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FROM A POLITICAL PROTEST TO AN ART EXHIBITION:

BUILDING INTERCONNECTEDNESS THROUGH DIALOGUE-BASED ART

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BİR PROTESTODAN SANAT SERGİSİNE: DİYALOG TEMELLİ SANAT YOLUYLA ORTAK BAĞ OLUŞTURMA

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I extract certain qualities of the Gezi Park protests that took place in 2013, in Istanbul and invite the reader re-think them in the light of topics discussed under the community art practices (new genre public art). I identify these qualities as critical dialogue, agonistic community and performative expression. Taking these three key issues as my criteria, I then search for ways to redevelop them through a collaborative and participatory artistic research, in which I collaborate with six collectives (five artist collectives and one ecology collective) from Turkey. Our collaborative and participatory artistic research constitutes our dialogical process and its outcomes, which we presented as an exhibition in Istanbul in 2017, and the follow up phase of the whole process. Through my in-depth dialogues with each collective, I found out this: In the current socio-political atmosphere in Turkey, where freedom of speech and the right to public protest is very limited, collective work model within the arts serves primarily for meeting emotional needs, such as expressing oneself freely, feeling heard, feeling accepted, connected and safe, rather than a shared artistic vision, common ideological agenda or career-related goals. Having met these needs first, artists express themselves through art. Acknowledging this as my key finding, together with the collectives, I searched for ways of making art that embodies these qualities of expression and connection, and through it reaching other people, who are not practitioners of the arts. I argue that, in an atmosphere where there is extremely limited freedom of speech, art, which is made through and for dialogue, holds the potential to connect people with one another, and thus transform the society.

A significant aim of this research is to make academia more open to methodological diversity and their results. An overarching aim is to make academia speak openly about emotions and their transformative power as well as to create safe spaces to practice them.

Keywords: Critical Dialogue, Community Arts, Performativity, Art, Artistic Research

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, 2013 yılında İstanbul'da gerçekleşen Gezi Parkı eylemlerinin bazı özelliklerini seçerek alıyor ve okuru bu özellikleri toplum temelli sanat (yeni tip kamusal sanat) kapsamında tartışılan konular ışığında yeniden düşünmeye davet ediyorum. Bu özellikleri eleştirel diyalog, agonistik (çatışmalı) topluluk ve performatif ifade olarak tanımlıyorum. Bu araştırmada, Türkiye'den altı kolektif ile (beş sanatçı kolektifi ve bir ekoloji kolektifi), işbirlikçi ve katılımcı bir sanatsal araştırma yoluyla, bu özellikleri yeniden geliştirmenin yollarını aradım. İşbirlikçi ve katılımcı sanatsal araştırmamız, 2017 yılında İstanbul'da bir sergi şeklinde sunduğumuz diyalog sürecimizi ve tüm sürecin takip aşamasını oluşturmaktadır. Kolektiflerle derinlemesine diyaloglarım sayesinde şu çıkarımı elde ettim: İfade özgürlüğünün ve kamusal protesto hakkının çok sınırlı olduğu Türkiye'deki mevcut sosyo-politik atmosferde, sanat alanındaki kolektif çalışma modeli ortak bir sanatsal vizyon, ideolojik gündem veya kariyer hedeflerinden ziyade, öncelikle kendini ifade etme, duyulma, kabul edilme ve güvenli hissetme gibi duygusal ihtiyaçlara hizmet ediyor. Bu temel ihtiyaçları karşıladıktan sonra, birlikte sanat üretiyorlar. Bu bulguyu temel alarak, bu araştırmada, kolektiflerle birlikte özgür ifade ve duygusal bağlantı özelliklerini bünyesinde barındıran bir sanat yapmanın ve sanat pratiği olmayan diğer insanlara ulaşmanın yollarını aradık. Sonuç olarak şunu savunuyorum: Son derece sınırlı ifade özgürlüğünün olduğu bir atmosferde, diyalog yoluyla ve diyalog için yapılan sanat, insanları birbirine bağlama, böylece yeni ilişkiler kurma ve toplumu dönüştürme potansiyeli taşıyor.

Bu araştırmanın önemli bir amacı, akademiyi metodolojik çeşitliliğe ve çalışmaların sonuçlarına daha açık hale getirmektir. Araştırmanın kapsayıcı bir diğer amacı ise, akademinin duygular ve onların dönüştürücü güçleri hakkında açıkça konuşabilmesini sağlamak ve bunları uygulamak için güvenli alanlar yaratmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eleştirel Diyalog, Yeni Tip Kamusal Sanat, Edimsellik, Sanat, Sanat Araştırması

INTRODUCTION

I studied performance art at The School of The Art Institute of Chicago and graduated with a master's degree in performance art. During my studies I became engaged with community arts, where artists can collaborate with groups of people from other segments of society and I wrote my master's thesis on this topic. Later in my career both as an artist and as a teacher, my aim has been to expand my circle of collaborators to groups of people, inside and outside of the arts. I collaborated with artists, non-artists, musicians, writers, a chef, a TV talk show host, an Iraqi doctor working on cancer treatment in the US, Turkish coal mine workers in Germany, and small shop owners in one of Istanbul's historic districts, including a barber, a real estate owner and street food vendors. Very importantly also, I did many collaborative projects and performances with my students over the years.

In May 2013 something ground-breaking happened. Known as the Gezi Park Protests, it started with a small crowd of protesters' coming together as a reaction towards the government's announcement of the destruction of Istanbul's centrally-located Gezi Park. However, "what began as a simple environmentalist protest grew rapidly and spread across the country as a result of police brutality faced by the small group of activists" (Batuman, 2015, p.881). In a few days thousands of people were gathering in this park located in the heart of Istanbul.

What fascinated me about the protests was the creative expressions of the protesters. In a few days, the park literally turned into a place, whereby people across very different identities were cooking, eating, singing and dancing together (Aksoy, 2017). These public expressions were in fact very similar to community arts practices, which has been my ongoing research. But this time they were bringing together heterogenous groups of people including feminists and queer activists, leftists, anti-capitalist Muslims, ethnic minorities as well as football fans, against the conservative, authoritarian and hetero/patriarchal capitalism of the AKP government (Potuoğlu-Cook, 2015).

My motivation to embark on this thesis started with witnessing and being part of these protests. As a citizen I was in the park to ask for my democratic rights, yet as an artist I could not help but see the protests as a major artistic expression that was inclusive to everyone. This brought me to question and look deeper into the role of creative expression and performativity within the recent protest movements around the globe, which are increasingly expressed through performances, slogans, graffiti, songs and other forms of communication today.

The creative expressions of the Gezi Park protests also became platforms for different segments of the society to come together, express themselves, and recognize one another without necessarily being on the same page in their ideological views, positions or identities. For example, in the case of the 'Standing Man', which I will write further about in Chapter 2, even though the protestors were driven through fundamentally different ideological positions and identities, who don't collaborate with one another in other circumstances, they did come together in the park through the shared expression of performance. This heterogeneity is described by some as something "that had not existed before" (McGarry et al., 2020, p.16).

The Gezi Park Protests have been analyzed from different perspectives, from political studies to urban sociology, social movements theory and performance studies. As an artist, my intention is not to realize yet another socio-political analysis of the protests, but rather to observe and point to certain intersections between the protests and my ongoing research of community arts. In this thesis, I observe and extract certain qualities of the protests, and invite the reader re-think them in the light of topics discussed under the community art practices. I identify these qualities as critical dialogue, agonistic community and performative expression. Taking these three key issues as my criteria, I then search for ways to redevelop them through a collaborative sand participatory artistic research, in which I collaborate with six collectives (five artist collectives and one ecology collective) from Turkey. My research constitutes the process of our collaboration

as much as its outcomes, which were presented in the form of an exhibition in Istanbul in 2017, and the follow up phase of the whole process.

In Chapter 1, I build the foundation of my thesis by problematizing the three issues I identify as key within community arts, which are critical dialogue, agonistic community and performativity. I discuss critical dialogue by looking into Paolo Freire's work and how it extends into artistic practice through Grant Kester's notion of dialogical aesthetics. Giving examples from certain art collectives who work with dialogue, I point out to problems and criticisms around this model of working and around community arts. I then problematize the definition of community as a harmonious or marginalized group and offer to look at Chantal Mouffe's concept of 'agonistic struggle' as an alternative view to such artistic practices. Moving from Freire and Mouffe, I then take up another notion, performativity as a continuum of everyday life and actions and argue that performativity is an extension of critical dialogue. At the end of Chapter 1, I write on my research motivations, which is about making academia open to different forms of research, as well as speaking about emotions, love and connectedness.

Chapter 2 describes the Gezi Park protests that took place in 2013 and the conditions that preceded this period. I refer to the concept, 'the right to the city', initiated by French philosopher Henri Lefebvre in late 60s, and lay out the neo-liberal urban developments in Turkey before the protests and how these paved the way to Gezi Park protests. Taking several examples from the creative expressions of the protests, such as the famous 'Standing Man', the painting of the public staircases with rainbow colors, and other collective acts such as cooking, eating and reading together, I then point to intersections between the protests and community art practices, which I discussed in Chapter 1. I argue that the protests were exemplary in bringing the theoretical discussions around the community art practices into practice and into life, especially issues around critical dialogue, agonistic communities and performativity all at once. At the end of this chapter, I write on my own artistic research about the Gezi Park itself, which actually started

before the protests, in 2012, and thus bringing up my intention of uniting artistic work and academic knowledge.

Chapter 3 starts with my personal quest to embark on a practice-led methodology and its potential to provide a framework to bring together my artistic and academic interests. Looking into characteristics of practice based methodological approaches and their openness for diversity in the academic framework, in this research, I worked with six collectives in Turkey (five artist collectives and one ecology collective) through a collaborative and participatory artistic research methodology. I refer to this methodology as 'collaborative and participatory artistic research' where the significance lies in solving a common problem through "the active influence of the researcher, and not only her external observations, on the events" (Hannula et. al, 2005, p. 90). A significant part in this chapter is my in-depth dialogues with the participant collectives as well as my own role within this process. Through the in-depth dialogues, I gather a key finding: A major motivation for the collectives to come together is to connect with one another on an emotional level, rather than a straightforward aim to make art together. Acknowledging this finding as focus of our work, I then move back into my theoretical research and build the framework for our exhibition. How can we extend this connection to other people outside of the arts?

Moving from my in-depth conversations with collectives, in Chapter 4, I write specifically on our exhibition, titled *Maybe We Will Benefit from Our Neighbour's Good Fortune* that took place at Halka Art Project in Istanbul, in 2017. Taking participation and dialogue as key elements, the works in the exhibition served as a platform to form kinships (Haraway, 2015) that bring people from differing backgrounds or lifestyles together. Through installation, food-based work, performance, workshops and round table discussions, our exhibition searched for ways to communicate and rekindle the principal qualities of the protests and their extended forms, such as neighbourhood forums. In this chapter, I write on each

artist collective's work from beginning to execution and interpretation, as well as on the potentials of small-scale actions, as exemplified in the case of our exhibition.

Chapter 5 connects the research period and the exhibition to the current moment, draws interpretations from the research process and looks to the future. Two and a half years after the exhibition, in March 2020, I came together with the collectives in a round table discussion to learn and discuss the impact of our work together. Right before COVID-19 took over the world and we were cut from socializing with one another, we were able to gather around a table and discussed what had changed since then. This final meeting reflected on the impact of the exhibition on the artist collectives, their works and their identities. I found out significant outcomes, such as the fact that some of the collectives that I worked with during my research were still continuing to collaborate with each other. Following this meeting and its outcomes, I added a section in Chapter 5, as guidance for future research, and what I would do differently now if I were to do the process again.

In the conclusion part, I present my main argument of this research: in the current socio-political atmosphere in Turkey, taking the principles of the Gezi Park protests and applying these qualities into an artistic practice creates safe zones not only for the artists but for people, who are not practitioners or audiences of the arts. Previous research shows us that the Gezi Park protests were able to transform emotions of the crowds from anger and frustration to hope, joy and solidarity. Through my collaborative and participatory research, I argue that in an atmosphere where freedom of expression and the right to publicly protest is extremely limited, artworks created through and for a dialogue-based process holds the potential to create interconnectedness among people and transform the society. I also argue that this working methodology can be applied in larger contexts within the arts, as long as emotional aspects of working are more recognized.

I would like to add that, as much as my motivation has been to form sustainable links of Gezi protests through a dialogue-based artistic research that is looking

towards the future, a significant aim of this research is to make academia more open to methodological diversity and their results. This diversity becomes especially clear in expressing the outcomes of research findings, which are presented as symbolic forms other than in the words of discursive text (Haseman, 2006). Even though you are now reading a written presentation of my process, a significant aspect of this research has been engaging with the collectives, which was originally presented in the form of an art exhibition in 2017. The print and visual documentation of the exhibition as well as the video interviews I did with each artist collective accompany this writing in the appendices.

Finally, I want to say that an overarching aim for this thesis is to make academia speak openly about emotions and their transformative power as well as to create safe spaces to practice them. As Asking and Blazek write in their article *Feeling our way: academia, emotions and a politics of care*, "emotions in academia matter in mutually co-producing everyday social relations and practices at and across all levels" (Askins and Blazek, 2016, p. 1). Feeling with the co-writers, I have written a PhD thesis that speaks often from the first-person point of view. Throughout the thesis, as much as I am quoting other writers' theoretical input, I am intentionally writing and reflecting on my own emotions, own experiences and own artistic practice in an attempt to exemplify how much the personal is critical in creating knowledge. As Sarah Ahmed says, I believe "personal is theoretical" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 10). Yet I am careful to not only rely on personal experiences as my research. Bringing together others' theoretical knowledge together with my own, and my collaborators' input, I intend to diversify certain academic knowledge production mechanisms as well as marrying knowing with feeling.

As a final note, I hope that this research as a singular piece of a-knowledge (Nevannlina, 2004) will serve as a model for alternative research methodologies and enlarge the academic circle for more diverse perspectives. In an age where speaking on the emotions is considered a soft skill and attributed to a feminine quality, just like the arts, my research could become a path to others who want to

include practices of care, love and interconnectedness in their work and make academia inclusive to the offerings of the heart.

CHAPTER 1: ON TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF ART

1.1 Endeavour for change

As I started my research on the transformative power of art on emotions and its effect on the artists and communities, I was surprised to see how little had been written on this topic in contemporary art research in comparison to psychology and education. While creative methods from various fields of art have become tools in bringing out forms of self-expression in other fields such as psychotherapy, the impact of art in transforming human emotions has not fully made its way into teaching and making of contemporary art today. As the curricula of today's university level fine art programs focus a huge amount on identity, geography and political transformation, little has been offered especially in emotional and spiritual transformation within art. "The contemporary art world has marginalized or discarded the spiritual and transformative dimensions of art which once gave it a sense of cultural authority and meaning" (Grady, 2006, p.83).

As an artist and educator, who served as the Dean of Art and Consciousness program at John F. Kennedy University, California, Grady believes art is essentially about change, and advocates an art education that helps students discover a holistic vision of art that is "simultaneously spiritual, social and material" (Grady, 2006, p.87). Referring to their curricula to Bauhaus school of art[1] and other modern ancestors, their program focuses on self-inquiry as well as community work, framing it under spiritual and transformative, yet non-religious practice.

[1] Bauhaus school of design was founded by Walter Gropius in Weimar, Germany in 1919. Rejecting traditional knowledge, young people were led to develop their artistic creativity by learning with and from materials so that they could give shape to the modern age and meet its many demands. Source: https://www.bauhaus-dessau.de/en/history/bauhaus-dessau.html Last access: 07.04.2020

I take Grady's writing on spiritual and transformative art practice as a key start for my research. As an artist, I have been dedicated to discover how we as humans can communicate with each other through new forms and frameworks that open us to each other, and help us understand and attend to each other with more care and love. I have found possibilities of such communication by deeply engaging with different communities in my artistic practice as well as researching on community arts practices.

As artist and writer Suzanne Lacy writes, these kind of art practices focus on human relationships and place it at the core of their process in order to "communicate and interact with a broad and diversified audience about issues directly relevant to their lives" (Lacy, 1995, p.19). I should note that although there are different terminologies used to refer to art practices involving communities, such as new genre public art (Lacy, 1995, p.19) littoral art (Kester 1999, p.1) or dialogical art (Kester 2005, p.4), these practices generally refer to collaborative works between artist(s) and different communities and their process, aimed towards engaging with social issues. In my research, I will use community art practices or community arts to refer to such works.

My ongoing research on community art practices brought me to the intersection of artistic work and communication studies, and in this thesis, I will explore how artworks, which take communication and human relationships into their core are essential not only for art and art history, but also for communication studies. This is also a reason why I chose to do this thesis in the field of communication.

In the next pages, I will look into certain topics that are discussed within the community art practices. These key topics are critical dialogue, agonistic community and performative expression. As much as I will introduce these key topics, I will later argue that they were also significant qualities of creative expression that took place in the Gezi Park Protests in 2013 in Turkey. Pointing to and interpreting these intersections between community art practices and the

creative expression within the Gezi Park protests, I will later seek for ways on how to build an artistic practice based on such an intersection, especially in the aftermath of a socio-political environment following the protests, where the right public protest is extremely limited.

1.2 On Critical Dialogue

My initial research in community art practices derives from writings of Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire's seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970).* Born in an impoverished part of Brazil (Recife) right before the economic crisis that first affected the United States of America in 1929 and later Brazil, Freire and his family experienced poverty. Having been subjected to hunger himself, Freire dedicated his life to work against it. Realizing that the poor and disadvantaged communities were silenced through an educational system that made any kind of critical thinking impossible, he dedicated his work to focus on education and educational philosophy.

Freire's writings on critical thinking and how to generate it through dialogue among the students is crucial. He writes that the educator's aim should not be to fill the students with a narrative, in which they only repeat the information delivered by the educator without perceiving the words, and thus turning into "passive entities" (Freire, 1970, p. 76). Rather, he focuses on how the roles between the teacher and the student could switch through a reflexive and critical dialogue.

"Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach" (Freire, 1970, p.76).

In *Pedagogy of The Oppressed,* Freire refers to dialogue as a word that has two components: reflection and action, which together equal praxis. "There is no true word

that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world" (Freire, 1970, p. 87). When a word misses one of these constitutive elements of action or reflection, Freire says it cannot transform, rather it suffers from being "idle chatter" or "action for action's sake" (Freire, 1970, p. 88). He writes that a dialogue only consisting of an action of speaking, to the detriment of reflection is purely speaking one's point of view without hearing or reflecting on what the other says. The opposite, he says, in which one only reflects what they hear without producing their own and authentic act of speaking does not create praxis, but creates empty words. In this mode of speaking, one only repeats what he/she hears without bringing in their own perspective. For Freire, neither of these two modes by themselves are productive towards a critical dialogue. Therefore, a praxis requires constant action and reflection among the involved parties, as well as stripping from all assigned roles and identities.

Freire further argues that during this dialogue process both parties remain on the side of freedom, thus avoiding arguments which are based on authority. "Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. People teach each other, mediated by the world" (Freire, 1970, p.80). Freire's thoughts on education and its interchangeable roles among its partakers has led me to see my two professions as not separate from one another, and this is how I came to understand myself as an 'artist-teacher' (a term I invented following Freire's term teacher-student), allowing myself to envision both of my roles and perform them simultaneously.

Art historian Grant Kester takes Freire's ideas on education further and carries them into artistic practice. In his essay *Dialogical Aesthetics: A Critical Framework into Littoral Art* (1999), he introduces a term: dialogical aesthetics, which he describes as "a discursive aesthetic based on the possibility of a dialogical relationship that breaks down the conventional distinction between artist, artwork and audience" (Kester, 1999, p.4). Kester's description of dialogical aesthetic is different than how German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten described aesthetics in the 18th century as the "study of sensory experiences" (Nanay, 2019, p.2). In dialogical aesthetics, Kester focuses on the function of dialogue as a discursive encounter

between the artists and the subject, serving both as a process and the outcome of the work. Thus, the aesthetic experience lies in the discursive process realized between the partakers of a work, rather than a sensory experience one has upon viewing an artwork. In Kester's sense, the aesthetic experience is a process, not a result, that occurs through a dialogical relationship between the artist and the involved parties.

Kester's approach of seeing critical dialogue as the core of an artwork is significant because of two reasons. First, instead of focusing on the outcome as an object, he offers a model where the dialogical encounter between the participants in a work becomes the nucleus of the aesthetic experience. Secondly, by creating a dialogue between artists and different communities, he argues that artists can "speak and imagine beyond the limits of fixed identities and official discourse" (Kester, 2004, p.2). He contends that through listening to others and learning from their experience, each participant can objectively look at herself/himself. He suggests that the fixed roles and identities attained to both the artists and the involved participants can be challenged and transformed through this process.

To name an example of such dialogical process, Kester in his book *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (2011), points to some artist collectives. One of the collectives mentioned in the book is called 'Dialogue Interactive Artists Association' (DIAA) based in India. Since the early 2000's DIAA has worked withs groups of indigenous people, whose life revolves around rice cultivation. Accordingly, many of these indigenous community members face unemployment and eviction from their land due to the interference of multinational mining corporations entering their region.

DIAA's work requires a long process and involves as many local people as possible. They first study the region to specify and understand its dynamics, then they connect with the villagers by organizing workshops with them, especially including children, women and male elders. In one of their projects called Nalpar (which

means the public place where people from all ages come to fetch water), they focus on re-imagining and re-designing water pump areas in the village, as these have extreme unhygienic conditions and threaten the health of the local community.

Figure 1 A re-designed water fetching structure at Bandapara, DIAA, India, 2001

Source: http://www.dialoguebastar.com/nalpar.html

The above image shows one of the re-imagined and re-designed structures of such water fetching area. DIAA identifies an issue, then engages the community members and also brings in experts such as local artists and architects in finding a solution that comes through all engaged parties. This is what Kester defines as the dialogical aesthetic. The projects are process based collaborations rather than goal-oriented actions. Here the aesthetic experience lies not in the final water-pump, but rather in the discursive process that leads to negotiate on the outcome.

Both Freire's and Kester's writings and their potential in artistic and educational settings are significant for these reasons: first, they shift the artist's or the teacher's role from being a singular, powerful, all-knowing subject to an engaging and emphatic collaborator, and sometimes a facilitator. And secondly, these works enable human relationships and communication to be at the center of the artworks, and thus centering dialogue itself in the heart of their production. Thus, this constant active and reflective 'praxis' can hold a space for growth and transformation, allowing new constellations and subjectivities to occur.

As much as I argue that such dialogical process is key in leading to a personal and social transformation, I also have questions regarding when theories are applied into practice. Many dialogue-oriented arts practices remain within the boundaries of the art institutions and exhibitions and reach a handful of participants. How can these practices engage broader and more diverse participation? How can they create dialogue that speaks to other segments of society? I will return to these questions in Chapter 2, especially through examples from recent protest movements and their capacity for more heterogeneous participation.

1.3 On Community and Agonism

The second quality I take as critical within community art practices is agonistic voices within a group. Before I delve more into agonism, I want to first point to the term community and what it entails. I will refer to the writings of Miwon Kwon and Claire Bishop, who in early 2000's problematized the term community and its general understanding as a harmonious unity.

