the main theme which was climate crisis. For this reason, Çaylı criticizes the framework of the 16th Istanbul Biennial because of post-colonial concerns. The 6 suggestions made by Bruno Latour to the artists do not directly respond to Çaylı's criticisms. While any artwork may contain all 6 propositions, it

can also be a part of the criticism directed to the institutionalized art. At this point, we can say that the features Sholette attributed to *creative dark matter* are vital to art and are particularly visible in aesthetics of the climate, especially in activists' practices. In this sense, the practices of Anthropocene art in Istanbul generally focus on the global context of the climate crisis. Art practices, especially with an activist orientation, question Turkey's role in the new climate regime or contain content that we can relate to being an urbanite, which we see in anti-globalization movements. On the other hand, focusing on the global context of the climate crisis also points to something left out about decolonizing nature as an area where climate activism and Anthropocene art diverge in Turkey today. Berin Golonu and Eray Çaylı's examples of ecological consciousness and Anthropocene art pass through rural Anatolia or a city like Amed for a reason. Golonu is interpreting Halil Altındere's work through the discourse of "raising ecological awareness" which has a western-centred orientation. On the other hand, Çaylı's comments on Cengiz Tekin's works are associated with post-colonial criticisms of the Anthropocene and Turkey's regional politics. In a metropolis like Istanbul, we can say that making a concept like decolonizing nature visible becomes more difficult as the art projects gets bigger.

If we think in terms of the climate movement that started in Istanbul in the early 2000s, the repertoire of the protests has a strong connection with the aesthetics of climate science, art and politics. Discussions through the artworks are crucial for communicative aspects of climate activism. Even though Turkey has its unique problems to integrate with international climate regime of UNFCCC, performative aesthetics of climate activism in Istanbul have considerable repertoire. How to construct a relationship with the local ecological resistances and demand political action on climate justice may require concrete communication strategy. Different NGOs shares the responsibility according to their working areas and networks. Political protests on the other hand, mostly have different intentions, demands and aims according to an artwork. Bruno Latour's propositions, again, can be a practical guide to act according to fulfil those intentions. As an urban rights

movement, Gezi protests was not derived as a part of climate justice movement, together with its ecological concerns. Climate activists were at the park as a part of shared discourse. Climate justice mobilization in İstanbul has its roots, shared values with this (2nd wave) international protests as Harvey describes. And the aesthetics of climate activism has common communicative sensitivity with the art in/of Anthropocene. Climate activism was already collaborated with the local ecological resistances before 2015, it becomes and need to be more and more integrated in its discourse with art practices of Anthropocene after 2015. Anthropocene forces us to change our perspective for our relationship with the Earth we live in, this is why an international climate regime (is necessary but) cannot be fully sufficient to reconsider the crises derives from colonization, developmentalist economies and lack of environmental rights for non-humans. (Abimbola, Aikins, Wilkinson and Roberts, 2021) Related artworks like Çaylı and Golonu discuss can be considered as a guide to handle the strategy to mobilize a creative action. Those art works are local, unique so that reachable to allow us for focusing such phenomenon like Anthropocene and its crises. In this sense, climate justice activists in İstanbul today, living hard-times to engage with this aspects of new global climate movement which has important content related to the new climate regime. Current totalitarian regime of the country is one of the most important reasons for this lack. (Deutsche Welle Türkçe,2020) Even so, it's worth to consider current activities of artists and activists, and the conditions of the aesthetics of climate activism in İstanbul. Art world of the city has increased attention to the climate crisis and there are plenty young climate strikers who start to strike for climate action approximately at the same time with Greta Thunberg. (Crouch, 2018) Extinction Rebellion Turkey, also mobilized creative actions several times to gain the attention on the emergency of the crisis and demand from the parliament to ratify Paris Agreement. (Taylor, 2020) I consciously chose to discuss Çaylı and Golonu's interpretations because they both academically focus on ecologically-concerned art works in Turkey from abroad. In a way, they bring Turkish art works into TJ Demos' post-colonial art and politics discussions. With

this thesis I look at how much and what the climate movement could do something similar in Istanbul.

Climate activism in İstanbul after 2015 is dominantly affected by the global developments on the climate justice movement. In 2018, Greta Thunberg started her climate strikes every Friday and Extinction Rebellion published its declaration which was a call for a global state of climate emergency. By the time, in March 2019, 11 years old Atlas Sarrafoğlu made a call for the young people to start local climate strikes in İstanbul. More than a hundred young people gathered in the Bebek Park to join Atlas. (Karaman, 2019) Most of those young activists still continues to strike and show solidarity to the international “Fridays for Future¹²” movement. After the very first strikes in İstanbul, young people from other cities joined the movement and started to mobilize their own climate strikes. And different environmental NGOs showed solidarity with climate striker young activists. As a result of the considerable media attention and increasing number of the strikes Fridays for Future Turkey was established to mobilized the communication. (Bianet, 2021)

In this thesis, local art and activist practices discussed through Bruno Latour’s defined intersectional aesthetics of climate and his 6 propositions, are admitted as the practices belongs to the new climate regime. The thesis of this study, which can be refuted, is that we have entered a new climate regime since 2015.

