

COMMERCIAL VALUE IN ART MARKET AND PRACTICES OF
COLLECTING CONTEMPORARY ART IN TURKEY

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**Commercial Value in Art Market and Practices of Collecting Contemporary Art
in Turkey**

**Sanat Piyasasında Ticari Değer Kurgusu ve Türkiye’de Güncel Sanat
Koleksiyonculuğu**

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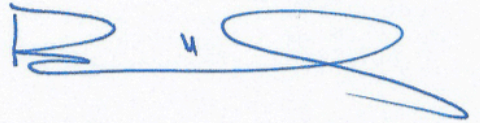
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

ABSTRACT

Commercial Value in Art Market and Practices of Collecting Contemporary Art in Turkey

Focusing on consumption patterns and tendencies in collecting art both on individual and institutional level, this thesis attempts to analyze the characteristics of collecting contemporary art in Turkey. It provides a frame to understand commercial value and price mechanisms along with unique cultural and social dynamics of local art market structuring these practices.

Key Words: Contemporary art, Value in art, Art collection, Consumption, Art market, Collecting art in Turkey

ÖZET

Sanat Piyasasında Ticari Değer Kurgusu ve Türkiye’de Güncel Sanat Koleksiyonculuğu

Bu tez, Türkiye’de güncel sanat yapıtı koleksiyonu oluşturma girişimlerinin karakteristik özelliklerini, motivasyonlarını ve yönelimlerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Sanat piyasasındaki ticari değer ve fiyat kurgularının yanı sıra, Türkiye’ye özgü kültürel ve sosyal dinamiklerden beslenen güncel sanat koleksiyonculuğu olgusunu bireysel ve kurumsal tüketim pratikleri çerçevesinde incelemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Güncel sanat, Sanatta değer, Sanat koleksiyonu, Tüketim, Sanat piyasası, Türkiye’de sanat koleksiyonculuğu

To my beloved Gökçe without whom it was almost impossible for me to complete this work.

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding how commercial value is constructed in art market is essential for analyzing practices of collecting art. Therefore, in the first chapter, the agents of commercial value are examined. I start with the discussion of the updated nature of the work of art and its relation to commercial value. I analyze the ways that the work of art gets into circulation in a market featuring same characteristics with luxury goods market. I examine the reproducibility with respect to the system of edition, which is an agent of commercial value, and has an impact on the nature of the work of art. In contemporary arts production, the organization of every stage is acquired by the monopolized dynamics of the art market, so I question the drives of the artists to conduct far reaching economic operations, and the effects of these operations on commercial value. Commercial value materializes in, together with, and by means of exhibition space. Therefore, I examine how exhibition space functions in order to reproduce guard and display the commercial value. Moreover, observing the quality of artist's labor within the context of creation of 'idea', which is not a single-layered artistic vision constructing the work of art, but a multi layered concept redefining artist's labor, seems to be vital in tackling with the construction of commercial value. Lastly, I put forward the evaluation criteria, which define the price of a singular work of art. I believe understanding the construction of commercial value in contemporary art might help to unveil the mystification laid over the unreasonable prices together with the motivations of purchases to collect contemporary art.

Second chapter examines the practices of collecting contemporary art both in individual and institutional level, in relation to the market conditions of Turkey.

Thorstein Veblen's notion of *conspicuous consumption* is examined as a constant affair shaping art purchases, it is applied in analyzing the characteristics of collecting contemporary art in Turkey. I have been discussing the practices of collecting art in context of conspicuous consumption signifying the desire for asserting wealth and power, demonstrating domineering economic status to others for expanding the reputation and social prestige. I analyze how temporal trends and motivation sources are produced by the actors, units of art industry to serve for the instantaneous demands of collecting after the 90's. I try to define how practices of collecting art is transformed in Turkey and how new practices are set within today's event-driven art economy. Both, worldwide and in Turkey, the era between 1990 and 2015 marks the wide scale consumption practices of corporations, I demonstrate the reasons of this change. Why do corporations get involved in art through funding art productions, events, art institutions and museums? Philanthropist attempts of the corporations are to be analyzed as institutionalized forms of conspicuous consumption. The drives and motives of corporations to invest in art are laid in general. After revealing the characteristics, motives and focus of practices of collecting contemporary art, I overview the current features of contemporary art collections from Turkey.

This study is mainly conducted through observations in the field. It is including the observation of events; (such as sale cases); involvement in a variety of operational activities; (artist liaison, event planning, exhibition production, budgeting, publishing, marketing, etc.); field notes, formal and informal conversations to develop an understanding of the phenomenon under study. In addition to that a variety of sources have been consulted in writing this thesis in order to construct a theoretical background for the thesis' problematic. These include relevant literature about contemporary art, economy, and theory of business and social theory. Artist,

art dealers, art critics and art collectors' writings and interviews have been incorporated.

CHAPTER I

CONSTRUCTION OF COMMERCIAL VALUE IN ART MARKET

1.1 Is the work of art the same old commodity?

Whenever the words such as economy, market or sale are uttered in conjunction to art, it is presumed or rather accepted that any singular outcome of artistic production related to these activities is basically a commodity. On the other hand, state of affairs, which transform a work of art into a commodity, drastically changed after the 90's. To comprehend the construction of commercial value within the context of current agencies shaping the art market as well as freshly emerging actors of art industry with all their intermingling contours, I believe it would be helpful to start with examining the updated *nature*¹ of the work of art.

Nowadays, the production and the circulation (display and sale) of the work of art are not separately standing stages independent from each other. There are some factors generating the interdependence of these two stages. Firstly, the work of art is re-organized over and over again without the initiation of its creator due to the progress experienced in technology. The loss of authority and the authorship introduce a new aperture, which is a given condition for the artist to delocalize and widen his/her skills for trying to find his/her path in the middle of this loss. Finding a way to be included in the control of the stages of production and the circulation,

¹ I used the word *nature* corresponding to Walter Benjamin's term *aura*; "an appearance of genuine or supernatural force, a given charm regarding the work of art, arising from its being uniquely presented in time and space, which can be gained, lost or transformed by the contribution of masses." Benjamin, W. (2008). *The Work of Art at the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (J.A. Underwood, Trans.). London, United Kingdom: Penguin. (Original work published 1936). I consider the nature of the work of art is a latent agent of commercial value and serving for economic operations of the leading actors in art market to construct commercial value.

which were already handed over, requires completely different skills and proficiency. To advance his/her reputation and career in art, the artist specializes in business management. Secondly, art practice is relatively broken away from struggling with the aesthetic motives of state power and the expectations of dominant ideology. There is a distance between the state power and the arts production at the moment, but the same distance is willingly covered by private capital in order to interfere in the stages of both the production and the circulation of the work of art. Besides the fact that the leading actors and power elites of art industry have an impact on the work of art's circulation, they are also eligible to orient the production through the designation of the quantity of the work. I will discuss how contemporary art's condition of reproducibility is affected by the guidance of the actors of the art market. Thirdly, I will analyze in what ways the work of art gets into circulation in a market featuring same characteristics with luxury goods market and what its relation is with the work of art's nature. While the production and the circulation is becoming an inseparable whole, these three reshapes the nature of the work of art.

1.1.1 Artist as a business guru

There are no certain qualifications that make someone a *business guru*. The term refers to a professional who has influential and controversial ideas, tools, skills and consulting knowledge to transform the demand driven condition to build a higher quality business. Many global patrons have their own favorite guru and some of them are already business gurus. For instance, an American management consultant, Peter Drucker's ideas has had an impact on business management since the second half of the 20th Century. He coined and developed the concepts such as "do what you do best and outsource the rest." He argued that all institutions of private sector have a

responsibility to the whole of society for the common good. Drucker's ideas have given way to the operations of funding and sponsorship as well as the philanthropist initiations, which are also the main veins of contemporary arts production and art market. As is known it is an obligation for an artist, like everyone who transport, display and sell products, to build up a business to be included in the formal economy for paying taxes. What I am trying to point out here is the artist's over specialization in acquired business skills, ensuring public visibility through marketing activities and conducting far reaching economic operations. As an example, Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson turned his studio into a research facility employing almost one hundred specialists working on the production of his grand public space installations and architectural interventions concentrating on the themes of nature, science and sustainability. His latest project titled *Ice Watch* could give an overview to interpret the artist's body of work and evaluate the certain qualifications of his working approach in order to identify him as a business guru. The artist brought twelve massive melting icebergs weighing 80 tones from a fjord outside of Greenland and installed them in the center of Paris to confront climate change while the COP21 (Paris France Sustainable Innovation Forum, 2015) was going on. It is stated that the project aims to encourage public action against climate change.² Moreover, carbon footprint of the project is calculated by the co-operation of the artist and project partners as 30 tones CO₂e. The project is presenting a detailed report³ of the research conducted to calculate the carbon footprint of the project *Ice Watch* itself. However, some main items and activities causing carbon

² Ice watch is a website for the artwork *Ice Watch* by Olafur Eliasson and Minik Rosing <http://icewatchparis.com/> (date of access: 18 October 2015)

³ Julie's Bicycle. (2015). *The Carbon Footprint of Ice Watch Exhibited at the UN Climate Change Summit (COP21)*. Retrieved from http://olafureliasson.net.s3.amazonaws.com/subpages/icewatchparis/press/Ice_Watch_Carbon_Footprint.pdf (date of access: 18 October 2015)

footprint related to the whole process of the Ice Watch exhibition are not included in the report such as; the usage of cellphones and cameras to record the display of the icebergs or travel and transportation activities of the exhibition's visitors. As a result, while the artist is reporting his project's carbon footprint to criticize global decision maker's approach on climate change, his project is producing more uncalculated carbon footprint because of hundred of thousands visitors. Through the realization of this public space installation, the artist is boosting his public visibility and reputation to secure the continuation of his wide scale productions since they all need to be funded or sponsored. The artists such as Olafur Elisson, Takashi Murakami or Damien Hirst are notable examples of brands within the art marketplace. Multimillion-dollar brand names such as Damien Hirst already have value assertions attached to their names by virtue of their reputations and their careers.⁴

Regarding the work of art, the organization of every stage becomes acquired by the monopolized dynamics of the art market. Accordingly, the work of art is getting compatible with the conditions and tendencies of the art market. The artist adapts his/her position to respond to the demand driven condition by developing business skills for the sustainability of his/her own business-production. According to Walter Benjamin, the loss of aura as the loss of singular authority seems to have both positive and negative effects. Likewise I am not attacking on the phenomenon of 'the wealthiest artists of contemporary art', I rather take some facts for trying to point out what could be the motives of living contemporary artists to establish a connection

⁴ Zimmerman, D. (2012). Art as an Autonomous Commodity within the Global Market. *art&education*. Retrieved from <http://www.artandeducation.net/paper/art-as-an-autonomous-commodity-within-the-global-market/> (date of access: 20 October 2015)

between the artistic production and proficiency in business through far reaching economic operations.

What will be the quantity of a single artwork to reproduce? How the meaning embedded in the work will be interpreted? How would it be displayed or circulated and for how long? Who would be the owner of the work? Where will it be hung, placed or stored after sale? Basically, questions and concerns of the artist are many due to the complexity of the art market. Jean Baudrillard discusses that what keeps the power elites' competition fresh is not an urge to claim the means of production but to control the production of meaning.⁵ Galleries, art dealers, curators, museums, art media, viewers and collectors are all now content creators and become authority for monitoring the content (meaning) at the same time. The artistic practice is trying to find a path in the middle of loss with open-ended questions and encircled by the demands of the public in any case. Since the whole system is constructed on being in front of the public's eye, artist is visible everywhere today, always appearing next to his/her work on TVs, papers, books, billboards, in shopping malls, on magazines, websites, blogs, twitter, instagram, facebook, and so on. Wide-scale public visibility is apparently leading the arts production to feed the massive demand. This can be the reason of the artist's specialization on customizing mass produced sub-products, such as ornaments, DVDs, small sized replicas of the artist's objects, sculptures, drawings or installations.

The work of art is a commodity bearing symbolic values (knowledge, wisdom and such) likewise every kind of commodity is bearing some. People, who are not

⁵ Baudrillard, J. (2009). *Gösterge Ekonomi Politiği Hakkında Bir Eleştiri* (2nd ed.), (O. Adanır, & A. Bilgin, Trans.). İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları. p.xi. (Original work published in 1972). (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis).

eligible to purchase the works of art and embrace included symbolic values, still maintain the desire of ownership. So, demand does not get lost with lack of purchasing power. According to that most apparent reason of the artist's drive of reproducing via far reaching economic operations is not to serve the collectors, but to serve public, to meet the repetitive demand of the masses. For instance, contrary to general opinion, perfume and cosmetics -not the expensive clothes- are estimated to make up 55 percent of revenue at high fashion brand *Chanel*.⁶ That means people who cannot buy expensive Chanel clothes buy Chanel perfumes. The same tendency applies for the art field; for instance Takashi Murakami's activities of mass production can be considered here. He is an internationally well-known Japanese artist, a leading contemporary art figure whose works investigate fashion, pop-celebrity and mainstream culture in context of Japanese consuming practices. He is the owner of *Kaikai Kiki*, an art production, management and marketing company, expanded its realm of Murakami design products to pillows, bags, towels, key chains, sticker sets, soccer balls, etc.⁷ Murakami is one of the richest living artists and his body of work is accepted as one of the most thought provoking of his time. Concerning the volume of the economic activities performed; there is no such artistic practice in Turkey that could be relevant to the examples above. On the other hand, considering the local art market's particular content and capacity, filmmaker and contemporary artist Kutluğ Ataman is distinguished from his local contemporaries. He adopts PR and marketing strategies to pursue his own campaigns for funding his productions both in filmmaking and contemporary art fields. Being directly

⁶ Metcalf, T. (2013, September). Chanel's Wertheimer Family Seen With \$19 Billion Fortune. *The Business of Fashion*. Retrieved from www.businessoffashion.com/2013/09/channels-wertheimers-found-11-billion-richer-selling-no-5.html (date of access: 21 October 2015)

⁷ Murakami collaborated with Louis Vuitton on the request of the brand to redesign Louis Vuitton's Spring/Summer accessories collection in 2003. Murakami produced the Monogramouflage, Cherry Blossom and Character Bag Collections offering the artist's interpretation on the brand's iconography. This companion took ten years; Murakami's business activity was enlarged due to this collaboration, and fashion industry found another channel to enter into the realm of contemporary art.

connected to the international network and art market he sells his video and video installation pieces often without any intermediaries or galleries in between.

The art practices of aforementioned artists and their counterparts influence many others by marking a new era, which allows the works of art to be displayed and valued by an heightened scale of visibility, and sold bypassing even economic crises. It attempts to define how such a model of artistic and economic integration can be 'controversial' and at the same time 'independent' and financially very successful in its breakthrough. The arts practice in general, so the nature of the work of art is affected by such an updated version of arts production.

1.1.2 System of edition

Observing the operation of edition is important to understand the construction of commercial value and how a work of art is produced and circulated in marketplace. What I am interested in here; how system of edition as an agent of commercial value is organized by the leading actors of art industry to operate within the economy. The decision made by the artist on his/her work whether it is unique or not is effected by unstable circumstances such as the accessibility to material and technology enabling the reproduction of the work, and convenience of space in need for reproduction or the availability of the artisans contributing to the production. Unless a work of art is unique, it can be produced in multiple numbers and in that case, each of them gets an edition number. Single screen or multi screen video installations, videos, works of photography, sculpture, drawing, digital prints, light and sound installation or kinetic installations, public space installations, textual works even wall paintings, indoor/outdoor performances or interventions can be editioned. Any kind of work in any medium, even films in documentary genre can be editioned and each numbered

edition of the same film can be displayed separately, put up for sale by art professionals to be treated same in the market. A work of art agreed to get an edition number is editioned either when it is presented to the market or during the production stage of its first edition. In both cases, the editions to be produced succeeding the first edition are most of the time not produced yet; therefore they do not physically exist. Most of the time, the work of art solely exists as a code in databases. It is only when the work has to be transported to abroad, therefore sent through customs clearance, to be returned or accepted back or any revenue enhancement act is applied on them, then the work is literally produced. Thus, this absence of work creates a space for gallerists, art dealers, curators, collectors and all other intermediaries, buyers to take part in decision made on the quantity of the work. A work of art is editioned before it gets the chance to meet with the viewer and sometimes even before the actual production. For instance, a work of art that is not produced yet can be put up for sale due to the requirements of local and international sales strategies of the actors in the market.