In her book *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity* (2002*)*, art historian Miwon Kwon writes that the term community is problematized differently by politically left and right leaning groups. Accordingly, while the term is often used by leftist groups to define people who are excluded or marginalized from society such as the working class, women's groups, LGBTQIA+ communities, African-Americans and etc., it is also used by the right to describe "departicularized identities of dominant social, economic, political, and cultural forces, such as the business community, the entertainment community, the medical community, the scientific community, the national and international communities" (Kwon, 2002, p.112). She says the left is very much associated with being extremely sentimental, dogmatic and idealistic in dealing with today's problems, and community artists must therefore redefine the word community.

Kwon's point regarding leftist groups' being sentimental, dogmatic and idealistic in dealing with today's problems is pivotal in analyzing current community art projects.

Even though many projects stem from good intentions, as seen in the case of DIAA, the role of the artist as the helper or problem solver seems fixed. Although there is a dialogical process that occurs between the artists and community members, I question how much the assigned roles to both parties can indeed be challenged and re-distributed.

Art historian Claire Bishop is another key figure who criticizes such identity roles within community art projects. In her article *The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents* (2006) Bishop writes that the discursive criteria of socially engaged art is drawn from "a tacit analogy between anti-capitalism and the Christian good soul" (Bishop, 2006, p.178). Comparing artistic practice to Christian practice of self-sacrifice, Bishop underlines that the critique of socially engaged art is formed through an expectation that the artists are expected to refrain from the "useless domain of the aesthetic and be fused with social praxis" (Bishop, 2006, p.178).

Bishop is also critical of the idea to see a community as a single-entity, that looks at things from the same perspective, through artworks which she describes as creating "fictitious whole subject of harmonious whole community" (Bishop, 2004, p.79). Basing her argument on Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (1985), Bishop suggests that antagonism is essential in a functioning democratic society in order to see confrontations as provocative acts of opening a democratic public sphere.

Moving from the writings of Kwon and Bishop, I want to pose a question. How can art become instrumental in opening up a democratic sphere to various identities, voices and representations while building up communities with a strong sense of collectivity? To have some clarity for an answer, I want to turn to Chantal Mouffe and her perspective on agonism.

In her article *Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces* (2007), Chantal Mouffe introduces a concept, 'agonistic struggle', which she describes as a struggle between opposing hegemonic projects that can never be reconciled rationally

(Mouffe, 2007). Mouffe sees agonism at the center of democracy, which acknowledges the hegemonic conditions that determine a society at a certain moment. She argues that an agonistic approach recognizes these conditions instead of staying neutral. However, instead of asking for a consensus to take place, the agonistic struggle opens up a discursive arena where conflicts occur.

Writing specifically on the public space, Mouffe states that public spaces are hegemonically structured and that they are battlegrounds where different hegemonic projects are confronted with each other, without any possibility of final reconciliation. "Public spaces are always plural and the agonistic confrontation takes place in a multiplicity of discursive surfaces" (Mouffe, 2007). Mouffe then brings her point to art practices and asks what links we can establish between the theoretical discussion regarding agonism and art. "According to the agonistic approach, critical art is art that foments dissensus, that makes visible what the dominant consensus tends to obscure and obliterate" (Mouffe, 2007). According to this approach such art practices should be aimed not at creating a consensus, but rather to challenge the consensus and to give voice to those who are silenced by the existing hegemony.

Mouffe's approach on community is pluralistic and diverse, especially thinking through the light of Kwon's and Bishop's descriptions of community as an idealized unity. I came across such an example from the city of Berlin, where I moved to during my PhD process. In her article *Unpacking Conflictual Consensus in Berlin's Cultural Policy Making* (2017), Friederike Landau talks about a coalition between art workers from different disciplines that was established in Berlin in 2012, called Koalition der Freien Szene (Coalition of the Independent Scene; KFS or the Koalition). Referring to Mouffe's concept of agonism, where the conflicting parties are adversaries not enemies, Landau says conflictual consensus within the KFS and with the cultural administrators of the city is constantly re-negotiated. Accordingly, "the group does not negate the dimension (and inequality) of power and antagonism inherent in any political negotiation with the cultural administration, but instead

seeks to actively (re)negotiate power and construct new agonistic spaces of political dialogue with the cultural administration" (Landau, 2017, p. 35). I found such a model of coalition between adversaries of cultural institutions and the city inspirational in understanding how agonism can function as an active element of dialogue within the arts.

Drawing from Freire's critical dialogue from the previous section and Mouffe's agonism, I want to give an example from an artist collective, Wochenklausur, which has been operating since 1993. Originally started in Vienna, Austria as a group of eight artists, Wochenklausur has since worked together and collaborated with many other artists and institutions in different cities. Taking artistic creativity as an intervention into society instead of a formal act, Wochenklausur has been "developing concrete proposals aimed at small, but effective improvements to socio-political deficiencies[2]". Instead of making bolder propositions about changing the world, Wochenklausur says in their manifesto that they prefer to make smaller contributions to society:

"In contrast to the thinking of the seventies, today's activists are no longer concerned with changing the world in its entirety... At the end of the century, activist art no longer overestimates its capabilities. But it does not underestimate them either. It makes modest contributions" (Wochenklausur, 1993).

Wochenklausur's early projects include setting up a mobile health clinic in a van for homeless people in Vienna, and creating a community center for senior residents in a small town in Italy. Yet, perhaps their more well-known work was in Zürich, in 1994, where the group organized meetings for eight weeks in order to discuss and find consensus for city's drug use among its sex workers. Inviting different stakeholders to meet in a neutral place, the group rented a boat and brought together all of the secretaries

[2] http://www.wochenklausur.at/index1.php?lang=en Last access: 05.09.2020

of the Swiss political parties, the mayor and four Zurich city councilors, two prosecuting attorneys, the editors in chief of the biggest Swiss newspapers, police chiefs, and specialists from the fields of medicine, prevention and therapy[3] through several consecutive meetings.

Figure 2 Shelter for Drug-Addicted Women, Wochenklausur, 1994

Source: http://www.wochenklausur.at/projekt.php?lang=en&id=4

Through these meetings, the involved parties came up with a concrete response and agreed to set up a "pension or boarding house in which drug-addicted sex workers could have a safe haven, access to services and a place to sleep" (Kester, 2005, p.1). This decision was then put into action by the city administration and the boarding house started functioning as a safe space for the women. According to the information on the Wochenklausur website, the project continued for six years, until 2001, when the City of Zurich cut its funding. Wochenklausur's website is still active and although their last project took place in 2018, their workshops, artist talks and lectures are listed as ongoing.

Wochenklausur's work does not necessarily answer Kwon and Bishop's criticism, however they manage to engage conflicting voices in their projects and look for ways

[3] http://www.wochenklausur.at/projekt.php?lang=en&id=4 Last access: 05.09.2020

to find consensus for problematic issues through a dialogical process. Even though their work is not necessarily an example of Mouffe's agonism, I still find it significant that they allow agonistic voices to be present in their work through the conflicting adversaries, without necessarily focusing on an outcome. Still, I have questions regarding what steps they follow to achieve a dialogue that is open and equal rather than hierarchical, or whether there is a certain methodology involved.

With these questions in mind, I emailed Wochenklausur and asked how they run their dialogues with so many different participants from different fields. I was particularly interested in whether they followed a specific methodology in communication. They answered me right away and said they do not follow a standardized method to run a dialogue and added that it always depends on the situation, time and place.

> "Over the years we figured out a few things that usually work in specific situations. If it is about conflict resolution, for example, we had a good experience by inviting conflict partners in a place where they can talk in private. Opponents on a stage with an audience always have to represent the lobby, party or interest group they belong to and often they only reply to the same arguments again and again. In private it is usually not so easy to roll off your tongue." (Wochenklausur, personal communication, September 8, 2020)

Looking at Wochenklausur's work through the lens of Freire and Mouffe, I see that their approach embraces clashing voices and oppositional positions within a community (in this sense, the community comprises the city of Zurich, its administrators and its residents) and seeks dialogue from within by allowing each person to speak and hear the others. I find this approach quite transformative in the sense that they acknowledge agonism as part of their process instead of ignoring it.

Agonism is also important in understanding the Gezi Park Protests and their multiple opposing identities, which I will focus on in the next chapter. During the protests, the park became a place where people "from very different walks of life,

from different political leanings, ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic groups, life-style choices and so on came together" (Aksoy, 2017, p.20).

F**igure 3** A protestor carries a rainbow flag. June 2nd, 2013, inside the park.

Photo:Işıl Eğrikavuk

As stated in Mouffe's writing, during the protests the Gezi Park became a symbol of agonistic struggle, giving voice to so many people from very different or opposing identities. Such heterogeneity is referred to as "insubstantial community" in the writing of Aksoy referring to Keith Bassett, which has "no unifying flag, no hierarchical decision-making structure, nor any leader (Aksoy, 2017, p.22). Accordingly, such communities "develop their own rules as they evolved, performatively maintaining a commitment to radical equality" (Bassett (2014) as cited in Aksoy, 2017, p.22). Indeed, this was the case in the protests, activists, artists, feminists, ethnic groups, teenagers, LGBTQIA+ people, political parties, football fans, anti-capitalists, anti-capitalist Muslims all came together under such radical equality. I will return to this quality in Chapter 2.

1.4 On Body and Performativity

So far, I have outlined the significance of critical dialogue and agonistic community as two main qualities towards a transformative experience within an artistic practice. I want to underline that, when I use the word critical dialogue, I refer to not only language and semantics, but their inclusion of the body and performance.

To elaborate further, in this section, I will take up another notion, performativity, as an extension of critical dialogue.

In his book compiled from a lecture series, *How to do Things with Words* (1962) philosopher John Langshaw Austin takes up the notion of performative, which he explains through the examples of certain discursive practices such as a wedding wow or a will. In these examples, he writes that the speech becomes a 'speech-act', an action rather than a verbal articulation. Giving the examples of "I do" or "I name this ship as Queen Elizabeth", Austin writes that these sentences do not actually describe what one is doing but rather they "do it" (Austin, 1962, p.6). By claiming these sentences as 'speech-acts', Austin concludes that language is performative.

I take this performative quality, which goes beyond the semantics of language and becomes a speech-act, as the third element in discussing socially engaged or community art works. Recently the word performative has become more popular, and "there also appears to be a 'performative turn' in the academic field of humanities and social science" (Law, 2018, p. 17). However, the term has been used much earlier. Richard Schechner, a pioneer in the field of performance studies since the 1960s, opened up a significant door in challenging the given notions of performativity as something only related to arts and theatre. Schechner has paved the way for acknowledging performance as part of everyday life. He argues that performing on stage, performing in special social situations, such as the public ceremonies or performing in everyday life are a continuum of each other (Schechner, 2002). Thus, he breaks the division between reality and representation, and places everyone in the role of the performer.

Schechner's way of seeing everyday actions and its actors, challenges the categorical division of life and art, and places everyone in the role of an actor, performing actions throughout the day. "Performativity is everywhere, in daily behaviour, in the professions, on the internet and media, in the arts and in the language" (Schechner, 2002, p.110). It is also similar to German artist Joseph

Beuys' famous proclamation of everyone being an artist, which is inherent in the community art practices, as they place ever partaker in the role of the maker.

In her book *Notes Towards a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015), Judith Butler also takes up the notion of performativity and looks into assembled bodies in a political protest. Seeing these bodies as a "living set of relations" (Butler, 2015, p.65), Butler looks into how they manifest themselves in transient, concerted actions, taking solidarity in "uneasy and unpredictable alliances in the struggle for social, political, and economic justice" (Butler, 2015, p.70). She argues that politics that are produced through recent protest movements are not vocalized by the demands of the protestors, but rather through the protestors' "action and sometimes through their inaction" and thus making performance a form of agency expressing political voice.

To name an example, I will turn to a book called *Performance Action* (2018), by academic Paula Serafini, who provides artistic examples that operate between performance and activism, particularly from the UK. One of these examples is from the work of performance artist and activist Liz Crow, who is dealing with the theme of disability. In her work, *Lying Down Anyhow* (2013), Crow takes up the notion of lying down in public spaces as a disabled person.

"To lie down in front of others feels so exposed. The bed exists in private space; it is sleep and sex, intimacy and guard let down. In public, reclined, I have so much body; it unfolds and unravels on the horizontal plane, taking up more than its share of space. It flaunts itself, "look at me," and eclipses face and mind. I watch myself through the eyes and ideas, the anxieties and judgments of others; danger lurks in being misread. And I wonder: shall I keep my boots on or tuck them neatly to one side? There is no guidebook" (Crow, 2013). According to Serafini, this act is where the artist embraces the role of activist, "challenging the norms that control bodies in public space, re/writing the rules, and encouraging others to do so by taking that stand" (Serafini, 2018, p. 94).

In the Gezi Park protests in 2013, hundreds of people stood together side by side for hours without moving, in one of the central public spaces of Istanbul, Taksim Square[4]. Known in the media as the Standing Man, this performative protest became a signature act of the protests, inviting and allowing many others to participate. Similar to Liz Crow's laying down in public spaces, this time the protestors were standing up quietly in a public space. Yet, what was more interesting was that, although this action/inaction was started by choreographer Erdem Gündüz, it was not only performed by him, but rather was taken up by hundreds of people, and not only in Istanbul but also in other cities of Turkey and even abroad. In Schechner's notion of performativity, the crowds were creating a major performance, which was blurring not only the notions of art and life, but also choreography and political protest.

In their book The *Aesthetics of Protest: Visual Culture and Communication* (McGarry, Erhart, Eslen-Ziya, Jenzen and Korkut, 2020), the authors write that conventional forms of democracy, such as a political party membership or voting have declined all around the world and political voice is increasingly expressed through "a variety of text, visual, graphic and communication forms" (Loader and Mercea (2012) as cited in McGarry et al., 2020, p.5). The writers especially point to the performative quality of the protests and say how surprising it is that "little attention has been given to the role of performance in political activism and social movements" (McGarry et al., 2020, p.19). Taking the creative qualities of protests "such as images, symbols, graffiti, art and choreography as well as the choreography of protest actions in public spaces" (McGarry et al., 2020, p.19) as

[4] Taksim Square, situated in the European part of Istanbul, Turkey, is a major tourist and leisure district famed for its restaurants, shops, and hotels. It is considered the heart of modern Istanbul, with the central station of the Istanbul Metro network.
Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taksim_Square, Last access: 04.02.2020

performative elements, the writers look deeper into the role of art in politics and how protesters across the world use them in order to communicate their ideas.

In this research, I take performativity as an extension of critical dialogue. Through the use of a diverse spectrum of body, through voice and language, through movement and choreography, different protest movements across the world today are creating new performances which are out of the ordinary, and which are hard to place in any other context. According to Paula Serafini, "performance is uniquely placed to fuel political activism as it develops new materiality, the use of bodies, and is often artistically creative, symbolic, and interactive" (Serafini 2014, p. 323-324). It is through performance and artistic expression that protestors create an alternative language that is inclusive and is hard to decode through the norms of traditional politics. This new language is participatory, dynamic and out of the ordinary.

I want to underline that, my aim as an artist is neither to analyze Gezi politically, nor to imitate it. Rather, I take critical dialogue, agonistic community, and performative expression as key qualities that exist both in community art practices and in the Gezi Park Protests. I argue that the protests, with their heterogenous participants, were able to manifest all of these qualities together in a macro setting. And now, in the aftermath of the protests, where public speech and the right to protest is extremely limited, such scale of coming together seems unlikely. Therefore, my intention is to look for ways of how to bring these qualities into an artistic practice in order to provide a safe space for both artists and participant communities to express themselves.

I want to open a paragraph here and say that, although I have noted that the recent protest movements across the world are increasingly using performative expressions in conveying their means, the engagement of art and social issues is not a new, and the trajectory goes much earlier. "Think of Happenings, Fluxus instructions, 1970s performance art, and Joseph Beuys's declaration that everyone

is an artist" (Bishop, 2004, p. 11). According to curator Michael G. Birchall, 1990's was an important shift for the embracing of socially engaged art practices by art institutions, with major exhibitions such as *Culture in Action* in Chicago, *Sonsbeek 93* in the Netherlands, as well as *Project Unité* in France. "These exhibitions acted as a precursor to what is now known as socially engaged art - and what has become expected from biennials, exhibitions, and art fairs around the world" (Birchall, 2015, p.13).

The 1990's and early 2000's was a time in which socially engaged artworks made their grand entry into the art institutions, especially with the term *Relational Aesthetics* coined by writer-curator Nicholas Bourriaud. In his collection of essays under the same name, Bourriaud drew attention to the art of the 1990's, which he claimed to be "an art taking its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an interdependent and private symbolic space". (Bourriaud 2002, p.14) . For Bourriaud, contemporary communications of the day had already turned humans into rats and therefore artistic spaces of the day seemed "protected from the uniformity of behavioural patterns" (Bourriaud 2002, p. 9). He offered that the practice of social relations as an art form could offer new utopias as a safe zone. Art was no more an autonomous object, but a collection of experiences into creating temporary communities, guided by the artist.

In her book *Social Works: Performing Art Supporting Publics* (2011) Shannon Jackson analyzes socially engaged works in contemporary art practices and performance, highlighting the increasing role of the 'performative' and 'social' in recent art practices. Giving examples from the practices of contemporary artists such as Wochenklausur, Shannon Flaherty and Santiago Sierra, Jackson asks "do such social practices break institutional boundaries or set the scene for the recuperation of sociality by a service economy hungry for de-materialized crowds?" (Jackson, 2011, p.44). Jackson's question is still valid today, and invites both artists

and institutions to think deeper into the making and displaying of sincere motivations of socially engaged practices.

In his book *The One and the many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Contex*t (2011) Grant H. Kester also asks: "Why so many artists over the past decade and a half been drawn to collaborative or collective modes of production?" (Kester, 2011, p.1). While he questions the rise of socially engaged art practices in the recent years, he also acknowledges that these practices "reveal much about the current political moment".

I will not delve more into either relational aesthetics or the embracing of socially engaged art practices by art institutions as I would like to look more into practices operating outside of the institutions. As an artist, I acknowledge that the engagement of social and art is not anew; my intention is not to draw a historical analysis, but rather see how the engagement of the social and creative is evolving through the recent protests, finding new forms of expressions, and reaching a non-art audience. I will look into several examples of such expression in Chapter 2. But beforehand, as the final section of this chapter, I want to address my key research motivations.

1.5 On Interconnectedness

In her book *All about Love,* bell hooks writes on the potential of love and interconnectedness. Quoting Thomas Merton, hooks writes: "We do not become fully human until we give ourselves to each-other in love" (Merton (1997) as cited in hooks, 2001, p.76). For hooks this interconnectedness through love remains an essential quality for transformation, through connecting one another we can grow and transform spiritually.

In *All about Love* hooks writes that our spiritual hunger occurs because we have an emotional lack in our lives, which she describes as "a response to lovelessness" (hooks 2001: 72). This is not to do with going to the church or any temple she says,

the hunger remains as it is sourcing from deep in our souls. Neither Christian church, nor new age spirituality can satisfy such hunger according to hooks, as the first one usually interprets religion to legitimize a conservative status quo and the second one pays a great attention to individual self-growth. Yet, a spiritual life she suggests, requires us to unite the way we think with the way we act. Quoting Parker Palmer "...Action, like a sacrament, is the visible form of an invisible spirit, an outward manifestation of an inward power. But as we act, we not only express what is in us and help give shape to the world; we also receive what is outside us, and reshape our inner selves" (Palmer (1990) as cited in hooks, 2001, p.77). According to hooks, a spiritual life is a commitment to a way of both thinking and acting in unity with the principles of inter-being and interconnectedness.

As an artist-teacher, I find such interconnectedness in my classroom with my students after an intimate dialogue where each of us share how we are feeling towards a certain moment or a discussion we are having on one's work. The sharing of not only our thoughts, but also our emotions and building on each-other's emotional state has influenced the classroom experience so much to the extent that I connect it to the spiritual experience hooks is talking about. This, I believe has to do with bringing our bodies in presence in the classroom. Recently, I started inviting my students to bring yoga mats to the classroom. Before we start each class every time, we practice a 10-15 minute of yoga, followed sometimes by a short meditation and we just kept sitting on the floor, on our mats in a circle shape. This form has really allowed us to see the classroom and our roles in it differently.

In her talk titled *Radical Love: Reflections That Awaken Our Heart Part 1*, psychologist, author and teacher Tara Brach speaks on the word radical as being the root of love and 'radical love' as something that "cuts through the delusion of being alone and not okay" (Brach, 2020). In her talk, Brach tells a story of her own and speaks about her political engagement in the 70s with some left oriented groups in the USA. Although she initially joined some of their meetings with the aim of having a just, peaceful and equitable world, soon she started noticing how much the

vibe in those meetings was in fact angry and about 'bad-othering'. In order to create the peaceful world they believed in, she argues, people should come from a very different state of mind than she was seeing in those angry meetings.[5]

Brach's speech reminds me of the agonistic voices within Gezi Park protests, however instead of bad-othering one another, the protests were able to create interconnectedness among different groups of people. Such interconnectedness was expressed through creative and performative acts. Indeed, during the protests, protestors were cooking together, eating together, doing yoga and praying together, singing and dancing together. In their article, *From Anger to Solidarity: The emotional echo-chamber of Gezi park protests*, the writers underline the role of these collective creative rituals during the protests and say that these collective actions carried a power to transform the emotions from negative to positive (Eslen-Ziya, McGarry, Jenzen, Erhart, Korkut, 2019). "Sharing food, cleaning the park, creating a library and organising yoga or praying together were all participatory activities that enabled one to one contact and strengthened the Gezi Spirit" (Eslen-Ziya et al., 2019, p.5). For some people, this unity had a strong underlining, "Their message was clear: 'together we stand, divided we fall'" (Erhart, 2014, p.1728).

As I initiated before, a major aim of this thesis is to re-create such interconnectedness in an artistic setting and reflect on its outcomes. While doing that, I also aim to create a PhD research that openly speaks about emotions, love and connectedness without feeling insecure or inferior. In their article *Feeling Our Way: Academia, Emotions and a Politics of Care* (2016), Askins and Blazek write that they want to acknowledge the significance of emotionality in academia at all levels. "We want to discuss emotions as they are relevant without apologies; and to extend the legitimization of emotions in processes of inward academic reflexivity outward, as vital for transformative politics based on care that would challenge the

[5] Brach's talk can be found here. https://www.tarabrach.com/radical-love-part-1-reflections-awaken-heart/ Last access: 05.12.2020

affective and material expansions of neoliberalism" (Askins and Blazek, 2016, p.15). Narrating their personal story from a first person's point of view, the writers each take a chapter and write on the difficulties of writing a PhD, finding a job position, the pressure to publish and fitting into certain academic expectations as well as doing community work and feeling exhausted.

By sharing the emotional aspects of who they are and what they do as academics, Askins and Blazek say they "want to hear and share more about the role of emotions in positive and inspiring examples that contest the dominant neoliberal framing of academia" (Askins and Blazek, 2016, p.16).

As I initiated in my introduction, this PhD thesis speaks very often from the first-person point of view. By reflecting on my own emotions, my own experiences and practice, I want to underline the significance of the subjective in creating knowledge. However, by that I do not mean to undermine the significance of other theoretical knowledge, which is also present in this thesis. By bringing others' theoretical knowledge together with my own, and the input of my collaborators, I intend to diversify certain academic knowledge production mechanisms and open the heart of academia for diverse practices.

