İSTANBUL BİLGİ UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

MA in MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS PROGRAM

NEW AVENUES IN MEDIA STUDIES:

TACTICAL MEDIA IN CONTEMPORARY ART

HALE TURHAN

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PROF. DR. HALİL NALÇAOĞLU

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MEDYA ÇALIŞMALARINDA YENİ HEDEFLER: ÇAĞDAŞ SANATTA TAKTİKSEL MEDYA

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2) Taktiksel Medya	2) Tactical Media
3) Çağdaş Sanat	3) Contemporary Art
4) Medya Arkeolojisi	4) Media Archaeology
5) Medya Çalışmaları	5) Media Studies

PREFACE

This quest of mine started back in 2013 when I myself and my life and artistic partner Gökhan Turhan began to produce visual/audial artworks on both digital and analogue terrains of media landscape. Making use of *any media available*, be it an obsolete or emergent one, allowed me to contemplate upon the issues this dissertation of mine comes to deal with, namely, appropriation, tactical media, within the theoretical framework of media archaeology and actualize the result of my constant contemplation of these in relation to contemporary art and media studies at large.

I may readily state that the research question that I have been tracing for so long has come to light after so many discussions I have observed in local and global art and media scene both at academic and artistic level. In the age of technological reproducibility that has required to be construed with the new concepts and emerging aesthetics of DIY and DIT practices, it is obvious that there is a huge shift toward a new mode of knowledge production in which authorship becomes an outmoded tradition. There emerges a new perception of knowledge production when observing how the artists tactically transform their art and the media they utilize.

This study of mine postulates my peers to be encouraged to contribute more on the issues covered here.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Halil Nalçaoğlu for his support and contribution not only during the course of the actualization of my study but the whole period of my master education as well. I would like to extend my gratitude to the esteemed members of the jury, Prof. Gülçin Özdemir, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Erkan Saka for their invaluable commentaries.

Last but not the least, this study of mine would not be possible without the constant support and readiness to discuss, intellectual contribution, and the convenience my significant other Gökhan Turhan has always provided me with.

Hence, I am more than pleased to dedicate my dissertation to my life and artistic partner, Gökhan Turhan.

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List of Abbreviations

CAE: Critical Art Ensemble

DIT: Do-it-together

DIY: Do-it-yourself

EDT: The Electronic Disturbance Theatre

N5M: *The Next 5 Minutes*

TBT: Transborder Immigrant Tool

ABSTRACT

The current thesis is the documentation of the research outcome that has been both a scholarly quest, and a subject matter of my very own research-based multi-medial inquiries into the material dimensions of *Tactical Media* art practice. Throughout the text, I employ a non-linear application of *media archaeological* methodology in the critical context whereby I develop questions, and propose answers thereof, in regard to the research question that seeks critical conceptualizations and formulations so as to render visible the role of *Tactical Media Art*, and its practitioners whom I showcase with seminal examples from their artistic oeuvre, and scholarly research both on a global and local level.

In this thesis, I provide the contextual layers for the accessibility, implications and applicability of conceptualizations, processualizations, and formulations of Tactical Media which in turn would be beneficial to *Media Studies* at large both at home and abroad. I also stress that art practices such as tactical media art are not merely domains of pure artistic ends, in that, many a practitioner in the field also works closely with, or directly from within, the scholarly bodies and institutions such as the academy as in the case of some members of *Critical Art Ensemble*.

I aim to provide a scholarly critique of these scholarly and medial ecologies through which art and sciences are able to re-mediate immediate problems of humanity and academy and propose solutions thereof in the context of expanded fields of art and media studies at large.