Any basic model of pricing includes the production cost to determine the retail cost. So, whenever the production cost of an artwork is over the projected budget and retail cost cannot surpass it in order to create a sufficient profit margin, then edition numbers are increased or decreased sometimes contrary to the amount settled by the artist. If the circulation (sales and display) of the work takes place concurrently in local and international art market, then editioning process gets affected. Since there is no obligation that all editions have to be produced at the same time, the ones that appear after the production of the first edition are most of the time brought into the market depending on the demand. Even if editioning appears like a system to secure

the copyrights and authenticity on behalf of the artist, it actually adapts the function of controlling the circulation of the work on behalf of the gallerists, dealers, intermediaries and buyers. For instance in the case of an artist represented by more than one gallery; any of these galleries participating in one or more international art fairs or any of these galleries loaning the same piece of work to museums or biennials to be exhibited; editioning -functions as documentation- serves for the institutionalization of the work of art.

Sometimes artists build their own practice to survive within the hypocrisy of system of edition. Known for his provocative works, carried out in a stenciling technique, Banksy's practice could be an example for this. One of his interventions took place in 2007 at Central Park where a man was selling Banksy's spray art pieces for \$60 each at a stall. The passerbys apart from a few were not interested in buying signed Banksy canvases, because they did not recognize they were the works of art which would cost a fortune normally. On February 22, 2007, the day after Sotheby's London sold three of Banksy's works, the graffiti artist updated his website with an image of an auction house, the people in the room bidding on a picture with the written words "*I Can't Believe You Morons Actually Buy This Shit*". Later on, Forbes was bewilderedly announcing Banksy's comment on Sotheby's auction and interpreting the case as "the artist's message of commercialism, capitalism and the mechanics of the art market was the point here, and he made it strikingly well."⁸ Comparing with the production of previously mentioned hyper visible artists, Banksy's practice is all based on invisibility. He tackles with system

⁸ Forbes. (2013, October 22). *Banksy: The \$20 Million Graffiti Artist Who Doesn't Want His Art To Be Worth Anything*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/daniellerahm/2013/10/22/banksy-the-20-million-graffiti-artist-who-doesnt-want-his-art-to-be-worth-anything/> (date of access: 2 September 2015)

of edition by reproducing his works in great amounts for the sake of surpassing the market conditions, this act in return leads to the denial of responsibility regarding display and sales of his works. For instance, The Art of Banksy exhibition, made its world premiere on January 13, 2016 in Istanbul with 35 TL ticket price for a single visit was criticized by public. However, against any criticism, the artist holds the right to state he has no affiliation with the case of sale or display. If I go back to the comparison among the artists choosing to be visible or invisible, to tackle with market conditions or not, the result yields the same: international reputation for the artist and same economic integration of the work to the market. Contemporary art's condition of reproducibility acquires crucial nuance and highlights an infected zone where the power elites as the actors of art industry are interfering in the process of production to organize circulation within art market. They have an updated impact on the quantity of the work where the chance of the artist to rule over the circulation is lost anyway. The reproducibility in the context of edition has an impact on the nature of the work, and therefore the commercial value.

1.1.3 The work of art on top of luxury

Luxury goods market operates the promotion and sales of goods, which people can live without. Common luxury goods are highest end products in terms of quality and price. Haute couture clothes, jewelry, yachts, and other highest end products are some of the examples of luxury goods that all operate outside the boundaries of income. The process of setting up the terms and conditions to evaluate luxury goods bears a resemblance to the configurations of commercial value in art market since both markets have similar characteristics. First of all, purchasing art is particular to people only with a certain income, just as luxury goods consumption is particular to

the richest. For instance; in 2014, the richest 1% of people in the world owned 48% of global wealth, leaving just 52% to be shared between the other 99% of adults on the planet.⁹ The bottom half of America own just 1.1% of the country's wealth, or about \$793 billion, which is the same amount owned by the 30 richest Americans¹⁰ who have the privilege to make luxury expenses. This statistics could give a hint about the scope of luxury goods market as well as the high consumption potential of these few consumers. Considering Turkey, luxury goods are acting as sign-indicator of socio-economic status likewise in some other developing countries according to the report *Luxury Market in Turkey: Luxury in Rise* prepared by *Deloitte Turkey* to analyze luxury goods market and Turkish luxury brands.¹¹ The report underlines that the existing 5.3 billions TL worth luxury goods market in Turkey will continue to grow 7% annually, reaching up to a total of 7 billions TL worth until 2018 due to the expansion experienced in supply and demand.¹² Accordingly, estimated and continuous growth in luxury goods market will probably occur with the increasing number of art purchases since both markets are not affected even by political or economic crises both in Turkey and in the world.¹³ Especially when the financial crisis occurs, products or services holding a risk-free commercial value become crucial for investment. Classic-antique cars or one of Mark Rothko painting holds

⁹ Credit Suisse Research Institute - Global Wealth Databook. (2013 and 2014 respectively). *Credit Suisse*. Retrieved from <https://www.credit-suisse.com/ch/en/about-us/research/research-institute/publications.html> (date of access: 5 June 2015)

¹⁰ Fuentes-Nieva, R., Galasso, N. (2014, January). Working for the Few: Political Capture and Economic Inequality. *Oxfam Briefing Paper: Oxfam International*. Retrieved from <https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp-working-for-few-political-capture-economic-inequality-200114-en.pdf> (date of access: 5 June 2015)

¹¹ Deloitte Report - Luxury Market in Turkey: Luxury in Rise. (2015). *Deloitte*. Retrieved from <http://www2.deloitte.com/tr/tr/pages/consumer-business/articles/global-powers-of-luxury-goods.html> (date of access: 2 September 2015)

¹² Deloitte Report - Luxury Market in Turkey: Luxury in Rise. (2015). *Deloitte*. Retrieved from <http://www2.deloitte.com/tr/tr/pages/consumer-business/articles/global-powers-of-luxury-goods.html>

¹³ I will concentrate on the relation of economic crisis and practices of collecting contemporary art in following chapter. In addition to that, even the turmoil caused by social uprisings, tensions and loss of credibility to political authority do not have any negative impact on luxury goods consumption in Turkey. For instance, there was not a decline in the number of customers visiting Istinye Park shopping mall after Gezi uprising. Conversely, there was a 4 to 5% increase in number of visitors in the year 2013. Patronlar Dünyası. (2013, November). *5 milyon 450 bin TL'ye tablo aldı, neye tepki gösterdi?* Retrieved from <http://m.patronlardunyasi.com/haber/5-milyon-450-bin-TL-ye-tablo-aldi-neye-tepki-gosterdi/150640> (date of access: 23 December 2015)

this kind of commercial value. So much so that, investment even in the periods of recession has become a common practice.¹⁴

Contemporary art market is monopolized by the economic activities of a group of patrons consists of art dealers and collectors, investment bankers, oligarchs, media moguls, dot com billionaires etc. ruling the luxury goods industry as well. As being leading actors of luxury goods industry, they all have a market share in the business world, controlling other sectors through similar marketing strategies targeting an increase in profit. They all have an impact on commercial value of the work of art through orchestrating the segments of art market. The group of patrons include individuals like Samuel Irving Newhouse, the boss of *Condé Nast*, is a mass media company, owning the brands like *Glamour*, *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *The New Yorker*, *W*, which promote and advertise contemporary art exhibitions, galleries, and art fairs. François Pinault is a French businessperson, the major shareholder and honorary chairperson of the company *Kering* that owns the brands like *Gucci*, *Saint Laurent*, *Balenciaga* and many others. In 1998, Pinault purchased a majority share of *Christie's Auction House*. Bernard Arnault is the president and CEO of the holding company *LVMH* (Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton) and *Christian Dior SA*, and also the main shareholder of *Dior Company*. This holding, union of 60 different companies is the largest in the production of luxury goods. Besides being one of the most important collectors around the world, Arnault is the owner of the auction company called *Phillips de Pury & Company*. If Turkey is to be the case, Zafer Yıldırım, a renowned art collector is also the main shareholder of *Orjin Group*, operating in

¹⁴ The economic climate in 2008 has been considered to be the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. It resulted in crash of markets worldwide and a drastic decrease in spending in many sectors, including areas of culture. On the other hand, Jennifer Thatcher references what Tate Triennial curator Nicolas Bourriaud's points out that the "art market recorded one of the most flourishing periods ever in 2009, art represented 25 % of the total 'emotional investments' of the persons with high incomes." Gerlis, M. (2014). *Art as an investment: A Survey of Comparative Assets*. London: Lund Humphries.

leather sector and the supplier for the most prominent luxury fashion retailers in the world. Another art collector Cengiz Çetindoğan is the chairman of *Demsa Group*, which operates as the representative agent of high fashion brands such as *Alexander McQueen*, *Michael Kors*, *Karen Miller* and so on. Demsa Group is planning to establish a museum to exhibit Çetindoğan's art collection soon. Textile patron Öner Kocabeyoğlu, owns *Papko Company*, Turkish supplier of another giant corporation Inditext. He has a remarkable modern and contemporary art collection and he displays his collection in a non-profit space named *Papko Art Collection* in Nişantaşı, Istanbul.

Luxuries might be services as well, so that many markets like finance, construction, etc. includes a luxury segment, which lower-income brackets generally cannot use. The leading shareholders of these sectors are also the art patrons such as Carlos Slim Helú, Mexican telecommunication patron, 5th world's billionaire on the list of American *Forbes Magazine* with his \$48.7 billion wealth as of January 2016.¹⁵ He opened *Museo Soumaya* in Mexico to house his collection of more than 60,000 works with estimated worth about \$800 million. Chen Dongsheng, the founder of Taikang Life, owns China's first private insurance company, offering services ranging from life insurance to asset management. He also owns *China Guardian Auctions Co., Ltd.*, specializes in the sale of Chinese artwork of all varieties. Dasha Alexandrovna Zhukova, married to Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich who is the main owner of the private investment company *Millhouse LLC*, founded the *Garage Center for Contemporary Culture* in Moscow and non-profit *IRIS Foundation*. She also sits on the board of the *Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)*. *The Wall*

¹⁵ Forbes. (2015). *The World's Billionaires List*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/billionaires/list/#version:realtime> (date of access: 11 June 2015)

Street Journal has mentioned Zhukova's name as the "burgeoning arts empire."¹⁶ Larry Gagosian is known as the biggest and most successful art dealer in the world. Over the last 30 years, he has built up a network of 11 galleries worldwide from New York to Moscow, and is said to have sales of \$1 Billion annually¹⁷. Some of Turkish giant conglomerate groups are *Koç*, *Sabancı* and *Eczacıbaşı*. They all engage with art in various ways. What makes these local art patrons similar to their peers in the world is their ownership of the companies, which incorporate hundreds of brands operating within dozens of sectors. Their business also contain academies that educate prospective artists, the museums sell tickets for every single visit, art publications create a domain to evaluate art, and foundations of culture&art that canalize the full city of audience to centralized art activities.

Collaborating with well-known contemporary artists animates luxury brands. Since the middle of the 70's, increasing number of collaborations has entailed the integration of luxury goods and art market. Recently, luxury brands have become one of the patrons of arts production. For instance, *BMW* has its own art program titled as *Art Cars* that sponsors the projects of Art Basel and Tate Modern, and commissions the works of many contemporary artists such as Jeff Koons or Isaac Julien. If the artist Takashi Murakami's *Monogramouflage*; the handbags collection, launched at the Brooklyn Museum or his rug designs, shown at Art Basel in 2009, are to be considered, then the profitable relations between luxury brands and contemporary art seems to grow more and impose on commercial value. The decision of purchasing is always effected by the commercial value of the product, which is subject to be

¹⁶ Helmore, E. (2011, May 26). Dasha, Dasha, Dasha. *The Wall Street Journal* (date of access: 29 September 2015)

¹⁷ The Gentlemen's Journal. (2012, February 26). *Contemporary Art – A Commodity or Just Art*. Retrieved from <http://www.thegentlemansjournal.com/contemporary-art-a-commodity-or-just-art/>

consumed. Considering luxury goods purchases, the higher the price gets, the more the buyer is content. This proposition is valid for a design handbag or a diamond ring.¹⁸ Therefore, when the collaborations in between these two sectors increase, and when any handbag can successfully masquerade as a sculpture, the practice of collecting art seems to be trapped in the same pursuit of contentment for the same reasons of displaying social status and purchasing power.

1.2 Exhibition space and commercial value

The work of art is eligible to conduct human perception by creating meaning; therefore, it has been classified as supreme object. Exhibition space supports this quality of the work of art through carrying out the functions of reproducing, guarding and displaying the commercial value. Exhibition space encloses the work of art by pointing out the meaning and adorns the meaning with prestige and esteem. Considering art galleries, an exhibition space is a simple border –just like a single painting frame– attributing meaning to the inner, reproducing value beyond or detached from the meaning of an artwork, making the inner visible and valuable. Since operational duties are performed in exhibition space to sell the works of art, exhibition space hosts the most tangible and evident stages of construction of commercial value. It is the place where the commercial value becomes concrete. It materializes in, together with, and by means of space.

There are particular qualities to situate an exhibition space to an active position in construction of commercial value. Those qualities can be named as established commercial approach, up to the minute vision that is favorable for contemporary art,

¹⁸ Thompson, D. (2011). *Sanat Mezat, 12 Milyon Dolarlık Köpekbalığı: Çağdaş Sanatın ve Müzayede Evelerinin Tuhaf Ekonomisi*, (1st ed). (Renan Akman, Trans.). Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları. (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis). p.287

professional labor fulfilling the necessities of the buyers and exhibitors, and adequate architectural characteristics. Since the 60's, aforementioned qualities have been marking mostly the white cube. The term, *white cube*¹⁹ coined by Brian O'Doherty, is used to describe spaces with 4 walls all in white, equipped with special lighting, and enabling only displayed works of art to be the center of attention rather than architectural components of the space. Today, most of the established art galleries have these qualities.

White cube hosts the operational duties such as logistics, shipment, custom procedures, installation, publishing, archiving, public and media relations, openings, workshops, seminars, talks, screenings, educational activities etc., which as a whole build the infrastructure of sales. Furthermore, as a space open to public, any white cube tries to fulfill its responsibility towards public. Whilst white cube harbors operations focusing primarily on boosting sales, no trace is left from this effort to be detected by any viewer; public. This intentionally adapted quality of neutralization and erasure of exertion is reflected through minimalist interior design. Consumption is customized and popularized by underlying the idea that the pleasure taken in art is personal and the experience offered by art is individual. Even though, the white cubes embrace their spoken motto of making art open to any singular experience, it appears like public is simply divided into two consistent groups. First group of people are the 'real buyers' and second group are the viewers/public. White cube creates an illusion of detaching the work of art from its commercial domain to appropriate it to public. This illusion ensures public that they have access to the

¹⁹ The term is coined by Brian O'Doherty in his essays first appeared in *Artforum* in 1976. His essays are published in the book: O'Doherty, B. (2000). *Inside The White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

works of art and the art's supreme value via the gallery space. However, what white cube seems to be marking and favoring is a certain group of people and their interest. The priority of the white cube is to ensure the accessibility of that particular group of people to the space. As long as the access is maintained, consumption multiplies, so does the profit. On the other hand, public serves for the visibility and the reputation of the gallery with their visits.