CHAPTER 2: CREATIVE EXPRESSION IN POLITICAL PROTEST

2.1 Gezi Park Protests: The Right to the City

In my introduction, I recounted Gezi Park protests as an unexpected and groundbreaking event for me personally, yet it is important to situate the protests within the trajectory of ongoing urban transformation policies and their socio-economic effects all around Turkey, whilst the AKP[6] government has been in power. During its rule since 2002, the AKP has "prioritized the governance of urban landscapes and adopted urban transformation as a technique for consolidating neo-authoritarianism" (Akçalı and Korkut, 2015, p.77). Branding its projects 'Çılgın projeler' (Crazy projects), the AKP government continued to initiate major infrastructural projects pursuing "increasing self-entitlement to privatize public assets" (Iğsız, 2013) including public (and green) spaces.

Such a neoliberal urban understanding transformed not only public spaces, but also has weakened the social fabric of the city rendering feelings of many communities and neighbourhoods within the city as a thing of the past. In this period starting from 2002, many neighbourhoods especially in Istanbul were demolished "to build highways and high-rise buildings, eventually pushing the working class to peripheral areas" (Akçalı and Korkut, 2015, p.81). Thus, communities who had a strong sense of bonding and solidarity were slowly moved into isolation towards the outskirts of the city, as seen in the examples such as the "gentrification of the Sulukule Roma Community District in Istanbul" (Akçalı and Korkut, 2015, p.83). According to Aksoy, such urban regeneration in Istanbul meant "tearing down of poor housing areas along with their entire neighbourhood, and the incorporation of these cleansed out spaces into the development projects of large real estate companies" (Aksoy, 2008, p.217). The cleansing of neighbourhoods, and their

[6] Justice and Development Party, founded in 2001 by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

substitution with money interest groups consequently affected the social relations, thus “marking important social and spatial changes in inner city neighbourhoods” (Yücesoy, 2008, p.29).

According to architect and activist Mücella Yapıcı, who served as secretary-general of the Chamber of Architects Istanbul Branch, the meaning of urban transformation in Istanbul has to do with profit and urban spaces in the city gaining real estate property value. “The main cause for all this has been economic and social policy change. Urban renewal is nothing more than the reflection of these changes upon space. Urban space in the city acquired real estate property value. Rights to housing and shelter disappeared” (Yapıcı and İleri, 2017, p.68).

Along with these new urban policies, the AKP government’s attempts at transforming Istanbul’s centrally located Taksim Square started in 2007, when the Minister of Culture announced their plans to demolish the Atatürk Cultural Centre (Atatürk Kültür Merkezi, or AKM), facing the Taksim Square (Aksoy, 2017). The AKM building had long been a home for the Istanbul State Theatre, the State Opera and Ballet, and the State Symphony Orchestra, and this iconic building was facing demolition. For many people, this decision meant more than the demolishing of a single building, as the AKM symbolized the modern and secular ideology of the Turkish Republic when it was founded in 1923. Therefore, AKP’s plan to demolish the AKM and change its surrounding area was “a tactical move intended to wipe out the legacy of the modern Republican period” (Aksoy, 2017, p.25).

In the following years, in 2012, the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality officially announced its “Taksim Square Pedestrianization Project”, which included the transformation of the whole square, including the Gezi Park and the AKM. These plans foresaw a rebuilding of Ottoman Military Barracks back into where they were before (in the Gezi Park), but this time the barracks would “include a shopping mall as a symbol of New Ottoman ideology of the ruling Justice and Development Party” (Eryılmaz, 2017, p.192). Therefore, it is important to note that the destruction of the Gezi Park was not a single case alone, but was linked to AKP’s ideology to

transform the Taksim Square and its surrounding area, and replace it with an identity looking back to its Ottoman past, yet this time shining with profitability.

Figure 4 Overview of the Gezi Park and Taksim Square that lies next to it. I took this photo from the top of Marmara Hotel in Taksim, on May 23, 2013, five days before the protests started.

Photo:Işıl Eğrikavuk

Despite the strong opposition and numerous court cases started by the Istanbul Chamber of Architects and Istanbul Chamber of Urban Planners[7] against the plan, the then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan himself announced in February 2013 that the plans to transform the area would continue. "We will build the Topçu Kışlası (Ottoman Military Barracks). The upper board (Heritage Protection Conservation Board) disapproved the plan apparently. We will also disapprove that…Some part of the barracks might be a museum. The middle part is a green area. The upper part will be a residence and hotel".[8]

The Gezi Park protests occurred in the aftermath of such major urban planning changes in the metropolitan city of Istanbul, with its official population of 15

[7] Please see report by Istanbul Chamber of Architects.
http://www.mimarist.org/calisma_raporlari/42_donem/9_3_taksim.pdf Last access: 05.12.2020

[8] https://bianet.org/bianet/print/144084-basbakan-in-topcu-kislasi-israri Last access: 05.12.2020

million[9]. The protests were therefore more than a reaction to the destruction of a single park. As stated in *Reclaiming the right to the city: Reflections on the urban uprisings in Turkey,* they represented right of urbanites to radically transform the processes that orchestrate the production and use of urban space (Kuyumlu, 2013).

In his article, Kuyumlu brings up the concept of 'the right to the city', initiated by philosopher Henri Lefebvre in late 60s and developed by David Harvey. Lefebvre argues that the Marxist theory should not be restricted to the factory as a site of struggle, but should expand to the city. This idea imagines a city "which is less alienated, with which residents are able to identify, which is arranged according to the demands of urban working-class people" (İnal and Gezgin, 2017, p.103) Inal and Gezgin further state that this is quite impossible to fulfil in capitalist conditions and requires first of all, an anti-capitalist struggle. Referring to David Harvey and his concept of 'rebel cities', they state that this new radical approach has turned the urban commons into rebels who demand, "affordable and quality housing, increasing the public spheres for the poor, putting an end to capitalist mega-projects, etc.," (İnal and Gezgin, 2017, p.103).

According to Kuyumlu, this was the case in the Gezi Park protests. He writes that the protests were initiated by ordinary urban people reclaiming their rights to the city against "capitalists, developers and their allies who recast the city as a locus of exchange value and capital accumulation" (Kuyumlu, 2013, p.275). However, it is also significant to note that as much as the protestors were coming against AKP's neoliberal gentrification projects, they were also "reacting to the authoritarian reflexes of the AKP government and the police brutality it inflicted on the people" (Kuyumlu as cited by İnceoğlu, 2014). In her article, İnceoğlu underlines that it was these above reasons that made the struggle for Gezi Park protests to jump scale from the urban to the national. The recent causes of unrest include the bombing and

[9] http://www.istanbul.gov.tr/nufus-bakimindan-turkiyenin-en-buyuk-kenti-istanbul Last access: 05.12.2020

killing of 34 civilians by the Turkish Air Forces in the eastern town (bordering Iraq) of Roboski, Şırnak in December 2011, the car bomb attacks in the southern town of Reyhanlı, Hatay bordering Syria) in April 2013, and the killing of at least 52 people, the media blackout during these two events, the provocative patriarchal speeches of the then prime minister Erdoğan and the restrictions that have been imposed on women's reproductive rights, the clampdown on May 1 demonstrations, the restrictions on sale of alcohol, and the neoliberal "urban transformation" projects, such as the naming of the newly-built third bridge across the Bosphorus, for Sultan Selim, an Ottoman Emperor famous for his massacre of Alevis (İnceoğlu, 2014). She argues that all these tensions and grievances link to people's right to claim the Gezi Park and its surrounding Taksim Square area.

The Gezi Park protests started in this climate, on May 28th, 2013, with a small crowd of protesters' coming together as a reaction towards the government's announcement of the destruction of Istanbul's centrally-located Gezi Park. Once a home to an Armenian Cemetery (1560-1865), and then the host of Ottoman artillery barracks (1806-1938), the area had been later opened (in 1943) for recreational use by the Turkish State and since then had been one of the few remaining green spaces in the district (Akbulut, 2014, p.232).

Figure 5 Municipality machines entering the park. May 28, 2013, the day protests started.

Photos: Işıl Eğrikavuk

On May 28th, 2013, I was working as a journalist, and was following the news on Twitter. As the municipality machines entered the park to bulldoze the trees, I ran to the park to witness what was happening. As the machines attempted to pull the trees from the earth, the gathering groups started standing in front of the trees, resisting what was happening. In the following hours, the course of the events shifted. As police forces attempted to throw the protestors out from the park using pepper gas, the tension built up among the protestors and the police.

Figure 6 Left: A protestor helping another after the police used pepper gas against people. Right. Protestors starting a sit-in protest. May 28, 2013.

Photos: Işıl Eğrikavuk

In the following days, thousands of people gathered in the park and at Taksim Square, located right at its exit. Thus, only in a few days, an environmentalist protest turned into "a major civil uprising against the government in which the most chanted slogans were 'Down with the government!' and 'Shoulder to shoulder against fascism!'" (Türkmen-Dervişoğlu, 2013). The protests soon spread to other cities such as Ankara, Adana, İzmir and Eskişehir as well as many other small ones, and turned into "a kind of highly colourful and heterogeneous resistance euphoria" (Ada, 2014).

Nearly every facet of Turkish society was present and in solidarity to claim their right to the city; “ardent secularists were seen marching beside Alevis and Sunni Islamists, Kurdish leftists fought the police alongside Turkish nationalists, and even the normally bitter rival fans of the Beşiktaş, Galatasaray, and Fenerbahçe football clubs united in opposition to Erdoğan” (Kowalski 2018). As I mentioned in the previous Chapter, this list also included LGBTQIA+ groups, disabled citizens and religious and ethnic minorities such as Alevis and Armenians. Despite the differences in identities, by standing side by side, these diverse yet ‘ordinary’ groups created a heterogeneous entity. Some defined it as the ‘Gezi Spirit’ which consisted of heterogeneous identities coming together and creating something new that challenged the existing order, narratives and ideologies (Akçalı (2018), McGarry (2019) as cited in McGarry et al., 2020).

Figure 7 A mock-construction site in the park. On the floor is written “Taksim belongs to the people”. On the little sign reads a slogan: “Tayyip Temeli Attık Gel”. (Tayyip, we started the construction, come). June 02, 2013.

Photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

As much as it was a protest arena, the park quickly became a place where people also inhabited. In a few days, Gezi Park was transformed into a diverse arena, a social microcosm of the nation where thousands of people gathered by day and hundreds slept by night. It became a place where people “from very different walks

of life, from different political leanings, ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic groups, life-style choices and so on came together" (Aksoy, 2017, p.20).

In a few days, the park became almost like a town, with its freshly built squares, monuments, communal eating places, and even small street signs that introduced each corner such as the 'LGBT street' or 'Çapulcu (marauder) corner' (Tulke, 2019, p.129). The term çapulcu was especially a significant word because the then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had attributed it to the protesters, who in return quickly "internalized this term and made it a nickname for themselves" (Öğün Emre, Çoban, and Şener, 2013, p.7). Such humorous play on the language was especially visible through the slogans.

Figure 8 A slogan from the protests. On the ground it reads "Gazyip Bieber". The word Gaz refers to pepper spray, combined with then Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan's name. June 02, 2013.

Photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

2.2 The Creative Expressions of the Protests

Similar to the twist in the meaning of the word çapulcu, the Gezi Park inhabitants adopted numerous creative and humorous expressions. I will refer to these expressions as performances or as being performative in the sense of Schechner's

description, as I choose to read them blurring the boundaries between protest and performance. To name a few examples: some of the performances involved collective cooking, eating and the distribution of food among the protestors. Some also involved participation, such as creating an open library for everyone, a free-speech station, a mock-marriage hall, free health-service halls, spaces for dancing, music and performances.

Figure 9 People distributing food to others, free of charge. June 02, 2013.

Photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, one of these performances referred to as 'Standing Man' by the media was started by dancer and choreographer Erdem Gündüz. His (in)action of standing up was followed quickly by a large number of followers" and thus becoming later one of the most celebrated and iconic images of the Gezi protests.

In his protest/performance, Gündüz stood facing Atatürk Cultural Center in Istanbul (AKM), on which a flag showing Turkey's founding father Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was hanging. Gündüz's passive act of standing drew the attention of other passersby, who joined him in his act of standing. In a few days, this simple act of standing was being performed not only in Istanbul, but also in other cities all around

Turkey, turning this gesture of non-violent action into a major collective protest. In an article he wrote after the protests, Gündüz explained his motivations as such:

Figure 10 Erdem Gündüz and participants during the Standing Man protest, 2013

Source:
https://www.cnnturk.com/2013/turkiye/06/18/taksimde.duran.adam.eylemi/712011.0/index.html

"My 'Standing Man' action was not a planned protest…By standing in passive defiance of Prime Minister Erdogan, there in the Square, right below the Anadolu Agency offices, they could no longer falsely claim that the protests were over. Also, as an artist, I was outraged that the order had been given to demolish the Culture Center, after all the other centers of arts and culture we'd lost in recent years. By keeping the Center - and the name Atatürk, who had done so much for the arts and for Turkey - directly in my gaze, I could not only honor him, but also hold vigil and draw attention to this cultural treasure I wanted to protect" (Gündüz, 2013).

Gündüz's performative act is similar to Liz Crow's 'Laying Down in Public' (2013) (p. 22), in that both perform an inaction as a political statement. According to Verstraete, there is a "repertoire of 'die-ins', 'lie- ins' and 'sit-ins' in historical protest movements that stresses the impact and importance of occupying space, and its main principle is performative" (Verstraete, 2016, p. 14). He points to other

similar examples of inaction, such as the mass choreography of 15 minutes of lying on the floor, organized by Mihran Tomasyan, after the assassination of Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink[10] in 2007. Another example is a kissing performance of some 200 couples in Ankara Metro in May 2013, after one couple was reportedly prevented from kissing by authorities. However, he continues to say, what made Gündüz's act stand out -together with other examples from Gezi-, was that they brought a 'new performativity', meaning they left individual identity politics and became attached to "a larger set of collective strategic practices and social-urban movements on a translocal and even transnational level" (Verstraete, 2016, p. 18). I will return to this quality transnationality in the next sections.

There were other creative and collective performances, both inside and outside of the park. One of these was the 'rainbow stairs', which was a collective and anonymous act of painting certain public stairs to the colors of rainbow. Starting in the Karaköy district of Istanbul (in Fındıklı), this performative gesture soon became almost a battle between people and the municipality, as the latter would immediately paint the stairs back to gray, only to find it the next day painted to rainbow colors again.[11] Some underlined solidarity within such an act saying that the choice of rainbow colors "obviously referred to advocacy of LGBT communities in Turkey and was a great instance of solidarity between different groups of people" (Germen, 2014, p.18).

[10] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hrant_Dink Last access: 05.12.2020

[11] https://bianet.org/bianet/yasam/149542-belediye-gokkusagini-griye-boyadi Last access: 13.11.2020

Figure 11 Rainbow stairs in Fındıklı, Istanbul, 2013

Source: http://everywheretaksim.net/tr/bianet-gokkusaginin-renklerini-parlatmak-icin/

In addition to all these creative performances, a common and everyday practice in the park was centered around cooking, eating and sharing food. While among the leftist groups, "distribution of food free of charge reflected the ideology of sharing and equal distribution of resources" (Haksöz, 2015, p.7), such sharing was adopted especially by an anti-capitalist Muslim group during Ramadan. Breaking their fast in the park together with other protestors (known as *Yeryüzü Sofrası* – mother earth meals), this act of sharing a religious ritual with others "destabilized the conservative AKP government's claim to be the sole representative of religious practices" (Ağartan, 2018, p.211). Furthermore, it reaffirmed the importance of food for building solidarity and community cohesion.

Figure 12 Mother Earth Meals in Taksim 2013

Source: http://everywheretaksim.net/tr/yeryuzu-sofrasi-bugun-fatih-sarachane-parkinda-kuruluyor/

Another performance that started in the Gezi Park and spread to other local parks both in Istanbul and in other cities of Turkey was the neighbourhood forums, in which individuals could each take turns to speak on an open microphone. Some called these practices as exceptional, saying that "urban citizens were reclaiming the commons for radical democratic formations while in the process of establishing agonistic relations" (İnceoğlu, 2014), referring to the fact that so many heterogenous groups were present in these forums. Thus, Gezi Park itself and its extension forums became sites of plurality and radical democracy, where "acknowledgement and acceptance of differences with respect and acting together in various ways to increase the visibility of certain disadvantaged groups and identity positions" (İnceoğlu, 2013). These forums served as public meeting and discussion platforms even long after the protests ended and they became trajectories of "how to continue with the protests and to turn it into a long-lasting political mechanism" (Batuman, 2015, p.900).

Other creative examples from the park included the painting of a construction vehicle belonging to the municipality and originally used for the reconstruction of the park area, to bright pink colors by the artist collective KABA HAT.

Similarly, another participatory act in the park was the open library serving as a free donation and pick-up point for books. In another case, a police vehicle was turned upside down and graffitied completely. Through all these performances, the park became a place, where a new language of protest was crafted and displayed everyday through fast-pace, creative, dynamic and fluid forms.

Figure 13 Left: municipality construction vehicle painted to pink by artist collective KABA HAT. Right: A police vehicle turned upside down and graffitied. June 02, 2013.

Left photo: https://kaba-hat.com/category/gezi/#jp-carousel-291 Right photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

My proposition to view these performances in the light of the issues raised around community art practices stems from several reasons. First of all, I argue that many of these above examples are very similar to the principles on community art practices in their emphasis on critical dialogue. The dialogical process is especially visible in the neighbourhood forums, where people from different views and positions take the stage one after another, expressing themselves and hearing the others. However, I add that the dialogue I refer here is not limited to discursive practice. Dialogue is also performative in the examples of speech acts. The many creative slogans that came out of the protests, such as the appropriation and embracing the word 'çapulcu' are examples of this. I argue that this process of critical dialogue is essential in hearing and understanding one-another and standing side by side together with clashing identities. What also intrigues me is that here the dialogical process is not limited to a certain group, it is embraced and multiplied by heterogenous groups of people.

Figure 14 A slogan in the park. Reads as "Gaz Çıkardım": I just released gas, or I farted.

Photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

Secondly, I want to emphasize the presence of agonistic groups during the protests, and their ability to stand side by side. In her essay *Hope with the qualms: a feminist analysis of the 2013 Gezi protests*, Öykü Potuoğlu-Cook writes that Gezi brought together "heterogeneous group of feminists, queer activists, factory workers and leftists, observant Muslims, middle-class secularists and underserved ethnic and religious minorities" (Potuoğlu-Cook, 2015, p.97) against the conservative, authoritarian and hetero/patriarchal capitalism of the AKP government. Some defined this heterogeneity as something "that had not existed before" (McGarry et al., 2020, p.16), referring to these diverse groups of people coming together and crafting something new against existing ideologies.

Thirdly, I want to emphasize the collective production of these performances (as seen in the collective making and distributing of food), and participation (as seen in the Standing Man as well as rainbow stairs). The ideas around participation and collaboration were very present in so many corners around the park, yet without the intention to call it art. In several collaborative cases, such as the Free Library and Free Kitchen, there was no signal referring to ownership of the work either, which made them more owned by everyone participating. "There was a 'revolutionary market', a market at which no money was needed, and a common kitchen, a library,

a health center, an organic vegetable garden, a forum area, a TV station, a radio station… Thousands upon newly energized thousands of people from across the city visited the park every day, bringing resources to the protestors (food, cleaning materials, books, etc.)" (Aksoy, 2017, p.31).

Figure 15 A neighbourhood forum at Abbasaga park, in Beşiktaş, Istanbul, 2013.

Photo: Araz Zeynisoy. Source: http://everywheretaksim.net/besiktas-abbasaga-forum/

As I wrote in my introduction, the Gezi Park Protests have been discussed and analyzed by different disciplines, from political studies to urban sociology, social movements theory and performance studies. As an artist, my intention is not to realize yet another socio-political analysis of the protests, but rather to observe and point to certain intersections between the protests and my ongoing research of community arts.

In light of these points, I invite the reader to imagine the performative expressions within the Gezi Park protests as if they were expansions of community art practices. I argue that the protests were exemplary in bringing the theoretical discussions around the community art practices into practice and into life, especially issues around critical dialogue, agonistic communities and performativity all at once and in a large scale.

In the next pages, I will explain the aftermath of the protests, and ask this: In an atmosphere where public protest is no more possible, can art practices provide safe zones for extracting these above qualities of the protests and re-create them in an art context?

2.3 Protest and Performativity Around the Globe

Although this thesis focuses specifically on the Gezi Park protests, other protest movements across the world today are increasingly expressed through a variety of performances, text, visual, graphics and other communication forms. “Recently waves of protests have emerged from Sao Paolo to Hong Kong and Seoul that are original in their cultural and artistic production and expression” (McGarry et al., 2020, p.20).

In his article *Devizualize* (2020) Nicholas Mirzoeff calls such performances as ‘moments of rupture’, where one can step “outside of the boundaries proposed by the society of control” (Mirzoeff, 2020, p.12). In these moments, the unexpected becomes possible: strangers painting umbrellas together, people dancing in a highly choreographed manner, and musicians playing music in the midst of a protest. According to Mirzoeff these moments show “a glimpse of a society that is (potentially) to come” (Mirzoeff, 2020, p.13).

In his book *Breathing: Chaos and Poetry* (2018), philosopher Franco Berardi defines our current state as “contemporary condition of breathlessness” (Berardi, 2018, p.56), which is filled with technology and information and fueled by capitalism. Berardi asks how one can breathe in an atmosphere of chaos, which “is too complex to be decoded by our available explanatory frames, an environment which fluxes and circulates too quickly for our minds to elaborate” (Berardi, 2018, p.318). He finds the answer in the metaphor of poetry which he defines as “the excess that goes beyond the limits of language, which is to say beyond the limits of the world itself” (Berardi, 2018, p.132).

Berardi's 'metaphor of poetry' and Mirzoeff's 'rupture' are moments of escape or dissent which occurs through the sphere of artistic imagination. It is these imaginative moments which can host new and unfamiliar, yet fast welcomed frameworks that can allow for breathing spaces. This is where the performative comes into play, allowing for the unexpected to occur. Through the use of a diverse spectrum of body, through voice and language, through movement and choreography (or its contrary, their inaction as in the case of the Standing Man) these protest movements create a space where both rupture and breathing occur at the same time.

The Gezi Park protests were not the only protests employing creative and performative expression in their language. Recent protest movements from Occupy Wall Street in New York in 2011[12], to Arab Spring in Egypt (Egyptian Revolution) in 2011[13], and the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong in 2014[14] share similar characteristics in their creative expressions.