CHAPTER 2: PERFORMATIVE AESTHETICS OF CLIMATE ACTIVISM IN ISTANBUL

Eray aylı distinguishes two approaches to the aesthetics of climate change according to the content of the art work: firstly, a work of art can be experiential or secondly it may intervene to the issue directly (aylı, 2020: 180). Experiential work of art historically defined by the 20th century’s practices and theories as Claire Bishop puts it as “participatory art.” It questioned the roles of institutions, artists, art work and its audience by strong relation with the social movement. The collaboration of science, politics and art are not totally distinguishing from the any other times since the invention of the notions. On the other hand, their

intersection between each other become more visible and even sensible if the content is ecology because of the rapid changing conditions of climate crisis in last 30 years. The Curator of 16th İstanbul Biennial Nicolas Bourriaud also writes on relational art (Bourriaud, 2006) which can be considered as a part of avant-garde école and the practices of participatory art in 1990s. (Çaylı, 2020)

Contemporary art projects which are directly intervene to the problems of climate crisis are increasingly performed by artists and activist. This second approach, also may called as “direct intervention” (Çaylı, 2020: 194) involves two different forms; documentation and concrete solution. Informative documentaries or solution – based collective exhibitions can be set an example for this kind of artistic content. The digital exhibition organized by İstanbul Women’s Museum, “*Which future will you leave me?*” involves similar approaches with the direct intervention form of an artwork.

Çaylı also offers a new naming called *self-reflexive* as an additional approach to these art forms. By the term of “self-reflexive” he recommends to intellectualize the issues of the Anthropocene (which can be anything) by focusing on their connections with the phenomena that have been at the centre of art throughout history. The connection of the issues like climate change, sixth great extinction, and ecological breakdown with the Anthropocene is mainly historical which is human – centred. Thus, any art work or activist practices that question human – centred approach can be considered as “self-reflexive.” Creative non - violent protests of Extinction Rebellion Turkey can be considered as self - reflexive practices.

2.1. PARTICIPATORY ART: 16TH ISTANBUL BIENNIAL, “THE SEVENTH CONTINENT

Organized by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSÜ), the 16th Istanbul Biennial was held between 14 September and 10 November with the participation of 56 artists from 25 countries. More than 220 works were exhibited

in the Biennial, which was very busy with public programs, panels and other activities. These works were exhibited in three different locations of Istanbul, at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University's Istanbul Painting and Sculpture Building in Tophane, Pera Museum and Büyükada. The French curator of the Biennial, Nicolas Bourriaud, who focuses on the climate crisis and determines its theme as the Seventh Continent, said in an interview with the Yeşil Gazete that he was trying to build an Opera of the Anthropocene with the Seventh Continent. (Bourriaud, 2019b; para 2)

The 16th Istanbul Biennial, with its "Seventh Continent" theme, was a contemporary art gathering that focused on "art in the Anthropocene" in the age of crises. With over 450 thousand visitors, the "Seventh Continent" became a biennial that remained on the agenda from different angles. The globalized art and its subject became the fore with its new space and content, due to what happened in the exhibition spaces became an urban health issue. The exhibition, which was planned to take place at Haliç Shipyard, had to change the location when a dangerous level of asbestos was detected in the shipyard less than a month before the opening. In his article in Yeşil Gazete, Alper Akyüz asked, "Do you say divine justice? Or ones cannot know." (Akyüz, 2019: para 2) Poetic justice "as the theme of one of the previous biennials ... this last minutes change due to the pillage of public coastal areas of Istanbul, drew attention to public health ignored in urban transformation in terms of the right to the city. We can say that the 16th Istanbul Biennial is a continuation of the experientialist art movements that took shape in the twentieth century, when taken together with the theme of "Seventh Continent" and the texts of French Curator Nicolas Bourriaud (Bourriaud, 2019a). He questions the cultural meaning of shortening the distances with the technological developments that Walter Benjamin drew attention to. "Racism, misogyny, colonialism, oppression, exploitation; the only source of all this is that the Western thought clearly separates human and nature, cultural and living," (Bourriaud, 2019a) says the author, who promoted molecular anthropology by a new generation of artists.