Brian O'Doherty argues, "An empty gallery space pretends that it is a work of art itself, hence protects art."²⁰ That means when an exhibition space is inactive, no exhibition to host or when it is in the installation period, or when it is closed due to holidays, the space is still an art space. It preserves its position regarding the work of art in every condition by defining the boundary between the inner and the outer to guard the commercial value. Since art spaces are long established and part of everyday life activities in metropolises such as New York, Berlin and London, white cubes are relatively putting effort to be discreet about the differentiation made between the public and the real buyers. At the end of the 50's new mediums like happening, installation as well as site-specific works filled exhibition spaces and diverted public's perception about the function of an art space in U.S, concurrently there were only few exhibition spaces other than state galleries in Istanbul. Most of the exhibitions were held within the consulate buildings or foreign press agency buildings in İstanbul such as *Amerikan Haberler Merkezi*, *Casa d'Italia* and *Consulate General of France*.²¹ Supporting contemporary art productions, standing on its own feet by personal and limited efforts and selling artworks to ordinary

²⁰ O'Doherty, B. (2010). *Beyaz Küpün İçinde: Galeri Mekanının İdeolojisi*. (A. Antmen, Trans.). İstanbul: Sel Yayıncılık. p.64. (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis)

²¹ Yaman, Z.Y. (1998, Winter). 1950'li Yılların Sanatsal Ortamı ve 'Temsil' Sorunu. *Toplum ve Bilim*, 79. p. 125-126)

people with low prices, most of the private galleries in Istanbul and Ankara could not survive during the 60's and the 70's in Turkey. In the 80's, Turkey's transition to the free-market economy and adopting export oriented growth model caused change in wealth distribution. Accordingly, the galleries' business strategies were solidified in favor of a certain group of buyers; nouveau rich. It can be proposed that since there has been no many galleries in number leading the art scene for years, and no common habit of visiting galleries as an art activity in cities like Istanbul for such a long time that art galleries adopt an approach highlighting the difference between socio-economic classes. They are laying eyes on people from low socio-economic classes and triggering anxiety of the viewer about entering the space. Today, marketing activities and advertisements advise public to visit the exhibitions. However, the working hours of white cubes are more or less the same all over the world, open at 10a.m or 11a.m in the morning and close at 6p.m or 7p.m. in the evening. Some of them are closed on Sundays as well. They all stay open during the standard office hours when most people are at work, leaving no opportunity for them to visit the exhibitions.²²

Since the establishment of white cubes date back a long time in U.S and Europe compared to Turkey, the ideology of gallery space long has been severely

²² It seems like number of people who visit art galleries increases in Europe. For instance, more people go to art galleries than football matches in Britain. "In 2006, over 42 million people visited an art gallery, more than attended a football match." These results are obtained from a research carried out by Sharpie Markers. Response Source Press Release Wire. (2007, October). *More Brits Now Visit Art Galleries than Go To Football Matches According To New Research*. Retrieved from <http://www.sourcewire.com/news/34272/more-brits-now-visit-art-galleries-than-go-to-football#.Vlg9mN8rKR> (date of access: 15 October 2015)

"In 2013, an estimated 54 million people visited Britain's major art galleries and museums, admittedly boosted by some popular temporary exhibitions, and a further 16 million attended live music concerts, the total crowds at all Premier and Football League matches was 26 million, horse racing was watched by 6 million, matches in the top Rugby Union premier league and Rugby League super league by 3.4 million and country cricket by just over 500,000." Football Economy.Com. (2014, August). *More go to galleries than to football*. Retrieved from <http://www.footballeconomy.com/content/more-go-galleries-football> (date of access: 15 October 2015) Considering that working hours of art galleries are leaving no opportunity for public to visit the exhibitions, high numbers of attraction is most probably reflects the interest of tourists. Then another question arises; what is public, only the tourists?

criticized.²³ White cubes were exhibition spaces where art professionals deliver the viewer what and how to think, redistribute the knowledge through descriptive texts and packed imagery. Determining the value of works of art, white cubes were also determining who would be the viewer. The aforementioned concerns are still valid for white cubes. Criticism and complaints neither have given way to detachment of the work of art from the white cubes nor changed the conditions of the art market, but they lead the way to explore different exhibition spaces freed from white cube. Today, not only white cubes are hosting exhibitions; there are many exhibition spaces such as industrial buildings and warehouses, offices, convention halls, public spaces, airports, shopping malls, hotels, and many more examples other than white cubes. They all are the new shelters of works of art. Contemporary art has been re-established by the confluences of high and low, concrete and mobile, main and the sub. The places in between have been the base of these match ups for a long while for some reasons. Interdisciplinary practice became a common interest with increasing number of mediums in use. There is a demand coming from the installation medium for large-scale works going beyond spatial control of gallery spaces or museums. Likewise, commissioned and site specific works don't need to be fitted in designated space; there is no designated space anymore. The artistic production considers everything even the space itself as a material more than ever to realize a conceptual idea. For all these reasons, the mentioned spaces above and many others become temporal premises of collectors, corporations, art institutions

²³ Since 1999, Stuckist artists have carried out protests at venues, including the Saatchi Gallery, in order to criticize white cubes. They have received extensive media coverage for protests both in the UK and internationally. Some of well-known museums and art institutions embraced the ideas of O'Doherty in various ways and organized exhibitions, talks and seminars. There are various publications mainly concentrating on the ideology of gallery space. For instance in *Between the Black Box and the White Cube: Expanded Cinema and Post War Art* (Uroskie, 2014) the renewed interest of moving image in gallery environment and the contested models of spectatorship are analyzed. There are also some practices of reading Michel Foucault's and Marc Augé, ideas on other spaces and non-spaces in parallel to the gallery space. (Foucault, M. (1986). *Of Other Spaces*. (J. Miskowiec, Trans.). *Diacritics*, 16(1), 22-27. Augé, M. (1995). *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. (J. Howe, Trans.). New York: Verso.)

and organizations. These spaces can be rented out for exhibitions and art events such as biennials or other commissioned and sponsored projects.

Construction of commercial value is a process also including the viewers' and consumers' ritualistic relation with the work of art, which mainly takes place within physical spaces. Ultimately, the places in between like airports or shopping malls, involve wide scale production and consumption of things or services, and also the commerce. In these spaces sheltering works of art, the trace of commerce is not taken away from life to be represented in display windows or on white walls as it is in white cubes and museums. Therefore, such temporal exhibition spaces build a different connection with the viewer compared to white cubes. They allow public to walk comfortably around the neutralized and normalized commercial value since the space is familiar to public in a certain sense. These spaces fulfill their mediatorship - different than white cubes do- in orienting viewers' relation with the work of art, so that it is readily taken in, appropriated and possessed by the viewer. As much as public appropriates a particular work, its commercial value increases. Then, these spaces take on a role in the construction of commercial value and perform it in exactly the same manner that white cubes do. In his 1967 essay *Different Spaces* Foucault's description of heterotopia is; "a space of difference, a space that is absolutely central to a culture but in which the relations between elements of a culture are suspended, neutralized, or reversed."²⁴ It seems that white cubes or 'in between spaces' are all suspended to keep commercial value for a while and they need public attention to serve for the collectors, corporations, any kind of buyer to make them state their ownership or control over the work. Thus, exhibition spaces

²⁴ Foucault, M. (1998). *Different Spaces*. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984* (Vol. 2) (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York: The New Press. p.178

become executives of the ownership and conduct the market in terms of commercial value.

1.3 The quality of artist's labor

Discussing the competence of 'idea' and its construction in context of contemporary art might unveil the mystification laid over commercial value. Idea is the founder of the work of art in the practices of contemporary and conceptual art. The idea embodies envisioning concepts to transform thoughts into things, which are suitable for production, circulation and collecting. It can be claimed that to argue, study, discuss or criticize a subject, to legitimize, oppose, or solely demonstrate anything, and to do any business, various practices need to construct an idea. It is not only contemporary artists but other professionals from various other fields might construct their productions on ideas. However, the contemporary work of art differs from any other product/service mainly depending on intellect in the sense that the 'idea' behind the work of art produced by the artist is not expected to deliver practical solutions to be used in daily life. It is also not expected to meet any analytical and logical suggestions or any consistent outcomes either. It is not requested to abide by any rules, techniques or forms of expression.

If the idea has particular importance regarding contemporary art practices, then time course that constructs the idea becomes crucial. One of the components of the artist's labor is the period of time necessary to construct an idea, in other words the working hours of the artist. It seems like technique is no longer a lifetime concept today, as it is transformed into a conditional, temporal state, which could be gained through periodical search and study. Although the artist outsources the technical

requirements and aspects of the production to the artisans, or other producers to produce the work, artist's labor is still defined by lifetime effort of gaining knowledge to constitute the idea for production. Considering the artist's effort for researching and studying, training, traveling, attending artist residencies and other activities of documentation and communication, his/her working hours are periodically overstretching accustomed working hours. In the long term, it starts from education, not necessarily art education but a knowledge gained by any educational experience covering necessary tools and skills, including business skills alongside the intellectual qualifications. It is also possible to do artistic production without any education, rare but still possible. Then, the essential training for producing works of art intersects with other economic activities of life that are also essential to earn money and to survive. At this point, price as a constant component of commercial value is reconstructed. First of all, art industry does not pay the artist to cover his/her working hours. Regarding conventional labor/time equation as an independent worker, the artist does not earn anything for his/her working hours that could extend to 20 hours per day. Therefore, this loss is doomed to be reflected on the price. In his book *On (Surplus) Value in Art*, cultural critic Diederich Diederichsen applies the Marxist theory of surplus value to investigate value formation in contemporary art. When he discusses the commodity nature of artworks, he underlines the mystification of the artworks somewhere on the line where its commodity nature turns into a fetish. Then, he puts emphasis on the matter of living labor of the artist by writing; "The living labor of the artist that is converted in the price is the indicator of the transformation of human labor in the abstract, relevantly reconstructs the production of value and status."²⁵

²⁵ Diederichsen, D. (2008). *On (Surplus) Value in Art: Reflections 01* Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art. Berlin/New York: Sternberg Press.

The living artists, as one of a current group of individuals living in the era of PR and marketing, demonstrate a different set of behaviors to produce work. Their updated leanings, relying on business strategies go hand in hand with conditions of the market. As I previously mentioned, the artist follows various business strategies despite the fact of having intermediaries in between taking on these tasks: First, the artist has to anticipate the quality of work that can be perceived as eligible for financial support. Second, s/he has to consider a source of fund for his/her production. Then, s/he has to build necessary contacts to exhibit his/her work, and reach to potential buyers. All these tasks require time and effort. Therefore, the idea in context of contemporary art production is not a single-layered artistic vision, but a multi layered concept including the management of economic operations implementing business strategies. All artists are cultural producers, laboring in art industry, so, their efforts of study and research, entire experience of getting knowledge with add-on trainings, plus business skills are all acquired for performing the idea within the conditions of art market. Then, 'idea', which constitutes the work of art and commercial value, is one of the reasons of exorbitant and unreasonable prices in the marketplace.

1.4 Pricing in contemporary art market

Everyone has his or her own evaluation criteria composed by individual perception and understanding, aesthetic or artistic taste when the subject is art. On the other hand, it is commercial value that contains the practical tools, indicators and keys for evaluation of the work of art. Commercial value is always evoking the price, whereas the 'supreme' nature of the work of art never recalls commercial value and price.

Galleries, auction houses, art institutions, collectors, artists and many other actors of art industry do not prefer to speak about prices. Art dealers and gallerists do not want other colleagues to know how well or poorly they do. Most of the times, the collectors do not prefer how much they pay for works of art to be heard. Likewise, the artists do not want other artists and public to know the prices of their own works. Probably that is why speaking about the price is not welcomed most of the time. As a matter of fact, there is no price list or price label in view in the galleries or other commercial art spaces. When a visitor asks about the price, someone should call the gallery director or any other salesperson to come and take care of the request. Likewise, many speculative headlines can appear on media such as ‘the highest-priced work sold at the fair...’ but the proper information of which gallery sold what and at what price is never accessible. Even the directories of the art fair do not know about it, or do not get this information from the participant galleries. Similarly, when an auction house is called to ask about the price of any work sold previously, they most probably forward the request from department to department, and at the end to their website. Then, finding the requested information depends solely on a pure chance of coincidence. No one prefers to put the supreme nature and commercial value in the same pot by talking about price due to various reasons. Despite all, every single work of art has commercial value and this value has nothing to do with the discussion of art’s supreme nature that vitalizes and enriches life. Commercial value is the thing that constructs the conditions of art market, art industry and art world and it is directly linked to price. Commercial value is determined by the principle of supply and demand, and is managed by the sales actors of the market. The evaluation criteria for determining the commercial value are accepted as follows:

1. Biography and the ethnic, politic, cultural identity of the artist: Who is the artist? What is his/her ethnicity? Where does s/he come from? What are the social or political conditions of his/her hometown? Does s/he have a brand within art marketplace and value assertions attached to his/her name by virtue of his/her reputations and career?
2. Contemporary art trends: How does a work of art compromise with the trends and tendencies of the art market? Alternatively, does it bring fresh approaches with potential to have an impact on the trends by criticizing or withdrawing them?
3. Permanency: The continuity and sustainability of the artistic practice, and consistency regarding the body of work.
4. Provenance: Exhibition history and previous ownerships regarding the body of work of the artist whose particular work of art is subject to evaluation. What are the previous exhibition spaces of the work of art and who are the previous individual or institutional owners of the artist's production?
5. Speculation: Any engaging media hype or remark, comment or rumor embodied in the work of art such as these written phrases on sale case, "Sherman print sells for \$3.9 million at auction" or "Turkish artists Burhan Doğançay's masterpiece was sold for \$1.9 million"
6. Art critics: How often do art critics or prestigious art publications mention about the work of art which is subject to evaluation and whole practice of the particular artist?
7. Production Cost: What is the budget of production? Constant components such as logistics and installation expenses as well as temporary changes on the unit prices of materials used for the production constitute the production cost.

Price appears as a result of these evaluation criteria. In addition to that, all agents, which I have mentioned previously, have impact on commercial value and overlap the given evaluation criteria: First, the efficiency of the artist's business skills in parallel to public visibility of the artist's production. Second, the competency of the artist in ruling the quantity of the work and conducting its circulation. Third, the qualities of previous, current and predicted exhibition spaces of the work of art, which is subjected to evaluation. Fourth, the multi-layered quality of labor on the process of production and circulation.

Art is a commodity form and artistic production is offered for sale in art market is a commodity to be bought and sold. Therefore, the work of art in art market ought to be a collection item and ought to be the subject of the practices of consumption. It is clear that demand for contemporary art over the last 10 years have excessively increased. In parallel to that the prices of the works that is classified as the examples of contemporary art have gone up drastically, and it is not a case specific to any country. China, South-East Asia, India and the Middle East have also become actively involved in the market. I believe, understanding how commercial value and price are constructed in art market is essential for analyzing the practices of collecting art in any specific zone.

CHAPTER 2

PRACTICES OF COLLECTING CONTEMPORARY ART IN TURKEY

2.1 Conspicuous consumption

The term *conspicuous consumption* is described in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English as “the act of buying a lot of things, especially expensive things that are not necessary, in order to impress other people and show them how rich you are”²⁶. In the present economic system, consumption is the most efficient element in constructing the uniqueness of the individual, and therefore an individual keeps his/her uniqueness through the continuity of his/her practice of consumption as a consumer. As Jean Baudrillard puts it through in one of his core works dated 1972, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*²⁷ the ruling class has a constant will to select, possess, and to display the signs that make the class distinctive from the rest in order to make its territory visible and the borders of that territory clear. Baudrillard is influenced by economist and social critic Thorstein Veblen's notion of *conspicuous consumption* to explain the phenomenon of sign-value as a prominent component of the consumption practices of society.

