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A Strange Concept Arising In The Covid-19 Pandemic: Sanal Sergi

Covid-19 Pandemisi'nde Doğan Garip Bir Kavram: Sanal Sergi

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic, or coronavirus pandemic, is the virus outbreak that occurred in Wuhan, China on December 1, 2019. With the reporting of virus cases in various countries in Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific, it was declared a global epidemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020. On April 1, 2020, T.C. Health Minister Fahrettin Koca, Turkey announced that it has spread to all cases of coronavirus. Turkey Outbreak in social, economic, political, economic, administrative, legal, military, religious and cultural areas has resulted in the taking radical decisions that cause the most significant impacts and results. While education was interrupted, all social and cultural areas were temporarily closed.

Due to restrictions and lockdowns, social and cultural life has tried to find a place online. Many museums and galleries around the world have opened interactive and immersive virtual reality tours to their visitors. Turkey also has seen similar examples. However, since the art gallery is also subject to restrictions, exhibitions have started to be organized under the name of "sanal sergi". These exhibitions, which are stated to be held for reasons such as making a place for art in a limited life, and similar reasons, are not correct as naming and most of them are not technically related to virtual reality.

Art has undergone conceptual and sensory change since the times it was exhibited in museums to show wealth to the public. It targets not only the eyes but also all the senses and has become interactive with the audience. For this reason, the "sanal sergi" seems far from being a real exhibition.

Keywords: Covid-19, Coronavirus, Pandemic, Art, Sanal Sergi

ÖZET

COVID-19 pandemisi veya koronavirüs pandemisi, 1 Aralık 2019 tarihinde Çin'in Vuhan şehrinde ortaya çıkan virüs salgınıdır. Avrupa, Kuzey Amerika ve Asya-Pasifik'te yer alan çeşitli ülkelerde yaşanan virüs vakalarının rapor edilmeye başlanması ile birlikte 11 Mart 2020'de Dünya Sağlık Örgütü tarafından küresel salgın ilan edilmiştir. 1 Nisan 2020'de T.C. Sağlık Bakanı Fahrettin Koca, korona virüs vakalarının tüm Türkiye'ye yayıldığını açıklamıştır. Salgın Türkiye'de sosyal, ekonomik, siyasi, iktisadi, idari, hukuki, askerî, dinî ve kültürel alanlarda birçok önemli etkilere ve sonuçlara neden olan radikal kararlar alınmasına neden olmuştur. Eğitim-öğretime ara verilirken tüm sosyal ve kültürel alanlar geçici süreyle kapatılmıştır.

Kısıtlamalar ve karantina nedeniyle sosyal ve kültürel hayat çevrimiçinde yer bulmaya çalışmıştır. Dünya genelinde birçok müze ve galeri etkileşimli ve sarmalayıcı sanal gerçeklik turlarını ziyaretçilerine açmıştır. Türkiye'de de benzer örnekler görülmüştür. Bununla beraber sanat galeri de kısıtlamaya tabi olduğu için "sanal sergi" adıyla sergiler düzenlemeye başlanmıştır. Kısıtlı hayat içinde sanata yer açmak ve benzeri nedenlerle yapıldığı ifade edilen bu sergiler adlandırma olarak doğru olmadığı gibi birçoğu sanal gerçeklikle de teknik olarak ilgili değildir.

Sanat, müzelerde halka zenginliği göstermek için sergilendiği dönemlerden bugüne kavramsal ve duysal değişim geçirmiştir. Sadece göze değil tüm duyu alan hedef alan ve izleyiciyle etkileşimli hale gelmiştir. Bu nedenle "sanal sergi" gerçek bir sergi olabilmekten oldukça uzak görünmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Covid-19, Koronavirüs, Pandemi, Sanat, Sanal Sergi