"Artists are the primitives and savages of their tribes," says the curator "... Any artist's work should also be analysed with an anthropological approach. Viewers looking at a work of art should equip themselves with a knowledge based on 'active participation' as contemporary anthropologists use." (Bourriaud, 2019a) He actually describes the relationship between artists and art with visitors in his own terms. While working with the artists on the exhibition, he also states that Tim Ingold's approach to art, "there is nothing but "participatory" observation", is based on the intellectual approach of the 16th Istanbul Biennial. This reference also coincides with Claire Bishop's concept of participatory art. This is important; because Bishop considers participatory art as a continuation of the currents that determined the relationship of art with politics (and of course social movements) in the 20th century. In this sense, we can say that a Biennial that deals with the climate crisis can also contain an experience of the new climate regime, and we can evaluate the spaces opened by the 16th Istanbul Biennial from this perspective. Tim Ingold opens up the meanings of going to an exhibition by discussing a question posed by Wassily Kandinsky in 1982. Kandinsky writes that, "... they (visitors) leave, just as rich or poor as they came in, immediately absorbed again by their own interests, which have nothing whatever to do with art. Why ever did they go?" (Ingold, 2011; 600) Ingold simply guesses at first that they came to see the artworks and then interprets Kandinsky's statement. According to Ingold, Kandinsky first of all, the artist's relationship with his own art changes from the moment his artworks are exhibited in an exhibition. The artist distances him/her/themselves from the work according to the production process. Thus, the exhibition space turns into an inner journey that we perceive with our (human) senses. In the corridors of the exhibition, as the continuation of Bourriaud's quote from Tim Ingold continues, "...only 'together' *with* (and *by*) the people one can be learned something" we can say that art, which deals with the climate crisis, has acquired an anthropological role by providing experience and participation in its relationship with climate science. At this point, as a participant/visitor of the 16th Istanbul Biennial, I believe it would be meaningful

to evaluate the exhibition itself and the interviews we made with its artists and curator through Bruno Latour's six propositions.

In the interviews I made with the Biennial artists for Yeşil Gazete I was able to discuss that kind of interaction in the sense that Bourriaud describes. The interviews in the file prepared for the 16th Istanbul Biennial started by meeting with Elmas Deniz in the exhibition area. Shortly after we met, Deniz clearly expressed the intention and need to talk about her own artworks in the exhibition. She produced two stories for the Seventh Continent: "Lost Waters" and "History of a particular nameless creek." *Lost Waters* is a relief mapping the underground waters that have now disappeared around Taksim and Bomonti. *History of a Particular Nameless Creek* is an installation in which the artist connects with her own childhood. In our interview with Deniz, she talks about the pina (Pinna Nobilis), a seashell from the parts that make up the installation of History of a particular nameless creek,



Figure 11. Elmas Deniz, *Pinna*, 2019.

"Pinna is a Mediterranean endemic. It just loves the rivers around the Mediterranean. Nowadays, a parasite causes them to become extinct. The extinction of creatures that we do not know exist ... This is actually why I put Pinna there. Pinna is not something people know very well. Some people think that I made it out of ceramics, some say wings. Few people know what it is." (Deniz, 2019: para 5)

It is not possible to know what the artefacts are hanging on the wall or the stories behind them, but we know that creatures whose existence we do not know are rapidly disappearing and we need to develop a sensibility as soon as possible. In this sense, an in-depth communication with the art of the Seventh Continent was possible through public programs and panels that continued throughout the Biennial. These programs mainly featured a discussion on the role of contemporary art in terms of the spaces it opens up to those who are sensitive to the climate crisis. Personally, after my interview with Elmas Deniz, I sensed that, in the face of an issue that is being socialized, such as the climate crisis, artists might feel uneasy about getting away from their art works and placed in an any room within a huge exhibition space. Deniz is an artist who approaches to the possibilities of representation of non-humans with sensitivity. With her works in the Istanbul Biennial, she explores ways to change and improve the attachments of the participant visitors with the subject (ecological breakdown) through her own childhood story and an ecology of underwater that no longer exists. Bourriaud answers when Alper Akyüz asks him about the relationship between the choice of exhibition space and the choice of artworks as follows:

"My task in a way to play with the context. I didn't want to invite artists who are ecological activist but artists with art works which are really into the ecological catastrophe. How the Anthropocene modifies the way of perceiving the world by artists? More than reactions to what's going on it's good to take a break out of the CNN world, take a distance. In this building, at the very heart of the urban catastrophe, showing works which were taking distance from this catastrophe but showing it in a different way." (Bourriaud, 2019b: para 2)