The term conspicuous consumption is first coined by Thorstein Veblen in his widely known work *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), which concentrates on the

²⁶ Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. Retrieved from <http://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/conspicuous-consumption> (date of access: 04.10.2015)

²⁷ Baudrillard, J. (2009). *Gösterge Ekonomi Politiği Hakkında Bir Eleştiri* (2nd ed.), (O. Adanır, & A. Bilgin, Trans.) İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları. (Original work published in 1972). (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis). p.xi.

study of economic institutions and the modern economic life.²⁸ Veblen introduced the term to analyze the characteristics of consumption practices right after the Second Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain and overspread Europe, North America and Japan in 19th Century and continued throughout 20th Century. Regarding the era of 19th Century, the term conspicuous consumption refers to the upper class that spends to manifest their wealth and privileged social status. The ability to purchase luxury goods rather than the necessities to survive like food and medicine, was underlining the capacity of purchasing power, thus naming the social status, which was then displayed openly to set the borders with others in society. The 19th Century also highlights an unceasing demand from the upper class for paintings of their portraits as the assertion of their social standing, wealth, and superior decorative taste. While ensuring staple industries (textile, coal, iron and steel), 2nd Industrial Revolution created new technology industries consisting of chemicals, engineering, electricity and car manufacturing. Alongside of these, it also provided the basis for expansion of capacity in construction, commerce and finance sector. While newcomer merchants and bankers were holding wealth as a determinant sign of power and status, the emerging middle class were developing their tools for upcoming Century to fall within a position nearby the upper class with their spending.

Veblen has neither made an analysis specifically concerning consumption practices in art market nor an evaluation of collecting art within the scope of luxury goods consumption. However, Baudrillard carries on the discussion from where Veblen has laid the bases, and takes conspicuous consumption as a notion shaping the

²⁸ Veblen, T. (1994). *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, New York: Dover Publications (Original work published in 1899).

consumption practices of consumer society. I would like to dwell more on conspicuous consumption as a constant affair shaping the practice of collecting art especially from the post war era up to date. The term conspicuous consumption is still referring to habitual pattern of the consumer who would like to assert his/her wealth, power and social status by displaying expensive belongings. In a developed economy, the number of consumers is on the rise, so are the luxury goods that constitute life styles, and parallel to that art expands by means of productions, viewers, events and art collectors. Consumption was effected by the ideology of progress, technological innovations, and modern capitalism developed in U.S.A. These developments set the example for other regions that were in the aftermath of devastating World War II. Paris was not the one and only art hub anymore; the city of New York was rising. Large-scale art auctions and private buying sessions became the two primary ways to legally acquire art in the United States after the Second World War.²⁹ During the 1944-1945 season, the New York art market made its largest amount of money to that date, more than \$6 million.³⁰

At the end of World War II, U.S.A became the sovereign power and had a huge impact all over the world, concurrently in Turkey; multiple-party system came into force (1945) so that the adopted cultural policy of government, aiming a modern society was due to change. The painting and sculpture exhibitions, held once a year by Istanbul State Academy of Fine Arts until the middle of the 40's, were the utmost important art events of the era. Democratic Party opted out of governing art through

²⁹ Erb, E. (2012, April) Hanging Prosperity on a wall: Private Art Collecting as Conspicuous Consumption, United States, 1945-1960. p.4. Retrieved from

<http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1061&context=forum>

³⁰ The data is cited in E. Erb, E. (2012, April) Hanging Prosperity on a wall: Private Art Collecting as Conspicuous Consumption, United States, 1945-1960. p.8 Retrieved from

<http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1061&context=forum>

exhibition activities of the State Museum, and no proper cultural policy and funding program were offered by the state after 1945.

In Europe, during post-war era, discussions on state funding in art field were arisen. The common idea among the opponents was that the state should take a step back in domination of art, and leave some room for other actors to step in and work in collaboration with the state. For instance in Britain, state funds were allocated through intermediate agencies such as *Arts Council of Great Britain* and not conducted only by the government anymore.³¹ On the other hand in Turkey, contrary to discussions carried out in Europe, the criticism regarding the role of the state in art was the lack of financial and organizational support offered by the state. However, both of the situations in Europe and in Turkey, although completely contrary to each other, yielded the same. Likewise, Europe, private sector started to be interested in arts productions during those years in Turkey. It was in the 50's when art galleries, though rare, started to appear in the art scene together with the exhibition spaces run by the state, thus the art market was refreshed. One of the first established private gallery in İstanbul was *Maya Gallery*, prominent with its abstract painting exhibitions, but could not survive for long and closed down in 1955 due to financial problems.³² Another private gallery, *Ertem Gallery* was able to survive only for a year in İstanbul art scene. *Küçük Gallery* (1952)³³ and *Çevre Art Gallery* (1955) are some to mention as the examples of these first private galleries.³⁴ In an interview, art

³¹ Harris, J. (2006). *Art History; The Key Concepts*, (1st ed.) London: Routledge, p.83

³² Yasa Yaman, Z. (1998). 1950'li yılların sanatsal ortamı ve 'temsil' sorunu. *Toplum ve Bilim*: 79. (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis.) p.122

³³ Kaya Özsezgin argues that *Küçük Gallery* opened in 1952, exhibited the works of the artist whom were close friends with Fethi Karakaş (the owner of the gallery) and couldn't survive so long. Özsezgin, K. (2000) *Cumhuriyet İdeali ve Sanat, Cumhuriyet'in 75 Yılında Türk Resmi*, (1st ed.). İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis.) p. 51

³⁴ Çolak, B. (2011) *From 19th Century to Today in Turkey Varying Concept of Display, Exhibitions and Exhibition Spaces*, Erzurum Ataturk University Journal of Fine Arts,;19. (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis.) p.4. Retrieved from <http://e-dergi.atauni.edu.tr/ataunigsfd/article/view/1025007063>

dealer Yahşi Baraz mentions that İsmail Hakkı Oygur opened up a brand new gallery in 1947 at the ground floor of a building in Tünel, where the works of artists like Zeki Kocamemi and Hale Asaf were in display, however, it was closed down two years later due to lack of interest.³⁵ In the same period of time in Ankara, *Helikon Society's Gallery* (1952) entered the art scene. Supporting contemporary art production, standing on its own feet by personal and limited efforts, and selling art works to ordinary people with low prices, the gallery was setting the foremost example of its own kind.³⁶ Later on, *Gallery Milar* was founded by an architect, publisher and graphic designer Selçuk Milar in 1957, and became the center of attention of the art scene in Ankara. *Gallery Milar* continued to exist through the 60's, and its owner financially supported the art galley by selling furniture until his business could not cope with fabricated furniture.³⁷ *Gallery Milar* sets an important example to point out that while art galleries in İstanbul were being closed down, the ones in Ankara were grasping the very fact that unless the art business was supported by some other means, it was doomed to die.

In the era of 50's when the notions of private gallery, gallerist, and collecting art started to emerge, and art society was formed in Turkey. Even though first art galleries both in İstanbul and Ankara became hubs for intellectuals such as poets, writers, artists, theatre and cinema practitioners, it seems that same dynamism was not valid for the case of art purchases. Considering the financial difficulties that

³⁵ Interview with Yahşi Baraz: 1970'lerden Günümüze Türkiye'de Sanat 1 (2012, January) (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis.) Retrieved from

<http://lebriz.com/pages/lst.aspx?lang=TR§ionID=0&articleID=992&bhcp=1>

³⁶ Önsal, B. *Emergence of Art Galleries in Ankara, A Case Study of Three Pioneering Galleries in the 1950s* (MA thesis) p. 80-83 Retrieved from

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.456.3834&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

³⁷ Cited in Önsal, B. *Emergence of Art Galleries in Ankara, A Case Study of Three Pioneering Galleries in the 1950s* (MA thesis) p. 91

galleries were confronted by,³⁸ common tendency was to see exhibitions and to get socialized within the community rather than to become the active agents of consumption in art market. Aforementioned local galleries and such could rarely sell works to a consumer profile consisting of physicians, lawyers, engineers, and civil servants such as notaries. It can be proposed that if art galleries entering the scene were short-lived, then middle class' purchases were far away from supporting art production and art market during that era. Although there is no significant and widespread practice of collecting art until the end of the 70's, depending on the statements of gallerists of that period, the rarely done purchases by the middle class throughout the 50's, 60's, and 70's could be evaluated as the first evidence of conspicuous consumption regarding collecting contemporary art in Turkey. During the 50's in U.S.A, the middle class had similar tendency in consumption to display social status rather than to cover basic needs. To make it clearer with an example, in U.S.A, buying larger houses and cars, which are especially practices of conspicuous consumption, became a trend in the 50's. When the houses got larger, then related mediums of consumption was triggered since houses were providing extra space for more items including the works of art. People in Turkey, were also furnishing their private spaces with modern signs of wealth with an attempt to reach to the social status they desire.

The 60's became an era of political uprising and change, which entailed newly flourishing institutionalization and cultural spheres all over the world. New

³⁸ Except that the special atmosphere was created by the society of Helikon in Ankara. Bülent Ecevit mentioned; "Sales in Helikon were unexpectedly high and regular. There nearly left no paintings from exhibitions at Helikon and the society had %20 of the sales. Helikon granted a possibility for citizens to buy a work. It was the first time in Turkey, a private art gallery was taking the attention of civil servants, workers, and housewives to the art works." Cited in Başak Onsal's work. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.456.3834&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

movements like conceptual art and pop art, and new mediums like performance and video began to be circulated in market. Whilst in Turkey, the common trends in art production were abstract expressionism, new figurative interpretations, and few examples of conceptual art mostly in the medium of sculpture. Conspicuous consumption can be put forward as a frequent practice only starting from the second half of the 70's when the art market awakens with the increasing number of private galleries and art events. *Or-An Art Gallery* and *Artisan Gallery* were founded in Ankara. In 1972, *Er Art Gallery* and *Gallery I*, together with Aydın Cumalı's and Yahşi Baraz's galleries were founded in İstanbul and enlivened the art market. After 1975, there was an immense increase in the number of the galleries that led the way to the practice of collecting art. The first gallery opened in Nişantaşı area was Melda Kaptana's gallery (1971-1976) and had an impact on other galleries, residing in the same area of Istanbul city.³⁹ Melda Kaptana mentioned that she had difficulties about selling the works at the beginning. She sold the art works to civil servants, but received the payment in installments.⁴⁰ She expressed that "the idea of purchasing art was not properly formed in the society at those times... The clients other than few wealthy art collectors were the ones who developed a kind of sentimental connection with the particular piece of work."⁴¹ Yahşi Baraz makes similar comments on the era:

In the 70's there was no interest in art. Nobody was able to make money in art business. I used to handout leaflets, on which 'Paintings are bought' written, around some residential areas such as Moda, Nişantaşı and Levent... I bought many paintings from Tünel and Beyazıt areas as well... I found many paintings of Halil Paşa and Hüseyin Zekai Paşa... We took those,

³⁹ Üstünipek, M. (1999) *Cumhuriyet'in İlk 50 Yılında Sanat Yapıtı Piyasası, Cumhuriyet'in Renkleri Biçimleri, Bilanço 98*, (ed. A. Ödekan) İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları & Tarih Vakfı. (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis.) p.195

⁴⁰ Guler Bek Arat interviewed with Melda Kaptana on October 4, 2004. Cited in Bek Arat, G. (2007). *1970-1980 Yılları Arasında Türkiye'de Kültürel ve Sanatsal Ortam* başlıklı (PhD thesis). (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis.) p.105 Retrieved from http://www.saltonline.org/media/files/1970-1980_yillari_arasinda_turkiyede_kulturel_ve_sanatsal_ortam_scrd-2.pdf

⁴¹ Cited in Bek Arat, G. (2007)

framed them and started to sell them to rich people. Actually, art business took its start quite late in Turkey.⁴²

While above excerpt summarizes the market conditions especially for the paintings from the eyes of gallerists, it is also helpful to lend an ear to the artists of the era in order to understand the circulation of the works of art which can be classified as examples of contemporary art and produced in other mediums. İlhan Koman mentions that after coming back to İstanbul from Paris and starting to work for the Academy, they set up *Kare Metal* (1953-1956) together with Sadi Öziş, Sadi Çalık and Mazhar Süleymangil in order to support themselves and their artistic productions financially. He describes *Kare Metal Atelier* as an ‘upholsterer’ then, he continues: “... We were feeding on halva and bread every single day. Since it was utterly impossible to survive, four of us decided to open up an upholsterer together. It meant that we could not serve the minds by our artistic production in those times, so we started to serve the asses.”⁴³

In regard to contemporary and conceptual art production, Füsün Onur is another artist worth mentioning. She is one of the most prominent conceptual artists whose practice bends the boundaries of sculpture and installation art. It took quite some time though (as late as mid 70’s) before her works began to be chosen for collections. However, her works were mostly bought for the state collections (The Museum of Painting and Sculpture and Hacettepe Art Museum), plus for a few private collections such as *Güneş Sigorta* (insurance company). Otherwise, there were a few art professionals from abroad interested in collecting the works of Füsün

⁴² Interview with Yahşi Baraz: 1970’lerden Günümüze Türkiye’de Sanat 1 (2012, January) (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis.) Retrieved from

<http://lebriz.com/pages/lis.aspx?lang=TR§ionID=0&articleID=992&bhcp=1>

⁴³ Akyürek, F. (1988). *Çağdaş Türk Heykel Sanatında Eş ya da Geçmiş Zamanlı Kültürel Verilerden Yararlanma*, (Sanatta Yeterlik Tezi). (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis.) p.78

Onur, such as Rene Block and Roger Conover.⁴⁴ This particular example could give us an overview about the practices of purchasing contemporary art in the 70's in Turkey. There was no apparent progress in sales of works, which tackles with conceptual and contemporary art, and produced in mediums other than painting. Only the state, a few local corporations and individual buyers, and some foreign buyers were interested in collecting such an artistic production.

Another important factor having an impact on social life in the 70's was TV. It was becoming swiftly widespread. The images were triggering commodity fetishism and competition to own the products. The inclusion of TV and the adverts served to make the position of Turkish middle class clearer in conspicuous consumption. Exactly as it happened in U.S.A, -but 20 years later- the same attempt to assert the social status through purchasing and possessing things was in rise in Turkey. In art collecting, the choice of mediums were very limited, and what is more oil on canvas, the symbol of a refined artistic taste for ordinary people during that period, was always valued the most among prestigious private properties. According to Hasan Bülent Kahraman, although bourgeois was not trained by aristocratic subtlety, people were trying to modernize and restore themselves by purchasing paintings and antiques during the 70's when socio-cultural conditions were pushing for change in everywhere.⁴⁵ On the other hand, individual artistic taste was not in need of consultancy or any kind of professional advice mechanism, provided by the gallerists and art dealers of that time.

⁴⁴ The sales data acquired from the artist book *Füsun Onur* (2012) Published by dOCUMENTA(13). Köln: Walter König. p: 37-38

⁴⁵ Cited in Bek Arat, G. (2007). *1970-1980 Yılları Arasında Türkiye'de Kültürel ve Sanatsal Ortam* başlıklı (PhD thesis). (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis.) Retrieved from http://www.saltonline.org/media/files/1970-1980_yillari_arasinda_turkiyede_kulturel_ve_sanatsal_ortam_scrd-2.pdf

Collecting contemporary art in Turkey was initiated by the state and financial institutions such as insurance companies and banks with a few individual collectors until the second half of the 70's. *Türkiye İş Bankası, Yapı ve Kredi Bankası, Ziraat Bankası, Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey* were forming collections. At the end of the 70's, there were maximum 50 collectors who were conscious of their choices in purchasing art.⁴⁶ On the other hand, towards the end of the 70's with the accumulation of capital the upper class that owned the money was in search of new channels for spending it. After realizing that owning art collection brings prestige and reputation in Europe and U.S.A, the private capital started to involved in art by various ways in Turkey. Correspondingly, in the year of 1973, *Istanbul Culture and Arts Foundation (İKSV)* is established.