My initial idea was to include examples from other protest movements into my thesis, specifically from the above mentioned. I thought of this for two reasons, the first was due to their chronological closeness. Both Occupy Wall Street and Egyptian Revolution started in 2011, two years before the Gezi Park protests. The

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[12] Occupy Wall Street (OWS) was a protest movement against economic inequality that began in Zuccotti Park, located in New York City's Wall Street financial district, in September 2011. It gave rise to the wider Occupy movement in the United States and other countries. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occupy_Wall_Street Last access: 24.09.2020

[13] The Egyptian revolution of 2011, also known as the 25 January Revolution, started on 25 January 2011 and spread across Egypt. The date was set by various youth groups to coincide with the annual Egyptian "Police holiday" as a statement against increasing police brutality during the last few years of Mubarak's presidency. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_revolution_of_2011 Last access: 24.09.2020

[14] The Umbrella Movement was a political movement that emerged during the Hong Kong democracy protests of 2014. Its name arose from the use of umbrellas as a tool for passive resistance to the Hong Kong Police's use of pepper spray to disperse the crowd during a 79-day occupation of the city demanding more transparent elections. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umbrella_Movement Last access: 24.09.2020

uprisings in Hong Kong also started in 2011-2012, with peaceful demonstrators occupying the HSBC headquarters (Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation) to protest against social and economic inequalities. The protests became more visible in the international media in 2014, known as the 'Umbrella Movement', Umbrella Movement', "so named after unarmed protesters used umbrellas to protect themselves from pepper spray and tear gas" (Nga, 2018, p. 55) a large-scale, seventy-nine-day movement calling for democracy. In one of the symbolic performances in Hong Kong, the artists Wen Yau (Nga, L.W) and Clara Cheung invited passers-by to express their feelings about the use of tear gas against peaceful protesters in Hong Kong by painting umbrellas.

Figure 16 Painting umbrella. The artists invited passers-by to express their feelings about the use of tear gas against peaceful protesters in Hong Kong by painting umbrellas.

Source: https://aaa.org.hk/en/ideas/ideas/shortlist-performing-the-protests

Secondly, I wanted to look into the transformation of urban cities into protest arenas. In their article *Reclaiming the City, Reclaiming the Rights* (2017) İnal and Gezgin write on the transformation of cities into profit zones by without taking into account the demands of the public. This, according to the writers results in the appearance of new agents of struggle such as "urban organization forums, slow city-approaches (Cittaslow), urban villages, organic production, or farmer's markets" (İnal and Gezgin, 2017, p.103). These new urban struggles take place in all kinds of public spaces such as parks, gardens, woods, seashores, suburbs etc.,

and turn these areas into sites of resistance. However, the writers acknowledge that recent struggles from 2011 to 2013 started to appear in the city squares, saying that "the hearts of the cities started to beat in the squares" pointing to the examples of "Tahrir, Puerto del Sol, Zuccoti Park/Wall Street, Syntagma, Taksim/Gezi" (İnal and Gezgin, 2017, p.104).

As I delved more into my research, I realized that many of the artistic strategies employed in political protests were bearing similarities and traveling across continents. To name an example: the 'Human microphone chorus' of Occupy Wall Street, in which protesters repeat aloud what the speaker says was similar to 'Complaint Choir Project[15]', in which participants write songs and sing together. Another instance: the neighbourhood forums that were an essential part of the Gezi Park protests, were actually quite significant in Occupy Wall Street as well. These acts of 'new performativity' were translocal and transnational (Verstraete, 2016), bringing together transnational influences together with a local nuance. Therefore, instead of pointing to single geographies, I decided to look at the common characteristics of certain performances across the globe.

In the book *Truth is Concrete: A handbook for Artistic Strategies in Real Politics* (2015), curator Florian Malzacher refers to all kinds of new or renewed alliances between art and activism as 'artivism'. Such terminology foresees imagining the use of artistic tools and skills for activist purposes and for creating self-empowerment for its author(s) and engaged participants (Malzacher, 2015, p.14). One of the qualities of artivist works in the book is described as 'being many'. "When the many emerge and start to engage in the constituent process of becoming a 'we', terrible and wonderful things can happen. The wonderful part is that, at such moments, the most important things can be reinvented: care, dignity, and the power to change our lives collectively, as recently in the squares and parks of Madrid,

[15] http://www.complaintschoir.org/ Last access: 05.05.2020

Cairo, New York, Athens, Istanbul" (Peters, 2015, p.131). Some of the artistic strategies listed under this category are carnivals, dancing, puppet demonstrations, coauthorship and choirs.

Figure 17 Still from Cairo to Budapest: The Choir Project organized by Egyptian artist Salam Yousry in collaboration with interested participants from Budapest.

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJBHBrp9d9s

This picture above is taken from The Choir Project, which was started by artist Salam Yousry in 2010 in Egypt. Since then, the project has traveled through Alexandria, Amman, Beirut, Paris, London, Istanbul, Budapest, Graz, Warsaw[16]. In every city he visits, Yousry comes together with the voluntary participants in writing and orchestrating a new song. In the short documentary made on the project, one sees artist Yousry with the participants from Hungary sitting in a circle on the floor, discussing what the lyrics of their song should be. The video shows that the song writing process takes place through a discussion with the participants, who write a song together and then reflect on the process. As expressed by the

[16] http://www.choirproject.net/ Last access: 05.05.2020

participants, it does not just include speaking, but also writing something together, and hearing one another.

"The most interesting thing is when I wrote something, or when I gave a song into the group, then I could hear it sung by them. Something about me expressed by the others, that was amazing"[17] (Workshop participant, 2013).

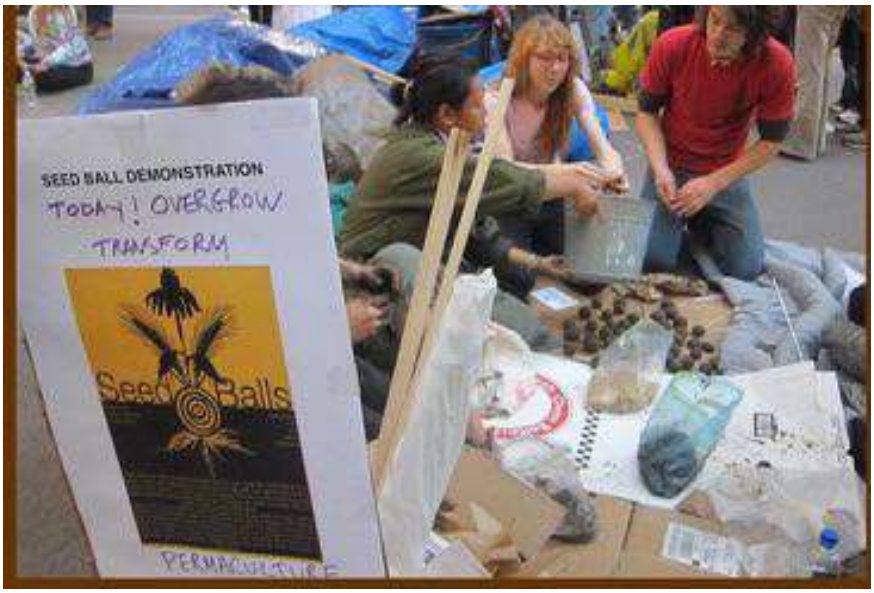
Yousry's project does not limit itself to a specific geography, yet it actually connects different countries, cities and the people in those cities in responding to common effects of neoliberalism and its societies of control (Mirzoeff, 2020). This is exciting in Yousry's work: even though the content changes from city to city, the performances make it clear that the consequences of neoliberal policies within the urban cities bear similar effects: deterritorialization, de-access, and silencing. Yet, what connects and brings people across geographies is the way of re-claiming one's rights, opening of spaces of breathing (Berardi, 2018) through self-expression, performance and creativity.

Another artistic strategy mentioned in the book is 'reclaiming spaces', which refers to projects such as squatting, blocking, guerilla gardening or mapping. According to artist Federico Geller the core of these practices is "set in the spatial dimension, inviting us to compose new places, to alter the normalized ways of interacting in a territory with other bodies and objects" (Geller, 2015: p. 175). An example from such interactions is the ongoing practice of British artist Richard Reynolds, who is the founder of www.guerrillagardening.org. Since 2004 Reynolds has been creating guerilla garden spaces in London. In 2011, he joined the Occupy Wall Street protests in Zuccotti Park by giving a workshop. He comments on this experience in his blog: "Here, for the first time I see guerilla gardening used in a protest whose heart is far from a gardener's in a way that is not at the mercy of plants. It makes

[17] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RKC7zSgdyc Last access: 05.05.2020

practical use of the energy and optimism within a crowd that has multiple objectives to change a society" (Reynolds, 2012).

Figure 18 Guerilla gardening in Occupy Wall Street.



Source: http://www.guerrillagardening.org/ggblog33.html

I chose this example of guerilla gardening specifically, because during the Gezi Park protests, the people in the park also created a community garden (bostan). Even before the Gezi Park protests, there were other garden projects all around the city. One of the well-known collective community gardens projects was against the demolition of historic Yedikule Vegetable Gardens in the Fatih district of Istanbul[18]. This 85,000 sqm area of fertile urban farm was under the threat of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and Fatih Municipality, who tried to convert it into a park. As a reaction, a growing group of gardeners, ecological activists, artists and journalists came together to secure the gardeners' rights for continued use of the land and to conserve the area, saying that if destroyed, "the traces of a unique

[18] https://yedikulebostanlari.tumblr.com/ Last access: 04.02.2020

ecosystem of houses, barns, gardens and resources of Ottoman agricultural technology [could] have been erased" (Cihanger and Durusoy, 2016, p.132).

Figure 19 The Gezi Park community garden set up by the protestors

Source: https://www.ntv.com.tr/galeri/turkiye/gezi-parkina-bostan,80V-IS0voUW3GsoL-wH-oA/zXGBefA8fUmMo00IqLGV0A

The choir project or guerilla gardening are not the only examples, there are many other creative tools, objects, images and performances that show similar creative characteristics across political protests in different geographies, from better known mediums such as posters and graffities, to dialogue-based approaches such as neighbourhood forums, or to more joyful performances, such as laughtivism, where protestors use humor as a tool for communicating their messages. In his article on laughtivism, Srđa Popović, the executive director of The Center for Applied Nonviolent Actions and Strategies (CANVAS) based in Belgrade, Serbia writes that humor is the best tool to "bring together people from different sectors of society to mock and undermine the authority of autocracts" (Popović, 2014, p.121).

Figure 20 Still from a TED Talk by Srđa Popović on Laughtivism.

Source: https://canvasopedia.org/power-laughtivism-tedxbg-talk-srdja-popovic/

In their article *The Art of Activism*, Stephen Duncombe and Steve Lambert ask the readers when was the first time they realized the world needed changing. "Was your transformative experience when you: Read a flyer? Studied a policy report? Attended an academic lecture? Signed a petition? Likely, it was none of these things" (Duncombe and Lambert, 2014, p.28). The writers say this is where the art of activism comes in the picture and when the two are applied together tactically and organizationally, they can bring social change.

"The problem with art, from an activist perspective, is that all this power of the sublime is wasted, sequestered safely away from politics. A painting hangs on the wall of a museum. It moves us. And then we move on, leaving that experience and its transformative power confined to its 'proper' location, to be tapped only by cultural institutions seeking to increase their status or profits. In our world, the sublime is in the service of hierarchy and capitalism. But what if we could harness the 'supersensible' power of art and apply it to the world-changing potential of activism? This is what artistic activism does" (Duncombe and Lambert 2014: 33).

2.4 The post-Gezi climate

In this section, I want to draw a picture of the political climate when I started my PhD research in the fall of 2016, as it is an important criterion that shapes my research questions, which I will present at the end of this chapter. When I started my PhD, it was three years after the protests and the political climate was quite different than what I described before[19]. In the subsequent years after the Gezi Park protests, Turkey went through dramatic social and political changes. Starting with the elections in 2014, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan began to transform Turkey's parliamentary system into a heavily centralized, presidential system. "The new system entrenched his one-man authoritarian rule at home and is having profound implications for the making and substance of Turkish foreign policy as well as Turkey's relations with the West" (Kirişçi and Toygür, 2019). Moreover, in 2016, a failed coup attempt had taken place, leading to a continuing 'state of emergency', allowing "the Turkish government to restrict or ban gatherings and censor the media" as well as "purging hundreds of thousands of people from civil service shutting down critical media organizations, and arresting tens of thousands of suspected members of the opposition" (Eagan, 2018).

The increasing authoritarianism was not just within the political system, but it was also growing against the freedom of speech in academia. In 2016, some 1,128 academics had signed an online petition 'We will not be a party to this crime'[20], a statement that supported Kurdish prisoners' demands for peace in Turkey. Very soon, all of these academics, many of whom I had personally known, were brought

[19] I started my research three years after the Gezi Protests were over, in 2016. In the same year, I started my PhD, I was also invited to take part in a collaborative research project led by Brighton University, UK and Bilgi University in Istanbul. Titled as 'Aesthetics of Protest: Visual Culture and Communication in Turkey', the project sought to examine why protestors deploy particular aesthetics during political protests by using the example of the Gezi Park protests in Turkey in 2013. For more info please see: aestheticsofprotest.com/about-aesthetics-of-protest

[20] https://barisicinakademisyenler.net/node/63 Last access: 01.10.2020

to the Heavy Penal Court in Istanbul to face charges of making 'propaganda for terrorism' with sentences of up to 7 ½ years in detention.[21]

The cases of silencing were not only in academia, but also in the arts through "growing censorship and cancellations of exhibitions" (Akermans, 2016). Right after the protests, the city's biggest contemporary art event, Istanbul Biennial, which was planning to be held in various contested public spaces in the city in September 2013, announced its withdrawal from these spaces, explaining that "they marked their presence through their absence"[22]. Although such a decision was criticized by some for being "too easily compatible with the repressive agenda of state authorities" (Snow, 2013), others described it as a "tactical withdrawal", referring to its curator Fulya Erdemci's statement "I want you to hear what's happening on the streets" (Batty, 2013).

Since then, there have been numerous cases of censorship or self-censorship, such as the last-minute cancellation of an exhibition called 'Post-Peace' at Aksanat Istanbul in February 2016, the postponing of the Sinop Biennial (Sinopale) in 2016 'due to recent events in Turkey'[23], the self-cancellation of Çanakkale Biennial in 2016, and the targeting of its curator Beral Madra by some politicians for allegedly 'being critical of Erdoğan'[24], which show "the difficulty of expressing critical views on state policies" (Günal, 2016).

The cases I mentioned above are only a few, and are taken from a report prepared by Siyah-bant[25], a research platform that documents censorship cases in the arts in

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[21] https://barisicinakademisyenler.net/node/63 Last access: 05.12.2020

[22] http://13b.iksv.org/en Last access: 05.12.2020

[23] https://www.biennialfoundation.org/2016/08/the-6th-edition-of-sinopale-postponed-until-2017/ Last access: 05.12.2020

[24] https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2016/10/turkey-art-troubled-times/ Last access: 05.12.2020

[25] http://www.siyahbant.org/ Last access: 05.12.2020

Turkey. Ironically, the writer of that article, Asena Günal, who works as the program coordinator of Depo[26], a center for arts and culture in Istanbul, was detained and later released by the police along with several other culture workers in Turkey, on charges of "alleged involvement in the Gezi Park protests of 2013" [27]. Although Günal was later released, another prominent figure in Turkish arts and culture scene, Osman Kavala, a human rights defender, civil society leader and the founder of several arts and culture organizations, has been held in solitary confinement in a prison for the same allegations since November 2017[28].

I personally experienced censorship in the Spring of 2016, when a public video artwork of mine, shown in a 6x9 meter screen, located on top of a central hotel roof in Taksim area, was shut down by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality for allegedly causing 'visual pollution'. My video consisted of a 30-second-animation that said "Havva elmanı bitir kızım!" (Eve, Finish Your Apple!), a statement I wanted to make publicly in response to violence against women in Turkey. Despite my attempts for understanding what constituted the criteria for visual pollution, I was not given a clear answer and my work remained shut-down. In such an environment where public spaces were very precarious, how would it be possible to reclaim the qualities of Gezi Park protests through artistic practice?

[26] https://www.depoistanbul.net/ Last access: 05.12.2020

[27] https://ahvalnews.com/gezi-protests/one-arrested-10-released-following-detentions-organising-gezi-protests Last access: 05.12.2020

[28] https://www.osmankavala.org/en Last access: 05.12.2020

Figure 21 Image from 'Time to Sing a New Song' by Işıl Eğrikavuk. Video Installation, The Marmara Pera Hotel /YAMA, 2016, Istanbul.

Photo: Courtesy of Işıl Eğrikavuk

Despite the dark picture I described above, there were still voices of resistance among artists. In 2015, some 84 artists came together for an exhibition titled 'Stay With Me'[29], in which they reflected on the memories, findings and traces of the Gezi Park protests. Organized by the artist-run-space Apartment Project[30] and its founder, artist Selda Asal, the exhibition took place in Istanbul, Berlin, Amsterdam and Bremen respectively. This exhibition was a trajectory of a group of artists, academics and activists, who came together under the group name of Turuncu Çadır (which translates as 'Orange Tent', literally referring to an orange tent that had become a meeting point and forum for artists in Gezi Park during the protests). According to Ada, even though the forum ended as spontaneously as it was formed, it "channeled the energy that emerged during the resistance for artists to collectively debate issues such as rights and to comment on developments in the art market" (Ada, 2016, p.12).

The manifesto of the exhibition summarized the feeling that many people were sharing at that moment: "This [Gezi protests] was the hope itself. It was a spirit of

[29] http://berlin.apartmentproject.org/projects/stay-with-me/ Last access: 05.01.2021

[30] http://berlin.apartmentproject.org Last access: 05.01.2021

solidarity, struggle, standing side by side. Then… Nothing changed. We closed back into ourselves. Now, we are just left tired. Is it possible to remember this hope?" In the light of this question, each artist created a notebook to document, re-enact or comment on their experience from the time of the protest. This was not just remembering what was long gone, but rather an attempt to keep it alive through physical documentation.

Indeed, three years after, how would it be possible to remember the feelings of the protests? And how could a research attempt to sustain the long-gone spirit of creative expression that was so dominant in Gezi Park protests? With these qualities in mind, I formulated some my research questions:

In an environment where freedom of speech and the right to protest is very limited, can contemporary art practices become instrumental in taking on the qualities of the recent creative political protests and reawaken them in an artistic context?

How can contemporary arts practices create dialogue-based approaches that would bring together different segments of the society in hearing and understanding one another?

And finally, what would be the impacts of such practice? Can such a praxis transform society into a more diverse, more engaging, more open and united entity?

2.5 Developing My Own Artistic Strategies

Before I move on to my research phase, I want to emphasize the significance of bringing together artistic practice and theoretical knowledge in a PhD research on arts. Just like the Gezi Park protests brought diverse segments of society together, a major motivation of my PhD has been to open up space for methodological diversity in academia.

My research around the transformation Gezi Park and Taksim Square in fact started in 2012, exactly one year before the protests took place. I underline that my artistic research, which is related to the Gezi Park Protests has started years before my PhD thesis. I want to include this part of my research in my thesis, not because it is my story, but to show that artistic practice is not separate from scientific knowledge and production mechanisms.

In the summer of 2012, exactly one year before Gezi protests started, I and my long-time collaborator, Jozef E. Amado shared a studio located on Istanbul's famous Istiklal street, right next to the Gezi Park and the Taksim Square. In order to arrive at our studio every morning, we walked, passing by this square and its neighbour Gezi Park, where we sometimes sat down to have a quiet moment. Just like many other people we were curious: what was going to happen to Taksim Square and to Gezi Park? There were rumors in the air that it would turn into a religious building (later in 2017, the construction of the Taksim Mosque would start right across the square and is expected to be completed in 2021[31]). The rumors also had it that, even without an official announcement, the trees of the park would be cut due to this transformation.

As artists, we wanted to draw attention to what was happening in this major public space, which had started already with little transparent knowledge to the public. To be able to understand what was going on, we first spoke with different urban planners, architects and residents of the Taksim area, who were saying that their opinions were not sought regarding the implementation of the project. To criticize the process through our imagination, we decided to implement a fictional urban transformation project, which would be an alternative to Taksim Square's transformation.

[31] https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taksim_Camii, Last access: 04.01.2021

Our fictional project was called 3P, and it foresaw either to buy or to rent (for 99 years) the major cultural heritage sites from Turkey's neighbouring countries, who were in economic and political turmoil. These would be: The Pyramids of Egypt, the Parthenon of Greece and Palmyra of Syria (thus constituting the 3Ps) and alternatively exhibiting them in the Taksim Square. We started to make photo models of this vision straight away.

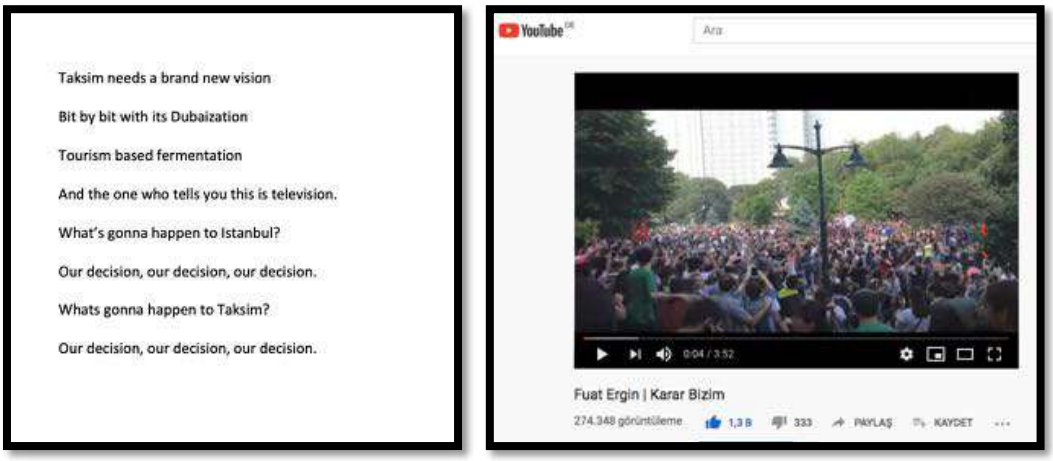
Figure 22 Images from 'Change Will Be Terrific', Photography, 2012

Photos: Courtesy of Işıl Eğrikavuk & Jozef E. Amado

We launched the project as a performance, which is called *Change Will Be Terrific* [32], and ran a promotion campaign. We also collaborated with a rap artist from Turkey, Fuat, and together we wrote a song, called *Karar Bizim* (Our Decision). The song was a satire on Istanbul's urban planning policies.

[32] Video documentation of the whole performance can be watched here. https://vimeo.com/242726023 Last access: 04.02.2020

Figure 23 Left, lyrics of Karar Bizim. Right, screenshot from the video clip of Karar Bizim



Source: Left: Courtesy of Işıl Eğrikavuk. Right: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mxcw4gxNf2U

I am going back to 2012 and writing about this performance because it has an important ground for my thesis. During the Gezi Park protests, which started eight months after our performance, our song became a protest song and was played many times in the park by the protesters. Without our knowledge, some protestors made a video clip to our song and shared it on social media, through which it was played even to a wider audience. The number of clicks on that video clip were almost 280.000 as of December 2020, a number we could most likely not reach by ourselves, had it not been part of this collective effort. This has encouraged me to include my artistic work into my academic career and reflect on the significance of collaboration. Thus, I started searching for a research methodology, which would allow me to bring together both my artistic practice as well as my theoretical interests in an open participatory form. In the next chapter, I will write on my collaborative and participatory artistic research methodology and its potential contribution to academic knowledge.

