

THE MEANING OF HOME IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGE: HOME IN THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE ORDINARY



SCAN ME

Recep KERKEZI, 

Trakya University, Institute of Natural Science, rcpkrkz@gmail.com

Article history:

Submission 19 November 2021

Revision 10 February 2022

Accepted 25 March 2022

Available online 30 April 2022

Keywords:

Architecture,
Home Phenomena,
Home Experience,
Space Sense,
Phenomenology.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.32936/pssj.v6i1.284>

Abstract

The concept of home, which can be discussed in many disciplines, is one of the important elements in the representation of shelter, belonging, asylum, security, peace, identity or it has become a phenomenon that is constantly traced in different disciplines over time, with the negative and contradictory states and phenomena of all these situations. The audience has become a powerful language and a mode of production within the object-space relations. Man attributes different meanings to the house that contains his own existence in his world. The house is not only a concrete building, a phenomenon that includes the usual housing function, but in this study, it is aimed to reveal the meanings in the phenomenological perspective of different disciplines that ascribe different meanings to the house.

In this context, the objectification of the house by transforming into a mass communication tool with modernity, and the concept of the house during the research, first of all, briefly discussed with its phenomenological dimension, various thoughts on the house and space are included. To position the house, which has become an object of modernity, as an object space in contemporary art; It has been tried to reveal the perception methods that artists such as Petrit Halilaj, Louis Bourgeois, Gordon Matta-Clark Nevin Aladağ and Maider Lopez brought their own phenomenological approaches to home.

1. Introduction

Today, the house should not be seen only as a shelter that protects people's vital activities from natural factors. This study aimed to try to define the house beyond just a concrete object made of stone concrete.

Although the house is considered as a building that the architectural field evaluates, when it is considered as a place where the shelter function is fulfilled in general, it is a concept that has been the research field of almost every discipline from the most distant past of humanity to the present. This situation is beyond the fact that the house is a house whose boundaries and definitions are determined by architectural approaches, but also psychology, sociology, philosophy, literature, etc. in research and literature on disciplines; It arises from its constant reproduction as an object, a language, in its relations with human, environment and space and in almost every discipline of art that deals with all these situations.

As a functional structure in the basic sense, the house has been used as shelter, protection, etc. throughout the history of humanity and culture. Going beyond its functions, it has turned into a production object in which multiple meanings are intertwined (Güneş, 2002).

Addressing the house with the help of phenomenology will make it easier to examine the house as an image that exists in the field of different disciplines. In this case, the house is a complex phenomenon with variable definitions, just like art.

2. The Phenomenon of Home as Object-Space in the Twentieth Century

2.1. The Phenomenon of the Home

The house, whose boundaries and qualities are determined by the subject, is the dominance area that can be intervened and embodied after the person's own body. This space, in reality, is the space that man idealizes for the sake of livability that he

establishes with another limited space on the "space" that he defines as unlimited. *"Human forms a private and to some extent personal space from the universal space and thus separates the interior from space"* (Bollnow, 1961).

According to Norberg-Schulz; A place gains a spiritual dimension and becomes a place. Here, what is expressed by the spiritual dimension is the life-related features that give the space its character; actions, concepts, feelings, experiences, physical characteristics (Schulz, 1979).

As a requirement and proof of human existence, he acts with the urge to find a nook and shelter of his own within the size of the universe and the world. The house or the subjectively named 'home' becomes a personal space that enables the sustainability of human life. By living in line with the instincts of protection and shelter in this space he has shaped, he creates a space in which he separates and isolates himself from the 'outside'. However, people who limit the space with the urge for shelter and protection are not satisfied with this either; he places his own special/important objects at home in relation to space. Rooms, objects create their own spaces and memories within the space created by the house. In this way, the bond of belonging between the house and the human (man) begins to form. This two-way relationship becomes so strong over time; space is now defined as a 'home' by becoming a place/space loaded with different meanings for each person (Güneş, 2002).