Key words: Appropriation, Tactical Media, Contemporary Art, Media Archaeology, Media Studies

ÖZET

Bu tez, hem bilimsel bir mesele olarak kendini addeden, hem de şahsımın *Taktiksel Medya* sanat pratiklerinin materyel boyutlarını sorgulayan araştırma tabanlı çoklu-medya ortamları soruşturmalarının kaynağını oluşturan araştırma sürecimin sonuçlarının belgesidir. Metin boyunca, eleştirel bağlamda doğrusal olmayan bir *medya arkeolojik* metodolojiyi uyguluyor, bu minvalde de hem *Taktiksel Medyanın*, hem de bu alandaki sanatçı pratiklerinin görünür rolünün eleştirel kavramsallaştırılması ve bu kavramsallığının uygulanabilir bir biçimleştirilmesinin yollarını sorgulayan araştırma sorum özelinde, ilgili alanda üretim yapan sanatçıların sanatsal ve akademik üretimlerinin kültürel teknikler boyutunda doğrudan bir incelemesini de gerçekleştirip yerel ve küresel düzlemde öneriler geliştiriyorum.

Tez boyunca, Taktiksel medyanın erişebilirliği, çıkarımları, ve bunların kavrasallaştırılmasının, süreçselleştirilmesinin ve de biçimselleştirilmesinin uygulabilirliği açısından bağlamsal katmanları ve boyutları ele alıyorum. Tüm bunların hem yerel, hem de küresel yorumlamalarını gerçekleştirip, aynı zamanda, taktiksel medya sanatı gibi sanat pratiklerinin *Medya Çalışmaları* açısından yalnızca salt sanatsal bir alansallık olmadıklarını gösteriyorum. Unutulmamalıdır ki aslında tanım gözetmeyen bu alanda, *Critical Art Ensemble*'ın kimi üyelerinin de yaptığı gibi, sanatçılar ya akademiyle içiçe ya da doğrudan akademinin içinden çalışmalarını ve sanatsal pratiklerini yürütmektedirler.

Sayesinde sanat ve bilimin, insanlığın ve akademinin acil sorunlarını yeniden dönüştürebileceği bu bilim ve medya ekolojilerine akademik bir eleştiri getirirken, genel medya çalışmaları ve genişletilmiş sanat alanlarında bağlam dahilinde bu sorunlara çözümler öneriyorum.

Anahtar kelimeler: Uyarlama, Taktiksel Medya, Çağdaş Sanat, Medya Arkeolojisi, Medya Çalışmalar

INTRODUCTION

In this introductory chapter, I summarize the entire structure of the thesis, so that readers will not have perplexing, or misleading ideas. As stated in the Chapter 1.1., the research question of this thesis aims to provide a scholarly response, and the critique thereof, as to whether tactical art practices in contemporary art are pioneers, or vanguards, toward a transformation and remediation of (technical) media in general, and media studies at large. These question, and the following scholarly quest, are in this direction highly concerned with that which can be termed as unmediated thinking, which is also critiqued by Jussi Parikka (2013) in his introductory chapter for the English translation of Wolfgang Ernst's *Digital Memory and The Archive.*

In Chapter 1, I provide a critical context that is based on a non-linear understanding of media archaeological methodology (see Zielinski 2006). Firstly, I pose the research question, and the related problematics that arise either as commentaries, or questions. Secondly, I elaborate on the aim and objectives of the whole research process, and the thesis itself. Upon these clarifications that is directly involved in the construction of the thesis, I provide definitions respectively on tactical media, appropriation art, and media archaeology.

In Chapter 2, I elaborate on the origins of critical aesthetics and tactical media in tandem with the general scope of the thesis, whereby the readers are encouraged to clearly comprehend the pillars of these scholarly and artistic fields

of which media archaeological critique has recently take advantage on a ubiquitous level (See Chapter 1.4).

In the Chapter 3, I showcase the practices in the field of tactical media art, and appropriation art—which is by its nature tactical—by scrutinizingly investigating the artistic oeuvre of Critical Art Ensemble (CAE), *New Portraits* series, and several other works by Richard Prince (2014) in which case he has been appropriating the social media platforms, gallery and museum spaces, and the spirit of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) and Do-It-Together (DIT) movements by any media necessary. These first two showcases inform both the thesis and the reader on the global level, while the third artist 2/5BZ from Turkey provides insights into the contemporary applicability and formulations of tactical media art practice on the local level. In investigating his position in this context, I visit significant examples of multi-media works of arts that utilize tactical media by their nature whereby a critical response and proposals in regard to the local artistic, and scholarly venues are presented as a research outcome. Here, it should be noted that English translations of Turkish texts, and references, are my own unless stated otherwise.