In the 80's, Turkey's transition to free-market economy and adoption of export oriented growth model caused change in wealth distribution. New consumption practices were emerging in the cities and art was incorporated into the luxury goods consumption (summer resorts, automobiles, antiques, paintings etc.) of the nouveau rich. This time the practice of conspicuous consumption was getting bold according to peer comparison. As Duesenberry argues, an individual's conspicuous consumption depends not only on the actual level of spending, but also spending compared with that of others.⁴⁷ The practice of peer comparison regarding consumption provokes more consumption in order to expand the reputation and social prestige and again to demonstrate domineering socio-economic status to

⁴⁶ Cited in Bek Arat, G. (2007). *1970-1980 Yılları Arasında Türkiye'de Kültürel ve Sanatsal Ortam* başlıklı (PhD thesis). (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis.) Retrieved from http://www.saltonline.org/media/files/1970-1980_yillari_arasinda_turkiyede_kulturel_ve_sanatsal_ortam_scrd-2.pdf

⁴⁷ Duesenberry, J.S. (1949), *Income, Saving and the Theory of Consumer Behavior*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Retrieved from http://everything.explained.today/Conspicuous_consumption/

others. Conversely, due to particular researches and surveys, there are opposing views on conspicuous consumption arguing that most of the wealthiest people lead quite modest lifestyles.⁴⁸ It seems that mentioned ‘modesty’ is still very connected to luxury and collecting contemporary art. Starting with the 80’s, upper classes start to withdraw from common consumption patterns and invent new forms of asserting class distinctive status to render their positions as unreachable as before. As a result, it is not quite possible to come across with the practices of middle class in collecting art after the 80’s in Turkey. ‘Real buyers’ is in control of whole market and seeking out fresh conspicuous consumption motivations in art market.

2.2 New consumption motivations in collecting art

“The cult of ephemeral is ideologically connoted by the privilege of the avant-garde.. Only the privileged classes have the right to the reality (actualité) of models. The others will have the right to them when these models have already changed.”⁴⁹

Therefore, admiring the temporal things, owning them and updating the ownership point out to a particular economic power of certain class as Baudrillard expresses.

As an example, technology renews itself quite quickly, which then leads to upgrading the model or the content of electronic devices used in daily life. Not everyone has the purchasing power to follow technological upgrades and to exchange the daily devices with brand new ones constantly. While the brand managers and manufacturers are developing strategies such as producing and

⁴⁸ The book *The Millionaire Next Door* is analyzing the lifestyle of the wealthiest Americans and finding that most millionaires are quite frugal. Thomas J. (2010). *The Millionaire Next Door: The Surprising Secrets of America’s Wealthy* (reissue ed.) New York: Taylor Trade Publishing

⁴⁹ Baudrillard, J. (1981). *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1st ed.), (C.Levin, Trans.). New York: Telos Press. p.52

promoting less durable products to enable the maximum consumption, purchasing power is not changing so, going into debt (getting loans from banks, credit card debts) becomes prevalent for many people to catch up with changing devices. I try to examine the situation from the perspective of interior design, which is the pursuit of certain classes. The usage of béton brut in interior design and in site-specific furniture production is one of the striking elements of today's architecture, constituting the concept of 'raw luxury' or 'less is more' that comes with Minimalism. For example, the lifetime of a 'modest' béton brut sink is less than the lifetime of a ceramic one. In order to protect the béton brut sink from the heat and damp and to make it water-resistant, a constant maintenance of insulating should be applied. This needs labor and economic power to afford for labor. If anyone has passion for being surrounded by concrete surfaces all along, then s/he has the will to meet the demand of the space for refurbishment constantly, and each time with the addition of new qualities set by new trends. However, the most important of all, applying any solution of choice requires constant economic power. I would like to give special design fashion accessories as last example. It is clear that once the current one is promoted and sold, another style of handbag is going to be hype after a few months. Then, comes the pursuit for the newer, only if power to purchase is maintained. The sign for maintained economic power and social status is again the act of purchasing more of new stuff. What is temporal is also transitory. Temporal things could be consumed only if there is purchasing power to afford the temporal trends. When we reach to the 90's, it is possible to talk about consumption practices in collecting art that adopt an approach of 'claiming the temporal'.

I will try to examine the updated motivations of collecting art and how the contours of the practices of collecting art are redrawn and new consumption patterns are set in Turkey after the 80's. Since the 90's, the timeline marks the consumption practices of corporations and art foundations rather than individuals both worldwide and in Turkey. I will demonstrate the reasons and drives of this change. I will analyze temporal motivations of collecting contemporary art during the 2000s as an additional and inseparable context to conspicuous consumption. How trends and motives are produced/coproduced by the actors, units of art industry to serve for the instantaneous and fast practices of consumption in collecting art will be my interest. I will focus on what constitutes the current purchasing interest of art collectors in Turkey.

2.2.1 Accelerating mediums and changing ownership

A close look at contemporary art reveals a field where everything is done and then undone again and again. It is a field where every day life and every incident occurring are internalized, intervened, and given response to, so it is a field that is fixed on a daily basis. The quality of temporal in context of contemporary art signifies the thing, idea or practice soon to be out of date and fall from favor, and nondurable in time, which most of the times points out the quality of not being able to be framed and hung on the wall for centuries long. Nevertheless, the demand for such art practices is rapidly increasing. For instance "Contemporary art sold at Sotheby's between 2003 and 2007 had a 600% increase from £218 million worth sold in 2003 to £1.3 Billion sold in 2007. 'Art Piece database' put the average rise in Contemporary Art between 2003-2008 at 800%. Hiscox put the increase in value

between 2006-2007 at 55% for Contemporary art and only 7.6% for Old Masters.”⁵⁰

Although painting as a medium has still its own buyers all around the world, the era after the 80’s highlights the accumulation of mediums in art such as installation, object sculpture, digital media, sound or kinetic installations, Internet or interactive art, new media, animation, video and performance. While the components of the works of art produced in these mediums or in other words, the materials used in realization of them can be anything (carrying any risk), they are in need of professional maintenance. They all require various storage, transportation, documentation, and installation techniques. The video works are in need of getting updated due to the changing requirements of technical progress, so do all other contemporary works of art using digital technologies. They all require certain practices, formats, media and eligibility of cutting-edge technologies. All these aspects are pivotal in transforming practices of collecting art. Collecting the works of art involves the power to cover all these aforementioned aspects and requirements, which in return become the reason of the shift in ownership from individuals to corporations.

In the 90’s with the privatization of culture and art, an increase in the number of galleries, biennials, fairs, auctions, and a rise in volume of collecting art were experienced together with the escalating number of private museums and art organizations so that “everything became contemporary” As Ali Artun puts it through: “The history of art is stabilized at the “contemporary,” the “current” and at

⁵⁰ Contemporary Art: A Commodity or Just Art (2012, February). The Gentleman’s Journal Retrieved from <http://www.thegentlemansjournal.com/CONTEMPORARY-ART-A-COMMODITY-OR-JUST-ART/> (date of access: 05.10.2015)

the “present”. Time (*kronos*) is synchronized.”⁵¹ By the 2000s, the first private modern museum, *İstanbul Modern* was founded. Previously known as *Project 4L* was reestablished as *Elgiz Museum* in Maslak business towers. *Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Centre* was established in 2001. Rapidly following one after another, *Borusan Art*, *Santral İstanbul*, *Siemens Art*, *ARTER*, *SALT* (Karaköy, Beyoğlu and Ulus-Ankara) were established. Kıraç family, Sabancı and Koç family all began to share their private collections with public via private museums and art spaces in the 2000s. They were added up to the list of initiators who were willing to take an active part through their collections in the construction of contemporary art history in Turkey. Together with individual collectors, newly established private museums, art foundation and institutions were all and still are in need of purchasing works of art for their solo and group shows as well as for maturing their collections.

2.2.2 Market conditions and purchasing trends in the 2000s

In the 90’s, art had the transformative effect of the capital, but at the same time endeavor of collecting came across with an alternative zone in art production in Turkey. It was a group of artists who were simply responding to socio-politic conditions, and producing works on the themes of women’s rights, human rights violations, identity politics, ethnic discrimination, and power relations intertwined with up-to-date political events in the 90’s. Director of research and programs at *SALT*, curator and art critic, Vasıf Kortun talks about the book *Ofsayt ama Gol*, compiled from the letters/writings between him and art critic and lecturer Erden Kosova, in the interview he has given to *Agos Newspaper*. He expresses his ideas

⁵¹ Artun, A. (n.d.) Ofis Müze ve Müzenin Medyalaşması (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis) Retrieved from <http://www.aliartun.com/content/detail/70> (date of access: 11.12.2015)

about the production of the artists and artist collectives activated towards the end of the 90's as:

They were energized by political caricatures and comics. They were easy with the material, move with a kind of urgency. None of them had a studio. Very dynamic and fresh; differing from the previous generations; their ethnic backgrounds were various... They were talking a lot, discussing a lot, but rarely and meticulously produced works...⁵²

It was in that period when İstanbul became a center of attraction for contemporary art. Realizing the attention paid by the outsiders, the local collectors were convinced that the productions of contemporary artists worth to pursue, so their interest in contemporary art was sparked. In the 90's it was the first time when the consumption practice was influenced by current movements, experienced the present mostly through the mediums other than painting, and developed a clear liking to contemporary art.

By the 2000s, the practices of collecting contemporary art have similar characteristics and pursued with similar purchasing motivations and interests. First, same political issues and concerns at hand to tackle with through artistic production - for example violation of human rights or Turkish State's war against Kurds- themes and topics of the recent past are still up to date. Yet, the collectors are still in pursuit of the works of art produced in the 80's and the 90's with an urge to fulfill the requirements of a mature and integral contemporary art collection. Some of the

⁵² Tuğba Esen interviewed with Vasıf Kortun. *Az Düşünüp Çok Üreten Sanatçılar*, (2014, May 16) *Agos Gazetesi* Retrieved from <http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/7360/az-dusunup-cok-ureten-sanatcilar> (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis)
Ofsayt Ama Gol!" (*Offside, But a Goal!*), a 2005 book by curators Vasıf Kortun and Erden Kosova who discuss Turkey's contemporary art scene from the 1990s to the early 2000s in an interview format. It can be found online in URL http://saltonline.org/media/files/ofsayt_ama_gol_scrd.pdf

works in demand within this context are the works of Şener Özmen, Bülent Şangar, Vahap Avşar and Gülsün Karamustafa. The works of the artists such as Halil Altındere and Murat Akagündüz, who are the former members of 90's artists' initiatives and became known with their individual practices later in the art market, are also in demand. Second, the works of the artists such as Kutluğ Ataman and Taner Ceylan having quite unique interdisciplinary practices and opened up a space for emerging topics throughout the 2000s are in demand. Third, the collectors are interested in the works of emerging contemporary artists. By 2015, most of these emerging artists such as Aslı Çavuşoğlu, Nilbar Güreş, Erinç Seymen, Hera Büyüктаşçıyan are represented by prominent art galleries in İstanbul, their productions are quantitatively more in number compared to the 90's artists' and their works are highly involved in art market. Lastly, the collectors show interest in early examples of contemporary art by collecting the works of prominent conceptual artists like Sarkis, Füsün Onur, Cengiz Çekil and Ayşe Erkmen. Their early works were produced in the 70's and the 80's, but due to lack of interest in those years they could not gain proper collection value in local art market. The collections aiming to keep the pulse of contemporary art are retroactively constructing their collections by picking up the pieces of the puzzle by working with art galleries.

In the 90's there were only few established galleries (for example, *Nev Gallery* and *Maçka Sanat Gallery*) displaying contemporary and conceptual works of art. Today, İstanbul is one of the favorite hubs of global contemporary art market, however, the galleries, which achieve significant local and international sales activity, have wide scale recognition and reputation, offer qualified artistic program to public, and represent the production which belongs to the prominent local contemporary artists,

are still a few. Some of them having most of these qualities are still experiencing financial difficulties due to the lack of sales. I specifically focus on this mentioned type of art galleries since their potentials to work with the ‘real buyers.’

It is not possible to determine the exact percentage of local collectors’ budget allocated for purchasing art from abroad. However, it is possible to observe the effect of foreign purchases on local ones by examining the sales of local galleries in the 2000s. The gallerists in Turkey have frequently expressed that the collectors has had the tendency to purchase works of art from abroad instead of connecting with local galleries to support local art market. This issue has not always but generally been the reason for some galleries to end their business operations and close down. *Elipsis Gallery*, the first of its examples in representing only the artists who produce works of art in photography, displaying and selling only works of photography ended its business activity in 2014. In the interview, published with a title “We are not working to fund anybody’s collection” in *Radikal Newspaper*, the gallery owner Sinem Yörük talks about the reasons that forced her to make the decision of closing down. She explains that some of the collectors who have been regular clients of the gallery have delayed the payments or they have asked for huge reductions on prices. Moreover, she mentions that some collectors prefer purchasing works of art especially from abroad. They do not even visit a local gallery where the works of the same artist they purchased from abroad, are put up on sale, “I know a collector who preferred to purchase a foreign artist’s work from a gallery in New York rather than buying the artist’s works from Elipsis Gallery. This is the greatest harm that a collector can give to his/her local market.”⁵³ This statement points to the fact that the

⁵³ Cem Erciyas interviewed with Sinem Yörük. *Kimsenin Koleksiyonunu Finanse Edecek Değiliz* (2014, December 12) *Radikal Gazetesi* (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis) Retrieved from

collectors do not have any problem with overpaying due to additional covering tax policies of foreign countries, custom and shipment fees for a work, which has already been shipped by a local gallery, and is there waiting to be purchased readily. The consumption preferences of the collectors directly effect the conditions of the local art market. Previously, I have discussed that before the 70's the private-commercial galleries were founded, but could not survive more than one or two years in the market and then closed down. In the 2000s, survival of the established galleries is still a matter of concern in Turkey. An art gallery with an unstable business activity impairs and causes a chain reaction in local art market by effecting living condition of the artists, quality of the productions, reputation of the city as an art hub that it operates in and so on. What could be the reason of this instability, if not an extreme tendency of the practices of collecting art for purchasing foreign works?

Luxury goods consumption did not get effected from recent economic crisis experienced both in Turkey and in the world. Depending on the analysis of purchasing art within the scope of luxury goods consumption in the first chapter, I draw the conclusion that the consumption of artworks as luxury goods does not get effected from economic or politic crises both in Turkey and in the world. For instance, there was no decline, but a 4 to 5% increase in the number of people visiting İstinye Park shopping mall during and after Gezi uprising in the year 2013.⁵⁴ On the other hand, the local galleries have been frequently pointing out the significant fall in sales since 2011, and especially after 2013. I believe decrease in

<http://www.radikal.com.tr/kultur/kimsenin-koleksiyonunu-finanse-edecek-degiliz-1243323/> (date of access: 12.10.2015)

⁵⁴ Par, K. interviewed with Zafer Yıldırım. Parası Değil Gelmesi Önemli, (2013, November 6) *Habertürk Gazetesi*, (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis) Retrieved from <http://www.haberturk.com/kultur-sanat/haber/891161-parasi-degil-gelmesi-onemli>

sales particularly after Gezi period stems from discord emerged between arts practice and collecting art. This disturbance in the ordinary flow of economic operations and relations was caused by arts practice spread on streets. Once contemporary modes of art took the streets to disrupt the formation of the ruling economic system, collecting practices were alienated from local art market. After Gezi period, the decline escalated, recession started in local art market and many different galleries such as *Mana* and *Elipsis* were closed down. Some of them are still struggling with difficulties like *Kuad Gallery*. Beral Madra, curator art critic and the founder of Kuad Gallery, published an article on her blog in 2014 in reply to the rumors that Kuad Gallery would be closed down. In her article, she explains Kuad Gallery's artistic program:

When the content and form of the exhibitions hosted by Kuad Gallery is observed, it can be easily perceived that Kuad Gallery operates almost like a non-profit organization. In the years 2012-2013, it was not as much as expected, but sale was made. However, since the beginning of 2014, there has been a drastic recession in sales due to political crisis occurred and election period that Turkey has been through.⁵⁵

Mana Gallery has ended its business activity without declaring the causes of its decision at the end of 2013. It didn't leave a trace from its archive, documentation of exhibitions, art publications, data of screenings, and talks, not even a website, they all disappeared. What is the reason for a commercial gallery, supporting artists by representing their works, providing opportunities for third parties, gaining a considerable international visibility and public attention in a very short period of time, and as young as 3.5 years old for closing down, if not insufficient sales? Some other established galleries struggling with market conditions found the solution of

⁵⁵ Madra, B. Fuarlardan Sonra Tufan, (2014, November) (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis) Retrieved from http://pluversum.blogspot.com.tr/2014_11_01_archive.html (date of access: 11.12.2015)

moving their premises to a bit cheaper areas or to apartment flats.