CHAPTER 3: THEORY INTO PRACTICE

3.1 Uniting Two Binaries

In an article titled *What Buddhism Offers Science*, Dalai Lama the 14th, writes that despite thousands of years of examination among neuroscientists, there is little consensus on what creates consciousness. He writes that the experience of consciousness can be subjective, such as the experience of seeing someone you love, or a walk through a garden on a spring day. He then asks how it would be possible to study this subjective experience objectively. "Can we envision a scientific methodology for the study of consciousness whereby a robust first-person method, which does full justice to the phenomenology of experience, can be combined with the objectivist perspective study of the brain?" (14th Dalai Lama 2005, p. 22).

Dalai Lama's question regarding the coming together of subjective and objective methodologies is very similar to what I strive for in this thesis. As an artist and academic, I have been trying to bring together two concepts that for many people seem very apart: art making and scientific inquiry. As Carol Becker writes, "Although art making, like scientific inquiry, is based on discovery; unlike science, artists' research and the findings that result are often understood as subjective. Therefore, they are usually not as valued or supported" (Becker, 2013, p.50). This is exactly how I feel when speaking about the subject. The artists of today are no longer recluses who close themselves in the studio and cut themselves off from society. "The image of the artist as creator, critic, theorist, teacher, activist, and archivist partly captures the range of art practices today. Many contemporary artists move easily over the terrain of other disciplines as they absorb, adapt, and co-opt a research language" (Sullivan, 2005, p.151).

According to Brad Haseman, recently there has been a radical interest to not only place practice within the research process, but to lead research through practice. “Originally proposed by artists/researchers and researchers in the creative community these new strategies are known as creative practice as research, performance as research, research through practice, studio research, practice as research or practice-led research” (Haseman, 2006, p.100).

The above-named practice-based research methodologies are referred to as “a combination of artistic practice and theoretical approach while aiming at the production of knowledge” (Hannula, 2004, p.70). Yet, this knowledge is different from both natural sciences and humanities. First of all, it does not meet the requirements of research for neither natural sciences, nor humanities because “in artistic research truth happens in a singular and interpretative mode instead of in a general and exact mode” (Nevannlina, 2004, p.83). Thus, it cannot be generalized into laws in itself. Nevannlina calls this mode as a-knowledge. “Maybe artistic research constitutes a-knowledge, where the ‘a’ can be freely seen either as an article or as a privative particle, or both” (Nevannlina, 2004, p.83).

It is a contradiction that an artistic inquiry method, which is singular and original, is also expected to create a set of knowledge that is general and applicable in other contexts. According to curator and writer, Hongjohn Lin, this is exactly where the paradox lies: “traditional academic research is to ‘re-search’ a topic, where certain repetitions and transformations are taking place and therefore can be verified and falsified, which is in the unwritten rule of academia itself” (Lin, 2013, p.150). However, he adds, artistic research cannot be “re-searched” in the same way, “simply because art practice needs to be unique and different” (Lin, 2013, p.151).

The second significant quality of artistic research is that, here practice is considered as the principal research activity “rather than only the practice of performance” (Haseman, 2006, p.105). This allows the practical part to lead the whole research process and becomes the main guide.

Finally, the third important quality of artistic research lies in its presentation. Accordingly, while research outcomes are expressed in non-numeric data, they are also presented "as symbolic forms other than in the words of discursive text" (Haseman, 2006, p.5)/

Figure 24 Three Qualities of Artistic Research: Adapted from Brad Haseman (2006) and Thomas Nevannlina's (2004) texts.

There are many artists or art collectives whose practices are based in research, such as the DAAR (Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency), an art and architecture collective, which was founded in 2007 in Beit Sahour, Palestine. Their work aims "to be able to gather together architects, artists, activists, urbanists, film-makers, and curators to work collectively on the subjects of politics and architecture"[33]. In their ongoing investigations and projects, DAAR often works with refugee camps, including the site's history and the people residing there.

I met DAAR co-founders Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti in 2014, when I was in an artist residency program in London. I was inspired by their work on refugee camps in Palestine, especially their approach on refugee camps not just as temporary spaces but also permanent architectural sites. Similar to the of DIAA (Dialogue Interactive Artists Association), whose work I introduced in Chapter 1, DAAR's work also involves a dialogical process with a certain community, and in

[33] http://www.decolonizing.ps/site/about/http://www.decolonizing.ps/site/about/
Last access: 05.12.2020

this case with the residents of the refugee camps, especially women. Some projects involve designing domestic and public spaces to be used by and for women in the camps. In other more controversial projects, they make imaginative propositions. For example, in their ongoing project called *Refugee Heritage*, they propose to include Dheisheh Refugee Camp in Palestine in the list of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites.

Figure 25 DAAR, Refugee Heritage (part I), 2015

Source: http://www.decolonizing.ps/site/refugee-heritage-part-i/

In their website DAAR explains the aim of their proposal: "Documenting, revealing and representing refugee history beyond the narrative of suffering and displacement can serve as an attempt to imagine and practice 'refugeeness' beyond humanitarianism"[34].

DAAR's work is based on research, they first explore and study their site, its history, its social, political and economic conditions and then connect with its residents. Their work is based on a collaborative and participatory dialogical process, meaning that the sites they design within the camps are results of ongoing conversations with the residents of the camps. Yet, they also exhibit the outcomes

[34] http://www.decolonizing.ps/site/refugee-heritage-part-i/ Last access: 05.12.2020

of their work, as in the above example of their project Refugee Heritage, which is exhibited in the form of video documentation and installation. Thus, their research operates in different contexts, both inside the camp through their building of a dialogical relationship with the residents and also outside the camps, as exhibits of the process.

3.2 Including collaborators in research process

One of the main aims of my thesis is to bring forward research methodologies based on practice. In this thesis, I will use artistic research as my research methodology, and I will expound the reasons. In their book *Artistic Research – Theories, Methods, Practices*, the writers Hannula, Suoranta and Vaden give two significant criteria to explain why there is a need for artistic research. These are "democracy of experiences and methodological diversity" (Hannula et al. 2005, p.24). Accordingly, a democracy of experiences means that there is no longer a hierarchical degree among the sciences or the prioritized status of any one science over the other, especially science over the arts.

The second criteria, which is methodological diversity, comes from another term "methodological abundance", a concept described in the writings of philosopher Paul Feyerabend, who defends against a single philosophy of scientific viewpoint, saying that the world is too diverse to be reduced to a single method. In his seminal work, *Against Method* (1975), Feyerabend writes that the essence of science is to be anarchic. "Science is an essentially anarchic enterprise: theoretical anarchism is more humanitarian and more likely to encourage progress than its law-and-order alternatives" (Feyerabend, 1975, p.5). Feyerabend also argues that 'non-scientific' procedures could not be pushed aside by argument, saying that the procedure they use is non-scientific. It is through following Feyerabend's thinking, one can claim that there is more room for methodological diversity in academia, which is clearly what artistic research can bring into the room.

I take both democracy of experiences and methodological diversity as significant criteria for my research. I will add one more significant criterion for my research, which is to include others in the process as collaborators. This, I believe is important as the core of my thesis explores the potential of co-creation and how to attain it in a setting of the arts. Therefore, in this research I will deliberately choose and use "collaborative and participatory case study" approach, which is a name for methodological approaches in which one tries in one way or another to influence the research object and include people other than researchers in the research (Hannula et al., 2005, p. 88). In this form of research, the significance lies in solving a common problem through "the active influence of the researcher, and not only her external observations on the events" (Hannula et. al, 2005, p. 90).

In collaborative and participatory case study approach, the researcher, by participating in the activity of the community she/he studies, strives to solve a certain problem together with the members of the community. In other words, the fundamental strive of the research is to include all individuals who are influenced by or participants of the research as full members of the research project. One important criterion for this model is that the traditional views on researcher's objectivity does not apply to this methodology. "Here one tries, rather, to influence an issue which is also the object of the research. One does not maintain a distance from the research object. On the contrary; one meddles with it" (Hannula et al., 2005, p.89). In my research, I will include collaborators and participants in the process, which I will write more about in the next pages.

Figure 26 Collaborative and participatory case study approach. Based on text from Artistic Research – Theories, Methods, Practices, Hannula, Suoranta and Vaden (2005)

I will open up a paragraph here to state that the collaborative and participatory case study methodology bears many similarities with action research, a qualitative research discipline that is often used in educational models, as well as in social practices and activism. Action research refers to projects where inquiry and action go hand-in-hand together within a community. Accordingly, the primary purpose of action research is neither to produce academic theories based on action, nor about action, but rather "to address questions and issues that are significant for those who participate as co-researchers" (Reason, Bradbury, 2001, p.5). The core of the action research lies in addressing a key problem in a community or organization and work towards contributing to a positive change either on a small-scale or literally affecting the lives of millions. Therefore, it has advanced with and through different social movements such as "civil rights, feminisms, anti-racism and community development movements" (Gustavsen (2003), as cited in Reason and Bradbury, 2001, p.2). Although action research bears many similarities to collaborative and participatory artistic research, in artistic research the outcome of the process is represented through symbolic forms, such as artistic mediums instead of a discursive presentation.

3.3 Learning from critical dialogue

In the first and second chapters, I explained three important criteria that are common between community art practices and the Gezi Park Protests. Those were critical dialogue, agonistic community, and performative expression. Based on my findings above, I have set off to collaborate with artist collectives through using these principles. I wanted to exhibit the outcomes of the works we would produce together in the form of an exhibition.

With this motivation, in early 2017, I started the practical part of my research firstly by contacting artists, who work as collectives. During this first phase, I got in touch and met with several artist collectives that were working across different mediums together. I wanted to collaborate with artist collectives from different disciplines such as performance, sculpture and installation as well as collectives who were interested in issues dealing with ecology and environment, because Gezi had initially started as an environmental protest, where people had "claimed their right to environmental conservation and the preservation of cultural integrity" (Özkaynak, Aydın, Ertör-Akyazı and Ertör, 2015, p.11).

In this period, I approached several different collectives working across Turkey and explained them my research motivations. After an initial introduction, I and six groups decided to collaborate for a practice-based research (four of these collectives were based in Istanbul and two of them in Ankara). These collectives and their primary work mediums were: dadans (contemporary dance-performance art), HAH (participatory art practices), Pelesiyer (sculpture/installation), Artıkişler Collective (video), birbuçuk (a collective of academics and cultural sector professionals, working on the intersection of art and ecology) and Istanbul Permaculture Collective (ecology).

During my meetings with the collectives, I used a critical dialogue approach, based on Paolo Freire's writings in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), which I described in Chapter 1. Freire's critical dialogue entails not only speaking and hearing as

components of a dialogical process, but also asking critical questions, reflecting on one-another and taking action from the answers. This approach proposes to reflect on what the other person says instead of simply hearing them or repeating what they say. After reflecting, one can again take an action, which can be as simple as asking a critical question, and thus the process continues, which Freire describes as Praxis (Freire, 1970, p. 87).

Figure 27 A dialogical conversation. Model based on Paolo Freire's writings.

Instead of approaching the collectives with a fixed idea on how the research will take shape, I wanted our conversations to lead the process. Once again, I issue a reminder here that when I started the practical aspect of my research in 2017, it was four years after the protests. In such an environment, where freedom of speech was constrained, I wanted to understand their motivation for a collective working model. Thus, I started by asking a question: In a politically restricted environment where freedom of expression was limited, what was their motivation and experience in being an artist collective?

"Rather than a group that has come together to produce work, we have a lot of shared values and a friendship, so we feel like there is a production emerging out of that" (dadans, quote from Merve Uzunosman, personal communication, April 2017).

“We all started as friends. Hanging out together for a period of time. Then we thought it would be great, because we are all artists and have our personal practices, to be around the table and just listen to each other's work. Really listening, by giving time and space. And it felt so good” (HAH, quote from Gizem Karakaş, personal communication, April 2017).

“With birbuçuk, every Thursday we are meeting at a bar. We do not talk about things we are gonna do as a collective, but rather our social life. Are we happy? Are we happy with our partners? Are we healthy? Do we need anything? Do we need any assistance? Any secrets? If we talk for 15 minutes about work, we are talking for 1,5 hours about daily life” (birbuçuk, quote from Serkan Kaptan, personal communication, May 2017).

Through our conversations, I gathered that a key finding: a major motivation for the collectives to come together is the need for sharing emotions and supporting each other, rather than a straightforward aim to make art together. What brought their collective formation together was not a shared artistic vision, common ideological agenda or career-related goals, but rather a need for expressing themselves, feeling heard, feeling accepted, and thus feeling connected and safe. The work that came out of that seemed only to have followed their shared connection. This common pattern reminded me of my experiences in my classrooms, in which we shared not only our thoughts, but also our emotions. The building on each-other’s emotional states made us connect more, which led to better engagement in the class and artistic work, confirmed by their positive feedback.

As I continued my dialogues with the collectives, I kept our focus on what collectivity provides them, thus gaining more information about their emotional needs.

“I don't feel so healthy psychologically in Turkey because everything is rushing and it’s easy to get depression. Having people to share private life within a collective is what keeps us alive” (birbuçuk, personal communication, May 2017).

“I think we were all very lonely in the reactions we took against our work and in our productions, so it seemed like we are trying to fill this gap (by being a collective” (HAH, personal communication, May 2017).

“Everyone is alone, everyone wants to establish a dialogue with each other” (Pelesiyer, personal communication, May 2017).

From these dialogues, I gathered that in the current socio-political atmosphere of Turkey, many artists were feeling lonely, not only in their private lives, but also in speaking up about their work and evaluating the reactions towards it. The collective formation provided them connection, support and a safe zone to speak about themselves and their work. Having these needs satisfied, they formed stronger connections to one another and worked better collaboratively. This brought me to understand the significance of connecting on an emotional level before collaborating on ideas, and I decided to place this finding as my focus.

My dialogues with the collectives also shaped my literature research, and I started to look into how feelings and emotions play a role in our cultural formations. This has brought me to the theories of affect. Defined as “momentary or sometimes sustained set of relations, forces or intensities that pass body-to-body and circulate and stick to bodies” (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010, p.1), affect is used to refer to forms or forces such as “generally other than conscious way of knowing” or things “beyond emotion that can serve to drive us toward movement.” (ibid.)

I want to open a paragraph here and note that there are various definitions and distinctions between these two terms: affect and emotion. Philosopher Brian Massumi's work *Parables for the Virtual* (2002) clears the distinction between the two. According to Massumi, affect is foremost an 'intensity', a nonconscious and "never-to-be conscious" intensity (Massumi 2002, p.25) that impinges on the biological body, while emotion is the conscious capture and qualification of that intensity. Accordingly, while emotion bares a rational and conscious constituent, affect is non-rational and non-conscious. Based on this reference, even though I am aware that the terms affect and emotion are closely associated, I will use the word emotion for my research, as dialogues with the collectives are laid out through a period of time and I interpret these dialogues as personalized and conscious qualifications.

According to Askins and Blazek, emotion is "central in and to everyday and structural conditions of our work" (Askins and Blazek, 2016, p.4). The writers contend that emotion is central especially "through research situations, teaching and collegiate relations, in and across specific institutional structures and norms; as implicit in knowledge production, circulation and legitimisation" (Askins and Blazek, 2016, p.4). Validating my dialogues with the artist collectives, I want to add the category of art in this list, and argue that emotions are central in the forming of artistic collectivity rather than any creative, political or career-oriented goals.

Emotions are also significant in protest movements. According to James M. Jasper emotions are present in every aspect of a political protest and they "motivate individuals, are generated in crowds, are expressed rhetorically, and shape stated and unstated goals of social movements" (Jasper, 2011, p.287). He states that many protest movements revolve around transforming emotions such as transforming

shame into pride, giving the example of gay and lesbian activism of 80's, or transforming self-image as in the case of feminist movement (Jasper, 2011, p.294).

According to Eslen-Ziya et al. emotions existed in every stage of the Gezi Park protests, and as they evolved and continued through the creative rituals, they managed to transform from anger to hope and solidarity. The Gezi protests, with their emphasis on solidarity and unity thus led to "making differences less important and enabled possible alliance and political mobilization between ideologically very different groups" (Eslen-Ziya et al., 2019, p.7).

Bringing together the outcomes of my dialogues with the collectives and my theoretical findings, I reached this conclusion. The artists were coming together for emotional support, connecting with one another and having a safe zone to express themselves and hear one another. Having met these needs, artists can then make art together collectively. In our artistic research, how could we extend these safe zones of expression to other people, who are not practitioners of the arts? How could we extend this connection to other people outside of the arts and include them into our works? In an atmosphere of political uncertainty, how could we connect to other people, who are not makers of art and create safe zones for them to express themselves? With these questions, I went back to the collectives and encouraged them to make artworks that embody the qualities of emotional connection they had among themselves.

3.4 Building a Framework

As my dialogues with the collectives continued, there was a re-occurring view among all of us: what has made Gezi Park protests so unique was that it had brought many different kinds of people under its roof. As I have written in Chapter 2, the park had turned literally into a diverse neighbourhood, where people from different classes, political views, ethnic and religious backgrounds, gender identities and

social engagements were coming together in the same space and existing side by side. Despite the differences in their identities, standing side by side, these groups created a heterogeneous entity, which I will refer as 'diverse neighbourliness', referring to such solidarity across different groups.

This understanding of a diverse neighbourliness led us to frame the exhibition on the new forms of neighbourly kinships, which are not based on "sharing certain characteristics, values, mutual interests, or styles of living" as described by sociologist Susanne Keller (Keller, 1968, p.44), but as kinships that can bring people who had no identical backgrounds or lifestyles together. This idea was inspired by Donna Haraway's definition of kinship, which proposes 'making kin' as a way to interact across species in the world (Haraway, 2015). Haraway proposes to see all earthlings, meaning the occupiers of the earth, 'making kin' other than being related through ancestry or genealogy. "All earthlings are kin in the deepest sense, and it is past time to practice better care of kinds-as-assemblages (not species one at a time)" (Haraway, 2015, p.162).

Taking Haraway's proposal as an initiation for the exhibition framework, I interpreted it as making kin across human identities in our specific geographical context. Our works would propose a form of neighbourliness that would create interactions across identities. This was also in parallel to another quality that I extracted from the Gezi Park protests, which was their ability to bring together agonistic communities together.

Thus, the title of our exhibition "*Maybe, We Will Benefit from Our Neighbour's Good Fortune"*, an exhibition on collectivity, community and dialogue emerged. The saying 'Maybe, we will benefit from our neighbour's good fortune' (Komşuda pişer, bize de düşer) in Turkish involves a double meaning; first it implies that one is happy for the good fortunes of those around them and secondly one expects their share from the others' good fortunes. I thought that this old saying, referring very much to the changing dynamics of neighbourhoods in big cities could be something

to question within an exhibition framework. “What is our imagined neighbourliness? How do we try to form new kinships and new relations across different segments of the society through our works?” These became the questions for the exhibition.

Figure 28 Our exhibition poster

Photo: Courtesy of Işıl Eğrikavuk

I met members of each artist collective regularly, either in bi-weekly personal or skype meetings and discussed their ideas on the process of the exhibition. I also documented some of these conversations. Our plan was that the three art collectives, namely dadans, HAH and Pelesiyer would produce new works to be exhibited in

the exhibition space. With the other three collectives, we decided to organize time-based events oriented around workshops, meetings and conversations[35].

I would like to add here that my initial inclination was to organize the collectives to realize works in public spaces. However, the political atmosphere we were in was quite different from the time of the protests, and it was extremely risky to do something in public space open to everyone. This led me search for a space, which is also dedicated to dialogue-based and collaborative working models. Through my search, I found Halka (the word halka translates as 'circle' or 'to the public') Art Project[36], a small non-profit art space on the Asian Side of Istanbul, dedicated to works involving the local community. As an independent space, they were not interested in mainstream projects, but rather were keen in collaborating on small-scale, community-oriented works.

[35] Here, I would like to comment on the financing of the exhibition. As I mentioned before, I was part of a collaborative research project funded by Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK and led together by Brighton University, UK and Bilgi University in Istanbul. By bringing my role for the project together with my research, I was able to use my budget under this project for the exhibition. Through this project, I was able to secure an exhibition space, pay each artist collective a fee to realize their works and organize our workshops free for the public.

[36] http://www.halkaartproject.net/aboutus.html Last access: 05.12.2020

Figure 29 Halka Art Project, 2017

Photo: Courtesy of Halka Art Project

The founder of Halka Art Project, İpek Çankaya often worked with artists or projects on issues regarding the needs of the local community and was in touch with the local artists and artisans in the area. The space was located in Kadıköy, in the Asian side of Istanbul, and this was important for another reason. In 2017, the 15th Istanbul Biennial was also about to take place and it was going to happen in spaces in the European side of the city. I thought this geographical contrast in relationship to the biennial's theme 'a good neighbour'[37], and wanted to position the two exhibitions as neighbours, both thematically and geographically.

3.5 Making kins, making neighbours

Having found the framework for the exhibition, I went back to our critical dialogues and asked each of the collectives how they experience and interpret neighbourliness and neighbourly relationships in their daily life. The first response from dadans on their experience of neighbourliness in Istanbul was actually quite critical. "I always saw the neighbour as an ideal structure, but in fact that is not so. When we say

[37] http://15b.iksv.org/agoodneighbour Last access: 05.12.2020

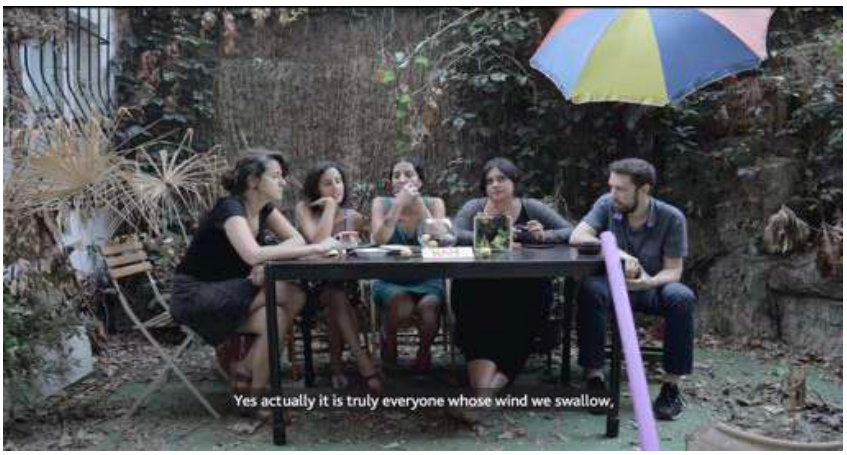
neighbour, there are all sorts of things that emerge from underneath it, there comes out gossip, social pressure, you name it…" (dadans, quote from Dila Yumurtacı, June 2017).

Figure 30 dadans members together.

Source: Video still from my interview with dadans

The second artist collective, HAH, was also critical on how neighbourliness is often interpreted today. "The phenomenon of being neighbours is presently approached from a romantic and somewhat orientalist perspective…Actually it is everyone we have contact with in everyday life, everyone we touch or not, everyone whose wind we swallow" (HAH, quote from Ayça Telgeren, personal communication, June 2017).

