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The interaction of painting and music

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Abstract

The relationship between different artistries is an interesting concept for both the academicians who are in related organizations and artists in these organizations. The aim of this study is to reveal the relationship between emotions that is a result of painting which has both abstract and real concepts and emotions that is a result of music which has generally abstract concept. The total field under this survey is Gazi University and the sample is the students in the Faculty of Vocational Education, Painting Department. The qualitative information will be acquired via observation method and this qualitative information will be transformed to quantitative information by using statistical analysis. At the end of the study, the relationship between painting and music will be determined and there will be some necessary suggestions.

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1. Introduction

In 20th century, as all fields, there were some multi-dimensional changes in art. From painting to music, from music to theatre, photography and cinema, there were very big changes and also a very big progress in almost all kinds of art.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a very chaotic art atmosphere has been in the world. It can be said that the most important characteristic of those years is a rapid and intensive mobility. The artists have been come together in the big art centers to find an artistic perspective; they have made some groups, they have changed their groups and also they have given up their groups and they have made some new groups. (İpşiroğlu, 2006, page 47).

Trends in the previous eras can be explained by some concepts which can determine the main ideas. For instance, some concepts such as the Renaissance, “humanism”, Classicism, “Enlightenment”, and Romanticism, “personal emotion” can have a description. But the 20th century cannot be described by these kinds of concepts. “Pluralism” has been the main characteristic of those years. (Say, 2003, page, 468). The acceptance of this pluralism can be explained by the interrelation between all kinds of arts and the crafts that were produced as a result of this interrelation. Additionally, in those years, there were a lot of different art movements as a result of a big rebellion.

The concept of interdisciplinary art has been begun in those years and Atagok describes this: “the freedom of art, the creativity of artist and the passion of artist led to change art and as a result of this change, there has been a inter-artistic works and interdisciplinary creativity in today’s art. (Atagok, 2008, page 25).

Especially in the 20th century, the relationship between different arts was begun to get stronger. İpşiroğlu summarizes the interaction between different arts, especially between painting and music: “the interaction between different arts isn’t a new concept; it has existed for all times. However the alienation of art from the nature has hastened to this interaction progress and also, it has made it stronger. Especially music which is the only art field that is sublimate to material has been the source of an innovation of other art disciplines. Additionally, the innovator of this process is painting. (İpşiroglu, 2006, page, 11).

When the 20th century is thought; Say, also, says that: “Inharmonious voices were the main character of music in 20th century. The history of music is also the history of searching inharmonious voices. The 20th century, also, undertakes this concept as a whole.” (Say, 2003, page 468).

The usage of “imbalanced voice (it looks like a technical problem)” results from a new aesthetic concept: Now music is responsible for not only reflecting beautiful and balanced voices, but also reflecting the reality, that is, the bad sides of reality. Indeed, modern art is not a beautiful art. It gives up the balance of impressionism, wonderful designs, good tones and colors. It damages painting values in the painting; it also harms melody/tones in music and images in poem. (Say, 2003, page; 468).

Yılmaz says about Modernism: “modern art has a paradoxical nature. It is the reason why it is so reformist, attractive and interesting (Yılmaz, 2006, page; 15).

2. Kandinsky and Schönberg

For many years, different art disciplines have interacted with each other. Especially in 20th century, famous artists supported to their paints by interacting with other disciplines, especially by interacting with music. One of the most important one of those artists is Wassily Kandinsky and in a concert in Munich, he has met Arnold Schoenberg who is a composer.

2.1. Arnold Schoenberg (13 September 1874 – 13 July 1951)

Schönberg was born in Vienna and he wasn't educated in music; but he had a lot of violin and violoncello courses and he became a good orchestra member and he earned money thanks to violoncello in those years. (...) After his first experiences in his works of art, Schönberg thought that he couldn't say anything about tones and he began to be interested in music-out-of-tone in 1908-1914. All of 14 works composed in those years were out-of tone. Thus, he didn't relate to traditions or customs and the melody began to be crooked; and it was out-of-design (Say, 2003, page 475-476).

After 1914, Schönberg didn't compose anything and he made some researches. Say explains the period of 1923 like this: “In 1923 in which he began to compose again, out-of-the-tone music could be attached by the rules and the rules known as ‘12 Tones Method’ was determined.” (Say, 2003, page 476)

12 Tones Method can be summarized like this: 12 tones which can be used in out-of-tone music and which can be assumed that each voice of them is independent and equal are ordered in accordance with the expectation of composer. Thus, there can be a series of 12 voices. The composer can use this series both in a horizontal way (melody and balance) and vertical way (rhythm). But after a voice in this series is heard, repeating cannot be done unless other 11 voices are heard. (Aktaran, Say, 2003, page 476).

The 20th century is a bound era in terms of science, technology and social life. Therefore, by using creative scientific efforts, art has actualized new bounds on the contrary to science and technology. But, music has imposed to rules and shapes of music- in-tone. It is normal; because in the mood of human, there is a desire of creating new things, not settle for old ones. (Say, 2003, page, 68).