According to Adolf Loos, "the house does not have to say anything to the outside; on the contrary, all his wealth must be evident inside" (Colomina, 2011). In Le Corbusier's houses, it has the opposite attitude compared to Loos. The arrangement that includes the public can be seen. In Loos homes, the eye turns away from publicity and focuses on privacy. In Le Corbusier, on the other hand, the opposite can be said here. No curtains are used on any of the windows and the windows are easily accessible; because the windows are not blocked by furniture. On the contrary, everything in these houses is arranged in such a way that the eyes are constantly directed to the public space, not to privacy. When viewed from a roof garden or a terrace, the walls are built to enclose the view, so a kind of publicity of the house becomes part of the space. (Colomina, 2011). It can be said that the windows of the house and even the façade are designed as frames to watch the view.

Over time, the house takes shape as if it is a second body in which the person who identifies with him is withdrawn and protected; On the other hand, it turns into the center of the memory, where people preserve their experiences, memories and fantasies about life. *"Every corner in a house, every corner of the wall in a room,*

every small space where one wants to squal is a solitude for the imagination; that is, a room as a seed is a house as a seed" (Bachelard, 2014). Based on this quote from Bachelard (2014), it can be said that home is the way of experiencing and solving the problems of humanity, perhaps from the past to the present, to cope with their impulses based on anxiety and fear, on space.

2.2. A Home Transformed into a Modern Object

As a result of industrialization, modernization and rapid urbanization, the capitalist metropolis, which is an economic, social, technical and cultural phenomenon, was born.

Modernization organizes all private and public, interior and exterior spaces of the metropolis in line with the ideal of rationality. First, it rationalizes and objectifies all patterns of material relations in the business world, working life and public sphere, and then the home, which is the center of the private sphere (Talu, 2012).

The house's involvement in such an objectification process has made it the center of attention for over a century, not only in modern architecture, but also in many fields such as sociology, philosophy, art and literature. In sociology and philosophy with critical texts discussing the concept of home, subject, place, context and its phenomenological relationship with nature; it is produced over and over again in art visually.

However, the commodification of the house as a product of the capitalist system through modern architecture by technology and mind-oriented modernization results in a way that modern minds can never predict: The house turns into an impossible myth, an object of desire (Talu, 2012).

The metropolis, which is almost the meaning of modern life, was the home of a crowd and confusion, which was overflowing due to excessive immigration, where people tried to reach the factories in masses, and where the public transportation system gained great importance in urban planning (Talu, 2012).

The overgrowth of cities due to economic growth and population explosion in cities were undoubtedly the results of the Industrial Revolution, but crowds, turmoil, people leaving their homes to work in factories, and the control of ordinary human life by mass production processes were the reality of the daily life of European cities in the middle of nineteenth century (Talu, 2012).

Centering the mass production process necessitated the standardization of working life and the integration of machines and ordinary people, and thus gave birth to a mechanized civilization, an industrial society.

Objectivity has been the main element of metropolitan life and modernization, and the human body has been robotized by planning its movements in order to adapt to this new order. The scale system of Le Corbusier's "Modulor" resizes the human body to fit modernist architecture, molding the world into a single mold regardless of its context can be seen as an indicator of the loss of the subjectivity of the house.

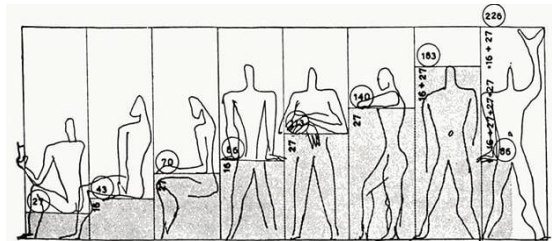


Figure 1. Le Corbusier's "Modulor" sketches (Artun, 2014)

The house was cut out of its phenomenological context, sized, cut and defined only within a mathematical system; It has been presented as a new, productive field of experimentation, where the methods and rules of the rational objective world will be tested. Thus, the first half of the twentieth century witnessed the works of modern architecture to build the house, or rather the modern house, with the principles of modernization such as standardization, flexibility and diversity.

After the efforts to rationalize housework in the USA, researches were started in Europe to improve the modern housing and to determine the minimum living conditions for the working class, with the help of modernization policies. It can be said that by determining the minimum dimensions of the modern house, solutions were tried to be brought to the housing need after the Industrial Revolution (Talu, 2012).