In Chapter 4, I reflect on the contextual framework of my thesis as amplified and critiqued throughout the previous chapters, and deduct research-based criticalities that inform both the sphere of tactical media (art), and media studies at large whereby I elaborate on the implications of these interchangeably so as to propose artistic, critical and scholarly methods and methodologies through which media studies expand and apply a broader horizon where artists and scholars may *do it together by any media necessary*

1. THE CRITICAL CONTEXT

Throughout this chapter, the critical context as to the media archaeological methodological nature of this thesis provided along with the necessary definitions that are provided in the context of prerequisites of the research question. It includes the research question, and the aim and objective of the thesis along with the definitions, and the vulnerability thereof in terms of tactical media, of, respectively, tactical media, appropriation art, and media archaeology.

1.1. The Research Question

The research question of this thesis was asked, and accordingly formulated as follows:

"Are tactical media practices in contemporary art pioneers, or vanguards towards a transformation of (technical) media and media studies at large?"

In order to provide a thorough and scholarly answer to this question, the following questions should also be considered:

1. How do our contemporary artists employ both existing and emergent forms of media, as in *new media* vs. *old media* to tactically transform their art and the media they are working (with)in?
2. What kind of an *ae*ffect do their tactical interventions have (with)in and on these media and their target audience?
3. Can media studies at large be inspired, informed, and take from these artists and their tactical media art more to a degree that a much-needed scholarly transformation is to be conducted progressively through which scholarly

endeavour can witness a cultural change both in academy and on a public plane as propagated by theories and practices of tactical media?

4. Do tactical media *in arts* spread a material awareness in people who by diligence might become artists themselves given the ubiquity of technological devices, or media that have revolutionized the art making by a practical sense of accessibility?
5. What is the most appropriate methodology to track these questions into a constructive research for the academy, artists, public and the media alike?

Throughout the text, I elaborate on, and investigate into, the critical frame which is provided in regard to, and by, above questions, and the methodological application of media archaeology around the issues of appropriation, tactical media (art) and their scholarly overtones. The problematization of all is also well-documented through a series of showcasing, and an overall critique of unmediated mode of thinking.

1.2. The Aim and Objectives

This thesis aims to provide an insight into how contemporary art practices that utilize tactical media might transform media studies at large and perception thereof, that is, it seeks to introduce critical instances at which tactical media (art), and contemporary media studies at large may converge, and re-mediate the latest advances in both theory and practice for the betterment of media studies as a scholarly domain. The objectives of this thesis are:

1. to create a media archaeological methodological and theoretical framework by describing and integrating strategies from tactical media as utilized in

contemporary art practices namely appropriation art, audio/visual, or multi-media collages, tactical media arts, and media archaeological investigations,

2. to utilize such a framework so as to undertake a formal, and scholarly, analyses of case studies that include the artistic oeuvre of Critical Art Ensemble (CAE), New Portraits and other works by the appropriation artist Richard Prince, and several works by 2/5BZ,
3. and finally, to evaluate the *ae*ffects of tactical media art practices in media studies by departing from the insights that the aforementioned inquiries will provide.