From the point of view of the curator, we can say that the 16th Istanbul Biennial's purpose can be considered as a given structure to create the opportunity to share art and to understand the Seventh Continent. In the same interview, he also says that he tried to build up a kind of an Opera of the Anthropocene with the Seventh Continent. (Bourriaud, 2019b: para 1) Hence, how the 16th Istanbul Biennial can answer Kandinsky's question remains a valid discussion before us. Why ever did they go to an Opera of the Anthropocene? Two years after the 16th Istanbul Biennial, each art work I saw have a dynamic place in my memories to be considered and discussed through Latour's six propositions. On the other hand, this is not likely for the Seventh Continent as a whole. This is an exhibition to "take a break from the CNN world" but, it's relationship with catastrophe of the urban is problematic. Bourriaud, himself, thinks that art (especially contemporary art) is historically related with the urban life and then social movements. (Bourriaud, 2006) In this sense, Kandinsky's question can be developed: "Why would we go to an Opera of Anthropocene to take a break, a distance from the CNN world?" In my humble opinion, the Seventh Continent as a whole failed to answer or discuss such question, or as the question itself, the argument was also Western-centre so that it couldn't engage with the environmental right problems of Istanbul.

On the other hand, there were projects to consider through Latour's propositions. The Feral Atlas collective group, one of the biennial participants, is a team that produces new information about the possibilities of art in the age of climate crisis in terms of both its structure and the work it does. Scientists, designers, social scientists, designers, filmmakers and activist group that came together to work on the Feral Atlas project that examines the relationship between what we call "feral entities" through infrastructures built by humans.



Figure 12. Feral Atlas Collective, 2019 (the picture taken by Bahar Topçu)

Saying that Feral Atlas is a project curated by three anthropologists and an architect, Jennifer Deger states that they do not only do art work with the contribution of more than 100 people. In the interview for Yeşil Gazete, Deger explained the work of Feral Atlas as follows:

"Feral Atlas advocates a transdisciplinary approach to our current earth crisis. Though we use aesthetic methods and incorporate the work of many artists, we are not producing art, per se. Instead we are experimenting with a curatorial strategy that combines a wide range of voices, sounds, and images from the humanities, sciences and arts, to see how these perspectives might work together to enable new ways of recognising, and responding to, the processes that give rise to the Anthropocene. Feral Atlas advocates a transdisciplinary approach to our current earth crisis. Though we use aesthetic methods and incorporate the work of many artists, we are not producing art, per se. Instead we are experimenting with a curatorial strategy that combines a wide range of voices, sounds, and images from the humanities, sciences and arts, to see how these perspectives might work

together to enable new ways of recognising, and responding to, the processes that give rise to the Anthropocene." (Deger, 2019: para 3)

We can say that the Istanbul Biennial, which symbolizes the historical continuity of the experientialist art movements in the 20th century and is one of the important Biennials, has succeeded in making the climate crisis more visible. However, it may not be so easy to be able to say the same for the concept and movement for climate justice. Feral Atlas is a project that involves different contents which have diverse responses to each 6 propositions of Latour. First of all, the complexity of climate science and the urgency of the crisis render the necessity of non-academic and artistic skills to gain the attention to the atmospheric situation. Enabling new ways of recognising the Anthropocene, Deger also indicates the functions of the 6 propositions Latour makes.

When we interpret the biennial through certain art works, in a kind of micro evaluation we first see that the art of the Anthropocene is an important communication tool for climate science. We can also broaden our view and say that there are works that respond to the 6 propositions made by Bruno Latour in different qualities. We can cite the works of Elmas Deniz and Feral Atlas, especially for "non-academic artistic skills" and "alternative figurations of the Earth" propositions. A final interpretation on the art of the Anthropocene through the three different forms of the aesthetics of climate that Latour put forward is the most necessary, and its relationship with the local climate justice movement gains importance. What did the 16th Istanbul Biennial promise about this relationship? How did art and social movements, which were in intense interaction with each other and the public during the exhibition, develop this interaction afterwards? First of all, we have come across the Anthropocene art more often, as the artists deal with the climate crisis more frequently. However, it is not so easy to say something similar about the local climate justice movement. There is an increasing number of ecological destructions in Turkey and protective resistances against these destructions. These resistances, on the one hand, have a very important role in terms of protectionism; on the other hand, they have a feature

that does not carry the relationship established with the soil beyond the relations of nation-state and property. Of course, it is not that ecological resistances play such a carrying role; it can be expected that the climate justice movement, which is organized especially in urban, will transform through discussion.

In a city that was affected by the global protests between 2008 and 2014, which determines today's conditions as the second social wave after the fall of Berlin Wall, it will inevitably be problematic if art that speaks of the climate crisis ignores the context of such a period. The climate movement in Turkey has a city-oriented, even Istanbul-oriented, organizational form like the art-world of the country. The distance that the 16th Istanbul Biennial put into urban rights movement and the talk of the climate crisis created its own dilemma. The 16th Istanbul Biennial, like the previous ones, became one of the Biennials with the highest number of visitors.