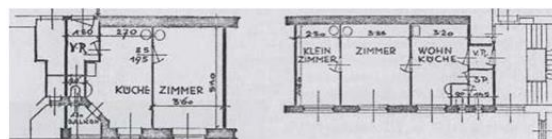


Figure 2. Standardized as Gemeinde-Wien Type in Austria; one of the first modern housing examples (Talu, 2012). (38 m2 on the left, 48 m2 on the right.)

In the eyes of modernist architects, the House has now turned into a laboratory, a playground, where ideas of modernity such as individuality, freedom and rootlessness will be exhibited.

Le Corbusier defines the house as "a machine to live in", emphasizing functionality; He likened a good home to be proud of to a well-functioning typewriter (Colomina, 2011). The relationship with place and geography, the whole

phenomenological context of the house, leaves its place to space organization and contextlessness. By making it the focal point, visual media strengthens rational discourse.

Some magazines of the period also pioneered the idea of prefabricated housing production by publishing special issues in which modern houses were exhibited. It is widely believed that the houses, whose parts are produced in the factory and assembled on-site, look much more modern. Prefabricated modern housing production is combined with the 'suburban dream house' discourse. As Beatriz Colomina emphasized, with all these advertisements, exhibitions and fairs, the ideal residence is presented and visualized as a package that can be bought in the market. (Fig; 3, 4, 5) (Colomina, 2011).



Figure 3-4-5. Houses advertised in magazines (Smithson, 2008)

The interior and exterior duo, which consists of white walls and transparent surfaces along the facade, in which concepts such as privacy and domesticity are ignored, is almost a declaration of modernity by modernist architects. These houses are printed in the most popular magazines and feature many feature films (Colomina, 2011).

3. "HOME" in Contemporary Art

Today, the concept of home, which is discussed in many aspects as an object-space used in daily life in the field of art, is handled without separating it from the socio-cultural environment that created it, as a result of being an 'external' element. It can be read as objects that are subject to being an 'inner' element. In this sense, home, cultural coding, environmental elements, etc. objective with factors; Sometimes it turns into a subjective object-space that cannot be confined within the boundaries of physical reality with factors such as personal experiences, relationships, time, memory moment. Again, although the house is a concrete structure consisting of physical elements as an architectural element, on the other hand, it becomes a whole with the experiences, memories, fears and expectations of the person who

exists in it, and such situations actually create the concept of home (Güneş, 2002).

The house is the object of search for artists, in addition to being a means of expression, representation in the form of object, form or language in every field of art. The house image turns into a space that becomes objectified according to the meanings that the artists attribute to the house.

In order to convey different functions and meanings, - social/cultural life, domestic relations etc. it takes its place in art productions as an image that gains a function and meaning in order to convey the situations to the audience. The home is the first place where the child's relations with the outside world and society begin. The child's ability to give meaning to the outside life, perhaps his protection from the outside, and the formation of his identity are based in the childhood home (Güneş, 2002).

Home as a form and subject of contemporary art; time, memory, identity, family, public, society, etc. on meanings, it becomes a space-object loaded with metaphors, gaining visibility by assuming a complementary role in every aspect of human life.

Under this title, we will try to examine the "house" as the subject of contemporary art, with examples under three different subheadings, from the different phenomenological perspectives; In "memories of the past", "As an Object of Revolt" and "in the paradox of Inner - External / Public – Private".

3.1. Home: In Memories of the Past

Kosovar contemporary artist Petrit Halilaj's "home" installation "The places I'm looking for, my dear, are utopian places, they are boring and I don't know how to make them real" It is a life-size reconstructed family house, appears here in a completely new form, which was destroyed during the war he lived in Kosovo between 1998-1999, by enlarging the scale of the scaffolding. For Halilaj, the house gains visually in the form of an image in search of a lost place (inferno-magazine, 2016).

Halilaj's work here demonstrates the expression of an aesthetic out of the home, conveyed as a home owner, a fragile space of longing, belonging and memory. Lauzon (2017) in other words, not the concrete aesthetics of the house, but the meaning of the past that the house makes itself felt.

Chickens that roaming around the house pier are also reminders of the rural-urban migration as a reference to the rural life he lived in during his childhood.



Figure 6-7. Petrit Halilaj's "The places I'm looking for, my dear, are utopian places, they are boring and I don't know how to make them real" art installation, Berlin 2010 (art map, 2010)

Another work about the "Home: In Memories of the Past" is Louis Bourgeois' Red Room.