1.3. Tactical Media

I especially abstain from formulating, or giving any precise, thus absolute, definition in terms of tactical media. As for the majority of tactical media art practitioners, any attempt to precisely define what tactical media are, or not, would frame the term within concrete scales that are as problematic as identity politics as in the impossible definition of the *queer*. They are not in favour of defining it, yet they rather experience it, and play with it in their own individual, or collective, terms. Their main criteria that is needed in order to fulfil any project is its (project's) capacity to make the audience involve in the act. Then, it becomes as fluid as it gets. It is what matters for tactical media and its practitioners. Fluidity in tactical media art can be defined as the fundamental hallmark that is required to fully realise a tactical media art performance weaving every and each stage in accordance with the critically and aesthetically designated objectives so that the necessary questions concerning the art project will be contemplated by the targeted parties; be them the

participants or the addressed institutions along with the outcomes of a given work in the field. This opens a space for unconditional surprises unlike a solidly framed work. Therefore, I tried my best to contribute to this fluidity by not framing it within a certain definition. However, in Chapter 2, I provide a historical and theoretical background regarding tactical media and its contemporary practices as led by the artists, and scholars themselves. It should also be noted that tactical media (art) practice is a research-based (as one might do a detailed research on the original content and its sources as in Rodriguez's nano-tech study), and practice-driven fluidity that evade any fixation while at the same time providing scholarly critique, and outcomes thereof.

1.4. Appropriation Art

According to *tate.org.uk*, the website of Tate Gallery, "[a]ppropriation in art and art history refers to the practice of artists using pre-existing objects or images in their art with little transformation of the original." Picasso and Georges Braque are considered to be the pioneers of such practice as they used newspapers in their artistic creations such as cubist collages and constructions as the representations of themselves from 1912 on. Then, in 1915 Marcel Duchamp created his ready-mades by bringing appropriation in art on a new level, which would break endless debates centered around this specific art work of his called *The Fountain* by the artist himself among both the art scene and the art audience. The work was a reversed men's urinal signed as R.Mutt and dated in 1917. Later, from surrealists and pop-artists such as Salvador Dalí and Andy Warhol to contemporary artists like Jeff Koons, Sherrie Levine and Richard Prince, appropriation art has been utilised to

create new meanings, new insights, or new *ways of seeing* of and for things. Although it is usually understood as a process of incorporating others' existing works, or readymade objects in art, appropriation art is able to take advantage of media in a critical way that also appropriate material and infrastructural aspects of the media involved, as is thoroughly elaborated in the second and third chapters of this thesis.

1.5. Media Archaeology

Media archaeology is a methodology that puts emphasis on the materiality of the media to be excavated. It prioritizes materiality in order to reach a wide understanding of the technicality of the media, how it works, and why it survived, or became obsolete. Stemming from various theoretical and philosophical backgrounds, media archaeology incorporates the studies in the archaeologies of power and knowledge by Michel Foucault, the *Arcades Project* by Walter Benjamin (1920 to 1940), and works by Friedrich Kittler, Marshall McLuhan as well as more recent works of scholars like Siegfried Zielinski (2016) and Lev Manovich (2013). "Archaeology", as a term, is used in order to depict the background reasons why a certain apparatus, statement or discourse is born and preserved in a cultural environment, as Jussi Parikka (2012) highlights in *What is Media Archaeology?*

Media archaeological field seeks to articulate media regardless of being *old* or *new* by the means of re-examination of the past. However, media archaeology does not construe the past with a linear, or chronological understanding of a history. In *Deep Time of the Media: Towards an Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by*

Technical Means, Siegfried Zielinski (2006) states: "[…] do not seek the old in the new, but find something new in the old" (p. 3). Zielinski, as one of the most influential media archaeologists argues the relativity of the new and old throughout the aforementioned work of his by emphasizing that the excavation is always about the present. Therefore, he advocates another way of seeing and hearing freed from the hegemony of the linear progress and the new as opposed to a chronological understanding of time that comes with historicization. In the words of Jussi Parikka (2012):

> Thinking cyclically has been one media-archaeological strategy for critiquing the hegemony of the new. Siegfried Zielinski (1999) connects the compulsory newness to what he calls the *psychopathia medialis* of our current capitalist condition. His solution is to promote heterogeneity of arts and media environments through the concept of variantology. Zielinski's development of media archaeology as research into the deep time of media -modes of hearing, seeing, and sensing in general- is another way of developing an alternative temporality that moves away from a hegemonic linearity that demands that we should see time and history as straight lines that work towards improvement and something better. In such linear perspectives, the past is only a lost present. Instead, Zielinski […] insists that "the history of the media is not the product of predictable and necessary advance from primitive to the complex apparatus. (p. 12)