2.2. INTERVENTION! – “WHICH FUTURE WILL YOU LEAVE ME? GIRLS AND CLIMATE CRISIS”

In 2020's International Day of Girl Child, Istanbul Women's Museum had started an art project called “Which Future Will You Leave Me? *Girls on the Climate Crisis.*” This project was designed as a digital exhibition project curated by Meral Akkent, covering different contents and activities in terms of documenting the history of the climate crisis and girls. Accordingly, we can say that the content of exhibition involves documentation and concrete solution aspects which are realized with the collaboration of Fridays for Future Turkey, Koşan Kağlumbağa Kindergarden and Ammonite Digital Art Gallery. The digital exhibition added to the permanent collection of Istanbul Women's Museum. Within the scope of the digital exhibition in general, (Akkent, 2020: para 5)

- Letters by 28 climate activist girls,
- Original works of art produced by the artists of the Ammonite Gallery,

- Drawings of the emotions of the little ones in the Koşan Kaplumbağa Kindergarten,
- Illustrations of Eda Çağıl Çağlarırnak,
- Writings of academicians such as Akgün İlhan, Rana Göksu, Hande Aydın; who contributed to the project,
- Information related to the topics that activist girls draw attention in their messages; statistics, surveys and video links that linking daily life and environmental crisis,
- And lastly, the Schneidertempel Art Center hosted the material exhibition from October 9 to 25.

This content has also been published as a book in both Turkish and English. The project funded by the UNDP Turkey to publish and distribute to the libraries of 70 Universities across Turkey. Same content can be downloaded as PDF document.

Another part of the project, prepared under pandemic conditions was the billboard visuals and videos were demonstrated at central districts of İstanbul during the material exhibition. The promotional video of the exhibition took place on public transportation vehicles. Citizens of İstanbul encountered with the images and learned about both the climate crisis and the role of girls in this crisis.

Despite many academic, artistic (or both) English contents documenting the climate crisis online, there is a lack of Turkish content. In this sense, while this art project demonstrates the role of girls; it also documents the current conditions of the climate crisis.



Figure 12. A screenshot picture from the online exhibition taken by Bahar Topçu, 2020.

It would be meaningful to consider the different contents the project covers around the roles of three different components: the role of girls, the role of institutions and the role of art.

2.2.1. The Role of Girls



Figure 13. Melike Kuş, *Impaired balance*, 2020.

In her published interview, the curator of the exhibition Meral Akkent states that the primary goal of the project is the vital role of documenting women's history. She basically says that,

“We established the Istanbul Women's Museum to show how polyphony can be put into practice in women's historiography. We set off knowing that the history of girls is an important part of women's history. If we consider climate justice movement in Turkey, girls are playing a very important role. It is necessary to see, document and demonstrate this important role. That's why I care so much about this exhibition.”

Thanks to the experience of women’s rights movement of Turkey, significant conditions for solidarity between climate activist girls had been created also by the İstanbul Women’s Museum. Mrs. Akkent says that girls have significant knowledge on how the climate crisis is the most important issue of our time and accordingly, they have concrete idea on their current and possible roles in this crisis. In their letters, they make reference to the failure of “business as usual,” global climate justice and the lack of political will. Moreover, it seems like they believe that they can make real difference as if they take actions like school strikes or writing a letter to an exhibition. Thus, they're making direct call to decision makers to take climate crisis as primarily urgent issue in their agendas.

At the exhibition, the intergenerational injustice created by the climate crisis is conveyed to us through girls as the right to the future. Activist girls are demanding that adults should take action on the climate crisis and end ecological breakdown. Women of all ages are the most affected by the consequences of climate change, as well as working to raise awareness.

2.2.2. The Role of Institutions



Figure 14. Serenay Tektunalı, unnamed, 2020.

The institutions have had different roles to accomplish the project and within the content of the exhibition itself. First of all, if we think about intellectual property rights of the project it belongs to İstanbul Women's Museum. The funding and the realization of the project have different components and collaborators as well. The cooperation of institutions in different fields seems to have created a meaningful solidarity, but on the other hand, it also makes us feel the need for a second thought in terms of "creative dark matter." In the pursuit of climate justice by young people, adults' efforts to make them visible are formed through an institutionalized cooperation.

The list of sustainable actions of the UN is also in the book by putting the items on the pages according to the subtitles. There is a significant lack between the content of the letters of activist girls and the UN's recommendations. While the

activist girls underline the necessity of global change, progressive and holistic politics; the ultimate concrete information can be given by the UN are how to calculate individual carbon print and how to reduce it.

Optimistically, we can say that different institutions like municipality of İstanbul, NGOs, a school and a museum helped to young girls to make their voice heard and historical role to be seen.

2.1.3. The role of art



Figure 15. Selenay Tektunalı, unnamed, 2020.