In her work, which takes the interior of the house as a reference, the spaces are transformed into places full of fear and anxiety, sometimes with the installations of daily household items located in the space that can be defined as belonging to the person, and sometimes with the cells depicted as a house or room. To the household items used in this house installation, feelings of boredom and confinement descending on women's clothes turn the house into an object of anxiety and distress. Bourgeois, who says "All of my works and subjects take their source from my childhood", creates the leading power of his creativity by bringing the traumas of his childhood home to consciousness through art products (Koruç, 2018).



Figure 8-9. Left photo; Red Room (Child) Richard-Max Tremblay, right photo; Red Room (Parents) (Geuter, 1994)

Bourgeois used the image of two separate rooms of the house, the child and the parent, in his installations called "Red Room", which he aimed to reveal the mood in his childhood home. The rooms are filled with red symbolic household items and other everyday items that reference Bourgeois' personal themes (Veryeri, 2008).

In this way she described these rooms not only a visual thing, but already as a place that hosts desires, pleasures, anxieties and even fears. Veryeri (2008) The house objectified in these installations of Bourgeois, which is about the interior; It has turned into a whole of relations in which the anxieties of the past and the feeling of being stuck are represented by objects through the child / woman in a sense.

3.2. Home: As an Object of Revolt

American artist Gordon Matta-Clark (1943-1978) treats artistic production not as object-oriented or product-oriented, but as a process-oriented action in an approach close to craft production. Thus, he criticizes the transformation of both art and modern housing into a commodity that is detached from its place and context and that can be bought and sold (Artun, 2014).

She evaluates art not as objects exhibited in museums, accompanied by articles titled "please do not touch", but as an environment to be constructed on social problems in a striking way, and in this context, he focuses on "home". With his works between art and architecture, he challenges rationalist thought with a poetic expression.

Matta-Clark, who is also an architect, cut a suburban home in Englewood New Jersey in two with two parallel sharp vertical lines in the middle, with a slit or crack in his work called Splitting, in which he cut through various shapes of abandoned suburban homes in the 1970s. Talu (2012) it can visualize both the emotional and psychological dimension of the modern home problem and the uncontrollable turbulences of the human psyche (Talu, 2012).

As in the modernist approach, it is not to build the house from pieces, but to destroy it by breaking it into pieces. Matta-Clark criticizes both the concept of home, which can be built with a sense of place and subjectivity, as the capitalist system transforms it into a machine to live in, a consumption object, and that it is stereotyped and standardized (Talu, 2012).



Figure 10-11. Gordon Matta-Clark, Splitting, (Clark, 1974)

3.3. Home: In The Paradox of Inner - External / Public – Private

Nevin Aladağ, on the facades of the buildings, in her 2005 installation in Amsterdam with the name 'Curtain House'; He placed long, translucent white curtains on the windows.

The curtains, which are a little too big for the windows, hang out and cover a part of the facade. The sway of these Curtains in the

wind attracts the attention of the viewer, making the work more perceptible.

The overly large curtains hung on a house by the canal in Amsterdam cover almost the entire façade, emphasizing the regionalization of inside and outside, exposure and concealment. While the curtains block the view, they also become the center of attention, thus creating curiosity towards the buildings. In addition, the new situation determined by the placement of an interior element outside, while emptying the curtains' function of drawing the privacy area and blocking the sunlight, also triggers a contradiction of belonging (Ustek, 2011).



Figure 11-12. Nevin Aladağ 2005 Amsterdam, Curtain House (nevinaladag.com)

The applications of the Curtain House work in various buildings with different functions manifest themselves as small design elements placed in the private and public areas. In other words, while the transparency of a curtain comes together with a line drawn between inside and outside, the connotations evoked by a flying curtain cause a permanent deterioration in this sharp distinction (Ustek, 2011).

Aladağ not only defines the boundaries of the private and the public, but also emphasizes and blurs this distinction at the same time. This work of Aladağ created a new situation by focusing on an ordinary element of daily life and bringing its function to a new context. It has grayed out the black and white line between interior and exterior, private and public.

Another example focusing on "Home: In The Paradox of Inner - External / Public – Private" is Maider Lopez's work titled "Intermediate Period".