Maçka Sanat, as a commercial gallery, still open today, has been probably one of the most prominent example of contemporary art space that has never compromised on offering public qualified artistic program to promote conceptual art for years. Why it is not one of well-known art galleries in the world today? *Maçka Sanat* is rather remembered and romanticized by the collectors as the witness of the history of Turkish conceptual art. Curator and art critic Necmi Sönmez mentions Füsun Onur's solo exhibition '*Çeşitlemeler*' held at *Maçka Sanat* in 2012 and asks that "Is it possible that a pioneering Turkish contemporary artist Füsun Onur's works could not find buyers in the market though sold for incredibly low prices as cheap as 20.000 TL?"⁵⁶

Most of the established contemporary art galleries have experienced more or less similar processes and faced the same financial difficulties due to rarity of sales. Thus, it appears that the consumption practices in Turkey not only lack the approach of supporting artists' initiatives, art spaces, production practices out of mainstream, it even lacks the understanding of supporting the commercial actors of its own market. In her writing, dated 2014, Beral Madra clearly states that: "We all suppose art collectors, as business people, know the way of doing business. Then it becomes difficult to understand why they are not interested in buying the local examples of contemporary art. The works, which are controversial, critical and linked to their contemporaries, are being produced since the 80's."⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Sönmez, N. (2015). *Şimdiki Zamanın Yanında ya da Karşısında: Sanat Üzerine Yorumlar, 1987-2014*. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları. (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis) p.394

⁵⁷ Madra, B. Fuarlardan Sonra Tufan, (2014, November) (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis) Retrieved from http://pluversum.blogspot.com.tr/2014_11_01_archive.html (date of access: 11.12.2015)

2.2.3 Foreign purchases, fairs and fast consumption

Turkish art collectors, widely connected to the international art market, have been keeping their eyes on the examples of contemporary art in abroad since the end of the 90's. Today, some of the collectors are receiving professional support from local and non-local art advisors who are carrying out foreign purchases for them. They also collaborate with international art institutions to get into contact with the artists' ateliers directly, and establish connections with international retailers such as galleries, auction houses and private dealers. They get curatorial guidance in order to get familiar with non-local artistic practices and also to purchase the productions of these practices for their collection. They are frequently travelling to attend fairs and auctions, openings and other art events in abroad. Purchasing rhythm of local collectors gets fast and intensive. For instance, *Art Basel* marks the beginning of the connection between the collectors from Turkey and international art fairs. One of the longest-standing and most prestigious art fairs is Art Basel, and its main sponsor for years is Switzerland based investment bank *UBS*. When *UBS* has started its business activity in Turkey, it has invited its Turkish clients, whether interested in art or not, to Art Basel. Some of those clients have become the prominent collectors of today. Now, there are many people from Turkey visiting Art Basel.⁵⁸ Clients from Turkey are not only important for Art Basel, but for most of the prestigious fairs nowadays. The interest of the collectors from Turkey in art fairs does not stem from the desire to give support to the booths of galleries from Turkey in fairs, but rather to purchase non-local contemporary works surpassing the reasonable pricing limits and commercial value thresholds. I introduce the threshold value as approximately

⁵⁸ Hatisaru, S. interviewed with Aziz Karadeniz. *Kazanmanın Yolu Fiyat Aralığı Formülüne Bağlı* (2013, October 24) *Milliyet Gazetesi* (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis) Retrieved from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/kazanmanin-yolu-fiyat-araligi/-ekonomi/detay/1781509/default.htm> (date of access: 10.11.2015)

100.000 Euro and over. Art dealer, founder and former shareholder of Galerist, Murat Pilevneli explains that the stagnation in the art market in 2015 stems from the galleries that are not sufficiently effective and potent; "...In the beginning of the 2000s the collectors would pay \$20.000 for a work of art with great hesitation, whereas now they pay \$100.000 without giving it a second thought. The real buyer is purchasing artwork from abroad."⁵⁹ The commercial value assigned to the artworks of young and emerging artists from Turkey, who are producing conceptual and contemporary works in various mediums other than painting, remains considerably below this threshold. Only few prominent artists who have built an international visibility have their works of art priced around this commercial value threshold. Some of Sarkis' installations and Kutluğ Ataman's video works or Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin's works can be given as examples for high-priced works. As I have mentioned before, there are only few galleries eligible to represent the works of these renowned artists in local market. In any case, local collectors are not interested in purchasing always the works of the same artists from those local galleries for some reasons. First, art is one of the most competitive fields regarding its market conditions. Most of the collectors ('real buyers') have their own art foundations, private museums, art institutions and some times their own art galleries; such as art collector Leyla Tara Suyabatmaz's art gallery *Rampa*. So, being the best in the field keeps pressurizing on real buyers, and they develop a tendency to keep away from doing business with supporting other established galleries. Second, if I dwell on the subject within the context of conspicuous consumption, then a collector who is able to afford the works of art priced at or above commercial value threshold certainly

⁵⁹ Ertuna, Ç. interviewed with Murat Pilevneli. Piyasa Dibe Vurdu Çıkacak, (2015, August 30) *Milliyet Gazetesi* (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis) Retrieved from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/-piyasa-dibe-vurdu-cikacak-/cagdas-ertuna/pazar/yazardetay/30.08.2015/2109727/default.htm> (date of access: 12.10.2015)

purchasing them for the prestige of it; it is the very proof of purchasing power.

However, when a collector from Turkey wants to purchase a local work of art with a high commercial value, s/he has very few options. S/he is probably not going to go through the works of the same artists every time, so is going to prefer to go abroad. Under these circumstances, art fairs are turned into domains where the heart of the contemporary art sale beats especially for the collectors from Turkey.

Baudrillard points out:

Contrary to commercial operations, which institute a relation of economic rivalry between individuals on the footing of formal equality, with each one guiding his own calculation of individual appropriation, the auction, like the fete or the game, institutes a concrete community of exchange among peers.⁶⁰

The fairs just like auctions are temporal sale network in which the conspicuous consumption is organized through new event-driven art economy by international actors and units of art industry in order to response to the fast and temporal demands of the consumer. It is the very arena to observe for the analysis of temporal quality and accelerating practices of art purchasing. Today's the most well-known contemporary art fairs are *Art Basel*, organizes two others in Miami and Hong Kong, *Frieze Art Fair* (London and New York), *The Armory Show* (New York City), *FIAC* (Paris), *Art Brussels*, *ARCOmadrid*, *SCOPE* New York, *Art Dubai* and *Art Stage Singapore*. All of them are marketplace for contemporary and conceptual works. They are arenas for 'real buyers', retailers, art critics, sponsors, curators, and artists to show up.⁶¹ In Turkey, there are two art fairs that can be similarly classified and compared to those aforementioned: First is *Contemporary Istanbul* that has been

⁶⁰ Baudrillard, J. (1981). *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1st ed.), (C. Levin, Trans.). New York: Telos Press. p.52

⁶¹ Detailed list of the art fairs can be found on ArtForum web side. Retrieved from <http://artforum.com/guide/calendar=special&filter=8> (date of access: 10.19.2015)

taking place every fall since 2005 and the other is *ArtInternational Istanbul* that has been launched in September 2013 and held for 3 times.

For every art fair, the application and acceptance processes, the display duration of 3 to 4 days including art events, and the formation of sales are more or less carried out in the same manner through similar steps. So, once the process for any art fair is explained, then a general idea about the operating system of fairs can be obtained.

The art fairs are primarily tangible fields where crowd of associate people gather in a closed system of value production and exchange. The access to this closed system is not only controlled via guest entrance checkpoints and x-ray devices, but also through an elimination process of the participant galleries, either accepted or rejected. Before the application process for participation takes its start, there are some eligibility criteria that have to be met for applicants. A gallery that does not meet the required criteria—making a gallery a worldwide prestigious and renown one—is expected not to apply. If it applies, then it is going to be classified as ‘not eligible’. This classification and refusal of the application is going to cause gallery to lose prestige. Eligible and competent, yet still emerging galleries mostly face this situation, which could have critical disadvantages for the future of the gallery in art market. Thus, fairs serve for securing the reputation of the galleries, which are already well known. Consequently, everyone continues to work only with them, not only at fairs, but also at marketplace.

The quality of the location in fair area is determined by being close to -or being surrounded by- the most prestigious participant galleries. The reason for this special designation of location is to make the fast and short visits of VIP’s easier, to gather

VIP's who are already familiar with each other to keep the strict and target-oriented sale atmosphere. The main sponsors and co-sponsors of the fairs, mostly banks, put the effort for PR activities by encouraging their clients to visit the fair, to support art and buy the works of art. The sponsors take the advantage of their sponsorships in various ways. For instance, different clients of all sponsors meet at VIP events, receptions and cocktails, and an eligible atmosphere is created for new business alliances to be born. The fair area is laid 1 to 3 days and often on the last day of installation, VIPs are invited for previews. Finally, when the fair is opened to public, nearly 70% of the sale is completed. Then, the fair area is left for public to watch works of art mostly sold, but still in display.

Many in number but held once in a year, no other art event can ensure attendance and sale as effective and intensive as art fairs. Related to this, even the connections and network in fairs embody a spontaneous and instant quality, the contacts built are permanent and serve for future commerce. If an artist or a gallery catches the attention of a collector, then it is certain that the collector is going to make further purchases in future. In fairs during sales operations, every contact name and information obtained has the potential of future alliances. These potentials sometimes occur in the form of sponsorships. Within the fast and intense atmosphere of the fairs, the main drive of the event; sale done in limited time faces severe competition. This competition leads to arising tension among galleries, among the colleagues of the same galleries, among buyers who intend for and art dealers who mediate for the same work of art. Thousands pieces of work put up for sale in fair area mostly embodies thoughts, contents and concepts totally in contrast to the

battlefield of fairs, consisting of tension and violence.⁶²

As I have previously discussed in 1st chapter, one of the most important rules of the art game is that none of the sellers wants other sellers to know how poorly or well they do. The participants of the fair do not have to supply information regarding the pricing either at the application stage, during the fair or at the end of it. They do not have to share the information of how much each work of art is sold for. Every participant is responsible for its own sales process and tax liability due to its homeland regulations. Consequently, factual data of total cost of the artworks put up for sale or the total amount gained in sales supplied by the fair management are actually coincidental.⁶³ Then, the question of depending on which data the fair management declares a total amount of sales or sum of sale prices (total commercial value of the works at the fair) is left to answer.⁶⁴ Therefore, it is not possible to make an observation depending on hypothetical total sales revenue provided by any foreign or local fair. Art fairs are jungles, and they are becoming the main channel especially for the particular practices of collecting art, which are not constructed upon deliberate and supportive thoughts.

⁶² Most recent example can be given for the case of violence in an art fair is a real knife attack confused for an avant-garde performance at Art Basel Miami Beach in December 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/woman-stabbed-art-basel-miami-event-article-1.2456264> Basically, a woman stabbed another woman. None of the news and reports regarding the case of violence mentioned the identities of both women. Most probably, they were the participants (gallerists or independent art dealers) at the fair. However, the fair management did not want to inform public about it, not to lose its credibility and prestige.

⁶⁴ One of the most possible options is that the fair directories guess the prices of the works submitted by the participant galleries to the board during the application stage. When the fair is over, the board estimates ratio of the amount sold to the total amount introduced to sale again merely depending on their own assumptions and defines the data of total amount of revenue due to sales at the fair irrationally. On the other hand, the participant galleries and other art agencies related with sales operations at the fairs are free to display and sell works of art other than the submitted ones during application process, and eligible to make changes on the known or estimated market prices of the works of art that are up for sale. In addition to that prices sometimes are set higher at the fairs because, the participants have participation fee to be paid and various logistics and installation expenses to be covered in the case of fair.

2.3 Contemporary art and capitalist philanthropy

Today, contemporary art and the business sphere became interlocked with each other. Can corporations and banks be art lovers, and if they can, what does it refer to? Why do corporations get involved in art through funding art events, projects, art institutions, foundations and museums? Why does philanthropy embrace contemporary art as one of its primary charity-cases? If the philanthropist attempts of the corporations are to be analyzed in the context of consumption practices, then what will be the outcome? These are the main points that I would like to discuss. Supporting education, health, sports or art are not different cases for corporations; they equate them all. Basically, corporations have accumulated or compulsorily spared budget to be spent for CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) projects. On the condition that the spared budget is not used to support projects, corporations can face some legal obligations, like paying high tax rates. First of all, I examine collecting contemporary art as a financial strategy put into use by corporations. Secondly, I put forth how corporations gain prestige and credibility for funding contemporary art within the scope of corporate social responsibility. The same point discussed earlier in conspicuous consumption section on individual scale applies here; this time art foundations and private museum concepts are examined as institutionalized forms of conspicuous consumption. The operations of philanthropy or sponsorship mechanism highlight how corporations embrace contemporary art as a primary field for their advertisement and PR activities. Sponsorship mechanism feeds back in the corporations as increased sales and briskness in financial activities. Among all fields like art, health and education that cannot be maintained merely with efforts of state, and that are in need of private sector in order to become more qualified and efficient, art stands out as a must-have field that has to be entered in.

2.3.1 CSR and tax liability policy

Since the 70's, with the impact of state support withdrawal, privatization policy and globalization respectively, the capital's interest in collecting art has grown and its investments have accelerated. In the 2000s, the tendency to purchase art was strengthened, the number of art foundations is multiplied, and the concept of private museums is ascended in Turkey. This transformation in art field is closely linked to the content of 3 different acts, numbered 5225, 5226, and 5228 introduced in 2004⁶⁵. Especially after these new laws put into force in 2004, corporations preferred to support contemporary art in various ways in order to reduce their tax liabilities to the state. The agents of capital allying themselves with the state via new laws in force not only caused art to be commercialized, but also transformed the field into a field of competition and power struggle.