2.2. Wassily Kandinsky (4 December 1866 – 13 December 1944)

Kandinsky was a mystic who thought that the world symbolizing “spiritualism” should be refreshed by a new art movement, and his lots of friends who were German artists have thought the same things. In his book “About the Spiritualism in Art” (1912, the original name; *Über das Geistige in der Kunts*), he emphasized the psychological effects of natural colors; he specified that a good red could effect us as a trumpet call. He believed that a spiritual composition between people is necessary and possible. Thanks to this belief, he demonstrated the first experiences of “music of color”. Thus, he started a new movement known as “abstract art”. (Gombrich, 1999, page 570).

Michel Foucault explains this art like this: “in his painting, simulation and “bonded goods” were cleared as twain and contemporaneous. In his paintings, there were also a relationship between simulation and animation; simulation

was useful to show some lines and colors. This explanation was not related to any other simulation and when it was asked as “what is this?”, it could be answered as “improvisation”, “composition” or by referring painting, it could be answered as “red form”, “triangles”, “purple orange” or by referring the tension and correlation of painting, it could be answered as “determining pink”, “above”, “yellow area”. (Foucault, 2004, page 34).

Kandinsky said in his first letters written to Schönberg that: “... I’m trying to find independent walking and original lives of voices given your compositions in my paintings. Nowadays, there is a tendency to pursuit New Harmony by using a constructive way in painting. Rhythm is generally built on geometrical forms... I believe that New Harmony cannot be found in geometrical forms, but can be found in the way that is contrast to geometry and logic. (Aktaran: İpşiroğlu, 2006, page 61).

3. Mondrian and Boogie Woogie

3.1. Boogie-Woogie

Boogie-Woogie which is a type of Blues burns out like this: “either is recorded or not, all the ideas of blues pianists in America are confused and they have come together in a new way, at the end of the 1920s, piano contributed blues in terms of new creative activity. These are the second generation pianists who listen to pianists in the dancing chained pubs and Boogie-Woogie is one of the piano styles in those years. Before that time, there have been names and techniques such as “black leather”, “pounding from top to down”, “changing bass” etc.; but one of these names and techniques is admired: boogie woogie. But music style and the name of boogie has been very old-fashioned, also general houses have been called as “boogie house” and the means of “make a boogie” is to make a party or sometimes it can have more sexual meaning. But, the rude and energetic name of this piano style was determined by Pinetop Smith in 1928 and he had a plague whose name is Pinetop’s Boogie-Woogie. Pinetop explained it orally by talking about active bass and separated rhythms. (<http://www.istanblues.org/forum/index.php?action=turler>).

3.2. Piet Mondrian (7 March 1872- 1 February 1944)

While the art of Kandinsky is personal and emotional, the art of Piet Mondrian is more logical and geometrical (Yılmaz, 2006, page; 65).

Mondrian thought that both traditional music and modern music were out-of-date. He was interested in jazz music. He interpreted jazz music in terms of his own music and he thought that there was a parallelism between jazz music and his own music style. Until one year to his death, in a conversation he said that the birth of boogie-woogie had the same reason the birth of his own music and he explained this similarity as melody in the music, the independency of rhythm, fiction of composition, contrasting of forming elements. (Aktaran; İpşiroğlu, 2006, page; 104).

In 1940s, in America, fans of “Boogie-Woogie” whose name came from their dance were more flexible and colorful than in Europe, but nevertheless they have showed that the root of this style didn’t want to change. The reason of this may be his paintings which were painted by using a new theory that its rules were also very new (Yılmaz, 2006, page; 67–68).

The artistic understanding of Mondrian depends on very strict rules. O’Doherty says that Mondrian who known as a lover of dance loves dance not only to be relax but also to enjoy with the program of dance (O’Doherty, 2010, page; 106).

This explanation clarifies why Mondrian called his last two paints as “Broadway Boogie-Woogie” and “Victory Boogie-Woogie”. According to Mondrian, the balance between material and tone cannot be determined in music. Jazz determines this balance (İpşiroğlu, 2006, page; 104).

4. Klee and Bach

4.1. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–28 June 1750)

Johann Sebastian Bach was born in Germany-Eisenach, in 1685. As his family members were musician, he was naturally interested in music. (...) He came into a small inheritance in 1707 and he got married with his cousin, Maria Barbara Bach. He became a widower in 13 years of his marriage. About one year later, he was married with a young soprano, Anna Magdalena Wilcke, in 11 December 1721. (...) Bach composed more than 1000 compositions during his life. But nowadays there are only some compositions can be found in the archives of his son Carl Phillip Emanuel. Johann Sebastian Bach who is famous for his compositions and who has 20 children died in Leipzig, in 28 June 1750. (<http://www.biyografi.info/kisi/johann-sebastian-bach>).