For this work, the artist drew floor plans on the ground of an empty land in a neighborhood of the city of Cordoba and tried to prevent any random meetings that may occur in the space by ending the undefined state of this area where the installation was made and transforming this area into a defined area. The

associations of the space are prevented by defining the space (Ustek, 2011).

In this study, with the public space where the installation was made, focused on the conceptual dichotomy between possible future housing structures in this area. Thus, he reconsidered and interpreted the concepts of private and public space.



Figure 13-14. Mainer Lopez, 'The Intermediate Period' 2011 (Lopez 2008)

However, the re-functioning of this place, on the one hand, invited the audience, on the other hand, it prevented random and social gatherings (Ustek, 2011).

The relations brought by the openness of the space became defined and deteriorated, as the area ended its undefined open space quality and transformed into an area that defines a certain area. In other words, he defined an empty open public space with two-dimensional architecture in a sense.

According to Ustek (2011), the area where the "Intermediate Period" takes place triggered a question; What will future homes be like? By putting forward the questions of how people will act in these structures, he also highlighted a game element with this work; The viewers, who are unlikely to live in these "prospective houses", can move from room to room and enter the space from any point instead of the drawn doors. In addition, these open plans allowed the audience to make a comparison with their own homes.

The new space created by the "Intermediate Period" refers to the future state of this space, while doing so in a public space that contrasts with the privacy of the residences.

Contemplating the dichotomy of private-public space, the work used the scale of real living space exactly, and defined these spaces through lines; thus making it possible to pass through the walls. In this way, we can say that the installation changed the use of the field and introduced new ways of perceiving the public space.

Starting from pre-existing spatial designs, the artist saw public spaces as a visually dynamic and figuratively transformable

phenomenon, and strengthened the meeting and socialization functions by playing with their formal elements (Ustek, 2011).

In the words of Mainer Lopez: *"The project aims to show the possibilities of people transforming urban space"* (Ustek, 2011). The audience's own initiatives, participation and coming together, while defining the concept of architecture through the use of public space, using this space in this way. In a sense, it can be said that he designed the urban space through occupation.

5. Conclusions

With the many different perspectives that we met with the twentieth century, "Home" also took its share from the transformations in art, design and architecture in general, which started in this period, opening the way for its conceptualization and enriching its meaning.

A "house" has evolved from the context of being a space separated from the outside only by walls, in its usual relationship with time, and has evolved into a concept that is evaluated beyond in terms of meaning and visually.

The house, whose boundaries and qualities are determined by the subject, is the dominance area that can be intervened and embodied after the person's own body.

The house image turns into a space that becomes objectified according to the meanings that the artists attribute to the house. Considering the productions that contain the house as an object, variable meanings and forms in the field of art; In general, it is possible to say that there are differentiating qualities and criteria that artists encode the house as an image into their memories.

The house's involvement in an objectification process has made it the center of attention for over a century, not only in modern architecture, but also in many fields such as sociology, philosophy, art and literature.

Technology and mind-oriented modernization has commodified the house as a product of the capitalist system through modern architecture, and it has been separated from its phenomenological context, disassembled, standardized and presented to us as a testing ground for rationality. Thus, the first half of the twentieth century witnessed the works of modern architecture to build the house, or rather the modern house, with the principles of modernization such as standardization, flexibility and diversity.

With the second half of the twentieth century, "House" now approaches "Home" as a contemporary art material, in a way, with

stereotyped thoughts, but it also becomes an object of phenomenology.

"Home", which is the subject of contemporary art, has been examined from different phenomenological perspectives with examples under these three different sub-titles:

- Home: In Memories of the Past
- Home: As an Object of Rebellion
- Home: In The Paradox of Inner - External / Public – Private

By integrating the works of Petrir Halilaj and Louis Bourgeois under the title of "Home: in Memories of the Past", the difficult life conditions and family relationships in the domestic life, and external elements that negatively interfere with human life are seen in the works of both artists. In both of them, it can be said that for a person who remembers the past time and place in adulthood, there is a search for the meaning and search of the house, a sad nostalgia about the house at the center of the experiences gained as a result of problematic or external negative conditions.

When we examine Gordon Matta Clark in the definition of "Home: As an Object of Revolt", we see that artistic production is not focused on the object or the end product, but is approached as a process-oriented action in an approach close to craft production, thus disconnected from the context of both art and modern housing. criticizes its transformation into a commodity that can be bought and sold (Artun, 2014).