Similar studies claiming a kind of direct intervention, besides revealing their political positions, may be lacking in containing messages related to artistic concerns. The artworks in this exhibition do not have any concerns to respond to Bruno Latour's 6 propositions. On the other hand, the exhibition in the gallery did not highlight the messages of the activist girls in the notes attached to each work as the descriptive texts of the art works.



Figure 16. A photo from the website of İstanbul Women's Museum, 2020.

Stating that ecological destruction and climate crisis can lead to emotions that are difficult to cope with such as desperation, anxiety, loneliness or fear of the future, Akkent said that young people need to hear each other; she emphasizes that art and the fields it opens are very valuable in this respect.

Another feature of the *Which Future Will You Leave Me* digital exhibition is that it is also documentation on the Anthropocene and its climate crisis in Turkish. It is important that general information on the Anthropocene and its crises, the information shared by the United Nations on the climate crisis, and the ideas and demands of the activists were shared in both English and Turkish. However, there was another disconnection between the activist girls who share their opinions and the political content given. While activist youth talked about how climate crisis is political, the information shared by the United Nations was that how we can calculate the carbon footprints. So, what is the message here? Nevertheless, the fact that UNDP is aware of the exhibition and makes the necessary contributions and an important part of the direct intervention feature of this art project, which is realized with many stakeholders.

While criticizing the distance the 16th Istanbul Biennial has established with urban rights movements, what kind of a place has such an exhibition's relationship with the climate strikers hold for the climate justice movement? When we look at this pragmatically, time will tell how the institutional connections established by young activists will guide the climate justice movement. However, we can say that the book distributed to schools has a content for learning about the climate crisis rather than encouraging girls in different cities in terms of activism. It is not easy to say that it is a project that can send the message that we need everyone to change everything. We also do not know if it is a project where the groups most affected by the climate crisis and ecological collapse can take part and all stakeholders can ensure the continuation of sharing, in order to go beyond being a proof that there are also girls on climate strike.

I believe that Latour's 6 proposition also refers to a kind of common sense which confirms that what artists and activists do /perform are communicative. What young climate striker girls do is communicative, "In doing so protest constitutes 'the people' and through the aesthetics of protests, rupture conventions of doing politics." (McGarry, Erhart, Eslen-Ziya, Jenzen & Korkut, 2020; 16) As climate strikes have such aesthetics, constitutes and communicate with the people in democratic ground, the role of art in this art project can hardly related with the Latour's propositions. It's simple because the communication between the contributors is organized by institutions corporately rather than a directly, face to face communication. As the aesthetics of the artworks in the exhibition stays as an artistic regime, the letters of striker girls can easily be considered just as literate essays. When the aesthetics of protest involves artistic creativity public space became more visible; but institutionalized art has its own problems and dilemmas.

2.3. SELF – REFLEXIVE ART: EXTINCTION REBELLION TURKEY

The new climate movement, whose seeds were thrown at the COP in Copenhagen in 2009, did not leave the streets of Paris empty during COP21 in 2015, and

strongly expressed the demand for climate justice. In 2018, the climate justice movement gained momentum and visibility, especially with the climate strikes initiated by Greta Thunberg. And at the same year in Britain, Extinction Rebellion started to draw attention to the climate crisis radically with acts of civil disobedience. (Doherty, De Moor and Hayes, 2018) Extinction Rebellion started to gather funds through the company "Compassionate Revolution", which was established by different urban and environmental movements organized together with new activists in 2008 and later. According to what Stuart Basden wrote and told me one-on-one, who has been involved from the beginning of the organization, the visibility of non-violent actions was higher than they expected and the newsworthiness of their detentions led them to the next step: disobedience.



Figure 17. A moment from the workshop organized by Extinction Rebellion, Vienna, 2019.

After all these activist experiences, they say that professional activism has been able to quench the excitement with budget and career planning, and most importantly, its achievements so far have not been sufficient in the face of the magnitude of the crisis. They seek a different and dynamic activism by revealing the difficulty of the continuity of a volunteer-based activism.

Meanwhile, when it comes to October 2018, a new IPCC report is published and noted that the glaciers are melting faster than they are known. It is communicated to the politicians and those who chose them that we need to give up fossil fuels as of today in order to stay at a maximum 1.5 degree warming level that we can adapt with the living creatures that are not yet exhausted on the planet. On the other hand, another major crisis, ecological destruction, which causes the extinction of at least 150 different species every day, is known as the “The Sixth Great Extinction” marks the obvious one about human life that is increasingly destabilizing life on the planet. These scientific facts that take place before our eyes are summed up by activists in their call to act, we cannot continue like this: "Revolt for Life" "Tell the Truth!" "Join the Rebellion" "It's a climate emergency, act now!"¹³Extinction Rebellion has 3 demands: (1) Tell the truth (2) Declare a climate emergency (3) Establish citizens' assemblies. In Turkey, a group of young climate activists in 2018 responded to the call from London in November, they added to ratify the Paris Agreement by the Turkish Parliament as a 4th demand and began to organized creative demonstrations. The activists tend to rise due to creative forms of action of civil disobedience in Turkey and drew attention to the extinction of species, especially in the action.

