

EVALUATION OF FINE ARTS PRINT PRODUCTION WITH ARTIST'S OPINIONS IN CONTEMPORARY ART PRESENTATION

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Abstract

Fine art printmaking is a process that involves creating multiple original artworks through various printing techniques such as etching, lithography, and screen printing. Printmaking has been a significant art form for many contemporary artists, and its value lies in its ability to reproduce artworks in a way that is more affordable and accessible to a broader audience. In the last three decades, rapidly advancing digital technology has caused radical changes in many social, cultural, and economic fields, including the presentation of contemporary art. This has led to the formation of an innovative attitude among artists, which has transformed and triggered the production of new artworks. Fine art prints, which are considered one of the original printing methods, have become increasingly popular among contemporary artists as a means of bringing their works to wider audiences and generating additional income.

Digital technologies offer a new tool for artists, which can be used to create dynamic visual presentations in different spaces and platforms. This innovative attitude that fine art prints bring to the behaviour of today's artists should be considered alongside other contemporary art presentations. The aim of this article is to investigate the effects of digital printing technology and fine art prints on contemporary artists. To achieve this, in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 participants, including well-known artists and art institution managers, in the contemporary art scene in Turkey. The findings were analyzed using content analysis, a qualitative research method, which helped to identify the concepts and relationships that could be explained with a theoretical expression based on the interpreted data.

Keywords: *Fine art Prints 1, Contemporary Artist in Turkey 2, Printmaking Art 3, Art production 4*

Introduction

“The development and adoption of computer technology after the Second World War led to increased demands in business and the development of communications methods. It is possible to see these developments, especially in the printing industry, which has existed commercially since the 16th century. Digital technology has brought advancements in the printing industry to light, enabling personalized designs that can be printed on any surface. The first intersection of digital technology with the art world was created by the applications experienced by photographers and artists. Photographers and artists, first of all, have applied digital imaging methods to develop their own art. These methods have created demands and, thanks to scientific studies, have improved the image quality of inkjet digital prints. In this context, as the inks become more resistant to fading in the light with a wider range of colours, artistic works designed by contemporary artists in the digital environment can be produced with fine art printing methods and find a place in contemporary art museums and collections. In this context, it is stated that digital technology shapes cultures and societies with its indispensable representation power in every field. In this representation, art plays an important role in shaping the expression of social emotions and life by taking the support of technology (Schiuma, 2011).

In today’s art landscape, digital technology has emerged primarily as an online marketplace that sells affordable paintings, prints and drawings to regular customers of museums and auctions. In this way, hundreds of unknown artists now have access to an online market that deals with all these purchasing and promotion processes and get the chance to watch all kinds of. However, some interpret that digitization in art means that quality is declining as anyone with a computer can now paint or draw and has access to a large number of customers online. In other words, it means that art becomes less privileged and thus loses the sense of uniqueness or beauty. The opinions of the auction sales sites in the art market on the digital platform against this negativity are; is that this is not the case, quality is the key and its maintainability continues. It is stated that it is not easy to enter the private circle of artists on an auction site such as www.curioos.com, which is one of these sites. It is stated that the artists are only invited or jointly selected by other artists and only 15% of them can take place in a very selective environment where they can exhibit their works on the website.

One of the other important criteria is that the selected works are numbered and printed in limited numbers – signed by the artist, in editions – which helps to preserve their values. In this way, the quality of the work is maintained through this changing process. Additionally, this approach

reflects how young art lovers are buying art today, providing an important tool for greater access and education about their particular tastes. (Oudea, [18.01.2017]).

Methodology

The data for this research, which aimed to evaluate the views of 15 contemporary artists and art institution managers, were obtained through in-depth interviews conducted as part of a qualitative study. The interviews took place over a 6-month period in 2021, under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were given the option to answer questions face-to-face, via email, or online. The interviews were conducted impartially, and every comment was recorded without interruption. The data obtained were analyzed using the MAXQDA program and expert opinions. To increase the validity of the research, some of the participants' statements were directly included in the data, and expert opinions were sought to examine the study in terms of its dimensions. The credibility of the research was further increased by comparing the researcher's themes and coding scheme with expert opinions. A desired level of reliability was considered to be achieved in cases where the agreement between the coding scheme was 90% or higher. The obtained values were interpreted and presented as meaning maps and tables.