1. INTRODUCTION

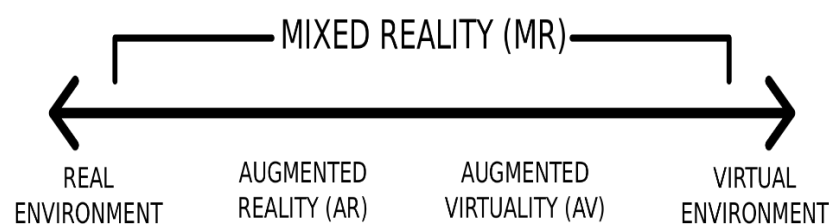
Corona virus disease was accepted as a pandemic by the World Health Organization at the beginning of 2020, and with harsh measures such as quarantines and restrictions, it imprisoned people in their homes in the 21 century by detaching them from their freedom, even from their routines. It would be impossible for art not to be affected by such a period when production came to a halt and the economy slowed down. Museums and galleries had to close temporarily due to quarantines and restrictions. There were many artistic projects that were paused, uncertain or postponed to a later date or canceled. Some studies showed that artists were among the groups most affected by the pandemic. But in this pessimistic picture, a little spark could make people smile. People who were locked in their homes started to make music from their balconies. Some museums and galleries were opening their doors with free virtual tours. Art, as always, was finding its way.

Suddenly in Turkey especially in social media "sanal sergi" invites, organizations, dates began to appear. At its beginning it looked like a temporary form of an online activity with naive recipes, as giving breathe to art that had contracted during the pandemic days. What was it really?

2. REALITIES

The English translation of the “sanal sergi” can come to mind or translate as a virtual exhibition. But in English virtual means; being such in essence or effect though not formally recognized or admitted and being on or simulated on a computer or computer network (Merriam-Webster). In Turkish “sanal” means It has no place in reality but is conceived in mind, conceptual, imaginary, hypothetical, estimated (TDK, t. y.). Also in Turkish, virtual translation is used especially in technological usage. For instance virtual ram or virtual reality. By giving such a name, the original simulation situation or a computer-aided display style is emphasized. There is a virtual reality exhibition reference.

In the continuum of virtuality, reality has been structured in a wide variety from real environment to virtual environment (Milgram ve Kishino, 1994:16). The structures between the real environment and the virtual environment are named as augmented reality and augmented virtuality. The whole continuum is covered by mixed reality (Jerald, 2016: 29) (Pic 1).



Source: Milgram, P., Kishino, F. (1994)

Figure 1. Virtuality Continuum (VC)

2.1 Reality

Reality, A wide variety of definitions are made for reality, which is a difficult to explain concept that can prove itself with its own existence. Reality is what exists concretely and objectively. While defining the present as present without any theoretical fiction or in the past or in the future, it is the current, factual, concrete and fictional, deceptive, artificial, imaginary and the opposite of the fantasy explains that it can exist substantially and objectively, independent of perception and memory (Cevizci, 2003: 943). In order for a work of art to be interpreted, it must first be perceived. It is described as the transformation of reality perceived by sense organs into information in the mind, that is, the process of defining the perceived reality (Sözen ve Tanyeli, 1992: 17). Perception and reality are related. For instance, visiting a museum or gallery without the aid of a device such as a tablet or headphone, it perceive with the whole sensory system, from seeing to touch.

2.2 Augmented Reality (AR)

Augmented reality carries the artificial data over the real environment (Tokareva, 2018). Augmented reality is an enhanced version of the physical, real-world reality of which elements are superimposed by computergenerated or extracted real-world sensory input such as sound, video, graphics or haptics. (Schueffel, 2017: 3). Augmented reality is experienced through applications installed on smartphones and tablet devices or through transparent glasses such as Google Glass.

One of the most recent artistic Augmented Reality applications is “London Mastaba AR” by Christo and Jeanne-Claude (Pic 2). With the “London Mastaba AR” application, visitors to London’s Hyde Park from 2020 July can experienced large-scale public artworks. It is an exact virtual replica of the physical statue placed in London Mastaba AR 2018 (Designboom, 2020).



