

Effects of fine art print artworks on the art viewer in contemporary art presentation

ABSTRACT

The social and cultural changes brought about by industrialization and the Industrial Revolution highlighted the value of printmaking as a new means of expression in artistic presentation. The innovative mechanical production methods influenced their artistic production through the interest and experimentation of many artists, whose numbers should not be underestimated. On the other hand, the transfer of examples of traditional Japanese printmaking (Ukiyo-e) to Europe in 1700-1900 caused profound effects on Western art, beginning with Impressionism, one of the modern art movements. Especially in the last two decades, rapidly digitalizing technology has also provided radical changes in many social-cultural and economic fields. As a reflection of this, it has caused a change in the presentation of contemporary art and caused the formation of an innovative attitude that transforms-triggers the perception of the audience. Two effective factors are emphasized in the context of the effect of fine art print works on the phenomenon of art. One is the artist of the time, who uses all the media tools of his time with pure intuition to transform his artistic expression, his dreams into reality, and another is the audience of the artwork, who accepts only a part of his artistic presentation, which is helped by all technological tools, by discussing, and few of which will be praised by future generations. In this context, digital technology promises a free space to thousands of artists who produce screen presentations or artistic prints on many different media, enabling us to see them everywhere. It has indisputable that digital technologies are a new tool with a different line for artists, apart from the usual art presentation of contemporary art, which is in different quests with an innovative attitude in every period. From this point of view, in addition to the dynamic visual presentations in different places and platforms where the art audience can be involved and integrated into the contemporary art environment, the innovative attitude that fine art print artworks brings to the effect and behavior of the audience should also be considered. The purpose of this paper is to investigate how digital print technology and print works influence audience perception. The survey data analysis is interpreted in this article through excerpts from the dissertation titled "Effects of fine art printmaking on phenomenon of the art" which is still in progress.

KEY WORDS

Art audience in Turkey, fine art prints and audience, contemporary printmaking

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Introduction

The collaboration with painters to disseminate information through books and posters in the industrial revo-

lution and cultural movements in 15th century Europe enabled the art to be watched with interest by the public. The dissemination of knowledge through printmaking supported a revolutionary, accessible, and powerful

democratization process, and the reflection of these developments and pursuits also found its place in the art movements. The artists of the period also found a new way of expression in this search, and by using the printmaking, which can be defined as the mass production tape method in art, they created a basis for an innovative art perception. When the capacity to share and disseminate information was combined with the characteristic of the art object, it has made possible the transformation of a new understanding for the artist and the audience (Crawford, 2021:p.2). The attractiveness of the cabaret and theater announcement posters in the entertainment world, which characterized the urban culture of the period, which were printed with mechanical mass production techniques such as lithography and wood engraving, made the art of printmaking popular. Thus, the art audience expanded, and the artists of the time, benefiting from the new production techniques, turned to new fields to present their innovative, original, and ideological ideas, expanding the means of production and incorporating the possibilities that the time offered to their artistic expressions. In other words, the artists who benefited from the new production technologies of the era exploited the era's possibilities to broaden the art audience and introduce them to the public through their work.

E. Gombrich points out the relationship between the spirit of the age and art movements by expressing that sometimes the age determines the art and sometimes the art determines the age (Gombrich, 1993:p.3). W. Benjamin, on the other hand, mentions that besides the enormous change that mechanical reproduction brought to literature, techniques such as wood engraving, metal engraving, and lithography in the Middle Ages brought the reproduction technique of art to a new level. He emphasizes that the mechanical reproduction of a work of art expresses something new and allows graphic art to take place in the market and that lithography, like Ukiyo-e, accompanies the graphic art of daily life with pictures.

However, with the invention of photography, the expression of the main artistic tasks in the pictorial reproduction process has changed- as it is perceived faster than the speed at which the hand can draw- the process of pictorial reproduction has accelerated immensely (Benjamin, 2008:p.20). Accordingly, it is suggested that printmaking is a social medium, that its social character and the role of social relations and power structures in the artist's negotiation of these dynamics should be considered. Given these interactions, it is emphasized that artists are prompted to question the power and significance of the art object, as well as reflect on their responsibility and ability to report and engage with current events. Also; it has been stated that artists have made this idea open to the public so that they can see it in their art practices and projects (Crawford, 2021:p.2). Today, the entrance of information into digital formats