I am going to focus on the contents of the 5225, 5226, and 5228 numbered acts, which regulate tax exemption and incentives regarding the encouragement of cultural investments, and allowing deductions in tax assessment due to sponsorships given. The 5228 numbered act allows expenditures on non-profit art and culture organizations, expenditures on the conservation, maintenance, renovation, and surveys, restoration, and restitution projects of immovable cultural heritage within the scope of 2863 numbered law on Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties, expenditures on the construction, maintenance and/or modernization of venues like libraries, museums, art galleries, cultural centers, movie theatres, theatre, opera and bale houses, concert venues where cultural and artistic events are displayed, and expenditures of all kinds of grants and aids (in-kind and in-cash) given for the

⁶⁵ The act numbered 5225 - Encouragement of Cultural Investments and Enterprises, K lt r Varlıkları ve M zeler Genel M d rl ğ , (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis) Retrieved from <http://www.kulturvarliklari.gov.tr/TR,44790/sikca-sorulan-sorular.html> (date of access: 09.10.2015)

mentioned goals above to be completely deduced from income and corporate tax base.⁶⁶ The 5225 numbered act covers the encouragement of cultural investments and enterprises through exemptions on inheritance and succession tax, conditionally on VAT and title deed transfer fee for immovable cultural heritage registered within the scope of 2863 numbered law on Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties, as well as deduction on income tax withholding, on employer's contribution in insurance premium, and water cost discount and energy support for the investments certified by Ministry of Culture and Tourism.⁶⁷ There are many examples of non-profit culture art organizations as museums, institution kind of art spaces, and art foundations operating under the roof of Immovable Cultural Heritage buildings within the borders of Taksim area. Those are also the most prominent art spaces in İstanbul; the buildings in their usage are historic. Due to the laws, the conservation, maintenance, renovation works, surveys, restoration, and restitution projects, modernization, and all kinds of grants and aids (in-kind and in-cash) supplied for the aforementioned goals is gained back by deduction on taxes. In this case, is it possible to address the interests of the patrons of corporations - as owners of art foundations and private museums- residing in these historical buildings as merely a love of cultural heritage? I would like to focus on the case of AKM as an example. AKM, the most prominent opera and bale house and a cultural and art heritage, has been closed since 2008. The restoration process of AKM became very complicated until a turning point was reached in 2012. In 2012, a sponsorship protocol regarding the restoration of AKM -upon the provision of remaining faithful to its characteristics- was signed between Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Sabancı Holding. Due to

⁶⁶ Sağlam, E. (2004, September) Kültürel Sponsorluk Harcamalarının Vergi Matrahından İndirilmesi ve Kültürle İgili İstisna ve Teşvikler: (5225, 5226 ve 5228 Sayılı Kanunlar) (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis) Retrieved from <http://www.vergidunyasi.com.tr/dergiler.php?id=3440> (date of access: 09.10.2015)

⁶⁷ Sağlam, E. (2004, September)

the protocol, Sabancı Holding was to donate 30 million TL for AKM's restoration. Yeni Yapı-Taca Holding won the bidding and continued restoration work until Gezi uprising. During the most intensified period of Gezi uprising, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism informed Yeni Yapı and Taca Holding that the restoration project of AKM was cancelled. The cancellation, followed by the statement of prime minister at the time, "*AKM will be demolished down for sure*" has fuelled the tension. After that Sabancı Holding has made an announcement through a very short press release: "The protocol that was made between Sabancı Holding and Ministry of Culture and Tourism only binds us within the scope of restoration of AKM"⁶⁸. At this point, the urgent question is to be asked: Why does the state collaborate with private capital - and particular to our example with Sabancı Holding - for? The unrest in public because of the urban renewal projects can turn into a widespread resistance such as seen in Gezi uprising. In order to overcome the potential oppositions that can be faced during the demolition of AKM within the scope of urban deprecation, the state allies with one of the most powerful and acknowledged brand, Sabancı Holding, which has proved its support in culture and art in numerous ways. Despite the clear statement made by the state regarding the demolition of AKM, Sabancı Holding's contradicting announcement on the subject can be taken as expression of an attempt to conciliate the opposing voices and a call for common sense to control the unrest. While Sabancı Holding insists that the collaboration done with the state only involves the restoration of AKM, there are some clues pointing the contrary.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ The Press Release Regarding AKM (2013, May 3) Retrieved from <https://www.sabanci.com/tr/basin/basin-bultenleri-arsiv/akm-ile-ilgili-aciklama/i-3055> (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis) (date of access: 19.11.2015)

⁶⁹ After the cancellation of the first restoration project that took its start with Tabanlıoğlu Architect, the owner of the company and the architect Murat Tabanlıoğlu stated that he had not got any information about how the project he had offered was applied or adapted. He commented on the subject, "You all know that the restoration of AKM is cancelled. I am not allowed to enter AKM anymore, none of us are allowed." Retrieved from http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/kultur-sanat/54025/_AKM_de_bulusabilmeliyiz_.html Citation is translated by the writer of thesis) (date of access: 19.11.2015)

Since the 90's, İstanbul has become a vibrant art hub, which in return had an impact on culture and art oriented urban policy, and led to the establishment of private museums. During the period following 2010, the principles of transparency, accountability and social responsibility gained critical importance in Turkey due to economical shifts taking place globally. Funding contemporary art has conducted through the philanthropic foundations within the body of corporations. Corporations try to vindicate themselves by supporting the preservation of cultural heritage buildings, collecting and displaying contemporary art, actualize their corporate social responsibility projects, and moreover gain incentives in their tax and other liabilities to the state. In order to suppress opposing views, corporations implement strategies in guised of presentation and promotion of local art in abroad, and consequently they become the defenders of art society and public benefits. On the other hand, individuals as art viewers and also as members of urban society are more aware of the fact that global corporations perform irregular business activities and make collaborations that propel environmental and urban depredation with the governments.

While Alain Badiou states that “seeking out for taking pleasure in art” puts art into the category of service, thus art in classical sense is perceived as a public service; “if we consider the fuss made over funding in modern times, then we can say that the state and private capital perceive art in the same way”.⁷⁰ The tradition of donating works of art to state museums now comes to an end, and is replaced by operations of

It is also claimed that during the restoration period of AKM Building the sound and electricity system together with furniture are taken down and sold to junk dealers. Retrieved from http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/kultur-sanat/218263/Koca_AKM_talan_edildi.html (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis) (date of access: 19.11.2015)

⁷⁰ Badiou, A. (2010) *Başka Bir Estetik: Sanatlar İçin Küçük Bir Kılavuz* İstanbul: Metis Yayınları. (1st ed.), (Aziz Ufuk Kılıç, Trans.) (Original work published in 1998). (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis). p.15.

philanthropy. The leading corporations active in the sectors of industry, finance, construction, etc. establish foundations to undertake their corporate social responsibility projects. Then, these foundations are given the task of conducting and financing private museums and art institutions founded by the same corporations to display the patrons' art collections. In this context, when art collecting is practiced on individual level, it serves for the prestige of an individual, on institutional level it contributes in making art public, thus again secures the prestige, but this time for corporations. Today, displaying collections, organizing events and activities become a tool for the sake of gaining corporate prestige, and construct a new private property zone via consumption that always tends to be conspicuous.

The legislation acting on the newly introduced laws, numbered 5225, 5226, and 5228, is allowing all kinds of funding and donations given to non-profit art and culture organizations, events and projects to be taken into consideration within the category of grants and aids in-kind as well.⁷¹ This extension gives way to corporations to penetrate more into art field within the scope of corporate social responsibility. Thus, some of these corporations also recover their image - loss of credibility stemming from oppositions in public to their business activities (product advertisements containing gender discrimination or offence to women, production processes causing environmental pollution, close contact with military by supplying arms, etc.) This constructed image results in financial gain and socio-politic

⁷¹ IKS SV inserts the content of the new law in force in its sponsorship call on IKS SV website; "Corporates and individuals to fund IKS SV are eligible to deduce the amount of their contribution/support completely from income and corporate tax base upon the receipt of expense given by our foundation... Our foundation is exempt from tax, providing a complete relief from taxes, as it is acquired "Public Benefit" status with Council of Ministers' Decree. Our foundation's festivals and events are also supported by Ministry of Culture and Tourism. According to the related article of the law in force, the contributions done even as donations are eligible to be deduced from income and corporate tax base without any limitation/exception. (GVK Md.89 ; KVK Md:10)" (Citation is translated by the Retrived from <http://www.iksv.org/tr/sponsorluk#4> (date of access: 13.09.2015)

immunity for all corporations involved in art field and for their executives.

Moreover, using art as a tool, these corporations build up a mutual support and solidarity mechanism only among each other.

SALT, has become Garanti Bank's most comprehensive investment in art field.

Besides, that Garanti Bank supports *Saha Association* and *İstanbul Modern* in-kind.⁷²

Saha Association introduces *Borusan Holding*⁷³ and *Eczacıbaşı Holding* as its supporters together with *Garanti Bank*.⁷⁴ Opening up as the first modern art museum in Turkey immediately after the new legislation acts in 2004, *İstanbul Modern* was initiated by *Eczacıbaşı*. There are many corporations, and renowned business people and politicians among the contributing supporters of the museum's foundation.⁷⁵

More or less similar names are mentioned as the founding sponsors of *IKSV* (*İstanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts*). *Oya Eczacıbaşı*, Chairwoman of the Board in *İstanbul Modern*, explains the support given to *İstanbul Modern* by the leading corporations having a sense of social responsibility as, "Sponsoring art provides corporations reputation and respectability; the sponsorships of individuals, corporations, institutions and media are vital in *İstanbul Modern*'s existence as well."⁷⁶ The reason of rushed opening of *İstanbul Modern* in December 2004, -even before the completion of the collection- was allegedly to make a positive impression

⁷² Retrieved from http://www.garanti.com.tr/tr/garanti_hakkinda/surdurulebilirlik/kurumsal_sorumluluk/kultur_sanata_destek.page (date of access: 13.09.2015)

⁷³ *Borusan Contemporary*, known as *Perili Kışk*, founded in association with *Borusan Kocabıyık Foundation* by *Borusan Holding* in 2007, sets an example of private museum operating literally within the building of a corporation. *Ali Artun* refers to *Thomas Kren* -who has given advice for the artistic program, administrative concept and institutional identity of the *Borusan Contemporary Museum*- as "Thomas Kren was the head of *Solomon Guggenheim Foundation* in New York, in 1988, and throughout his 20 years of sovereignty he executed discharging the concept of modern museum. He tried to restructure the museum like a corporation or rather a global chain store." *Artun, A, (n.d.) Ofis Müze ve Müzenin Medyalaşması* (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis) Retrieved from <http://www.aliartun.com/content/detail/70> (date of access: 13.09.2015)

⁷⁴ Retrieved from http://www.saha.org.tr/destekciler/kurumsal_destekciler (date of access: 13.09.2015)

⁷⁵ Retrieved from http://www.istanbulmodern.org/tr/destekleyin/sponsorluk/kurucu-ve-ana-sponsorlar_15.html (date of access: 13.09.2015)

⁷⁶ Retrieved from http://www.istanbulmodern.org/tr/muze/hakkinda_3.html (date of access: 13.09.2015)

on E.U countries before one of the E.U accession negotiations tour took its start.⁷⁷ Executing sponsorships mechanism actively, İstanbul Modern has grown with funding. Upon the establishment of museum by requesting donation -as-works of art- from the artists, Oya and Bülent Eczacıbaşı Collection was broadened in content and the ‘modern-contemporary art collection’ was matured. *Santralİstanbul Museum*, founded in 2007 and not active currently, also adopted the same approach and requested donation instead of rendering payment for them to the artists. Later on Santralİstanbul put out the works of art, which had been acquired through donations, for sale in an auction in 2013 was revealed when the statements of the artists who had donated their works to the museum, appeared on media.⁷⁸

The main goal of a museums and non profit art organization is to purchase works of art in order to support the arts production and artists however, examining examples given above, the primary importance of this goal is certainly debatable in Turkey. There are other goals and concerns benefiting the corporations. Owning non-profit art space and operating it in favor of public through foundations are advantageous for purchasing the most prominent works in both local and international market and competing with various similar actors of the market. “Not for sale but for public benefit” works of art, collections and exhibitions require a tough competition to be obtained. A foundation that is long established and pioneering in culture and art field in its own country has always been privileged in international art scene and in art market.

⁷⁷ Durmaz, N. (2015, May) Sanatın Özelleştirilmesi ya da Sermayenin Meşruiyet Alanı, Heinrich Böll Stiftung (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis) Retrieved from <https://tr.boell.org/tr/2015/05/28/sanatin-ozellestirilmesi-ya-da-sermayenin-mesruiyet-alani> (date of acces: 22.10.2015)

⁷⁸ <http://www.haberturk.com/kultur-sanat/haber/819306-sanatcilar-ates-puskuruyor>

2.3.2 PR & advertisement & sponsorship

Grasping art as a tool for public relations or advertisement, corporations strive to widen the scope of their target consumers or to be more influential on their customers by promoting their support and investments in art. As the struggle heightens to obtain cultural capital in order to achieve the desired economical goals, and as art depends more on corporate funding day by day, concerns arise about how the actors, units and laborers of the industry inquire the sources of finance and the context of sponsorship. To react to the corporations' methods and strategies of involvement in art, *Occupy Museums* movement calls out public to occupy all museums. The manifesto of Occupy Museums movement starts as, "We Occupy museums to reclaim space for meaningful culture by and for the %99. We believe that art and culture are the soul for the commons. Art is not a luxury."⁷⁹ The financial support that *Tate Museum* gets from *BP* (the energy giant responsible for the Deepwater Horizon disaster in 2010) due to their sponsorship, agreement also faced a series of protests.⁸⁰ The climate activists protested the climate-unfriendly corporation's sponsorship program of Louvre in 2015. Artists called for boycott of *Sydney Biennale* over sponsorship in 2014 and many other examples of boycotting took place in abroad. In Turkey, İstanbul Biennial protest dated 2011 due to its sponsorship agreement with Koç Holding⁸¹ can be given as an example. Despite these, corporations continue to compete in sponsoring art and contemporary art field continue to compete in accepting it. Jennifer Suggitt, head of corporate relations at

⁷⁹ Retrieved from <http://occupymuseums.org/> (date of acces: 23.10.2015)

⁸⁰ Climate Change Activists Stage Tattoo Protest Against BP at Tate Britain, (n.d.) *The Guardian* Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/nov/28/climate-change-activists-tattoos-tate-britain-bp-protest> (date of access: 22.10.2015)

⁸¹ The letter dated 3 November 1980 written by the founder of Koç Holding Vehbi Koç and sent to the seventh President of Turkey Kenan Evren was the main focus of the protest in order to criticize the sponsorship relations established by İstanbul Biennial. The letter can be found in URL: <http://kamusalsanatlaboratuvari.blogspot.com.tr/p/isimsiz-mektup-bienal.html>

the *British Museum* says, “It is a very competitive market for all art institutions and they have no choice other than corporate funding.”⁸² Likewise, Oya Eczacıbaşı states, “art business is not much different from other business fields, except the fact that the museums provide works of art as product.”⁸³

Sponsoring art helps corporations to promote their business activity, plus to gain visibility, so that they find the opportunity of reducing their advertisement budgets. As corporations offer support and fund to culture and art they gain visibility in return. Moreover, art organizations have also media sponsorships so that they do not have to allocate an extra budget to afford for advertisement and PR. If any amount of money is ever spent for PR and advertisement, then it goes back to where it comes from as the sponsorship mechanism works in a vicious cycle. Media is owned by giant corporations that monopolize automotive industry, nuclear energy, oil, finance, telecommunication etc. not only in Turkey, but also in the whole world. While the beginning of the 90’s witnessed the rise of holdings and seizure of media by them, the philanthropy as a mission updated its content with this new state of affair. It is previously mentioned that the private museums, art institutions, non-profit culture and art organizations, biennials and fairs are all in need of either corporate or project-based sponsorships for their operations, enhanced furthermore with media sponsorships. In the Economic Impact Research Report conducted by *IKSV* and published in 2012, it was declared that the total coverage of news published in written and visual media on national scale throughout the year 2011 was the

⁸² Spence, R. (2014, September) Who Funds the Arts and Why We Should Care, *Financial Times* Retrieved from <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/4313691c-3513-11e4-aa47-00144feabdc0.html> (date of acces: 22.15.2015)

⁸³ Artun, A. (2011) *Çağdaş Sanatın Örgütlenmesi: Estetik Modernizmin Tasfiyesi*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları. p.125 (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis)

equivalent of 180 million TL.⁸⁴ Basically, IKS V and non-profit art organizations alike save this budget through the mechanism of media sponsorships. While corporations are supporting art institutions and organizations, they gain visibility through the events carried out by these institutions and organizations, which feeds back into corporations as an increase in their business activities and profits. What the media sponsors get in return for their support is directly linked with their ownership. Since most of the media channels are owned by sponsoring corporations, the prestige, respectability and the profit gained by the corporations are adequately satisfying for them.