In this direction, through the frames provided by Parikka and Zielinski to the non-linear and encompassing nature of the media archaeological methodology, in

tandem with prerequisites of my research question, I will be utilizing my research on media archaeological field while I will also be conducting media archaeology in order to unearth how specific media are being utilised in various tactical media art practices by means of pursuing their social, cultural and political trajectories as well as artistic concerns.

1.5.1. Variantology

Siegfried Zielinski's term *variantology* suggests an in-depth survey of any subject to be studied within the possibilities of diverse methods in order not to lead to a standardisation. It does not acclaim the programmatic nature of "bloc formation", "modularisation" and "standardisation". It invites "heightened presence of mind" unleashed from standardisation and cluster formation. As the word *variant* refers to "sudden changes from major to minor (and vice versa)" (Zielinski and Wagnermaier, 9), Zielinski emphasizes that it has a destructive nature for the established formulations, of which he also reminds the reader that "[t]o vary something […] is a strategy that played a prominent role and was favoured by many avant-garde movements in the twentieth century" (9). Therefore, variantological field embraces experimentation, playfulness, flexibility and openness toward the "other" that must always give birth to *anew*.

Variantological approach calls academy of media and the arts for re-consideration of long-established concepts and their interior relationships in order to elaborate on things "to confront constructively the base-less formation of

variants" (Zielinski and Wagnermaier, 11). With this effect, Zielinski's articulation of media archaeology:

> […]is to both distinguish it as a nascent discipline and to set some boundaries in order to avoid its trivialization. Archaeology, as Foucault writes, "is not a return to the innermost secret of the origin," rather it "describes discourses as practices specified in the element of the archive" […]. Without evolving coherences that are neither reductive nor dogmatic, media archaeology faces numerous issues: to evolve histories of technologies, apparatuses, effects, images, iconographies, and so forth, within a larger scheme of reintegration in order to expand a largely ignored aspect of conventional history. (Zielinski, ix)

Hence, variantological approach employs non-linear constellations with *anarchaeology* of media "including the possibility of failure in its calculations" because "[m]agical, scientific, and technical praxis do not follow in chronological sequence for anarchaeology; on the contrary, they combine at particular moments in time, collide with each other, provoke one another, and, in this way, maintain tension and movement within developing processes" (Zielinski, 258).

2. CRITICAL AESTHETICS AND TACTICAL MEDIA: ORIGINS

In recent years, there have been radical changes in the ways in which culture and knowledge are produced, conceptualized, formed, handled, consumed and accordingly shared. Material conditions, and the infrastructure thereof, have been re-invented, re-contextualized, and re-construed. It is due to the proclamation of the digital culture-making and its almost ungovernable structure, and networks as aptly internalized by especially scholars, artists and the audience who in one way or another realize *media art*, *net.art*, *intermedia art* etc. (which pave the way for those to utilise the technology of which they are meant to consume) among many other sub-branches and genres of the recent history of art and academy. The technology is always present in the present with its all modalities. However, the way through which the scholars, and artists interact with these modalities, and produce culture through them instead of merely consuming in the direction of pre-designated ways determined by the very technology itself is the significant argument of this thesis.

Michel de Certeau (1988) states that:

> Culture articulates conflicts and alternately legitimizes, displaces, or controls the superior force. It develops an atmosphere of tensions, and often of violence, for which it provides symbolic balances, contracts of compatibility and compromises, all more or less temporary. The tactics of consumption, the indigenous ways in which the weak make use of the strong, thus lend a political dimension to everyday practices. (p. xvii)

Scholars and artists today, as culture producers, whether informed by the insights of de Certeau or not, are widely practising tacticality of the media that they utilize as well as their modes of representation. Michel de Certeau (1988), in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, discusses the idea that ordinary people can operate as the active agents to give shape to their environments through everyday actions so that the ordinary people, *the users,* are not reduced to mere consumers that the ruling class, *the producers of the culture*, designates them to be. He claims that ordinary people, the users, can manipulate, utilise, and hijack the mechanisms of power and appropriate them tactically. With other words, he proposes a manifestation where there are *tactics* against *strategies* on how natural-born consumers transform themselves as the producers of the culture.