is changing human life with social and cultural changes, just as in 15th century Europe. The changing conditions of life due to digitalization have shaped our social and economic life and made it necessary for us to evaluate our cultural-artistic perspectives from a different aspect in an innovative light. Even though there is a dominant view that this change is destroying most of the inherited values of society, art persists stubbornly by transforming itself before it disappears. Computer technology enables us to track today's art easily and offers endless possibilities, such as monitoring and communicating all kinds of activities in virtual dimensions. In this vast comfort zone, the artist uses this easy presentation opportunity and treats it in an innovative manner, bringing it as close to us as a button press, nurturing the transformation of the perception in the minds and the innovative perspective. In the world of conscious deception, where art presentation is reconstructed, the artist adds new elements to the existing world with the help of information technology, as Gasset says, and further expands the world by adding a mythical continent to the present reality we perceive (Işık, 1998). As information technologies have taken over the entire dynamics of social life with the digitization of information, some contemporary artists have turned to artistic representations in which they adopt the interdisciplinary production relationship and use new virtual information in which no human is involved. These innovative information technologies have also enabled artists to expansions in their presentations. Examples of various artistic expressions called new media art are- starting with photography and video - Internet art, multimedia art, software art, intelligence happening, viral art, e-mail art, performance in virtual worlds or NFT, etc. This way, art is repositioning itself in the new world order by reaching a broader mass. In this direction, the view that art is now detaching itself from the traditional, that it needs to be redefined and regrounded, is gaining weight (Yıldırım, 2010). In the digital universe created, the artist remains loyal to the historical process and facilitates his artistic production, continuing to explore ways to reach a larger audience by expanding new presentation areas. One of the questions that need to be answered in this new field of presentation is how fine art prints, which are a new means of expression for artists, are perceived by the art audience.

This research paper, which seeks answers to such questions, consists of the analysis and results of the survey conducted to determine how audiences in contemporary art presentations today perceive fine art prints. This survey includes the analysis and interpretation by contrasting the views towards printed works through demographic information that clarifies the attitudes and perspectives of art audiences living in metropolitan cities, which are central to artistic presentation in Turkey, towards fine art prints.

Methodology

This research includes the analysis and interpretation of questionnaire prepared for adults interested in art, which is one of the factors influencing the phenomenon of art, as part of the ongoing doctoral research. The reliability tests of the prepared questions were conducted. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic process and the reopening of closed artistic events in May 2020, art events were followed and face-to-face meetings were held in accordance with the rules of social distance. In this research, which was originally planned to be conducted with 500 volunteer participants, difficulties in communication and invitation to participate due to the anxiety of the COVID-19 pandemic were observed. Therefore, a sufficient number of face-to-face surveys could not be reached. Social media, e-mail and digital communication channels were used to reach the targeted number, and this study was completed with the participation of adults who are interested in art. The art lovers living in metropolises such as Istanbul and Ankara, which are the centres of art in Turkey, constitute the target audience of this survey. Therefore, analysis and comments include comparisons of demographic information over the answers to the questions asked and results and part of comments only on the sample. In this study, the survey method, which is "*the method of obtaining data by responding to the questions created in a predetermined order and structure*" (Coskun, Altunışık & Yildirim, 2010), was preferred for data collection.

Findings and results

The widespread use of digital technologies, computers have become part of everyday life, and the development of vector image programs that facilitate production in industrial design has made it possible to produce art more easily in the digital environment. Whether using traditional methods such as brush, paint, or canvas or digital techniques such as video and sound programs, these are considered software or hardware tools that enable the artist to produce, and the result is no different. While in the 19th century, the artist produced his art with the possibilities of classical materials, he diversified his artistic expression by technological developments such as printing techniques, photography, television, and video, under the influence of the significant changes that have affected humanity in the 20th century. As one of the main reasons for this diversity, U. Eco, in his book "The Open Work," mentions the significant impact of the existence of an art audience, which the artist did not think of until the beginning of the 19th century, on the production process of his works for today's artist. According to Eco, in the art equation, the artist emphasizes that he cannot enjoy his work without the audience or the interpreter. (Eco, 2001:p.11).