3 Sonatas and 3 Partitas for Solo Violin of BWV 1001-1006

These Solo Violin compositions known as “Six Sonatas” are often voiced and these are some of the most important compositions of Bach and also, these can be thought as the evidence of genius of Bach. It is assumed that these compositions can be played only by using a special fiddlestick known as Bach’s fiddlestick; this fiddlestick is large and it has four-voiced tunes. It is thought that the compositions called as “sonata” consists of four sections with slow-active-slow-active of church sonata and compositions called as “partita” consists of baroque suite. It is thought that all of them were composed in Köthen in 1720. (http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Sebastian_Bach)

4.2. Paul Klee (18 December 1879 – 29 June 1940)

When he displayed on his first paintings, the similarity of Klee’s art and music attracted attention of critics. In the writings written about him, this similarity was pointed out by critics and the art of him was criticized in terms of music. But, those were just general ideas not critic ones about him. For instance, Th. Daubler said that the colors of Klee’s painting were very attractive, those were similar to the rhythm of music and those were sometimes looked like a violin, cello or chamber music. (Aktaran; İpşiroğlu, 2006, page 75).

In 1985, inhibition called as “Klee and Music” which was displayed firstly on Oslo and one year later was displayed on Paris and Frankfurt made this topic clearer. Nearly all paintings of Klee were related to music: the pictures of Musicians, paintings about music, paintings about subtitles of music, paintings in which some musical elements were used or some paintings that had a relationship between musical elements and painting... The aim of this inhibition was to show the effects of music in Klee’s creativity and to give a chance to spectators in order to interpret those paintings. (İpşiroğlu, 2006, page; 76).

For Paul Klee, music is not only the source of inspiration but also the effect of creativity in terms of concurrency. Paul Klee always thought that the world is a big scene that improves the action of characters on it and his art-crafts were always composed by being influenced to music, theatre and poem. (Münire Yurdayüksel, 2008, page; 68).

A group of painting that determined the surface of picture via points of color is called as “diversionist” by Klee and those paintings were also composed of two perception styles of rhythm. In those paintings, there wasn’t any difference in tones and the color which was integrated to light. In the surface of painting, same colors came together and they composed small structures of whole picture. (İpşiroğlu, 2002, page 68-69).

Ad Pamassum is the name of a painting made by Klee and the artist called this painting with this name by inspiring “Gradus ad Pamassum (1725)” that was a contra-point book written by J.J. Fux. As it is known, Pamas is the place of muse in mythology. According to this, it is paraphrased that the roof is the mountain and the red circle is the sun in his painting. In terms of that paraphrasing, the door can be interpreted as the door opened to creativity. (İpşiroğlu, 2002, page; 69-70).

In Klee’s paintings drawn in last years, as the Bach’s last compositions, symbols became very important. (İpşiroğlu, 2002, page 70).

5. Findings and Interpretation:

Chart – 1 the test results of sample that are related to music and painting

PAINTING	MUSIC	Matching				
		TRUE	FALSE			
		(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)	
A	P.Klee Ad Parnassum,1932	J. S. Bach Sonata no.1 G Minor BWV 1001	4	20	16	80
B	P. Mondrian, Broadway Boogie-Woogie, 1942-43	P. Johnson Death Ray Boogie	15	75	5	25
C	W.Kandinsky Consistent line,1923	A.Schoenberg Variationen für Orchester (13)	4	20	16	80
Total			2			61,6
			3	38,3	37	

In Chart1-A, there are some rates about the 20 students in painting department matching Klee's Ad Pamassum and Bach's Sonata which is reminiscent of Klee's As Pamussum. 4 students made the true matching and their rate is %20 but %80 of students made a false matching.

In Chart1-B, there are some rates about the 20 students in painting department matching Mondrian's Broadway Boogie-Woogie and Pete Johnson's Deat Ray Boogiewhich is reminiscent of Broadway Boogie-Woogie. 15 students made a correct matching and their rate is %75, but 5 students (%25) made a false matching.

In Chart1-C, there are some rates about the 20 students in painting department matching Kandansky's Consisten Line and Schönberg's orchestras which is reminiscent of Kandansky's Consistent Line. 4 students made a correc matching and their rate is %20, but 16 students (%80) made a false matching.

6. Result:

Looked at the painting of Klee, there is simplicity instead of details and there is a symbolism. In Kandansky's compositions, the rhythm in music is symbolized. It is assumed by a lot of students that this symbolism exists by inspiring music and it is confused. Additionally, it is shown that Mondrian's strict rules and jazz music emphasize the same actions and thanks to this emphasizing, students can find the correct option.

7. Suggestions:

The matching activity made by students' shows that there is a lack of education in art. It can be concluded that students in artistic departments who don't have a training program in other fields of art are reluctant to use other disciplines expect for their own field. For this reason, students aren't educated in some other artistic fields cannot understand artists who are educated in these fields. Similar studies will show the interaction between different art disciplines and the importance of this topic in artistic education.

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