The first activity they did, "Hurdahaş" street performance, is a good example in terms of describing the action style chosen by the activist group. At the event held on April 21, 2019, artist Eymen Aktel surrounded herself with scrap papers in Moda Beach. The artist was taken on a video while she was drawing letters and symbols about the extinction and wearing an oxygen mask inside the transparent but airy cabin.

13 “Hakikat” Yokoluş İsyanı, accessed January 6, 2021.



Figure 18. A still from the performance *Hurdahaş* by Eymen Aktel, 2019.

After Aktel's drawing was finished, Yokoluş İsyanı organized a workshop at the park. Aktel's performance corresponds to at least one side of self-reflexive art. By producing her work in the public space, where she deals with a subject such as the climate crisis, the artist primarily performs a kind of performance responds to 6 propositions. The work of art is an outcome of the labour that is performed in certain time and space. In this sense, we can say that every interaction with the audience includes a temporality, as Alper Akyüz said in his video talk about the temporal locality of works of art. (Hemzemin, 2020) This transience sometimes takes place in that place, as in the *Hurdahaş* performance; and sometimes it makes you experience the monolith of the constantly transforming interaction with each visitor in a museum.

However, we could also sense that performances like this could be the driving force of "dark matter" at least in the following activities of Extinction Rebellion Turkey. Such practices of art-activism also invite participants to a kind of confrontation. One of the key revelations of Extinction Rebellion in the UK is that unless we change our habits and perspectives, we also confirm the "business as usual" activities that caused the crisis. We must change our way of life from today and demand the change. Greta Thunberg's contribution to this call was that even a

small contribution can make a difference. In this sense, activists and their practices create the possibility of self-reflective experience and this falls within the scope of artists.



Figure 19. Eymen Aktel, *Hurdahaş*, 2019.

Another *Hurdahaş* performance in a public gathering organized by the multicinity of Kadıköy, the painting was ended by randomly volunteered participants rather than artists herself.

Climate activists increased their activities by communicating with people and different groups with similar concerns through creative actions in a short time. One of these protests was against the fossil fuel company sponsorships of the 16th Istanbul Biennial, which deals with the climate crisis. (Yeşil Gazete, 2019)



Figure 20. Extinction Rebellion Turkey, "Sanata Petrol Bulaştı", 2019. Photo by Erhan Demirtaş

According to Yeşil Gazete, the performance started with a big bang, accompanied by vuvuzelas. Activists read their statement which says that “We are here to protect our future. We convey the climate crisis through one of us and every living thing. We are here to protest the greenwashing; art is contaminated with oil.” At the end of the performance “oil” is poured into the building entrance with food colouring, as a representation of death, extinction.



Figure 21. Extinction Rebellion Turkey, "Sanata Petrol Bulaştı", 2019. Photo by Erhan Demirtaş

It should be noted that Eymen Aktel, who took part in the demonstration, was also a participant in one of the events in the public program. This is understandable in the circumstances of making art in Turkey as Bourriaud also argues. As Aktel used every platform to mention the greenwashing, the discourse of the protest was unfortunately problematic. In their slogans and their statement, they did not mention the fossil fuel company as the sponsor of the Seventh Continent. In global demonstrations like the ones against the BP's sponsorship to Tate Moderns, activist underlined the company. They mentioned it within their banners and slogans. To change the existent circumstances and condition the agencies should be clearly announced. On the other hand, this demonstration was one of the most well-known performance made by Extinction Rebellion Turkey. Because of the ongoing trails against civil disobedience, climate activists in Turkey mostly prefer to perform creative actions.

A work of art can be a self-reflexive practice, and such practice can be carried out as part of any protest. In addition, Rancière's definition of aesthetics allows the agents to considered their own collective action as self-reflexive practice. We can say that the courage or willpower in Bruno Latour's 6 propositions stems from this feature of the aesthetic of climate activism (or any other protests). As artists have