When it comes to the 21st century, digital technology and communication channels, which are creatively involved in today's artistic productions, enable us to watch brand new presentations that will change the perception of art. Another approach to the use of digital technology in artistic presentation is hybrid technical artworks that combine traditional mediums with digital outputs such as film positives, plates engraved with CNC-type cutting machines, computer-engraved woodcuts as well as traces of scanned images. In contrast to conventional art presentations, some artists using digital technologies such as inkjet printers or laser printers have adopted entirely digital approaches in their artistic expressions. Fine art prints are now included in exhibitions and collections of comparable quality to traditional engraving, lithography and screen printing. Accordingly, it can also be said that virtual events on the Internet and exchanges on social media create a basis for the increase in interest and appreciation of edited fine art prints on a large audience.

Demographic findings

This survey aims to interpret the data through question and answer to determine the art audience's level of appreciation and views, which can affect the art phenomenon concerning edition fine art print artworks. To obtain better results, planning was made to think that working with a specific sample following the art activities under the pandemic conditions would be beneficial. In this context, 506 art-loving adults who visited contemporary art events during the pandemic between May and July 2020 were interviewed. According to the interviews, a questionnaire was applied to the respondents who were accessed face-to-face or through digital platforms until a quorum was obtained, and 506 questionnaire forms were considered since there were no such forms left unfinished to allow analysis. SPSS was used to analyze the data collected for the evaluation of the survey results. The questionnaire consists of 23 questions and consists of two parts. In the first part, the first six questions consist of questions for comparison, such as demographic information of the respondents, age, gender, education, and the sector they work in. The 17 questions asked in the second part are meant to investigate how often the respondents, as art viewers, watched art events, especially their perspectives and appreciation levels towards the print works they watched. In this survey, which was prepared to determine the level of appreciation of the art audience for fine art print artworks, questions were asked to ensure that the research could continue with suitable samples. The majority of the respondents follow art events, only 3% do not follow art events, and 52.8% of those pursuing art have received art education (Figure 1). In the light of the data, it is seen that the highest level of participation in art activities as spectators is those who have a high level

of education and employees (Table 1). In this context, the function of "having prior knowledge" and the content of the education gain importance as an incentive to participate in determining the culture and art audience.

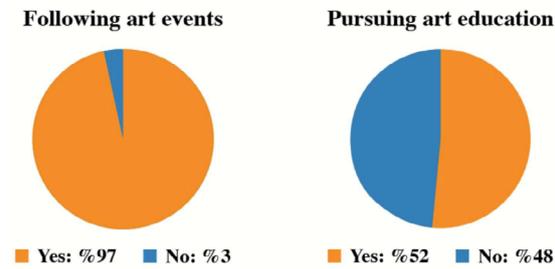


Figure 1: Data analysis of the art audiences following contemporary art events and pursuing art education. Source: Adopted from the survey within the scope of the ongoing doctoral thesis titled "Effects of fine art printmaking on the phenomenon of the art"

According to this data, there is a relationship between the level of education and the art audience, especially the art education received during the university period, which is one of the critical factors affecting being an art audience. The reason for the low participation of the pre-university education audience in the survey may be that the arts are not sufficiently included in the curriculum. For this reason, it draws attention once again to the importance of pre-university art education in terms of the function of "having prior knowledge".

Table 1

Table showing the education level of art audiences

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
PhD	85	16,80 %	16,80 %
Master	95	18,80 %	18,80 %
Bachelor	273	54,00 %	54,00 %
High School	40	7,90 %	7,90 %
Under high school	13	2,60 %	2,60 %
Total	506	100,00 %	100,00 %

Source: Adopted from the survey within the scope of the ongoing doctoral thesis titled "Effects of fine art printmaking on the phenomenon of the art".

It is seen that the respondents mainly consist of those working in the education sector, and the majority of those who receive arts education are also in the education sector (Table 2). In another study similar to this one, which GfK commissioned in 2017 by İKSV in Turkey, it is pointed out that this value is higher in groups with a university or higher level of education in participating in cultural and artistic activities. In this context, the function of "having prior knowledge," which is an element that encourages participation, is once again emphasized while defining the culture and art audience. In this respect, the

opinion that qualified culture and art classes in formal education positively affect the number of participants is also included in this report of İKSV (IKSV, 2017:p.29).