Digital Printing Applications in Contemporary Art Production

Jack Duganne, a printer and printing engineer, introduced the term "Giclée" around 1990 to describe the process of digital art printing using inkjet printers. This innovative term was coined to differentiate high-quality inkjet prints from the low-quality printing often associated with inkjet technology. Duganne, who worked as a printer at Nash Editions, used the term Giclée to refer to proofs from an industrial pre-press high-resolution inkjet printer called "Iris". Over time, Giclée has become an accepted term in the print industry to describe high-quality digital art prints of original works or computer-generated artworks. This term is now widely used to describe the modern printing technique that has revolutionized the art world. (capcityrepro, [03.05.2018]).

Artists have been using digital printing technologies in their creative process since the 1990s. However, early digital art prints produced by Iris printers were found to fade or deteriorate over time. Thankfully, advancements in technology have significantly improved the durability of ink and substrate materials used in digital printing, thereby eliminating these issues (Nickelson, 2017). As a result, the digital environment has become a new

medium for archiving artwork and producing fine art prints with minimal effort and cost for the artist. By using a professional color separation process, artists can create limited edition prints with their personal control, signature, and desired number of copies. This allows them to offer original prints to a certain number of buyers and restrict the sale of their work. By sharing the material value of the artwork between a few buyers, artists can make their work accessible to low-budget art lovers at affordable prices. By embracing this process, contemporary artists can expand their reach and contribute to the development of this new medium.

Contemporary artists face a significant challenge in navigating the complex process of digital printing and understanding the different stages involved, as noted by Berger (2005). This stage of production requires the artist to grapple with the constantly changing world of digital printing technology and often necessitates the assistance of an expert in preparing the original work. Achieving high-quality, durable prints that resist fading over time involves several factors, including selecting appropriate ink and media combinations, assessing the longevity of the print, and considering finishing options like polished or canvas prints. With this, digital art production requires different skills and knowledge compared to traditional art-making methods. Although an artist may be proficient in traditional art materials, they may have limited knowledge and experience in digital production techniques. To produce high-quality prints, artists must either work with a professional in a reliable studio environment or invest significant time and money in extensive research and professional training. In this context, the high costs associated with machinery and consumables can pose a significant barrier for many artists. Therefore, digital art production is more commonly used by well-known artists in the art market. Some contemporary art museums, such as Istanbul's Graphic Arts Museum (IMOGA), have established fine art printing studios to support artists in this field.

Analysis and Findings

E. Gombrich draws attention to the fact that the Age sometimes determines the art and sometimes the art determines the age, and the relationship of the spirit of the age with art movements (Gombrich, 1993, 3). W. Benjamin, on the other hand, mentions that in addition to the tremendous change that mechanical reproduction brought to literature, techniques such as wood, metal engraving and lithography in the Middle Ages brought the production technique of art to a new level. He emphasizes that the mechanical reproduction of a work of art expresses something new, while graphic art allows it to take place in the market, just like Ukiyo-e, lithography accompanies

the graphic art of daily life with pictures. Accordingly, it is suggested that print art is a social medium, its social nature and the role of social relations and power structures in the artist's negotiation of these dynamics should be taken into account. Considering these interactions, it is emphasized that artists are led to question the power and importance of the art object, as well as to reflect on their responsibility and capacity to report on and engage with current events (Crawford, 2021, 2).

Since information technologies have taken over all of the dynamics of social life with the digitalization of information, some contemporary artists have turned to artistic presentations in which human beings are not involved and in which they adopt the interdisciplinary production relationship by using new virtual information. These innovative information technologies have also provided opportunities for brand-new expansions in their presentations for artists. Starting with sample photography and video, internet art, multimedia art, software art, artificial intelligence happening, viral art, e-mail art, virtual world performance, or NFT etc. with the derivatives, the diversity of artistic expression, which is called new media art, has increased. In addition, as a digital production technique, fine art prints are also a new production technique alongside traditional original printing methods such as lithography, engraving, and wood printing. In this way, art repositions itself in the new world order by reaching wider masses. In this direction, it is possible to say that art is now separated from the traditional one.