2.4 3D + I or art as an investment

Once in Europe, there were three common excuses for selling out the owned works of art. For the old works, sale has been mostly driven by these three reasons called 3 D's; divorce, debt and death, so has the purchase. Now, both selling and purchasing are driven by investment-oriented reasons. Art market is a target for many investors - whether art collector or not - for seizing upon the fortune they have got from their business activities to make more money in art. There are reasons why art is treated as an investment option. To survive through economic crises with minimum loss, an urge to invest in 'things' that do not lose their commercial value appears in crises periods. In the existing economic system there are very few options possessing this kind of quality in investment field. One of those few options is contemporary art. In the case of a market collapse, does not the commercial value of art also decrease? In order to answer the question, it is better to examine some examples. During the oil

⁸⁴ İstanbul Kültür Sanat Vakfı Ekonomik Etki Araştırması, (2012, December) (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis) Retrieved from http://cdn.iksv.org/media/content/files/IKSV_Ekonomik_Etki_Arastirmasi.pdf p.9 (date of access: 17.04.2016)

crisis of 1979, the prices of antiques raised, when the stock market's crash occurred in 1987, the art market recorded one of the most flourishing periods ever, in 2009 during the crises, art represented 25 % of the total 'emotional investments' of the persons with high incomes."⁸⁵ The auction results in 2008 prove that Lehman Brothers' collapse in 2008 did not have an effect on art market while impairing all other sectors. For example, Sotheby's New York holds the most successful auction to date in history, with sales of Contemporary Art reaching \$362 million for 2008.⁸⁶ In Turkey, perceiving collecting art as an investment option dates back to the 80's. Before the hype times of bankers came to an end with the renowned bankers crisis in Turkey, the interest rates had made peak due to the usurer money market accelerated in financial system. Cevher Özden's (Kastelli) bankruptcy in 1982 triggered 'Bankers Crisis', which then led to the reconstruction of financial system in Turkey. Regarding that period, art dealer Rafi Portakal states, "When the \$2000 artworks of the past gained value up to \$30.000 – \$40.000, people preferred to sell them and deposit the money in banker Kastelli in order to earn exorbitant rates of interest. The paintings have been there, on the walls of their houses, being watched for years anyway."⁸⁷

In the world, another reason of treating art as an investment option is money laundering. Starting from the 80's, the need of converting black money, owned through illegal acts like corruption, drugs, gambling etc. into another value unit, the works of art were in demand. Convenient to transport, easily bought and sold by the help of mediators, and either individual or corporate no obligation to proclaim the

⁸⁵ Gerlis, M. (2014). *Art as an investment: A Survey of Comparative Assets*. London: Lund Humphries.

⁸⁶ Retrieved from <http://www.sothebys.com/en/inside/about-us/timeline.html> (date of access: 22.12.2015)

⁸⁷ Hatisaru, S. (2013, October) Ustalardan Sanata Yatırım Tüyoları I, *Milliyet Gazetesi*. (Citation is translated by the wirtter of thesis) Retrieved from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/ustatlardan-sanata-yatirim/ekonomi/detay/1779966/default.html> (date of access: 13.11.2015)

buyer's identity are the reasons which made purchasing art popular especially among individuals and corporates involved in off the record business activity. The tendency in investing unrecorded income on art has appeared. As Beral Madra states for the period of the 80's in Turkey, "...It was easy to justify the situation just by stating, "the piece inherited from my father"⁸⁸. All around the world trading (buying and selling) art has been quite common for money laundering. Related to illegal acts and money laundering giving way to unrecorded economy, speculative collectors, corrupt dealers, and free ports, the regulation of art market has become the hot topic in recent years. Nouriel Roubini economics professor expresses the use of art for tax avoidance and evasion as stating "Anybody can walk into a gallery and spend half a million dollars and nobody is going to ask any questions... Art can easily be used for money laundering purposes."⁸⁹

As I have previously mentioned the price of an artwork, can rise or fall because of dozens of reasons. In the case of disagreement, there is no any regulation, mechanism or people to make an objection to; some economists believe that a certain kind of regulation is required in art market. High-end deals and the process of sale are operated in privacy and buyers remain anonymous. Business reporter based in CNN, Sophia Yan discusses that how rich Chinese people are secretly moving their money out of China via purchasing art on TV, "Fine art is an appealing vehicle for money laundering because prices can be fuzzy, pieces are easily moved across borders, and even experts have trouble identifying fakes. Cash is a commonly accepted form of payment, making it difficult to track where the money came from

⁸⁸ (2005, April), *Arkitera*. (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis) Retrieved from <http://v3.arkitera.com/s4-beral-madra.html> (date of access: 21.12.2015)

⁸⁹ Laird, M. (2015, January) The Business of art, a Davos Talking Point, *swissinfo*. Retrieved from <http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/the-business-of-art--a-davos-talking-point/41233432> (date of access: 15.12.2015)

and where it's going.”⁹⁰ Edward Winkleman of *Winkleman Gallery* makes a similar comment about the situation in U.S.A as, “The state generally wouldn't question what is reported. Individual sales don't need to be reported, only the totals for each quarter.”⁹¹

It seems that it is easy to purchase millions of dollars worth artworks without proclaiming to revenue authorities. Then, these artworks are sold and the profit obtained becomes ‘legitimate’ on tax payments. The only restraint to money laundering is money-depositing limit called suspicious transactions. Banks and financial institutions are obliged to report the transactions exceeding the amount determined together with the identification of the parties involved. This limit varies from \$2000 to \$50.000 depending on the country. On the other hand, in art business “artworks can be bought and sold relatively anonymously, and even when a transaction occurs, complex ownership schemes, many with a degree of secrecy attached, are widespread.”⁹² says Paul Tehan of *TrackArt*, a Hong Kong-based art risk consultancy. The ways of buying and selling art without encountering transaction obstacles or getting caught authorities’ attention varies in number. In U.S.A, Louisiana State is known for its state and local tax exemption law, applied on buying and selling works of art. There are many zones in the world where no tax liabilities for buying and selling art. These free zones can be duty-free art warehouses, ports or harbors where extreme liberal economy rules, real buyers, art

⁹⁰ CNN Money. (2014, February) Chinese Snap Up Fine Art for Use in Laundering Schemes. Retrieved from <http://money.cnn.com/2014/02/20/news/economy/china-art-laundering/> (date of access: 15.12.2015)

⁹¹ Abrams, L. Laundering Money Through Art, If You're Into That Sort of Thing. *Hopes&Fears* Retrieved from <http://www.hopesandfears.com/hopes/culture/art/214699-guide-to-laundering-money-art> (date of access: 21.12.2015)

⁹² Song, S. (2014, February) China's Money Laundering: Wealthy Chinese Smuggling Cash Out Using Art. *International Business Time*. Retrieved from <http://www.ibtimes.com/chinas-money-laundering-wealthy-chinese-smuggling-cash-out-using-art-1557155> (date of access: 23.11.2015)

dealers, gallerists, auctioneers and all sorts of intermediaries meet. The works of art are stored for sale and purchase.

Another reason for treating art as an investment option today, is the financial advice given by private banking assistants. They advise their customers to invest 18% of their capital on art. Banks offer loan programs designed for the practices of collecting art. In Turkey, *Yapı Kredi Bank* has recently launched its new loan program with a catchphrase “do not wait for expanding your collection.”

Collectors and want-to-be collectors are now able to own the works of art of their desire, and own it whenever they like to via specially designed loan programs, plus the loans can be paid back with flexible payment schedules and options. People being offered bank loans to purchase art especially when it is not a matter of need and they can readily afford for high priced works of art, sounds irrational. Yet, it cannot be ignored that people prefer to keep their cash in saving accounts or buying bank assets and investing in stocks, thus they get loans for their high-priced purchases. The works of art to be bought are most probably going to be sold in a short period of time to gain more, -as it happens in stock market-, so the bank loans offered for purchasing art sounds more suitable for experienced collectors rather than beginners. Özçelik from Yapı Kredi Bank answers the question, “Why has the bank launched this kind of loan program?” as, “We would like to promote art, because for financiers art is a very effective investment”.⁹³ Apart from the bank loans offered to purchase art, consultancy in passion investments -including collecting art- to structure wealth have begun to be offered by professional companies in the world. In

⁹³ Retrieved from <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=13258216&yazarid=20.i> (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis) (date of access: 10.12.2015)

U.S.A *Fine Art Wealth Management*, the company offers international consultancy in purchasing fine art ⁹⁴

2.5 Contemporary art collection scenes from Turkey

Starting from the 80's, contemporary works as collector's new interest gained collection value together with the early examples of Turkish classical painting, Ottoman antiques, tughras, Islamic calligraphy etc. within most of the art collections in Turkey. Today, most of the art collections that are composed of the competent works of contemporary art in Turkey bring all the pieces mentioned above together in the same pot. Collections include, evaluate, preserve, protect, treat and sometimes display all of these examples together. In his article titled *Office Space and Museum as Media* Ali Artun criticizes the content of Borusan Holding's Contemporary Art Collection and the form of display at *Borusan Contemporary Office Museum*:

It is difficult to name it as a collection because; the selected works on display do not bear either aesthetic or historic connections, which are the requisites for being a collection. The works are bought randomly and most of them are ordered dependent upon and suiting to the surrounding design where they are in display.⁹⁵

By 2000, existing collections begin to be reconstructed or rather renovated by their owners with the addition of new works of art. Most of the corporate collections pay special attention to restructure their collections so that a corporal identity and subjectivity can also be constructed upon that relevantly. Likewise, individual collectors have become quite assertive to be a competent contemporary art collector,

⁹⁴ *Fine Art Wealth Management (FAWM)* is a wealth management consultancy dedicated exclusively to art and other investments of passion as an alternative asset class and the disciplines required to analyze complex field of investment.

⁹⁵ Artun, A. (n.d.) *Ofis Müze ve Müzenin Medyalaşması* (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis) Retrieved from <http://www.aliartun.com/content/detail/70>

and fetch the swiftly changing tendencies in art. The owner of *Beyaz Art Auction*

House mentions:

Some of the corporations that were specialized on antiques previously, began to switch to contemporary art starting from 2008. It was obvious that a threshold was reached when trading volume of contemporary art at Beyaz Art was beyond the total sale of painting, calligraphy, objects made at other auction sessions.⁹⁶

Individual collectors mostly asked for professional support or advice for their new purchases, but rarely for the process of restructuring, documenting or achieving their collections. Most of the collectors are not aware of the basic qualities and standards of a mature contemporary art collection, the requirements particular to every single work of art to preserve and the relation between the sum and its parts. Art collector Zafer Yıldırım answered the questions whether he had bought the works of art in the collection randomly or not, and what kind of transformation had his art collection been through as, “I was buying Turkish artists’ works. Later on, calligraphic works and even manuscripts of Kur-an were included in my collection. I have to confess that we have recently started to grasp the idea of building an art collection. Now, we are eliminating and weeding out.”⁹⁷

By the year of 2016, a close look into the private or corporate collections reveals that there are few convincing examples displaying the integrity of consciously chosen works of art, and fulfilling particular criteria. Paul McMillen creative director of RPM Agency compares many collectors in Turkey to ones who collect ‘Hello Kitty’ items and says, “Most of the collections are higgledy-piggledy. When you ask, ‘Why

⁹⁶ Hatisaru, S. interviewed with Aziz Karadeniz. *Kazanmanın Yolu Fiyat Aralığı Formülüne Bağlı* (2013, October 24) *Milliyet Gazetesi* (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis) Retrieved from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/kazanmanin-yolu-fiyat-araligi/-ekonomi/detay/1781509/default.htm> (date of access: 10.11.2015)

⁹⁷ Par, K. interviewed with Zafer Yıldırım. *Parası Değil Gelmesi Önemli*, (2013, November 6) *Habertürk Gazetesi*, (Citation is translated by the writer of thesis) Retrieved from <http://www.haberturk.com/kultur-sanat/haber/891161-parasi-degil-gelmesi-onemli>

did you buy that?’ most of the time you get the answer, ‘I do not know, I think I really liked it.’⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Akyüz. R & Darendediler S. (2015, February). Fotoğrafın Türkiye’deki sancılı yolculuğu. İstanbul ArtNews:17. (Citation is translated by the writer of the thesis)

CONCLUSION

It seems difficult to overcome the problems of art industry by merely discussing the integration of art market into current economic system. It is also ineffective to address all alone the transformation of arts practice into economic operations to negotiate with market conditions per se. Moreover, it seems quite late to evaluate possible outcomes of state support in contemporary arts production. Today, debt-laden governments are not interested in funding contemporary art instead corporations keep works of art on public display and maintain power to ensure the strength of art markets. Hence, to identify specific issues and questions (such as reviving art market in favor of the artists, supporting alternative productions and artists falling outside mainstream, carrying out archival work in order to enable the access to the history of contemporary art) with individual and corporate practices of collecting art is reasonable. I tried to demonstrate that the practices of collecting contemporary art in Turkey fall short of invigorating the market, because of its different motives. Those practices are based on conspicuous consumption, partly investment-linked concerns and partly individual emotional belongings derived from the urge to fetch the swiftly changing trends.

Leaving aside the discussion of the ideology of gallery space, I find it necessary to consider the situation of art galleries in Turkey. Being short-lived due to lack of sales was the reality of art galleries in 50's in Turkey. By 2010, survival of the established galleries is still a matter of concern in local art market. If art galleries are pushed out of the industry, then the mission to offer an extensive content to public is left only to private museums and institutions that are owned by corporations. Nowadays

corporations consider restructuring their collections in order to revise social prestige and reputation by funding art and establishing museums. The operations in art field become tool for constructing a new private property zone via displaying collections in/for a closed circle of real buyers, art patrons and the art promoters.

What is collecting? Contemporary art is a field harboring quite uncanny base to end in solid answers; the question whether or not you legally own the piece that is painted on your wall by Banksy lingers to find its answer. Likewise, it is not clear whether Ayşe Erkmen's work (*Tünel'e Heykel*, 1993) in Tünel Square belongs to public, who attributes a function to it by climbing on top of it during every single public greeting such as LGBTI Pride March, or to state as a solid component of a collection. If there is another edition of the work *Tünel'e Heykel*, to whom does it really belong then? During Gezi uprising, contemporary art spread on streets to such an extent that it became an obstacle for İstanbul Biennial held in the same year. Although setting out with an aim to reclaim public spaces all around the city, 13th İstanbul Biennial changed its agenda. It was enclosed to indoor spaces and run parallel to Gezi uprising, leaving the stage to public on the street.

Then, contemporary art is a channel allowing accumulated capital to be spent whilst collecting art in the form of commodity is a consumption practice pointing out the realization of this spending. As long as consumption practices of consumer society do not come to an end, there is a reason to tackle with these practices. In his writing, *Unpacking My Library*, Walter Benjamin explains the relationship that a collector establishes with objects as:

A collector's existence tied to a very mysterious relationship to ownership, a relationship to objects as the scene, the stage, of their fate. The most profound enchantment for the collector is the locking of individual items within a magic circle in which they are fixed as the thrill of acquisition passes over them.⁹⁹

If it is only the object (commodity) that is fixed by acquisition, then there is still a space to reclaim the meanings, and to expect consumption practices to propel art practice in completely different way.

⁹⁹ Benjamin, W. (1969), *Unpacking my Library: A Talk about Book Collecting*, in *Illuminations*, (Harry Zohn, Trans.) New York: Schocken Books. p. 60.

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