Table 2

The table shows the employees status of art audiences

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Workless	133	26,30 %	26,30 %
Health	20	4,00 %	4,00 %
Engineering	23	4,50 %	4,50 %
Academic	148	29,20 %	29,20 %
Finance	12	2,40 %	2,40 %
Art & Culture	69	13,60 %	13,60 %
Self-employed	55	10,90 %	10,90 %
Retired	46	9,10 %	9,10 %
Total	506	100,00 %	100,00 %

Source: Adopted from the survey within the scope of the ongoing doctoral thesis titled "Effects of fine art printmaking on the phenomenon of the art".

In the survey, conducted during the pandemic period, 68% are women, 30% are men, and 1% are those who choose not to state their gender.

Most respondents being women could be related to the high proportion of women among those receiving an arts education. Due to the pandemic period, it was seen that those who responded to the invitation to participate in the survey and in communicating, women were more participatory, and as those who followed the arts, the respondents were predominantly women. Studies conducted in Turkey also mentioned that the higher the level of education, the higher the participation rate of women compared to men, especially among those who follow cultural and artistic events in big cities like Istanbul (Gelişli, 2014).

According to the Gender Report in Turkey, prepared by the survey company Konda in 2018, the higher the education level, the higher the rate of women attending cultural events compared to men. According to the study, women with higher education participate in cultural events more frequently than men with the same level of education, and women with higher education attend cultural events more frequently than men with the same level of education (KONDA, 2019:p.49). One of the assumptions is that the pandemic process inspires more anxiety, and depression in men since they are generally the responsible for finances of the household, while women are less affected and have a tendency to become more social after the pandemic is over. Another is that due to high income level, ticket prices can be seen as a factor in accessing cultural and artistic activities.

The GfK research conducted by İKSV, it was emphasized that audience participation in cultural and artistic activities is essential to have a certain level of financial savings

and that the high ticket prices are an obstacle for this (IKSV, 2017:p.40). According to Table 1, most of the 506 respondents graduated from university or higher education, this proportion is almost 90%, and only 10% have a lower education level than a college degree. Based on these ratios, it is seen that only 10% are at the lower college education level. The view that a high level of education is an essential factor for people interested in and visiting the arts, which impacts the distribution of income, is also discussed in the report presented by Gfk.

Results

Based on the survey results, it can be seen that the audience interested in the arts, with a rate of 68.75%, attended the concert as the top cultural and artistic activity. Theatre comes second with 67.34%, and contemporary art exhibitions come third with 64.52%. This data shows that concerts are the most commonly attended cultural activity for both men and women who attend contemporary art events. Theatre and contemporary art exhibitions, on the other hand, are the other highly rated events. The percentage of opera and ballet attendance among those attending cultural and artistic events is 2%, which is relatively low compared to concerts, theatres, and exhibitions. Prejudices influence the approach to different artistic disciplines and the great diversity of cultural and artistic audiences. Moreover, the effect of prejudice on selective perception is undeniable. Considering that this perceptual bias also guides going to cultural and artistic events, the views of potential audiences who state that they cannot "understand" artistically such as opera and ballet have no previous experience or- was not mean anything to themselves due to lack of knowledge- and curiosity has also can be caused these rates to be low (IKSV, 2017:p.34).

This research surveyed art lovers to determine their views and awareness of the fine art prints presented at contemporary art events and exhibitions. The data obtained from the responses show that 48.20% of the art lovers surveyed, regardless of whether they have an art education, have already attended exhibitions where fine art prints are displayed due to acquiring "prior knowledge" that is effective for perceptual selectivity. The percentage of those who have never visited an exhibition is 47.20%, and the percentage of those who have no idea about the subject is 4.60%. The fact that these findings are almost proportionally close to each other gains importance for the knowledge of the art production technique and awareness of the artwork he is looking at. The respondent is assumed to have a limited approach and awareness of the work they are looking at depending on how much "prior knowledge" they have of fine art prints- whether they have an art education or not. Even those who have never viewed fine art print before considered it a work of art and indicated that they might purchase the work if it fits their

budget. This data was discussed based on responses to the question, "Would you buy fine art prints that you like?" The percentage of those who have never bought anything before is 29.60%, and those who previously have bought something is 13.20%. If they like it and it fits their budget, almost half of the respondents, 46.60%, say they could buy fine art prints.