In this research, with the participation of 15 interviewees, including contemporary artists and art institution managers in Turkey, the expressions of digital print works on the visual art phenomenon were evaluated. Themes obtained from the findings expressing personal and professional characteristics were presented and interpreted in the form of maps and tables.

Evaluation of Findings

The research consists of 15 interviewees, who are well-known painters in Turkey, who produce contemporary art, expert academicians, sculptors, textile artists, printmakers and art gallery managers. All of the interviewees consisted of two women and thirteen men, who were educated in fine arts and are experts in their fields. The interviewees consist of a mixed group of people between the ages of 37-82 who are interested in and produce digital art in a wide range of traditional ways. At the beginning of the analysis, codes were given to each of the participants first. (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive information about the study group

Interviewer Code	Age	Gender	Level of Education	Profession
1 (A.G.)	77	M.	Bachelor/1974	Artist, Academician
2 (A.N.)	67	M.	Bachelor/1984	Artist, Sculptor
3 (C.A.)	54	M.	Bachelor/1986	Artist, Academician
4 (C.K.)	61	M.	Bachelor/1995	Artist, Academician
5 (E.T.)	53	W.	Bachelor/1997	Art Gallery manager
6 (G.D.E.)	67	M.	Bachelor/1979	Artist, Academician
7 (H.K.)	55	M.	Bachelor/1993	Artist, Academician
8 (H.E.)	55	M.	Bachelor/1987	Artist, Academician
9 (M.G.)	63	M.	Bachelor/1981	Artist, Academician
10 (M.Ö.)	37	M.	Bachelor/2005	Artist, Academician
11 (M.T.)	52	W.	Bachelor/1997	Artist, Academician
12 (M.B.)	55	M.	Bachelor/1986	Artist, Academician
13 (S.S.T.)	82	M.	Bachelor/1961	Artist, Academician
14 (T.B.)	45	M.	Bachelor/2002	Printmaker, Academician
15 (T.A.)	57	M.	Bachelor/1986	Artist, Academician

Content analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the analysis of the data obtained from the in-depth interviews with the participants. In the research, coding and sorting were done first in the process of analyzing and interpreting the data. After the coding of the interviewees, the three main headings with the highest frequency values among the themes obtained by classification according to the stages were examined (Figure 1).

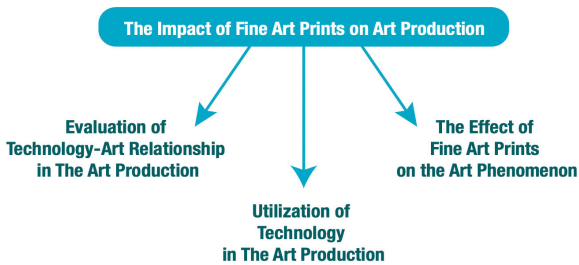


Fig 1. The semantic map of the impact of Fine Art Prints on art production

When the findings obtained in the research were evaluated, it was seen that in terms of percentage values in the interviews, it was structured as 3 main themes with the titles “Utilization of Technology in the Art Production”, “Evaluation of Technology-Art Relationship in the Art Production” and “The Effect of Fine Art Prints on the Art Phenomenon”. The frequency values related to these main themes are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Interviewers' view on the main themes

The Main Themes	f	%
Evaluation of Technology-Art Relationship in The Art Production	113	38,44
Utilization of Technology in The Art Production	59	20,07
The Effect of Fine Art Prints on the Art Phenomenon	90	30,61
The other Themes	32	10,88
TOTAL	294	100,00

Evaluation of “Technology-Art Relationship in Artistic Production”

To the interviewees forming the working group, “How do you evaluate the relationship between technology and art in today's contemporary art environment and artistic production?” the question was asked and when the findings were evaluated, the data obtained within the scope of “Evaluating the technology-art relationship in artistic production”, which is one of the 3 themes, were coded within the scope of positive and negative effects (Figure 2).