Accompanied by articles titled "please do not touch", he evaluates art not as objects exhibited in museums, but as an environment to be dramatically fictionalized on social problems, and focuses on "home" in this context. Gordon Mattha Clark's revolt ends by dividing the house into two pieces.

We can say that "Home: In The Paradox of Inner - External / Public – Private" emerged in Nevin Aladağ's "Curtain House" and Maider Lopez's "Intermediate Period" work. "Curtain House" not only defines the boundaries of the private and the public, but also highlights and blurs this boundary at the same time by randomly destabilizing the curtain with the effect of the wind.

In the "Intermediate Period", on the other hand, the conceptual duality between the housing structures that are possible to be built in this area in the future by making an imaginary installation with a plan drawing in the Public Space was emphasized. By creating a space here, it provides an experimental space experience.

In the study, with a phenomenological framework, "House" has moved beyond retinal perception, as it can only be perceived visually, as in the examples of "In Memories of the Past", "An object of rebellion" and "In The Paradox of Inner - External / Public – Private".

References

1. Aladağ, N. (2005). Curtain House. (Photography) Curtain House Amsterdam, Installation in public space. Available at: <https://nevinaladag.com/works/curtain-house>
2. Artun, N. (2014). "Sürrealizm/ Mimarlık Mekân Sanatı" İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 2014
3. Bachelard, G. (2014). Mekânın Poetikası (çev. A. Tümertekin). İstanbul: İthaki Yayınları
4. Bollnow, O. F. (1961). "Lived-Space", Philosophy Today
5. Clark, G. (1974). Splitting (photography). Original photograph in the collection of SFMOMA New York. Available at: <https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/search/details/collection/object/379692>
6. Colomina, B. (2011). "Kamusallık ve Mahremiyet Yazar: (çev. A. U. Kılıç). İstanbul: Metis Yayıncılık.
7. Geuter, M. (1994). Red Room (Child) & Red Room (Parents) (Photography). Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain. Available at: <https://bourgeois.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/en/red-room-parents>
8. Güneş, E. (2002). "İnsan varlığının bütünleyicisi olarak 'ev'in anlamı" Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi 2002
9. Halilaj, P. (2010). The places I'm looking for, my dear, are utopian places, they are boring and I don't know how to make them real. (Photography). Berlin Biennial for contemporary art, Berlin Germany. Available at: https://artmap.com/petritthalilaj/chapter/images#_v2a5c
10. Inferno Art Attitudes. (2016). Petrit Halilaj: Space Shuttle in the Garden. (Photography). Hangarbicocca Milan inferno-magazine.com. Available at: <https://inferno-magazine.com/2016/03/03/petritthalilaj-space-shuttle-in-the-garden-hangarbicocca-milan/>
11. Koroç, E. (2018). "Günümüz Sanatında Otobiyografik Anlatılar" Hacettepe Üniversitesi Güzel Sanatlar Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Sanat Çalışması Raporu. Ankara.

12. Lauzon, C. (2017). *The Unmaking of Home in Contemporary Art*. Canada: University of Toronto Press.
13. Lopez, M. (2008). "Ara Dönem" Intervention on a pot. Córdoba City Hall, Spain. Available at: <https://www.maidelopez.com/portfolio/intermedio-2008/?lang=en>
14. Schulz, N. (1979). "Genius loci: Towards A Phenomenology of Architecture" New York: Publisher Rizzoli.
15. Smithson, A. (2008). "House of the Future, axonometric projection" First Published in Oase.
16. Talu, N. (2012). "Bir Arzu Nesnesi olarak Ev". *Arzu Mimarlığı: Mimarlığı Düşünmek ve Düşlemek*' ed. Artun N., Ojalvo R., İstanbul İletişim Yayınları.
17. Ustek, F. (Ed.), (2011). *Beklenmedik Karşılaşmalar* Metis Yayıncılık.
18. Veryeri, I. (2008). "Louise Bourgeois'nin Sanatının Kronolojik Dönüşümü" Ç.Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, Cilt 17, Sayı 3, Beykent Üniversitesi, Güzel Sanatlar Fakültesi, İstanbul.