Figure 31 HAH members in their studio



Source: Video still from my interview with HAH

With the third artist collective, Pelesiyer, most often we had meetings over the phone or skype since they were based in Ankara. When we started discussing ideas on neighbourliness, they thought of neighbourhood not just as people living physically next to each other but also neighbour geographies. “I don’t perceive the neighbour merely as the person living next door, I mean, I perceive it as the relationship between neighbouring countries” (Pelesiyer, quote from Alper Aydın, personal communication, July 2017).

Figure 32 Pelesiyer members in Ankara. Still from my interview with Pelesiyer.

Source: Video still from my interview with Pelesiyer.

Moving in the light of their responses, I then asked each collective how they could try to initiate new forms of relations or kinships that would challenge the existing, the ideal or romantic approaches towards neighbourliness. Just like the Gezi protests had triggered a new set of relationships across very different communities and identities and brought them together in solidarity, how could we, as artists, challenge the existing relationships in our society and initiate new models through our work? How could art become instrumental in opening up new dialogues or challenge the existing ones? How could we include others in our work?

With the other three collectives, namely with birbuçuk, Artıkişler Collective and Istanbul Permaculture Collective, I also had dialogues. Because these collectives' works were not geared towards producing objects or physical forms, but rather dialogue-based or time-based events, we decided to organize events, workshops or talks oriented around dialogues. For example, with birbuçuk, who organizes talks on issues of art and ecology, we decided to gather a meeting by inviting local food cooperatives and bringing them together with artists working on the topics of ecology.

Figure 33 birbuçuk members. Ayşe Ceren Sarı, Serkan Kaptan and Yasemin Ülgen (from left to right).

Photo: Courtesy of birbuçuk

With Istanbul Permaculture collective (IPK), I first met with their founder, Dilek Yalçın Demiralp and asked her what they would like to do. The İPK was organizing

workshops on issues around permaculture, encouraging people to create better relationships with nature. Together we decided to organize a weekend workshop during the course of the exhibition for free of cost.

As I was doing my meetings in Halka Art Project's space, something unexpected happened. I met a local artist and bread-maker Murat Demirtaş, who was using Halka's open kitchen as his cooking space. Demirtaş, a trained sculptor had started to make and sell organic bread in order to make a living. He was apparently well known in the area not just for his breads, but also how he delivers them, only by foot[38], thus reducing pollution. After our initial dialogues, I asked Demirtaş, whether he would like to give a bread making workshop as part of the exhibition. To my surprise, he said yes and became part of the team.

Figure 34 Murat Demirtaş, baking his bread at Halka Art Project

Photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

And finally, with Artıkişler Collective (leftoverworks collective), who was based in Ankara, we decided to screen their video work 'The Surplus of Istanbul', which follows a story around daily waste that gets produced, collected and circulated in

[38] http://firinimdanekmekler.com/author/muratdemirtas/ Last access: 05.12.2020

Istanbul every day. Focusing on the daily lives of people picking waste and making a living from it, we thought that this work would shift our focus a bit from collective production to collective consumption, and the labor formed around it.

3.6 My role as an 'artistteacher'

During my research process and while building relationships with the collectives, I often reflected on my own roles as an artist, a teacher, a researcher and in this case a curator. Working with collaborative and participatory artistic research, I first built personal relationships with each artist collective and connected to them individually. Through our dialogical process, I discovered that this approach was in line with their motivations in being a collective, they were also connecting on an emotional level before making work together. By connecting with them on an individual emotional level, I was able to make our collaboration an extension of their collectivity.

Figure 35 Işıl Eğrikavuk and two members of Pelesiyer. Thinking over their installation, Halka Art Project, 2017

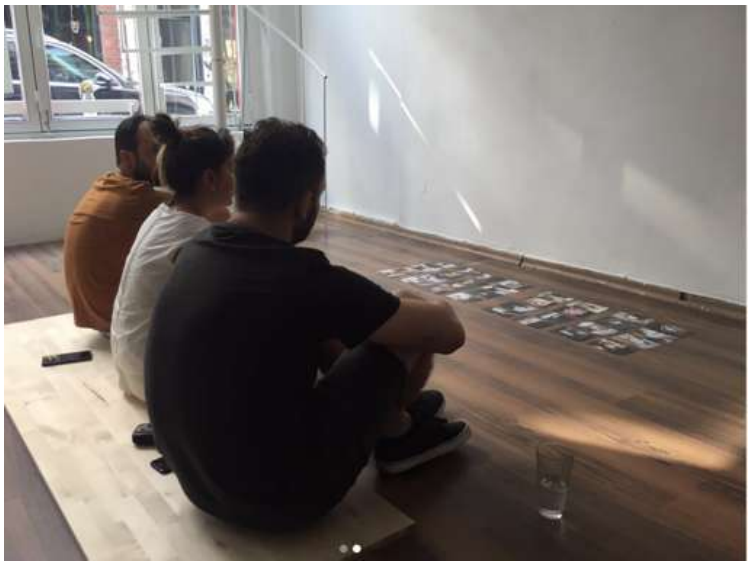


Photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

As I wrote before, I worked with each collective through Freire's notion of critical dialogue, which meant that I asked them critical questions, reflected on their answer and took our dialogue further by building onto their answer through my theoretical

research. This meant that I as I much as I learned from them, I also opened my thinking process to them, shared my theoretical research with them, and also guided my research based on my findings through our dialogues.

This openness in my research and seeing them as collaborators also helped them include me in their working process of creating the works. Thus, instead of imposing our ideas over one another, we opened ourselves, our thoughts, feelings and our working process to one another. As Freire suggested, true dialogue could only occur through "thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them, thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity, thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved" (Freire, 1970, p.92).

I invite the reader to consider the whole exhibition process as our work, and not just the final outcome. Through our dialogical process, I tried opening up both the collectives' and my own fixed positions and ideas through posing questions and reflecting on their answers. From my teaching experience of over ten years, I was already aware of how one's work and their ideas on that work could shift through a productive discussion. This was also the case working with the collectives.

I want to visit Freire's writing once more, because he writes about another significant criteria for a true dialogue. For Freire, dialogue does not exist in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. "If I do not love the world- if I do not love life- if I do not love people- I cannot enter into dialogue" (Freire 1970, p.90). Even though to some people it may sound naive, when I question my deepest motivations in doing a work where I constantly try to build an equal relationship with others in order to transform the world, I find the same motivation Freire describes in my work as well. I will get back to this part once more at the end when I reflect on my overall motivation.

Figure 36 An image of my students putting up our exhibition poster. I was able to engage and employ them in this process and they helped me significantly to prepare the exhibition.

Photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

CHAPTER 4: EXHIBITION AS AN EXTENDED FORM OF DIALOGUE

4.1 Reflecting on the works

The focus of this chapter is to look at each collective and the work they produced for the exhibition. I would like to remind the reader of the three qualities I extracted from community art practices and Gezi Park protests: critical dialogue, agonistic community and performative expression.

In the previous chapter, I wrote on my methodology in working with the collectives and how I used critical dialogue in reaching the findings that shaped this research. Using critical dialogue, we built an exhibition framework that focused on how we could include other people, who are not necessarily makers or audiences of art into our work and create interconnectedness across different identities.

In this chapter, I will explain the works, workshops and round table discussions in the light of these qualities. I will first focus on the three artist collectives, dadans, HAH and Pelesiyer, who produced works that remained in the space for the duration of the exhibition. Then I will write on the time-based events of the exhibition, which were produced by Istanbul Permaculture Collective, Artıkişler Collective and birbuçuk.

Although the exhibition seems to be the final product of our research, I underline that a vital quality that realized this research was our dialogical process. Therefore, it is significant to acknowledge that the works presented in this chapter are not the sole outcomes of our collaborative process, but a part of it.

4.2 Works: dadans

The first collective I will write about is dadans[39] (written in small letters). dadans is a collective of three women; Dila Yumurtacı, Melek Nur Dudu and Merve Uzunosman, who come from a contemporary dance background. They have been working as a collective since 2008 and have already made a significant amount of work together, which have resulted in performance, dance and video.

Figure 37 dadans during their rehearsals for the performance

Source: Video screenshot from my documentation of dadans' rehearsals

Reflecting on our earlier conversations on neighbourliness, dadans wanted to play with an old habit among neighbours in Turkey, where one can listen to their neighbour's house through placing a glass on their wall. "There are always the unspoken rules that operate in the relationship between neighbours, we are turning them over and about a little in our own fictional performance by setting certain rules in the form of a game, so it's like, if you know the rules you can play as well" (dadans, quote from Melek Nur Dudu, personal communication, July 2017)

[39] www.dadans.com Last access: 05.12.2020

Titled “Doll’s House” (Evcilik Oyunu), the performance starts first with the performers’ placing a glass on each-other’s bodies and listen. Each performer in turn then tells a story from the body part, where the glass is placed and also listens to the other. After they take the initiative to speak out, they then start walking among the audience, placing the glass on the audience’s bodies randomly. By doing this, they invite the audience to speak out from their body parts.

Figure 38 dadans, Doll’s House, performance, 2017

Source: Courtesy of dadans

During the performance, dadans’ work brought the audience into small constellations in different areas of the room (as the three performers went into different directions) and created small groups of people, listening to each other. Within these constellations, one could see a participant audience telling a random story, associated to their body. Some of the stories told by the audience included anecdotes such as:

“My back, I had treatment for my back-pain a few years ago. The chiropractor was a big man with big hands, from Malatya (a city in Eastern part Turkey). Every time he was massaging my back, he would tell me stories from his hometown and stop paying attention to my back pain. At some point he massaged my back so hard that my back really really hurt.”

“My arms carry my childhood memories. One day, when I was around 7 years-old, I dreamt that I could fly if I tie balloons to my arms. I bought balloons and tied them to both of my arms. I waited hours to be lifted. In the end I fell asleep.”

Figure 39 dadans, Doll’s House, performance, 2017

Source: Courtesy of dadans

I don’t aim to connect dadans’ performance to performative expressions in the Gezi Park protests directly, however I am interested in its power to take inspiration from what is traditionally seen as a neighbourly custom (listening one’s neighbour through a glass on the wall) and transform it into an open bodily platform for sharing memory with each other. By giving the audience the freedom to choose whether to speak out or to listen, the performers shift the audience’s role from being passive observers to active performers. The audience, can then contribute to this oral archive by adding their stories, or letting others hear them and also hearing others. I argue that this voluntary act builds trust amongst the audience and enables them to speak up, as narrated in these stories.

dadans’ approach of treating the body as a source of memory can also be seen as an attempt to look into how our bodies could collectively create an archive together. In her book *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*

(2011), Rebecca Schneider writes on the antagonistic relationship between performance and its archives. Schneider writes that even though recently there is a shift in favor of a new history that incorporates collective memory and performative practices, "performance practice has been routinely disavowed as historical practice" (Schneider, 2011, p.100). She adds that this "new" history is manifested in the constitution of radically new kinds of archives, pointing to oral archives.

I see dadans' performance as an attempt to collect an oral archive among the audience, an archive of collective diverse body memories, which offers another form of saving the past. As Schneider describes, it constitutes "more profoundly than anything the loss of a different approach to saving that is not invested in identicality" (Schneider, 2011, p.101). This way of involving the body to lead the story-telling constitutes a creative response to our dialogical approach. What happens when we speak through the memory of our bodies? What potentialities can this way of speaking bring to our critical dialogues?

dadans' repeated their performance during the opening and closing of the exhibition (twice each time) and they also left a video of their practice in the exhibition space during the other opening hours.

4.3 Works: HAH

My second collaborator was HAH. Founded by Sevgi Aka (who is no longer a member of the group), Ahu Akgün, Gizem Karakaş, Ayça Telgeren, Defne Tesal and Murat Yıldız, HAH started working collectively since 2017, using different mediums, such as drawing, sculpture, installation or found objects.

Figure 40 HAH members working on their installation

Photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

For their work, HAH wanted to challenge existing and romantic interpretations on neighbourliness, and think of neighbours not necessarily as people we live close to, but as "a kind of cloud that is somewhat beyond the idea of neighbours that are physically defined, but actually a neighbourhood of consciousness" (HAH, quote from Ayça Telgeren, personal communication, June 2017). The scope of this work would be about asking the participants unspoken or not-often-asked questions, getting answers and have them ask questions.

From the beginning, HAH wanted to make a work that would exist in the space and that would be open to growing through the audience's participation. "The work that we thought, is not necessarily about piling up these questions and answers in one place, but rather hang them in the air to make it more fluid" (HAH, quote from Ayça Telgeren, personal communication, June 2017). They set off to create a participatory installation, in which small sized papers and pencils were hanging from the ceiling, each on a piece of a rope, covering almost the entire floor.

On each small paper, one could find either a written question or answer, and thereupon was invited to complete it by either answering the question or writing a

new question for another person. The result would be a 'consciousness cloud', constituted by the audience's written responses.

Figure 41 HAH, Without Encountering. Mixed Media Installation, Halka Art Project, 2017

Source: Courtesy of HAH

The opening night, HAH's installation, titled 'Without encountering' received a lot of participation. Some of the randomly written questions were: "Do you consider the stray dog or cat on the street more of your neighbour than your actual neighbour?" "Is your best friend also your neighbour?" "What would unhappiness be if it was a space?". The final installation became a continuous dialogue process between people, who did not know each-other and only communicated and exchanged ideas through their writing, thus turning the piece literally into a dialogue cloud.

I propose to read HAH's installation 'Without Encountering' as an attempt to create kinship among its participants not just through a physical encounter, but as a set of palimpsest performances. According to scholar Ruth Hellier-Tinoco palimpsests are "inherently trans-temporal, containing traces and remains of previous existences even as they are experienced in a present moment… Palimpsests prove evidence of

multiple journeys, stories and environments through a temporal narrative that is often ambiguous" (Hellier-Tinoco, 2019, p.5). Hellier-Tinoco adds that these qualities of the palimpsest are useful for creating and interpreting performances that are dealing with collective memories.

Figure 42 HAH, Without Encountering. Mixed Media Installation, Halka Art Project, 2017

Source: Courtesy of HAH

In HAH's installation, the palimpsest is created through individual and fragmented memories, experiences and temporalities, thus forming a collective narrative. They do not necessarily stand side by side in the same space and at the same time, but they share as Hellier-Tinoco says "traces and remains of existences", which forms another way of association among them. This is what HAH calls "neighbourhood of consciousness" and what holds the potential of forming unexpected or out of the box dialogues and associations. As HAH says "What it (the work) is trying to get at is actually the questions that have not been talked about, that have not been asked, and the need to produce questions anew to the given answers" (HAH, quote from Ayça Telgeren, personal communication, June 2017).

4.4 Works: Pelesiyer

The third artist collective that I collaborated with was Pelesiyer. Pelesiyer is a group of four people, Ali Şentürk, Sultan Burcu Demir, Alper Aydın and Mert Acar, who met during their art studies in Ankara in 2013. From the beginning of our conversations, they have been interested in food and sharing of food through their work. “We started focusing on the concept of the dining table, we discussed what we can do, should we lay out tables on the floor, or make gigantic tables, how do we get to the gallery, how can we stop that place from being the gallery space, how can we situate ourselves in there…” (Pelesiyer, quote from Sultan Burcu Demir, personal communication, July 2017).

Figure 43 Preparations for Pelesiyer’s Table. Mixed Media, 2017

Courtesy of Pelesiyer

Pelesiyer’s idea was making edible artwork to be consumed during the exhibition, inspired from an old neighbourly custom in Turkey. Accordingly, when one was cooking, if an ingredient was lacking, one used to knock on the neighbour's door and ask for a small ingredient, such as a lemon or a cup of sugar. Taking this custom as a cue, they decided to collect a cup of flour from each of their neighbours’ in Ankara and make a very large bread from this collected flour.

“Take for instance the flour that we will get, they are all different, I mean, someone can give us corn flour or any other type of flour, but the fact that a bread will be made with all those different types of flour, it will be sort of… geographically speaking, maybe the flour we get from a foreign neighbour will perhaps be coming from her/his native country and this time it will start to be a universal bread” (Pelesiyer, quote from Ali Şentürk, personal communication, July, 2017).

After collecting different types of flour from their neighbours, with some of whom they had not met before, Pelesiyer transported all the flour they had to Istanbul. With the help of a bakery we found, we produced a 1.5-meter-long bread. The bread was exhibited and eaten in our opening alongside the photo documentations of the work. Since it was quickly consumed during the opening event, it has been re-produced several times during the exhibition dates.

Pelesiyer’s installation is important due to two reasons: First, it links the exhibition to the shared table meals during the Gezi Park protests. As I wrote in the first chapter, one of the main activities in the park was centered around cooking, eating and sharing food. According to academic Cengiz Haksöz, the protesters wanted to “turn Gezi Park into a commune and perform anti-capitalist way of life by practicing the ideology of solidarity and communality through food” (Haksöz, 2017, p.7). Such communality was not just supported by leftist groups but also anti-capitalist Muslims as well, who performed communal Ramadan dinners during the protests.

Secondly, in Pelesiyer’s work, the specific choice of bread is also quite symbolic. As Haksöz writes “bread is a very powerful and common symbol in political struggles...Ekmek (bread) may imply earning money for living. However, in Turkish bread is a sacred object. Respect for bread through various practices is still common in Turkish culture...” (Haksöz, 2017, p.11).

Figure 44 Pelesiyer's Table, Mixed Media, 2017

Source: Courtesy of Pelesiyer

During our dialogues Pelesiyer underlined that they saw neighbourliness not just between doors but also in between countries. I want to open a parenthesis here and note that their comment brings to mind the recent forced migrations from to Turkey, especially from neighbouring Syria. According to UNHCR 2020 data, "Turkey continues to host the largest number of refugees worldwide, with close to 4.1 million refugees, including 3.7 million Syrians and nearly 400,000 asylum-seekers and refugees of other nationalities" [40].

Such high number of migrations has clearly changed the dynamics of the cities and neighbourly relationships in Turkey. According to a recent report realized by KONDA research in 2019, the number of people who considered lining in the same city with Syrian people has dropped by %32 in the last three years. The same report also showed that the number of people who considered living in the same

[40] https://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2544?y=2020#year Last access: 04.01.2020

neighbourhood with Syrian people as acceptable has dropped from %57 to %31, and also the number of people who found the idea of living in the same apartment and developing a neighbourly relationship with Syrian people as acceptable from %41 to %21 percent" [41].

Pelesiyer's work is not directly about the current refugee situation in Turkey, nor about the above statistics. Yet, in a politically troubled region where the dynamics are changing fast and their effects are clearly visible on the neighbourly relationships, it is difficult to ignore that the making of a such a universal bread is becoming more and more difficult every day. Pelesiyer's work offers an optimist vision to the picture, and even though it may seem too positive to some, I find their effort to actually realize their bread symbolic. I argue that Pelesiyer's work is a key statement for our exhibition not just because it is a continuum of collective making and sharing food during the Gezi Park protests, but also for pointing to current issues on politics of the geography through the simple element of food.

4.5 Workshops and Dialogues

Our exhibition also featured two workshops, one round-table discussion and one screening and conversation, in collaboration with the other three collectives. These were Istanbul Permaculture Collective, Artıkişler Collective and birbuçuk. For the one-month duration of the exhibition, every weekend we held an event, free of charge, which we announced on social media and called for interested participants. On our first weekend, we organized a one-day workshop with Istanbul Permaculture Collective (IPK). The theme of the workshop was on how to cultivate one's own garden at home. Led by IPK's director Dilek Yalçın Demiralp, the workshop hosted twelve participants, who were guided on how to keep a good soil at home, how to choose seeds suitable for their soil and how to grow the right plants

[41] https://tr.euronews.com/2019/07/29/suriyeli-siginmacilara-bakis-3-yilda-buyuk-oranda-olumsuz-yonde-degisti Last accessed on 05.11.2019

and vegetables in their home spaces. I specifically wanted to host this workshop because it was in line with the guerilla gardening acts I wrote about in Chapter 2, which was present in the Gezi Park.

Figure 45 Istanbul Permaculture Collective's workshop

Photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

The next weekend, we had another workshop with artist/bread-maker Murat Demirtaş, who taught people how to start and grow their own yeast at home and make their own sourdough bread. Similar to Pelesiyer's work of making bread, this workshop concentrated on food and bread as a central element and taught the participants how to make it at home. For both workshops, we had 12 participants attend for free.

Figure 46 Murat Demirtaş's sourdough bread-making workshop

Photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

On our third weekend, we held a screening and artist talk with Artıkişler Collective and showed their video, *The Surplus of Istanbul* (originally a video, photography and book project, 2014). In the video, Artıkişler's camera follows the daily lives of people picking waste. "In Istanbul the average waste per person per day is more than 1 kilogram. In this city we produce approximately 20 thousand tons of waste every day. Over time, the waste that can be recycled turns into waste again" (Artıkişler Collective, 2014, p.9).

In Istanbul, hundreds of waste collectors in the streets earn money every day by "collecting recyclables such as paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, aluminum" (Saltan, 2014, p.45). What is significant about Artıkişler Collective's video is that, one sees not just facts and numbers around waste and waste collection, but also follows the story of the waste pickers. By following the story of the waste pickers, the subject of the video expands. It also opens up issues around environmental concerns for the city, and speaks about urban transformation, child labor, migration and politics. The

video shows that these issues are interrelated and concern all neighbourhoods in Istanbul, and therefore should be part of the discussion surrounding neighbourliness.

“Is it possible to think of the city’s relationship to waste as a symbol of ‘development’? If we cannot conceive exactly what we mean by waste, then these twenty thousand tons will just remain a large number. If we cannot figure out, or learn what waste is, the issue is bound to remain an ‘ecological opiate’” (Artıkişler, 2014, p.10).

Figure 47 Still from Surplus of Istanbul, Artık İşler, 2014.

Source: Courtesy of Artıkişler Collective

Our final and core event was organized by birbuçuk (one and a half), who organize round table meetings with invited guests and the public on issues around environment, ecology and sustainability.

By bringing professionals from different fields, the three founders of birbuçuk, Ayşe Ceren Sarı, Serkan Kaptan and Yasemin Ülgen focus on forming dialogues among people from different segments of society without necessarily making an

end product out of it. The dialogues themselves are their work. For our exhibition, we organized a lunch table discussion on the topic of food and its production. This meeting was quite significant in the whole scope of the exhibition, not just because it was our final event, but also the birbuçuk collective themselves took the initiative and invited several local fair-food producers, distributors as well as artists into the round-table discussion.

“One day a friend of mine called and said they are establishing something called DÜRTÜK (acronym for Producers and Consumers in Resistance -Direnen Üretici Tüketici Kolektifi), and asked whether I want to join them. As a researcher, an activist, an artist, I was always trying to do something from outside. I was always curious how food gets produced, distributed, what kind of relationships lie under it? … Istanbul has many vegetable gardens; we buy food from them and make it accessible to people. When we speak among each other how much the price of a rocket should be, or how your division of labor should be, we actually experience the production consumption processes we have always dreamt of” (anonymous participant from the meeting, October 2017).

Birbuçuk’s meeting hosted various food collectives around Turkey, such as Köstebek Kolektifi, Tarlataban, KEÇi and DÜRTÜK, who work on fair food production and distribution. It also brought artists and food collectives together in the same room, through which the participants could draw many parallels within everyone's concerns.

“I realized that the labor struggle in the city actually also exists in the countryside, and in fact its source of this struggle comes from the degradation and fragmentation in the countryside” (anonymous participant from the meeting, October 2017).