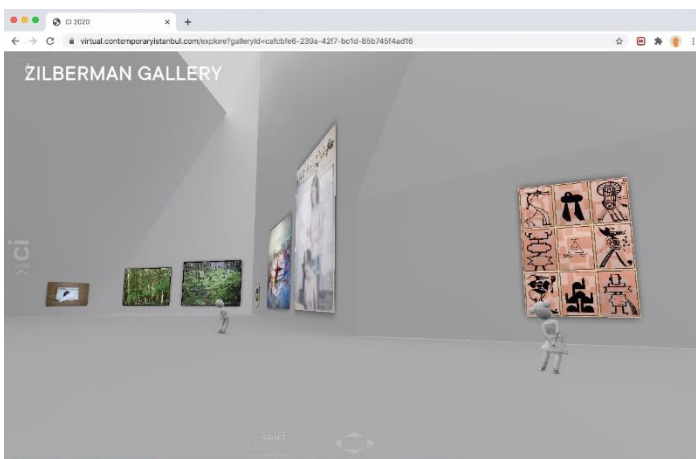
Source: DESIGNBOOM

Figure 2. The floating “London Mastaba” sculpture by Christo and Jeanne-Claude, recreated in augmented reality.

2.3 Virtual Reality (VR)

Virtual Reality, creates a new artificial environment independent of the physical environment. Virtual reality is a computer-aided created digital environment that can be experienced and interacted as if it were real (Merriam-Webster). Despite this, divers completely have the perception that the experience is not real. This virtual environment can be completely recreated or created by transferring the image of an existing space. The term VIRTUAL REALITY does not mean something very close to reality, but a simulation of reality (Cotton ve Oliver, 1997: 209). Virtual reality can be experienced mostly on computer screens or with headset glasses.

The latest VR exhibition example from Turkey is Contemporary Istanbul’s virtual.contemporaryistanbul.com. Contemporary Istanbul is the leading annual art fair in Turkey, situated at the meeting point of Europe and Asia in one of the great cities of the world. Contemporary Istanbul takes place each September and offers a platform for the city’s thriving art scene, growing art market and collector base, as well as an access point to the best contemporary art from the wider region (Contemporaryistanbul). Contemporary Istanbul has announced that it will make its physical edition between 27 April-2 May 2021 due to the pandemic. On the other hand, under the main sponsorship of Akbank, the fair was opened for free visits online at virtual.contemporaryistanbul.com on the Virtual Contemporary Istanbul platform between 21 December 2020-6 January 2021 (Pic 3).



Source: CONTEMPORARY ISTANBUL

Figure 3. A Screenprint from Virtual Contemporary Istanbul

2.4 Mixed Reality (MR)

Mixed Reality, takes many forms and can be considered to range on a virtuality continuum from the real environment to virtual environments (Milgram ve Kishino, 1994: 1-16). Mixed reality covers a continuum between graphics enhanced by video and video enhanced by graphics (Ohta and Tamura, 1999: 2). Mixed reality uses headset glasses. Physical movement in real environment finds its response in virtual environment as well. The user acts in an immersive virtual environment.

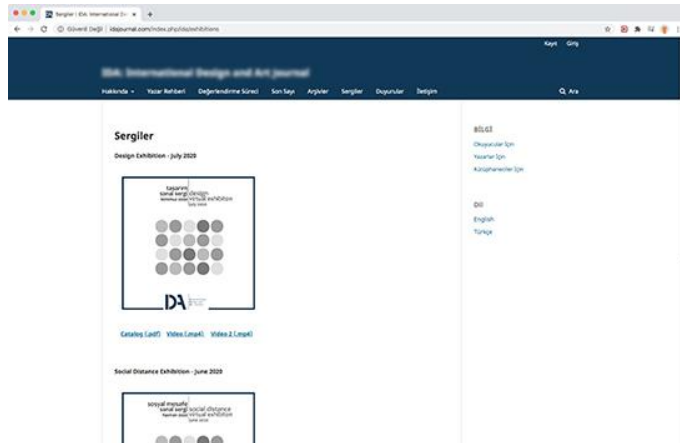
Pera Museum offers visitors the opportunity to visit Osman Hamdi Bey’s working environment and take an interactive tour inside the painting of “The Tortoise Trainer” with “A Journey to the World of Osman Hamdi Bey: Virtual Reality Experience” (peramuseum.org) (Pic 4)