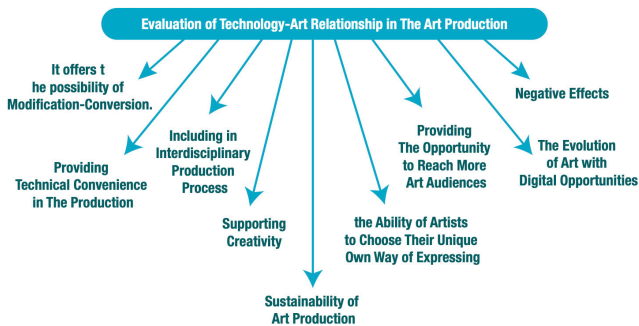


Fig 2. The semantic map of Evaluation of Technology-Art Relationship in The Art Production

When the findings related to “*Evaluation of Technology-Art Relationship in Artistic Production*”, which is one of the main themes, are evaluated; As seen in Figure 2, “*Providing technical convenience in production*”, “*Evolving Art with Digital Opportunities*”, “*Supporting creativity*”, “*Involving in the interdisciplinary production process*”, “*Choosing a unique way of expression for artists*”, “*Providing the opportunity to reach more audiences*”. and “*Sustainability in production*” were revealed and coded within the scope of positive effects. Apart from these sub-themes, “*Criticisms about originality*” found in the expressions of artists and art institution managers were coded under the “*Negative effects*” sub-title. Frequency values related to these sub-themes are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Evaluation of Technology-Art Relationship in The Art Production

Evaluation of Technology-Art Relationship in The Art Production	f	%
Providing Technical Convenience in The Production	45	40,55
The Evolution of Art with Digital Opportunities	25	22,5
Supporting	9	8,1
Negative effects	9	8,1
Including in Interdisciplinary Production Process	8	7,21
the Ability of Artists to Choose Their Unique Own Way of Expressing	6	5,43
Providing	5	4,5
Sustainability of	4	3,6
TOTAL	111	100,00

Within the scope of the relationship between technology and art, technology provides convenience in the technical field; In the context of providing new possibilities and manipulation possibilities on basic tools, facilitating and facilitating the process, the participants; stated within the scope of positive opinions that technology shortens the production process, provides creativity, and provides a more practical and faster art production.

In the scope of adverse effects; Expressions such as being misleading, imitating and copying some works, unfair use of technology and causing alienation between the producer and the produced were expressed.

Evaluation of “Use of Digital Technology in Art Production”

To the interviewees forming the working group, “How do you evaluate the relationship between technology and art in today’s contemporary art environment and artistic production?” the question was asked and when the findings were evaluated, the data obtained within the scope of “Utilization of Digital Technology in Art Production”, which is one of the 3 themes, were coded within the scope of positive and negative effects.

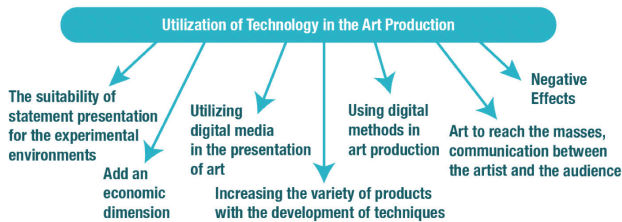


Fig 3. The semantic map of Utilization of Technology in the Art Production

When the data obtained in art production are evaluated; “For the artist, the compliance of expression presentation to the experimental environments”, “Utilization of digital channels in the presentation of art”, “Using digital production methods in art production”, “Economic dimension”, “The reaching of art to the masses, and the communication between the artist and the audience”, “With the development of techniques, the increase in diversity in art production”, and “The negative effects” come to the forefront and are shown in Figure 3.

Table 4. Utilization of Technology in the Art Production

Utilization of Technology in the Art Production	f	%
The suitability of statement presentation for the experimental	7	11,86
Increasing the variety of products with the development of techniques	5	8,47
Art to reach the masses, communication between the artist and the audience	9	15,25
Add an economic dimension	3	5,08
Using digital methods in art production	23	38,98
Utilizing digital media in the presentation of art	11	18,64
Negative effects	1	1,69
TOTAL	59	100,00

As seen in Table 4, when the findings regarding one of the main themes “Using the digital method in art production” are evaluated; Concepts consisting of the most frequently mentioned facts and interpretations such as “Image processing programs”, “Using digital art printing methods”, “Using digital methods in the artistic production process” were coded under the “positive effects” sub-headings.