I find birbuçuk’s work crucial in that it highlighted the significance of the collective working model as a struggle to protect one’s right to exist and cope with conditions of living in the city, and in our case Istanbul. The meeting brought it to surface that

urban struggle movements, fair food production and also art were interrelated issues, that fair food production and distribution was more than a health consciousness. What brought us together, just like what brought very different heterogeneous groups together in the Gezi Park protests and in the neighbourhood forums afterwards, was our right to exist and move freely in the city.

Figure 48 Ilgın Seymen, A Fair Death, 2015. Original window cleaner bottle, PU foam, chef's knife, epoxy glue, spray paint. Seymen was one of the participant artists in birbuçuk's meeting.

Source: Courtesy of the artist

The coming together of fair-food producers, activists and artists, who are concerned about issues related to ecology show that all partakers have common concerns related to the city. Therefore, birbuçuk's meeting carries a major significance in relationship to the exhibition's theme, as it was able to bring together people from different professions, who share similar concerns, yet do not know one another.

Even though the scope of the meeting's participants was not as diverse as Gezi Park protest's participants, it brought together people across different groups in forming

connections and provided a sense of familiarity, connection and solidarity among the partakers.

"We need to get together without fear. We need to be together, talk, create safe environments and speak from our minds and hearts as much as possible in these environments. We need to stand together with our creativity, with our ideas and courage. We need to take the time and putting our hands in the heart of the issue. Because Istanbul eats us." (anonymous participant from the meeting)

4.6 Power of small-scale

In her article *The Gezi Resistance and its Aftermath* (2015), İrem İnceoğlu writes that the Gezi resistance had a great and irreversible impact on citizens of Turkey, despite the short life-span of the occupation itself (İnceoğlu, 2015). She writes that even though there was no electoral change that followed after, the Gezi Park Protests "changed the political language of the nation, brought a new form of consciousness into the politics of everyday life, and opened people's eyes to the possibilities of resistance" (İnceoğlu, 2015).

One of such possibilities was the neighbourhood forums that started in the Gezi Park and spread all around Turkey. Although both the park and forums were already gone, four years later, I proposed to rejuvenate the idea of a critical dialogue that can create kinships around our theme of neighbourliness. In an environment, in which the right to freely express oneself in public is no more possible, let alone the right to protest, I wanted to hint at the significance of small-scale actions and their impact for a potential transformation. Our exhibition, *Maybe We Will Benefit from Our Neighbour's Good Fortune* is part of this imagination. It is a small-scale act, but it can be exemplary in understanding the significance of dialogue in realizing grander projects.

I will write about the exhibition's impact as well as my reflections on how I would do the exhibition differently if I did it again and now, in the next chapter. I want to

emphasize that, even though it might seem that the exhibition was the core production of our process together, in fact what defined our collaborative and participative process was our dialogues and the openness that came through these dialogues with the artist collectives. Therefore, we decided to include some of these dialogues into the exhibition as video works. I also wanted to include these dialogues because they included my voice as part of the exhibition. This was also crucial in embracing and showing my role within this process as artist, researcher, teacher, mediator and as an agent of change.

Figure 49 Opening Image from the exhibition. Audience members is watching the documentation of interviews.

Photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETING THE IMPACTS OF OUR RESEARCH

5.1 Two and a Half Years Later

Our exhibition *Maybe We Will Benefit from Our Neighbour's Good Fortune* took place between September 14 and October 14, 2017. Very soon after the exhibition, I moved to Germany due to my new academic position[42]. When I finally felt that I had settled in my new job and in city and I shifted my focus back to my PhD.

In the middle of my writing process, I realized that it was important to include the post exhibition process in my writing. I wanted to include the perspectives of the collaborators, as well as learn of the impacts of the exhibitions. Therefore, I wanted to come together once again with all the artist groups in order to discuss with them if and how the exhibition had changed anything in their practice, in their collectivity or in their personal relations. Reaching out to my collaborators once again, I was able to organize a face-to-face meeting with three of the artist collectives on March 7, 2020, just before the Covid-19 pandemic took over the world and transformed our social interactions into digital encounters.

In a closed group meeting, I met face-to-face with the members of dadans, HAH and birbuçuk as well as the team of Halka Art Project. With the other three collectives, we had conversations by email. Our meeting took place once again in Halka Art Project, gathering around a table.

42 I took a new job and started teaching at Berlin University of Arts (UdK) in the Faculty of Communication as of Fall 2017.

Figure 50 Our meeting with the collectives on 07.03.2020 at Halka Art Project

Photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

We started the meeting by taking turns in telling each other what had changed in our personal life since the last two years. Some people said they had moved to another city, and some to another country, some people had gotten married, and some divorced, some people started to engage in other collectives. Some, such as Halka Art Project, were on the edge of a major transformation. Unfortunately, it was their last exhibition, as they were forced to move out due to an increase in rent. They wanted to continue their work through digital means, thinking of new options on how to move on.

I then asked everyone whether the exhibition had an impact on their collective identity or work, or whether their artistic practice had changed as a result of their experience of being part of the exhibition. The first outcome was that three participant collectives (dadans, HAH, birbuçuk) said the exhibition had solidified their identity as a collective.

“We did collective work before this exhibition too. But we felt that the art scene was not so open to performance art collectives. And festivals say no… It was the first time we exhibited our collective work and it solidified our identity. After the

exhibition we became more aware that we are producing as a collective" (Merve Uzunosman, dadans, personal communication, March 2020).

"This exhibition was the first time we were invited to an exhibition and it was the first time we did collective work to be shown. After that we started being invited to other exhibitions. It defined our identity as a collective, what kind of works we do. The work we did afterwards was always relational, participatory, inviting others" (Gizem Karakaş, HAH, personal communication, March 2020).

"Before this exhibition we were only doing closed meetings, but this was the first time our meetings were watched by the public. This was a very important step for our collective" (Serkan Kaptan, birbuçuk, personal communication, March 2020).

This first impact shows that, through our exhibition the collectives felt recognized, acknowledged and thus validated. This solidified their collectivity and working together.

The second finding they expressed was that our exhibition helped them find their working methods and led them to produce works that are inclusive to others even afterwards. Four of the collectives expressed that the works they produced afterwards have been participatory, and this became a part of their working method.

"Our way of working evolved. Before we were in conversation with each other, but then we started a conversation with other people. Since then, we are working on how to have a dialogue with others. I think since the exhibition we are trying to create spaces where people can speak and exchange. Like what we have within the collective, and now we expand it to a public" (Defne Tesal, HAH, personal communication, March 2020).

"During our process of working on our piece for this exhibition, we worked a lot on participation. It became a lot about intimacy for us. Since then, participatory

work has been a big part of our work" (Dila Yumurtacı and Merve Uzunosman, dadans, personal communication, March 2020).

Through the above answers, I gather that after the collectives felt that their collectivity was validated and solidified, and then they started inviting and including other people in their work. In fact, dialogue and participation became a big part their method.

"Our method has changed a lot after the exhibition. During our work for the exhibition, we thought a lot about participation and this later became our method," (Dila Yumurtacı, dadans, personal communication, March 2020).

The third outcome was that four of the participant collectives had collaborated with each other after our exhibition ended, for another exhibition. In fact, birbuçuk had invited HAH, dadans and Artıkişler Collective to be part of their meetings for the next Istanbul Biennale in 2019.

"In 2019, we applied for the Istanbul Biennial and we were accepted to co-create the public program for the biennial. There we held five themed meetings on the topics of water, concrete, petrol, processor, potato. We invited many artists to be in the program with us, including HAH, dadans and Artıkişler Collective from this exhibition. We are still working together" (Serkan Kaptan, birbuçuk).

"There were several participant collectives in this exhibition. But when I look back at the exhibition, it felt like all of us were a big collective, together with the curator and the team. It felt very sincere," (Merve Uzunosman, dadans, personal communication, March 2020).

This continuing collaboration among the collectives shows that our work together was not limited to a single-project, but actually we had built a solid relationship, which led to further collaborations.

I want to note that with the other three collectives, Pelesiyer, Artıkişler and Istanbul Permaculture collective, I had conversations through email. Unfortunately, the Pelesiyer collective has stopped working together since the exhibition and thus I could not receive a collective response from them during follow-up research. (They still continue working as individual artists).

I reached out to Istanbul Permaculture Collective through email and learned that the COVID 19 pandemic had really negatively affected their work. They said they were still working together but transforming their workshops to online formats. They were integrating the gift economy in their work, such as organizing free online workshops or offering pay-what-you can model. “We try to do things that are motivating, binding and things that provide unity. What one of us does affects us all. Let's be aware of this now” (Dilek Yalçın Demiralp, IPK, personal communication, March 2020).

I also spoke with Artıkişler Collective through email. They responded that the discussions and the responses they received from our exhibition motivated them to work more on the related topics. Since then, they continued their research on the city, its waste and its circulation through new works and have made two new related works.

Figure 51 Impacts of the exhibition on collectives

5.2 Interpretations and Criticisms

This thesis started as a curiosity on Gezi Park protests and their creative and performative language. Building on to my previous research in dialogue-based art practices, I took key qualities from the language of Gezi park protests such as critical dialogue, agonistic community and performative expression and applied them into my collaborative work with artist collectives. Bringing my theoretical research together with practice, I set off to do a collaborative-participatory artistic research project, in which I worked with six different art and ecology collectives into building an exhibition. Together, we created an exhibition with newly produced artworks, as well as organizing workshops, screenings and meetings as side events.

Throughout my research process, I have been challenged by criticisms, especially through some of my thesis committee members. “What makes this exhibition different from other collective works? Isn’t this another exhibition where people eat together? What have you changed?” These questions made me once again reflect on the whole process.

I chose to work with participatory and collaborative artistic research as my methodology, because I found it to be the most representative tool to engage others into co-creating. As I wrote in Chapter 3, artistic research, in its core is aimed towards finding ‘a-knowledge’, in which truth happens “in a singular and interpretative way” (Nevannlina, 2004, p. 83). I believe this also happened in our case. Our exhibition took place once and then, and if I were to repeat the same process again, even with the same collectives, the outcome would most likely be different. Yet, I want to ask: what interpretations can I make through this singular a-knowledge I have achieved? What interpretations can I draw from the exhibition other than the images of works produced? As Brad Haseman asks, “But how can presentational forms be understood as research? What makes a dance, a novel, a contemporary performance, the outcome of research?” (Haseman, 2006, p.5).

Once again, I want to underline that practice-based research "does not force upon an audience a single finalized perspective, but instead offers a provocative 'picture' which preserves complexity and multiplicity, retaining some degree of openness and ambiguity" (Douglas & Carless, 2013, p.57). In this chapter, instead of presenting concrete results or conclusions, I will share my findings as interpretations of the whole project.

My first interpretation: the collective model of working within the arts in Turkey not only serves as a platform for shared artistic vision but also meets a major need of emotional solidarity with others, especially in current social and political conditions. I identify this need specifically as expressing oneself, feeling heard, feeling accepted, connected and safe. This need I believe occurs due to several reasons. As some artists have expressed in our interviews: the fast-changing political climate and rising cases of censorship against freedom of thought in Turkey leaves many people lonely, and frustrated (in this case artists). Thus, collectivity provides its members a safe atmosphere where they can meet their emotional needs.

"When we are together, we can create a 'normal' time. Time without tensions, hatred or ugliness of politics. That time period is an independent zone for us. We spoil each other to talk about something nice, it's a huge luxury to talk about beauty, dreams...simple things. The world is burning, we always feel responsible, we feel desperate, while we are together, we make that isolated bubble which we can breathe in" (HAH, personal communication, March 2020).

"Being a collective definitely meets an emotional need. Collectives produce spaces and relationships to breathe, to belong, to survive, to struggle and to hold on to life with the warmth of solidarity within the endless labor exploitation of capitalism, which isolates individuals, impoverishes them in every sense, or within the conditions of living based on property" (Artıkişler Collective, personal communication, April 2020).

My second interpretation: once the collective members connect and meet their own emotional needs, such as expressing themselves freely and being heard, then then can extend this connection to audiences by producing participatory and dialogue-based works and thus involving others. In an environment where freedom of speech is limited, dialogue-based artworks serve as platforms for communicating with others, and they not only serve as platforms for the artists, but also participants to express themselves, to feel heard and thus feel connected. I argue that dialogue-based art practices can therefore become safe zones both for the artists and other people from different segments of society to express themselves and hear one another, and connect with each other.

“Change cannot happen, if we stay in the same group. For us, to overcome that, that's why we do interactive stuff. Catching little instances. In our last performance, we didn't perform as the three of us but we invited people to move the circle with us. We also decided to open up to other cities. Like we went to Adana. It opened our eyes when we did something in Çanakkale for example. There are less events there, so people are really involved. We had a discussion. It was so enriching. Here everyone has prejudices. We want to go to Artvin too” (dadans, personal communication, March 2020).

“For birbuçuk, we haven't been out of our bubble yet but we are inviting people from Anatolia, who are doing local activism to our meetings. For example, Sevinç came from Black Sea region, where they protested against the dams. They have a grassroots organization there” (birbuçuk, personal communication, March 2020).

“I learned here the importance of togetherness. It's a chance. We really can team together and share everything” (Bahar Güneş, Halka Art Project, personal communication, March 2020).

And my third interpretation: In our final meeting, the artist collectives expressed that our research process and the exhibition had solidified their collective identity,

made them feel recognized and encouraged them to produce more participatory works in their future process. I contend that these dialogue-based art holds the potential to connect people and thus transform the society. In their article, *From Anger to Solidarity: The Emotional Echo-chamber of Gezi Park Protests* (2019*)*, the writers argue that the collective performances of the Gezi Park protests connected protesters to one another and strengthened its spirit. Gezi is long gone, but in our current political climate, I argue that dialogue-based artworks have the potential for building interconnectedness among different groups in society.

Finally, I underline that the dialogical approach in my research did not only occur between the collectives and audience through the artwork. In this research, the critical dialogue first started between myself and the collectives, which then through the works attempted to communicate to an audience. Thus, I see my role an instigator of this process. I was glad to hear from the collectives that my openness to them led them to trust me and the project more during our process. This also allowed me to have more trust in my work and its impact.

5.3 How to Continue in Times of Crisis

As I write these sentences, the world is under a pandemic threat known as COVID-19.[43] A week after our meeting in March 2020 in Istanbul, I came back to Berlin, and Turkey shut down its borders to international flights. As cases rose all around the world, people in many countries have been warned not to leave their homes and to keep distance from one-another. In such times of uncertainty, isolation and social distancing, I think it is important to shortly touch on how this period might affect the collectives' works.

When I met the collectives in Istanbul, I asked them what projects they were working on currently. Interestingly, HAH answered that they had moved towards

[43] https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019 Last access: 05.01.2021

social media as they were now living in different cities. They started two projects on Instagram, whereby they invited the participants to share their opinions on their neighbourhood and environment[44]. That was another important find for me that they had continued to work on the themes of neighbourhood and environment. Both dadans and birbuçuk said they were working towards including other people in their collaboration; birbuçuk was inviting local activists from Anatolian cities in their meetings, and dadans was also planning to do performances in cities other than Istanbul, as well as sharing their meetings online. As I wrote in the previous pages, Halka Art Project was also on the verge of becoming a non-space collective. This had also tremendously affected the Istanbul Permaculture collective as they often held their workshops at Halka Art Project's space and now started giving more and more online workshops.

One interpretation I could make from their answers was that almost all participant collectives had either already started or they were on the verge of a digital transformation. This was not a question of my research, however it definitely brought up questions on how to sustain collectivity especially in such precarious times where we are challenged not only by capitalism's hard pressure such as the rental increase but also by a worldly pandemic. Research has already shown us how digital space has already opened up a new era on political solidarity, "social media offers a space for the creation of counter publics to challenge existing power holders, for new social meaning to emerge, and is based on the assumption that digital technologies such as smartphones and social media platforms afford people an opportunity to participate in politics" (McGary et al, 2020: 23). Similarly, it holds the potential to allow more participation in collaborative artistic works, giving voice to different people to be heard. I will not move into that direction as it derives from my research topic. However, I can say that the answers that I got from the collectives, such as HAH's recent Instagram projects, Istanbul Permaculture

[44] Instagram @hahhavuz

Collective's online workshops, Halka Art Project's yet to come online exhibitions, as well as birbuçuk's sharing their meeting online has led me to interpret that we are likely to see more and more artistic collectivities and collaborations in digital platforms, especially in such pandemic times when many people are forced to stay at home. Yet, I am curious to see how such digital collaborations will render the current classifications between online and offline spaces and what potentialities they will hold for new meanings to be created.

5.4 Looking Forward: Guidelines for Future Research

Looking back at the exhibition and my research from a distance in time and space, I evaluated the whole process once more. Did our exhibition succeed in reaching the same diverse and broad audience as in the Gezi Park protests? Were we indeed able to create heterogeneous participatory relationships? In answering this, I would refrain from making bold comments. Throughout this research, what we did was to create small examples, small communities, or singular pieces of knowledge which I interpret as the invisible threads of the protests and their shared feelings of belonging and solidarity. The works in the exhibition have been instrumental in creating these small-scale examples, by opening up the space for others and inviting them to participate. Engaging the audience's bodies, their memories, their writing or their active participation in sharing bread with others, we wanted to recreate moments of solidarity, joy and hope.

I imagine that if I were to repeat the entire process again, I would modify and adapt a few things. I will note these points as guidelines for a potential next research.

- As much as I enjoyed organizing an exhibition in a community-oriented art space, I am curious to search for ways of engaging both the artists and the audience in a dialogue-based practice outside of a single art space. One way of doing this can be including temporary interventions in public spaces, or considering non art spaces as sites of engagement. Given our time and political conditions, I did not want to risk any artist collectives and put them

into a threatening situation, but I think these other options can be very beneficial to any static exhibition framework engaging dialogue.

- I would widen my perspective more towards using the digital space. As we have all experienced during the Covid-19 times, and also what I learned from my final dialogues with the collectives, many artists, art institutions and art archives of today are currently looking for ways of integrating their work into digital spaces. I would also try to search for ways of forming dialogue-based work online without sacrificing the works' quality.

- While working in a collaborative and participatory research methodology, I started questioning the word exhibition and thus searched for alternatives to formulate new terminologies for our work. This also made me reflect on our collective work and its forms of representation. Especially for dialogue-based works such as ours, the name exhibition falls at times short. For a potential next research project, I would search for terminologies on process-based works as well as seeking new formats that would challenge existing exhibition frameworks within artistic presentation.

- I see that the whole process as still ongoing, as my communication with the collectives and their work still continues. Therefore, I will look for ways of presenting this body of research in different forms in the future.

CONCLUSION

This thesis started with the intention to apply certain principles of the Gezi Park protests into artistic context. Building on my previous research on dialogue-based community art practices, I worked with a group of artists and environmentalists in a participatory and collaborative research project, where we together produced works that would instigate dialogue with the participants.

In the beginning of my research, I invited the reader to extract and re-think certain qualities of the protests in light of the issues within community art practices. I list these qualities as critical dialogue, agonistic community and performative expression. Taking these qualities as cues to guide my research, I further sought to imagine whether it would be possible to rejuvenate such qualities within an artistic practice and if so, what it would be.

During my research process with the collectives, I followed a dialogue-based approach, in which I placed more emphasis on developing personal relationships with each collective member instead of focusing on the outcome and thus allowed these dialogues to guide the research process. As I wrote in the previous pages, our collaborative process and our dialogues has brought us much closer than the exhibition itself. I personally favor moments of heart-to-heart connection within these dialogues and I see them as transmitters of trust and openness. Such trust and openness are key for current collaborations, which are still ongoing among the participant collectives, and also for a future solidarity, even in small-scale acts.

My personal relationship with the collectives and our in-depth dialogues has led me to recognize the significance of emotional connection within the members of collectives. Acknowledging this as my key finding, I then worked with each collective to extend this connection to others through their works, and thus building new forms of kinships, and interconnectedness across different identities. By producing dialogue-based artworks, our exhibition sought ways to communicate

and involve others, and allowed the participants to express themselves as much as hearing the others.

Titled as *Maybe We Will Benefit from Our Neighbour's Good Fortune*, the exhibition sought to rejuvenate the collective and creative spirit of Gezi Park Protests through participatory action. Taking participation and dialogue as key elements, the works in the exhibition served as platforms not just for the artists but also for other people where they could be voiced. Through installation, food-based work, performance, workshops and round table discussions, our exhibition searched for ways to communicate and rekindle the principal qualities of the protests and their extension forms, such as the neighbourhood forums. Within a period of one month, the exhibition reached more than 1000 people (Halka Art Project, personal communication, March 2020).

Our collaborative and participatory research did not end with the exhibition. Two and a half years after, I met again with some of the collective members to discuss and assess the impacts of the exhibition. Through this face-to-face meeting, I found out several outcomes of this research: firstly, our work together had solidified their identity as a collective, and secondly, the collectives started inviting and including other people in their work, using dialogue and participation as a major part of their working method. I also found out that four of the collectives later collaborated with each other for a project within the Istanbul Biennial in 2019. These findings made me realize the significance of our research together and the impact it had on the collectives.

My primary conclusion of this research is this: in the current socio-political atmosphere in Turkey, where freedom of speech and the right to public protest is very limited, there is a major need for sharing and hearing one's thoughts and feelings. The collective working model in the arts exemplifies this need. Through this research, I found out that primary purpose of the collective work model is not for a shared artistic vision but it is actually for meeting emotional needs, such as

feeling accepted, feeling safe and included, being heard and understood without fear and judgement. Having met these needs through being in collectives, artists can express themselves through art. In our artistic research, we searched for ways of making art that embodies these qualities and through that extend these safe zones of expression to other people, who are not practitioners of the arts. I argue that, in an atmosphere where there is extremely limited freedom of speech, art, which is made through and for dialogue, holds the potential to connect people with one another, and transform the society by hearing and recognizing one another. Just like the collective performances of Gezi Park protests created a "feeling of belonging and togetherness, by uniting differences, and forming 'we-ness' and solidarity" (Ziya et al., 2019, p.5), I argue that our works can serve as trajectories of the protests and its spirit by creating interconnectedness across diverse groups of people. Once again, I underline that our collaborative and participatory artistic research was a single case, a small-scale project, and the same principles and working methodology can be applied in larger contexts within the arts, as long as the emotional aspects of working are more recognized. Overall, I argue that we need more dialogue-based approaches within the arts, especially at this moment and now. This requires a re-thinking of roles, positions, methodologies of art and art making, and embracing the potential that comes from a dialogue-based approach.

From the beginning, I underlined that a significant motivation for me to start this thesis has been to open academia for broader and more diverse methodologies, and to bring art and research practices together. Through this process-based and practice-led project, I viewed my critical dialogues with the artist collectives as the main guidance of our work and supported them in the light of a theoretical framework. By bringing others as collaborators into this body of work, leading our research through our practice and presenting our artworks as part of the process, I want to contribute to pluralistic methodologies within academia, and open up spaces for different voices. I am aware that academia is not monolithic, and there are various approaches within it. I am speaking rather, about the discipline of

communication and pointing to a need for acknowledging dialogue-based art forms as well as their artistic presentations as part of its study.