In this context, this can be interpreted as that the viewer's approach to the artwork is only at the level of appreciation, especially since they have no specific idea about the artwork's structure. In another statement, respondents indicated that they agreed or partially agreed with the statement, "Fine art prints are as valuable as classical printmaking in today's artistic presentation," at the highest rate of 70%. The percentage of those who say they have no idea about the subject is 18.00%. The responses "I disagree" and "I do not agree at all," with the lowest percentage of 10.9% in total, illustrate the views of the art audience. As can be seen from this data, the opinion that fine art prints are as valuable as classical printmaking is the most widespread from the audience's point of view.

Analyses of quantitative data were conducted on adult art lovers in metropolises such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, the centre of contemporary art in the country. In this context, some of the responses to the questions and comments regarding the interest of 506 adult art lovers aged 15 years and older in cultural and artistic activities between March 2020 and July, as well as to determine their level of appreciation for fine art prints, are as follows:

- *"It is important that artistic fine art prints produced with digital printing technology take place as a new art genre in the contemporary art scene."*
- *"Wet-signed fine art prints printed with digital technology should be valued in today's art as much as printmaking printed with traditional processes".*
- *"The fact that a work of art is printed using digital technology does not change my artistic value judgement of that artwork."*
- *Would you be interested in attending contemporary art exhibitions consisting of fine art prints?*

According to the responses to these comments and questions, the following odds was obtained;

- *"It is important that artistic fine art prints produced with digital printing technology take place as a new art genre in the contemporary art scene":*

This interpretation emphasised that fine art prints that are present in contemporary art events represent a new genre of artistic presentation. In particular, fine art printing is technically considered one of the original printmaking techniques such as woodcut, gravure and

linocut. This production technique, which has transformed into digital technology, is an artistic means of production with an innovative attitude. With this approach, the views of the art audience become more critical in the context of the art phenomenon. Table 3 shows the survey results determining the public's appreciation of fine art prints produced with digital technology. Depending on the data, whether or not they have an art education or not, the fine art prints produced with digital technology are watched with admiration by the audience, and the art lovers, as the audience, adopt diversity in artistic presentation. Therefore they find innovative digital production presentations interesting in the exhibitions.

Table 3

Proportional values according to the answers given by the art audience to the interpretation of *"It is important that artistic fine art prints produced with digital printing technology take place as a new art genre in the contemporary art scene"*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Agree	246	48,60 %	48,60 %
Partially agree	160	31,60 %	31,60 %
No idea	61	12,10 %	12,10 %
Disagree	30	5,90 %	5,90 %
Strongly disagree	9	1,80 %	1,80 %
Total	506	100,00 %	100,00 %

Source: Adopted from the survey within the scope of the ongoing doctoral thesis titled *"Effects of fine art printmaking on the phenomenon of the art"*.

- *"Wet-signed fine art prints printed with digital technology should be valued in today's art as much as printmaking printed with traditional processes"*

Table 4

Proportional values according to the answers given by the art audience to the interpretation of *"Wet-signed fine art prints printed with digital technology should be valued in today's art as much as printmaking printed with traditional processes"*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Agree	201	39,70 %	39,70 %
Partially agree	180	35,60 %	35,60 %
No idea	54	10,70 %	10,70 %
Disagree	60	11,90 %	11,90 %
Strongly disagree	11	2,20 %	2,20 %
Total	506	100,00 %	100,00 %

Source: Adopted from the survey within the scope of the ongoing doctoral thesis titled *"Effects of fine art printmaking on the phenomenon of the art"*.

There is a preponderance of opinion, with 75% of respondents agreeing or partially agreeing with this comment. The responses "I disagree" and "I disagree at all" are a close second with a total of 14.1%. The

percentage of those who say they have no idea about the topic is the lowest at 10.70%. As can be seen from these data, they believe that fine art prints are as valuable as the printmaking ones (Table 4). In this context, it is assumed that the artistic value of fine art prints, as one of the printmaking production techniques, is seen as equivalent for the art audience.

- *"The fact that a work of art is printed using digital technology does not change my judgement on the artistic value of that work."*

Another comment that supports the response in Table 5 is, "The fact that a work of art is printed with digital technology does not change my artistic value judgment toward that artwork." The opinion with which the respondents agree or partially agree the most ranked first with 77.90%. On the other hand, "I do not agree, and I do not agree at all" ranks second with an overall percentage of 16.8%. Those who stated they had no idea about the topic had the lowest score of 5.30% (Table 5). According to these data, an understanding accepts taste and artistic value, reinforcing that fine art prints are as valuable as printmaking. Fine art prints, as one of the printmaking production techniques, the view that he accepts and adopts the artistic value for the audience is dominant.