Apart from positive concepts, “Being misleading” in the statements of artists and art institution managers was coded under the “Negative effects” sub-title. Frequency values for these sub-themes are also shown in Table 4.

In the statements of the participants regarding the relationship between technology and art and the facilities provided by technology in the technical field; Positive opinions were given about providing new possibilities and manipulation possibilities on basic tools, accelerating and facilitating the process, shortening the production process of technology, providing creativity, and providing more practical and faster art production.

Evaluation of “The Effect of Fine Art Prints on the Phenomenon of Art”

When the findings obtained from the interviews were evaluated in the research, the positive and negative effects of the data obtained regarding “The Effect of Fine Art Prints on Art Phenomenon”, which is one of the 4 themes, were coded. When these data are examined; “Technology Accelerating and Developing Artistic Production”, “Artistic Value of Works Produced by Digital Printing Technology”, “Artist’s Status and Perspective of Digital Art Print Work Production”, Views on Art Production with Digital Printing”, Opinions Regarding the “Artworks in Exhibition-Collections”, “Interactive with the Artist and Her/His Work” The meaning map of the positive and negative effects such as “Establishing Communication” is shown in Figure 4.

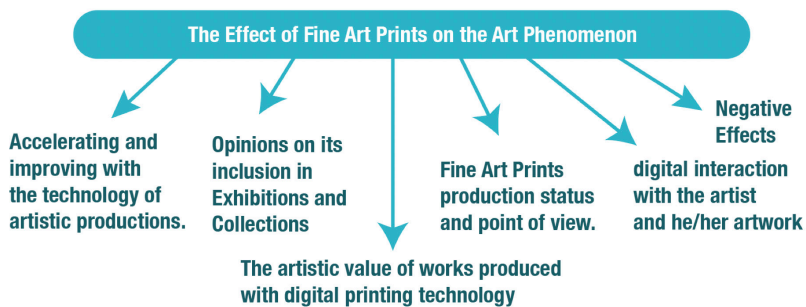


Fig 4. The semantic map of The Effect of Fine Art Prints on the Art Phenomenon

Table 5. *The Effect of Fine Art Prints on the Art Phenomenon*

The Effect of Fine Art Prints on the Art Phenomenon	f	%
Accelerating and improving with the technology of artistic productions.	18	20
The artistic value of works produced with digital printing technology	17	18,89
Fine Art Prints production status and point of view	37	41,11
Opinions on its inclusion in Exhibitions and Collections	9	10
Digital interaction with the artist and own artwork	3	3,33
Negative effects	6	6,67
TOTAL	90	100,00

One another main theme is when the findings regarding the evaluation of effect of Fine Art Prints on the phenomenon of art are evaluated; The concepts constituting this main theme were revealed and coded within the scope of positive effects, as seen in Figure 4. Apart from the positive concepts, the opinions of the artists and art institution managers that “according to the idea that digital technology is not art, the buyer doesn’t want it, as well as its tendency to be imitated and reproduced far from uniqueness” were coded under the sub-title of “Negative effects”. The frequency values for these sub-themes are also shown in Table 5.

In the statements of the participants about the effect of Fine Arts Printing on the phenomenon of art; “As technology improves art production, makes it more practical and adds new dimensions to the field, they expressed positive opinions about how fine art prints interact with technology. Negative statements within the scope of negative effects are: “Not having enough technical knowledge and not having time for training”, Expressions such as “Concern that the recipient will see it as worthless”, “The classical work of art is perceived as more valuable”, “Concern for reproducibility” and “The artist does not prefer to use digital techniques in production” are coded under the sub-title of “Negative effects”.

Conclusions

It’s uncertain how digital technology will affect artistic vision. Since the 1960s, engineers have invited artists to explore this innovative production environment. The development of digital technology has led to changes in the art environment, with fine art prints being accepted as an original with the artist’s signature. While some main artists have been hesitant towards

digital print artworks, the majority of well-known artists in the Turkish art market have a positive view. To see real change, collective practices and developments need to be presented to the artists. Once concerns and fears are addressed, clearer results regarding the impact of fine art prints on the art world can be observed.

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