I also wrote that the overarching aim for me to write this thesis was to make academia openly speak about emotions and their transformative power, as well as creating safe spaces to practice them. Throughout my research process with the collectives, we were able to create and exemplify this. I am hoping now that my research can become a path to others that want to include practices of care, love and interconnectedness in their work and make academia and communication sciences be inclusive to benefit from the offerings of the heart.

In *All about Love* (2001) bell hooks writes that she spent many years searching for a definition for the word love that is apart from its romantic connotations. Then she came across to a definition in M. Scott Peck's book *The Road Less Traveled* (1978), which defined love as "the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth" (Peck (1978) cited in hooks 2001, p.4). She then continues to quote him, who says that that love is both an intention and an action, and implies choice. "We do not have to love. We choose to love" (Peck cited in hooks, 2001, p.5).

My intention and actions within this thesis are to choose to understand and extend the capacity of love (and by that I do not mean romantic love but a love that brings care, interconnectedness, openness and trust in every action) to connect to myself, connect to others and connect to my work from this place. This, I believe has the potential to nourish us all.

Figure 52 Together with all participant collective members. Image from the opening night.

Photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

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APPENDICES

1- Our exhibition poster in Turkish and in English

Poster design: Eylül Dizdar

A photo I took during the research process, which later became inspiration for our poster.

2- From our booklet, participants

dadans, *Playing House*
Performance, 14 September 19:00, 20:00, 21:00
14 October 19:00

If one is not inside, is she on the outside?
At close encounters, where do boundaries start?
What changes when one becomes two,
two becomes three?
Where did my dad learn to bake like this?
Using the form of a children's game to reinterpret
the habits, rituals and practices of living together
in a fictional living space, the performance examines
through symbols the cultural meanings attributed
to the interactions between individuals
living in proximity in everyday life.

Creative performers: Dila Yumurtacı,
Melek Nur Dadu, Merve Uzunoaman
Sound design: Can Us

About dadans

dadans is a community that strives for
artistic creation, using primarily dance,
cinema and theatre combined with other
different disciplines. For us, the "dada"
of dadans is not related to a movement that
we follow, but the "dadadadaa" sound.
Creating unique pieces that defy definitions,
conventions or rules excites us.

HAH, Without Encountering, Site Specific Installation, 2017, © HAH

HAH, *Without Encountering*
Site-specific installation

Perhaps every day I chance upon you whom I will never be able to encounter. You are my lover, my neighbour, you are the one I almost run into, you pass by my house every night at 6, perhaps you stand next to me in the grocery line. How old are you, what do you eat, do you walk fast, have you ever loved, why are you languid, perhaps I will never know. Every day we step outside our own safe universes. We catch each other's eye, swallow someone's wind, inhale the scent of the one we are taken with, sometimes we bump into each other, sometimes we prefer to go in different directions and end up going nowhere... Once we enter that colossal crowd we touch other universes. Then there comes a time when we need to establish direct contact with the one we do not know. You know how we get lost sometimes, we cannot get comfortable or how we feel lacking. We feel the need for an other. We cannot help but establish connection. Hah then we ask questions to the neighbour, to the one sitting on the next seat, to the bagel vendor, the rag-and-bone man, the local. We engage in a dialogue with the one we do not know oftentimes by asking questions. A distant and limited connection. We set out from universes that are least in touch with one another. We want to render this minimum relationship anonymously visible, to expand this universe. In the universe of "Without Encountering" no one knows anybody; everyone is a stranger, everyone anonymous. We imagined a pool made up of questions and answers and cheated from our loneliness amidst the crowds. The materials are only a piece of paper and a pencil. Now it is your turn. An answer... Ok, what was the question?

About HAH

In January 2017, Sevgi Aka, Ahu Akgün, Gizem Karakaş, Ayça Telgeren, Defne Tesal and Murat Yıldız sat around a table to officialise their casual get-togethers and form an artist collective. They found themselves in a routine where they regularly meet to discuss, listen, share and act side by side through art. They expanded their meetings by inviting fellow artists they encountered.

They had to leave their meeting space in Kalamış as it was going to be demolished during the urban renewal process. In March 2017, they moved to their new place in Öztürk Palas, which again will be demolished at an unknown time in the near future. They decided to turn this new space into a work and exhibition place and named it HAHmekan.

Peleslyer, *Peleslyer's Table*
Site-specific Installation, Mixed Media

Could one object suffice to transform a space?
If the object is the indispensable aspect
of the circle of life, the symbol of culture,
the definition of labour, when it is produced collectively,
it may possess the potential to transform the space.
As the Peleslyer team, up until now,
we shaped our production around the stories of spaces.
Now, we are trying a different approach
and focusing on transforming a space into
a collective sphere through an object.
Peleslyer is making a call for collective production
and consumption!

About Peleslyer

Peleslyer is a contemporary art collective.
Peleslyer detaches its participants from their own artistic
approaches or areas of interest and steers them
toward producing anew, from scratch at a site
of Peleslyer's choice. Peleslyer, in which everybody
engaged in arts can participate, leaves the artists alone
with the space, tells them to forget about their previous
productions and asks them to create a brand new
art work. We call this a sort of catharsis.
Peleslyer provides a new playground for its participants
in the given space. The works produced in this space are
recorded through photographs or video and then
they are shown on the website for two months.
After two months, the exhibition is closed and archived
until a new action is realised.

Peleslyer team: Ali Şentürk, Alper Aydın, Mert Acar,
Sultan Burcu Demir.

Istanbul Permaculture Collective
Sourdough Bread Making Workshop,
16 October 11:00 - 14:00

Why do we make bread? Because we care for ourselves and our environment. Because we need to stop. Because we need to stop and listen to the earth, the air, the water and our body. We want everything to happen very fast. Transportation, communication, eating, drinking... everything... While all these become faster, we wonder what we are missing or perhaps losing in a way that we will never remember. Then STOP and LISTEN, we said first of all. It felt good to listen. Little did we know that everything in this universe was alive and they each had a language. Keeping quiet and listening gave one peace. And sometimes caused disquiet...
At those moments of disquiet, as we were listening and thinking about what we can do to heal and be healed, with its delicious smell and heartening image the sourdough greeted us with a huge hello. After that day our home, our body enlivened. Our healing alone was no longer enough; we wanted all of us to heal.
Our meeting with the sourdough liberated us albeit only on the subject of making bread. To eat bread we do not need a bakery. A little clean flour produced from local seeds and water made us independent.
Long live FREEDOM!

About the Workshop Leader Murat Demirtaş

Born in 1974 in Istanbul, Murat Demirtaş graduated from Mimar Sinan University of Fine Arts Department of Sculpture in 2002. He then continued making sculptures. He got married in 2005. He worked in teams that make special decors for the cinema, commercials and theatres. In 2010, he said if one is to do anything it should be in the food sector and opened a cafeteria. The same year his son Eren was born. They focused on the issue of food safety, the importance of which they better comprehend nowadays. In 2013, he closed down his shop which was to be demolished due to urban transformation and his "house-husband" period began. It became his fulltime job to take care of their two-and-a-half-year-old son Eren and organize his social activities. In November 2014, he began to share his first sourdough breads with his friends and family. These breads funded Eren's education. In September 2015, his son Ozan was born. Now he had to make more bread. In December 2015, he was invited by Buğday Association for Supporting Ecological Living to the "Beautiful People Who Make Good Things" conference as one of the keynote speakers. Following his speech, when he went home he saw himself on prime-time news. Ever since that day he has been continuing to talk, explain what he knows, share his breads, learn and play with his children.

artıkişler, *Surplus of Istanbul*
Video Screening, 7 October 16:00 - 19:00

In Istanbul, the daily average waste per person exceeds one kilogram. People living in this city produce approximately 20 thousand tons of waste every day. In an infinite loop, while processed goods transform into raw material, raw material turns into processed goods, and willingly or not, city dwellers leave their trace in this city through their waste. Surplus of Istanbul follows the waste disposed/left on the streets on camera and focuses on the daily lives of waste pickers and the urban spaces where they work. Videograms trace the ways in which waste pickers in two different city centres of Istanbul, Beyoğlu and Ümraniye, are appended to Istanbul's rapidly changing urban space. In the meantime, the project also forms an alignment of memory through videos produced before 2014. Camera as part of body sees, captures and renders visible the effects of diverse but interrelated issues such as urban transformation, work safety, child labour, ethnic identity, migration and homeland, soccer and local elections on the lives of waste pickers; it looks at many different places in the city through the eyes of these people. It creates a visual memory at the centre of shared issues where environmental waste, labour conditions and immigrant identities intersect.

About artıkişler

artıkişler [leftoverworks] is a video collective that strives to create alternative, collective production and distribution spaces in the field of contemporary visual culture and arts. The collective follows the principles of collaborative work, exhibition and screening with other similarly oriented groups, and creates contemporary and thematic works that question different breaking points of recent history and social life in Turkey such as urban transformation, gentrification, forced migration, refugees, labour in urban space, archiving and collective social memory.

birbuçuk members, (from left to right) Ayşe Ceren Sarı, Serkan Kaptan and Yasemin Ülgen, 2017 (cut-out in right), Photo: birbuçuk

birbuçuk, *Common Ground: FOOD*
Meeting, 14 October 14:00 - 18:00

birbuçuk (one-and-a-half) is organizing a meeting titled "Common Ground: FOOD" in scope of *An exhibition on Collectivity: Maybe, We Will Benefit from Our Neighbour's Good Fortune* bringing together individuals and groups who are concerned with or collectively producing around the idea of food collectives.
The meeting focuses on alternative practices of production and consumption shaped around food and the emerging needs in this field. Groups that ponder and act on food processes and artists who tackle collective production in their works will come together for the meeting. Following brief presentations in which participants will share their experiences, they will discuss possibilities of joint action. .

About birbuçuk

birbuçuk (one-and-a-half) was co-founded by climate change and energy economist and dancer Ayşe Ceren Sarı, systems and environmental scientist and artist Serkan Kaptan and curator Yasemin Ülgen. birbuçuk (one-and-a-half) aims to reinterpret and discuss the information, knowledge and propositions which emerge directly out of societal struggles and studies in the field of ecology through the creative media such as visual arts, performative arts and design.

Booklet design: Eylül Dizdar

3- Selected images from the exhibition opening

Halka Art Project. Courtesy of Halka Art Project.

dadans, Doll’s House, performance, 2017. Courtesy of dadans

Pelesiyer, Pelesiyer’s Table, Mixed Media, Halka Art Project, 2017. Courtesy of Pelesiyer.

An audience member watching the video documentations of our process.

We distributed rice and beans in the opening to the audience. Image from the opening.

Photo: Işıl Eğrikavuk

With my students who were also collaborators during the whole process.

4- Selected press coverage

FRIEZE.COM

Critic's Guide: Istanbul

With the opening of the 15th Istanbul Biennial this week, a guide to the best exhibitions around town

'Maybe, We Will Benefit from Our Neighbour's Good Fortune'
Halka Art Project
14 September – 14 October 2017

[illegible]

https://frieze.com/article/critics-guide-istanbul-0

3 art events in Istanbul not to miss in September 2017

Art Radar
20.09.2017
UDV: 1,602

As the 15th Istanbul Biennial opens this autumn, the city comes alive with collateral art events.

The 15th Istanbul Biennial launched on 16 September 2017. *Art Radar* highlights three not-to-miss events taking place across the city during the biennial's opening month.

2. "Maybe, We Will Benefit from Our Neighbour's Good Fortune" – halka art project

14 September – 14 October 2017

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

http://artradarjournal.com/2017/09/20/3-art-events-in-istanbul-not-to-miss-in-september-2017/

Yayın Adı : Gazete Kadıköy
Referans No : 6927913
Dağıtım alanı : Yerel
Yayın Periyot : Haftalık
Yayın Tipi : Gazete
Yayın Tarihi : 18.09.2017
Sayfa : 6
Tiraj : 40000
Reklam E.(k) : 135,53
AJANS PRESS

"Komşuda pişer bize de düşer

"Komşuda Pişer Bize De Düşer" sanatçı kolektifleri sergisi, 14 Eylül – 14 Ekim tarihleri arasında halka sanat projesi'nde

Moda'nın alternatif sanat galerilerinden halka sanat, yine ilginç bir çalışmaya ev sahipliği yapıyor. Işıl Eğrikavuk küratörlüğünde ve Jozef E. Amado koordinatörlüğünde gerçekleşecek "Komşuda Pişer Bize De Düşer" sergisinde, sanatçı kolektifleri dadaus, HAH ve Pelesüyer, bu sergi için üretikleri yeni işlerini sergileyecek. Aynı zamanda, video kolektifi artıkişler; sanat ve ekolojiyi bir araya getiren birbuçuk ve İstanbul Permakültür Kolektifi, sergi kapsamında paralel etkinlikler düzenleyecek.

Birleşik Krallık Sanat ve Beşeri Bilimler Araştırma Konseyi'nin (Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK) verdiği bursla fonu sağlanan sergi, Brighton Üniversitesi ve Bilgi Üniversitesi arasında düzenlenen, ortak bir akademik çalışma kapsamında gerçekleştiriliyor. Protesto estetikleri konulu çalışma, sanatsal üretim ve politik protesto hareketlerinin kesişim noktalarını araştırıyor. Bu doğrultuda sergi, ortak üretim, dayanışma, pişirme, yeşertme ve dolayısıyla komşuluk fikirleri, sessiz görünmeler de protesto biçimleri olarak görülebilir mi sorusunu soruyor.

Kolektif üretime odaklanan sergi, sanatsal anlamda bireyselliği bırakıp ortak bir isim altında üretmeye, ekolojik anlamda birlikte yeşertmeye ve gastronomik anlamda birlikte yemek yapma ve tüketmeye yer veriyor. Bu kapsamda sanat kolektiflerinin üreteceği işlere, atölye çalışmaları, video gösterimi ve söyleşilerin dâhil olduğu etkinlik programı eşlik edecek. Ayrıca, dadaus kolektifi, 14 Eylül Perşembe akşamı gerçekleşecek açılışa özel bir performans sunacak.

"Komşuda Pişer, Bize de Düşer" sözü iki anlamlı; biriincisi etrafımızdaki insanların iyi hallerinin ve kazanımlarının bizim için de geçerli olması, diğeri ise bu iyi halden faydalanma, fırsat çıkarma haline işaret ediyor. Geleneksel anlamda dayanışma ve birbirini gözetmeyi barındıran komşuluk kavramını, dayanışma ve ortaklığın dinamiklerini sorgulayan sergi 14 Ekim tarihine kadar Kadıköy, Moda'da yer alan halka sanat projesi'nde görülebilir.

Sergi süresinde düzenlenecek tüm etkinlik ve atölye çalışmaları ücretsiz olarak halka sanat projesi'nde gerçekleşecek. Katılım için rezervasyon gerekiyor. Etkinlik detayları ve rezervasyon için halka sanat projesi ile iletişime geçebilirsiniz:

0216 550 29 90 / 0535 781 25 91 /
directors@halkaartproject.net
www.halkaartproject.net

Sergiye paralel düzenlenecek etkinlikler:

- **14 Eylül Perşembe @ 19.00**
"Evcilik" Performans | dadaus Kolektifi
- **16 Eylül Cumartesi**
Murat Demirtaş'la Ekmek Mayalama Atölyesi | İstanbul Permakültür Kolektifi
- **23 Eylül Cumartesi**
Dilek Yalçın Demiralp ile Evde Bahçecilik Atölyesi | İstanbul Permakültür Kolektifi
- **7 Ekim Cumartesi**
"İstanbul'un Artığı" Video Gösterimi ve Konuşma | artıkişler Kolektifi
- **14 Ekim Cumartesi**
"Ortak Zemin: GIDA" Başlıklı Toplantı | birbuçuk Kolektifi

Yayın Adı : İstanbul Ad Novel Otomotiv
Referans No : 49883209
Dağıtım alanı : Yerel
Yayın Periyodi : Günlük
Yayın Tipi : Süreli
Yayın Tarihi : 01.09.2017
Sayfa : 16
Tiraj : 10000
Reklam Ü.(S) : 577.00

Komşu komşunun külüne muhtaç (mı?)

İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi ve Akademi arasındaki iş birliğiyle 14 Eylül – 15 Ekim tarihleri arasında Hâlâ Sanat Projesi'nde gerçekleştirecek "Komşuda Piyaz, Bize de Düğün" isimli etkinlikleri hakkında bilgi alacağımız bir görüşmenin gerçekleştirileceği gün, Akademi İstanbul'da sabah saatlerinde buluştuk.

Sanat Direktörü Ahmet Ali Kaplan (sağda) ile...

Sergiye dair

Ayşe Kalkavan

Sergiyle ilgili, Ahmet Ali Kaplan'ın da belirttiği gibi, bu etkinliğin ilk kez gerçekleştirilmesi nedeniyle bu konuda bir referans olmadığından, bu yüzden de bir kaygı ve belirsizlik içerisinde olduklarını söyleyebiliriz. Ancak, bu durum, sanatçıların yaratıcılığını ve sanatsal üretimlerini olumsuz yönde etkilemiyor. Aksine, sanatçılar, bu belirsizliğin kendilerine sunduğu özgürlük alanını, yaratıcılıklarını ortaya koymak için kullanıyorlar. Bu durum, sergiyi ziyaret edecek olan izleyiciler için de oldukça heyecan verici bir durum olacaktır.

ZERO

KOMŞUDA PİŞER BİZE DE DÜŞER

ZERO İstanbul
22.09.2017
UDV: 1,239

Şehirdeki nadir bağımsız inisiyatiflerinden Halka Sanat Projesi, ismi itibariyle İstanbul Bienali'nin 'iyi bir komşu' başlığına göz kırpan bir sergiye ev sahipliği yapacak. 'Komşuda Pişer Bize de Düşer', kolektif üretime odaklanan, dolayısıyla inisiyatifin ruhunu da yansıtan bir sergi. Son zamanlarda sayıca artan sanatçı kolektiflerinden dadans, HAH ve Pelesiyer'in yeni çalışmalarının yer aldığı serginin küratörü Işıl Eğrikavuk, koordinatörü ise Jozef E. Amado. Birlikte üretmeye ve dayanışma kavramına işaret eden sergi kapsamında video kolektifi artıkişler, sanat ve ekolojiyi bütünleştiren birbuçuk ve İstanbul Permakültür Kolektifi paralel etkinlikler düzenleyecek. Bunlar arasında ekmek mayalama atölyesi de var, bahçecilik eğitimi de. Hep beraber üretmeye, yeşertmeye çağıran bir sergi.

Yayın Adı : İstanbul Art News
Referans No : [illegible]
Dağıtım alanı : Yerel
Yayın Periyodu : Aylık
Yayın Tipi : Gazete
Yayın Tarihi : 01.10.2017
Sayfa : 6
Tiraj : [illegible]
Reklam £(R) : [illegible]

Kolektif üretim

dadans, "Evcilik", performans, 2017 Fotoğraf: Çağlar Tahiroğlu

ISTANBULARTNEWS

Halka Sanat Projesi, 14 Ekim'e kadar Işıl Eğrikavuk küratörlüğünde ve Jozef E. Amado koordinatörlüğünde gerçekleşen "Komşuda Pişer Bize De Düşer" başlıklı sergiye ev sahipliği yapıyor. Sergide, sanatçı kolektifleri dadans, HAH ve Pelesiyer, bu sergi için ürettikleri yeni işlerini sergiliyor. Aynı zamanda, video kolektifi artıkişler; sanat ve ekolojiyi bir araya getiren birbuçuk ve İstanbul Permakültür Kolektifi'nin katılımıyla, sergi kapsamında paralel etkinlikler düzenleniyor.

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Halka Sanat'ta ayrıca 18 Ekim'de Lale Altunel'in kişisel sergisi "Buluntu Benlik" açılacak. Sergi duvara sıçrayıp kuruyan bir parça betonun edindiği rastlantısal formu temel alıp içsel bir araştırmaya yöneliş sonucunda ortaya çıkıyor. "Buluntu Benlik"te sanatçının desenleri ve ikonalarının yanı sıra lateks, beton ve demir gibi malzemelerle oluşturduğu üç boyutlu çalışmalarını içeriyor. Sergi 1 Kasım'a kadar sürecek.

Yayın Adı	: Daily Sabah	**Yayın Tarihi**	: 14.09.2017
Referans No	: 69895985	**Sayfa**	: 7
Dağıtım alanı	: Ulusal	**Tiraj**	: 7197
Yayın Periyot	: Günlük	**Reklam E.($)**	: 620,00
Yayın Tipi	: Gazete		

AJANS PRESS

Halka Art Project to open exhibit on collectivity

[illegible]

ART HIGHLIGHTS

There's more on **www.theguideistanbul.com** For an up-to-date list of music and art events, festivals, and performances go to our website and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

HOMAGE TO MASTERS OF SCULPTURE

UNTIL OCT 28

Elgiz Museum

The 9th edition of the Elgiz Museum Terrace Exhibitions, entitled "Homage to Masters of Sculpture," is open until October 28. Sculptures by 14 Turkish artists are presented on the museum's terrace overlooking Istanbul's district of Maslak.

PAST MEETS PRESENT

SEPT 7 - OCT 13

Anna Laudel Contemporary

Turkish and international artists will present artwork inspired by historians, scientists, and archaeologists to explore the meaning of taking a historical journey through contemporary art practices. A curatorial tour, artist talk, and a performance installation by TORK Dance Art will also be presented within the scope of the program.

AI WEIWEI

FROM SEPT 12

Sakıp Sabancı Museum

Ai Weiwei's first exhibition in Turkey presents a wide selection of the internationally renowned Chinese artist's works, including several new pieces. The focal point of this exhibition will be on the artist's study of porcelain, a material he has worked with for many years.

CANAN: BEHIND MOUNT QAF

SEPT 12 - DEC 24

Arter

Featuring new and existing works produced since the late 1990s until today, this exhibition will provide an overview of the artist's wide array of practices and media. CANAN's works often involve the use of her own body to portray the ways the personal meets the political and the ways in which suppressed individuals can adopt new forms of expression.

MAYBE, WE WILL BENEFIT FROM OUR NEIGHBOR'S GOOD FORTUNE

SEPT 14 - OCT 14

halka art project

As a collaborative project between universities and art collectives from Turkey and the UK, this exhibition attempts to answer the question of whether art can be considered an alternative means of protest. The artists investigate how the processes of cooking, eating, cultivating, and co-existing, which form the idea of a neighborhood, can generate alternative means of protest through solidarity.

DIANA THATER: A RUNAWAY WORLD

SEPT 16 - FEB 18

Borusan Contemporary

This multilayered exhibition includes the artist's recent works exploring the current plight of animals living in imminent danger of extinction. The works, which will be staged in a self-designed architectural environment with free-standing screen structures, will give the viewer a glimpse into the fragility of our world and our place in its condition.

FOTOISTANBUL

SEPT 22 - OCT 30

Various locations

The fourth edition of Fotoistanbul will present a large variety of photographs in indoor and outdoor locations to reach Istanbulites in unexpected places. Venue locations range from Ortaköy and Beşiktaş squares to abandoned orphanages and mosques.

5- Video documentation of my interviews with the participants

dadans
https://vimeo.com/239780594

HAH
https://vimeo.com/239780752

Pelesiyer
https://vimeo.com/239780914

Curatorial
https://vimeo.com/239780284