renewed attention on the new climate regime, climate activists also have similar interests. Moreover, how to constitute or perform 'the people' can be their primary concern in terms of the aesthetics. Apart from Latour's third proposition (the search for a phase contradiction versus message-based 'ecological art'), the meeting and creative actions of Extinction Rebellion Turkey aim to create an approach, a discourse that takes all other propositions into account. Although they do not do so in a focused and systematized way, climate activists have renewed attention to atmospheric situation and representation of non-humans. In one of its creative activities, Extinction Rebellion Turkey held a park meeting dressed as endangered animals. After the event, the democratic participation of non-human beings in community activities was discussed with participants and spectators. The activist group is also aware of the complexity of climate science so that they aim to build a link between non-academic and artistic skills in terms of their discourse, communication strategy of their creative actions. Most importantly, the space that activist demonstrations create during and after the performances are crucial for the alternative figurations of the Earth. The climate movement organized in various NGOs and climate justice communities in cities such as Istanbul is aware that the climate crisis is a global problem and that all actors have different responsibilities. Different intellectual approaches are shared in academic and non-academic environments in order to ensure climate justice with the tools of the international climate regime and to establish a relationship beyond the nation-state with the Earth in the new climate regime.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I tried to share and consider the performative aesthetics of climate activism through cultural studies methodology. In the first chapter, the intersectional context of climate aesthetics is presented within its historicity. The concepts of performance and performativity in the aesthetics of climate activism, together with the basic concepts and their historicity, were also discussed. One of the two reasons why these concepts form a foundation for the study is primarily because the aesthetics of climate activism tells us something important about the Anthropocene era and its aesthetics. The other was that the practices studied were from Istanbul.

In terms of social science studies on the climate crisis, the concepts of performance and performativity reveal the characteristics of the new climate regime. For this reason, I think it would be meaningful for the climate justice movement to address these concepts again and from its own perspective. Second, we see today that art and activism practices open up space to experience the intersectionality of climate aesthetics. Therefore, the theoretical part of this study focuses on the intersectionality of the three distinct aesthetics of climate as stated by Bruno Latour. When the art, politics and scientific aesthetics of climate are considered separately, the relationship between human and non-human beings is discussed. While doing this, I tried to point out the academic fields of study while making at least one outcome evaluation at each step. Finally, we can see how climate science has become politicized with its outputs, institutions and communication in the US title elections. In the aesthetics of climate policies, the structure and history of the international climate regime and its role in the fight against the climate crisis are mentioned. The aim here is that international institutions are the only institutions that provide communication between political actors; however, it is pointed out that the new climate regime and its aesthetics cannot be limited by it. The post-colonialist historian Chakrabarty's reading of the climate crisis by evaluating the possibilities of non-human beings to become political actors can open a different path for our relationship with nature in the

new climate regime. For this reason, a part of the textual dialogue established by Latour's concepts with Chakrabarty's point of view was included in the political aesthetics of climate. I think it would be meaningful to consider the concept of aesthetics through Rancière, how non-human beings can participate in the experience of the sensible, or to play their role in this experience with a post-colonial reading of history. After the fall of the Berlin wall, there were significant historical moment in art movements and these turning-points were influenced by or developed with social movements. At this point, Bruno Latour's six propositions to contemporary artists and activists who addressed the climate crisis played a key role for my interpretations. I wanted to show the practices of producing, sharing and discussing art and activism through these propositions, which opened up the space for the decolonization of nature in/with/through art, (at least in discourse). On to the second part of the thesis, where practices that include the performative aesthetics of climate activism are interpreted. Before moving on to the second part, it should be pointed out that there are academic fields that can be studied in terms of the climate justice movement. Such as the education of climate change through art and the handling of climate policies with non-colonial historiography, are mentioned in the theoretical part.

The 16th Istanbul Biennial, the Which Future Will You Leave Me exhibition and the Extinction Rebellion Turkey's actions were discussed in the second part of the thesis, based on 6 propositions of Bruno Latour. Three different approaches to making art shared by Eray Çaylı; participatory, interventionist and self-reflexive, were evaluated separately in these three practices. First of all, the actors in the Biennial are predominantly artists; In Which Future Will You Leave Me exhibition, I tried to reflect the meaning of the balanced participation of artists and activists, and finally, the fact that Extinction Rebellion is an activist community in selecting and discussing these examples. While doing this, the areas where the Seventh Continent - 16th Istanbul Biennial, whose theme is the climate crisis in general, correspond to participatory art practices and which are lacking were discussed. With the Which Future Will You Leave Me exhibition, I tried to

conceptualize the roles of institutions and participating actors, and the limits of an art practice that prioritizes archivalism. Finally, I wanted to show how Ranciere's aesthetic concept opened up a space with the activist practices of Extinction Rebellion Turkey and self-reflexive art approach. I feel that these practices are open to study and developing their potential for the climate justice movement, as well as how well they correspond to theory.

When we consider both chapters, we can say that considering the role of art and activism in the new climate regime together with the social movements of the past will have a critical meaning in terms of Anthropocene aesthetics. For the future, I hope that this thesis will be motivating for art collectives and projects from different disciplines to deal with the Anthropocene in a comprehensive way. I studied on this thesis inspired by the narration of a dance performance. I hope that my thesis will inspire other studies as well.

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