Source: Pera Müzesi

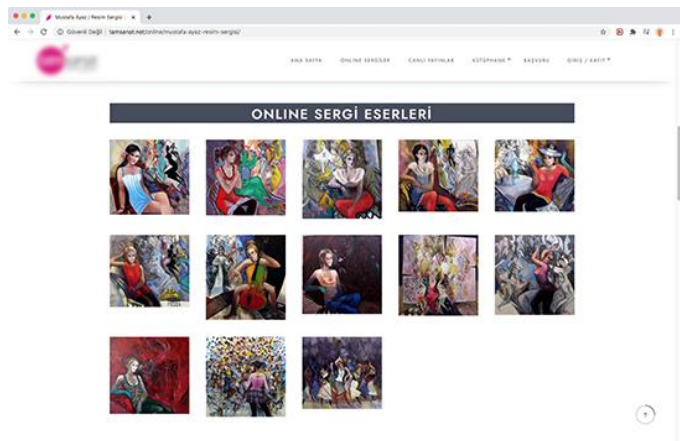
Figure 4. A Screenprint from “A Journey to the World of Osman Hamdi Bey: Virtual Reality Experience”

Above, how the augmented reality, virtual reality and mixed reality are used in art and exhibiting art has been explained and simply examples given. Being online alone is not enough for an exhibition to be virtual. It must also use software and hardware virtual reality systems. In art, virtuality should be interactive and immersive. Since these approaches cannot be seen in many exhibitions, which are named as “sanal sergi” or “çevrimiçi sergi”, it is not possible to talk about virtuality. Therefore, these exhibitions are far from virtuality. They are an exhibition catalog (Pic 5) or web page (Pic 6). It was observed that naming mistakes were also made in such exhibitions (Pic 7). Similarly, there are cases where the situation in the “sanal sergi” does not differ in the “çevrimiçi sergi” and the “online sergi”



Source: Idajournal

Figure 5. A “sanal sergi” where only a catalog pdf is downloaded



Source: tamsanat

Figure 6. A “sanal sergi” which is actually a web page



Source: Artsteps

Figure 7. A “sanal sergi” that calls itself augmented reality exhibition despite being virtual reality exhibition.

4. CONCLUSION

The period when art was exhibited to show wealth and power in museums is far behind. Art is no longer something that only appeals to the sense of sight and pleasure. Today, art has a perceptual structure that appeals to all the senses. Space and time are very important together with all the senses in the perception of a work of art. Also the roles of the artist and the audience have changed considerably. For instance, Pistoletto rolled his Globe into the gallery with the audience, Gonzalez-Torres fed his candies to the audience, and Banksy even destroyed his art work. For this reason, virtual exhibitions are inadequate for today’s art, as they only appeal to the sense of sight. Of course, while these predictions are valid for virtual exhibitions of physical art works, the situation is different for virtual art works.

The pandemic has undoubtedly made life difficult. The “sanal sergi” or online exhibition offers an easy, inexpensive, risk-free solution at this point. For this reason, it has been a savior for many activities that have been prepared before or have been restricted again due to the second wave. At the same time, it has become a new media for academics who must to show academic performance in a year when the galleries were closed. The virtual exhibition, which is a temporary solution during the pandemic process, continues even though the quarantine and restrictions are over. While this situation leads to an exhibition inflation and it becomes a bypass for many events that cannot be exhibited in the real galleries. Even this indirect route becomes preferable. Most of the exhibitions are just for kind of display only.

As the virtual exhibition starts to replace the real exhibition day by day, these two questions should be asked. Is there a possibility that the real exhibition will be replaced by the virtual exhibition, and perhaps its disappearance will be replaced by this simulacra? Can a virtual one replace the real one of its own?

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