Table 5

Proportional values according to the answers given by the art audience to the interpretation of *"The fact that a work of art is printed using digital technology does not change my judgement on the artistic value of that work."*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Agree	209	41,30 %	41,30 %
Partially agree	185	36,60 %	36,60 %
No idea	27	5,30 %	5,30 %
Disagree	68	13,40 %	13,40 %
Strongly disagree	17	3,40 %	2,20 %
Total	506	100,00 %	100,00 %

Source: Adopted from the survey within the scope of the ongoing doctoral thesis titled *"Effects of fine art printmaking on the phenomenon of the art"*.

- *"Would you be interested in attending contemporary art exhibitions consisting of fine art prints?"*

To determine the attitude of the culture and art audience participating in the survey towards the artwork, the question "Would you be interested in attending contemporary art exhibitions consisting of fine art prints?" was asked. In response to this question, which clarifies the views of the audience vis-à-vis the above comments, a large majority of respondents, 79%, indicated that they attend such exhibitions 'yes,' 'sometimes' or 'rarely' (Table 6). The percentage of those who answered "no" or "never" is 20.90%. These data show us that in

Turkey, art audiences participate in contemporary art exhibitions consisting of fine art prints with interest, a limited group does not participate, and an understanding that accepts the value of art with admiration against innovative presentations are in the majority.

Table 6

Proportional values according to the answers given by the art audience to the question of "Would you be interested in attending contemporary art exhibitions consisting of fine art prints?"

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	213	42,10 %	42,10 %
No	76	15,00 %	15,00 %
Sometimes	112	22,10 %	22,10 %
Rarely	75	14,80 %	14,80 %
Never	30	5,90 %	4,90 %
Total	506	100,00 %	100,00 %

Source: Adopted from the survey within the scope of the ongoing doctoral thesis titled "Effects of fine art printmaking on the phenomenon of the art".

Discussion

According to the survey data, this research shows us that on art lovers' attitude and approach toward contemporary and innovative artistic presentations, regardless of whether they are produced by the classical method or digital technology, are approached with admiration and interest. This digitalized age offers the possibility to follow cultural and artistic events easily. Another result that underlines appreciation and interest is that the respondents find it attractive to view and buy fine art print, a new type of artistic production, according to their taste and purchasing power. It is a remarkable result to see this view in the responses of highly educated and professional art lovers. Considering this data, it indicates that the relationship between the level of education and the art audience, especially the art education received before and during college is an essential factor influencing the affiliation with the art audience.

Conclusion

This study addresses the survey results to determine the impact and level of appreciation of the fine art prints produced with digital printing technology by art audiences in the context of the art phenomenon.

According to an overview of this article, the Turkish art audience approaches contemporary art exhibitions consisting of fine art prints with admiration and interest. Moreover, income and education levels seem to play a significant role as well. The influence of income level due to higher education on the art audience's

participation in cultural and artistic activities cannot be ignored. Another effect is the audience's level of awareness of the work they are viewing, according to the process of "prior knowledge", whether they have received art education or not. Based on the process of acquiring "prior knowledge", it can be said that he is aware of the type of artwork they are viewing, which affects their perception selectivity. In this context, it is evident that the audience with no art education approaches the artwork at the level of appreciation, mainly because they have no specific idea about the artwork's structure. This result reminds us once again of the importance of having curricula associated with the theoretical structure of education and practices and art.

According to the researchers, 506 adult art lovers living in metropolitan cities of Turkey during the pandemic period attended contemporary art exhibitions and events with fine art prints as art audiences, were very enthusiastic about innovative presentations, and showed a willingness to purchase art. This result can be considered one factor that encourages contemporary artists to include innovative means of expression in their artistic presentations. The contemporary artist is inclined to include new means of expression in his artistic presentations, thanks to his awareness that gives importance to the attitude and views of the art audience by following technological developments. In this context, as Umberto Eco mentioned in his book "The Open Work," the existence and views of the art viewer, effective in the artistic production process by adapting to the changes in the general nature of art, will continue to be a phenomenon that promotes production for today's artists.

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