Thinking within the theoretical framework of de Certeau, those who employ critical aesthetical ideas into their research, art and science are thus by nature do-it-yourself practitioners. They exploit the media in ways that are artistic, and thus being conceived through practice-led research-driven processes. They are not interested in "user-friendly" surfaces of media, be it a personal computer, or a biological sensory chip. In an interview, Lori Emerson (2016), the director of Media Archaeology Laboratory at University of Colorado at Boulder states that many media are attributed as "user-friendly" just because they are ubiquitous not because their design is easily operated. User-friendliness, in this context, emerges as a feature which "disempowers" the users who can actually turn un-user-friendly design such as QWERTY keyboard) into user-friendly ones by the means of "creativity" and "playfulness" (Kirby quoting Emerson 2016, 3221).

Economic and promotional concerns of any medium due to its marketing value and planned obsolesces hinders users from uncovering the veil that would eventually ruin the idea of user-friendliness and reveal the potent of DIY aesthetics since DIY or DIT practices are more navigable and grant users the power of creativity. The play element herein is the key to creativity, and by creativity we do not need to understand a sanitized practice that is unabashedly claimed to be art. Creativity is here to transform information into knowledge that can be shared free of constraints, which is the basis of culture. However, the design has replaced the play element in technological circles and innovation, which in turn deemed and designated users as disempowered consumers as is argued by Emerson above. Her stress is that everyone can play with media, and yield different outcomes, each of which has its own function on any scale. In the same interview, she gives historical examples from the history of text editors (Kirby, p. 6) and asserts that there were much more flexible and productive models of text processing in the rather early history of computing that were in a sense modular in that the user could also program them in the direction of his or her needs. Today, the mass opinion and practice on and in technical media is that you need to be an expert to understand their infrastructure. Otherwise, you will not be able to mod, or fix a given device, or media. It is also cemented with the overall premediated immediate obsolete nature of design of media (see Hertz and Parikka 2012). That is also the reason why any manipulation of a certain media is lazily considered as hacking by even the most educated end-users. Modding, or hacking a tool, a medium is by its very nature a need as a means to specific ends. Tactical media break in here. It is a way of hacking both already-

existing and emergent media, as in new and old, in favor of a more creative appreciation and experience of life for all by way of engaged scholarship and art.

Although the historicity of tactical media goes back further in time when the definition was publicly framed and announced, we need to give attention to an event, or a scene, called *The Next 5 Minutes* (N5M) organized by Dutch cultural groups, which took place in Armsterdam in 1993. Being the first event of the series, inspired by de Certeau's work (1988), *The Practice of Everyday Life*, the topic of the event was "Tactical Television", focusing on "the era before the web." It was the second event of the series called *Tactical Media* where people from Europe and North America manifested and addressed the topic in 1999. With the emergence of the topic, *N5M* (1993) favoured a definition: "The term 'tactical media' refers to a critical usage and theorization of media practices that draw on all forms of old and new, both lucid and sophisticated media, for achieving a variety of specific non-commercial goals and pushing all kinds of potentially subversive political issues" (cited in CAE, 2001, p. 5). As stated aptly, tactical media aesthetics can be applied to all kinds of media regardless of being old or new, or, analogue or digital. Media have always been there. However, there are moments at which it is needed to dub an act, a performative action with a proper name. That is the case with tactical media. It was heralded with a text, *The ABC of Tactical Media*, by David Garcia and Geert Lovink (1997) in a mailing list called *nettime*:

> Tactical Media are what happens when the cheap 'do it yourself' media, made possible by the revolution in consumer electronics and expanded forms of distribution (from public access cable to the internet) are exploited

> by groups and individuals who feel aggrieved by or excluded from the wider culture. Tactical media do not just report events, as they are never impartial they always participate and it is this that more than anything separates them from mainstream media. (para. 1)

From this manifestation, it is implied that tactical media practitioners are playing with the "ways of operating" which is also called *métis* by the Greeks: "victories of the 'weak' over the 'strong' (whether the strength be that of powerful people or the violence of things or of an imposed order, etc.), clever tricks, knowing how to get away with things, 'hunter's cunning', manoeuvres, polymorphic simulations, joyful discoveries, poetic as well as warlike" (de Certeau, 1988, p. xix). It is a matter of do-it-yourself and do-it-together aesthetics basically. Those who want to transform any given thing, or matter for a betterment of all have always sought after alternative ways of practising, enacting available means of media and communication, or reversing the ways of operating in a given socio-economic and cultural structure. For instance, the western history of arts is abundant with imaginary media projects by figures such as Leonardo da Vinci and Athanasius Kircher among many others (see Zielinski 2006). These people were able to access certain infrastructure and tools to conceptualize their ideas even though these have since been latent, and accordingly dubbed as imaginary media. In our present day, however, a concept has a full potential to (self)realization as long as the material necessities are met, and never to be left aside as imaginary once it is diligently put before the eye of the beholder, be them either the entrepreneurs that support start-

ups, or small neighbourhood communities who need that given media in order that they might better their living conditions on a socio-cultural plane.

In this thesis, tactical media are observed to reveal, and to contribute to the transformatory *ae*ffects—here I employ aeffect as an umbrella term that retains specificities and function of both effect and affect interchangeably thanks to the recent proliferation of scholarly works towards a theory of affect—of tactical media art practices in the contemporary scene for the betterment of media studies that have been on the threshold of constant change throughout the recent decades. Broadly speaking, contemporary art as a term is used to denote and designate artworks that are being produced at present. However, people tend to deem contemporary art as a modality of art-making that is hard to comprehend. It is also occasionally stated that anyone can do it, hence "I can do it." I myself take contemporary art as the practice of art that is being carried out at present regardless of a certain historicity. Tactical media is an act of media art oriented do-it-yourself aesthetics. Garcia and Lovink (1997) prefer to refer to "cheap 'do-it-yourself 'media." However, tactical media do not necessarily have to be cheap in price. Some practitioners of tactical media art do their research in such fields as particle capitalism where they need to access very expensive sets of media. For instance, Ricardo Dominguez (2016), who was one of the founding members of the Critical Art Ensemble collective, and the founder of the Electrical Disturbance Theatre (EDT) mentions several occasions in which he needed to access very expensive nanotechnology in "Zapatismo in Cyberspace: An Interview with Ricardo Dominguez" on *rhizome.org* (Smith, 2016). Practitioners of tactical media art are under the spotlight nowadays. It is not

so surprising to encounter more and more exhibitions, and collections of *bioart*, *net.art* and *intermedia art* among others in many galleries and other cultural spaces worldwide. More and more institutions are carrying out exhibitions that honour the early *net.art* which had a considerable impact on tactical media art practices, for instance. Among these artists are JODI, Critical Art Ensemble, subROSA, The Yes Men, Eva and Franco Mattes—the duo who have just won the *3rd Annual Prix Net Art*. In addition to being an artist, many of these figures in one way or another flirted with the academy. Some have become professors, and the others visiting artists. There is a proliferation of institutional branches as established by such figures. For example, the famous Institute of Networked Cultures at Hogeschool van Amsterdam is led by Geert Lovink. There are countless media laboratories such as the Media Archaeology Laboratory at CU-Boulder, or Media Archaeological Fundus at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin that focus on different modalities of media ranging from the history of computing to digital/electronic literature to distant reading. All of these laboratories, or countless other institutional hosts, are working closely or directly with artist-scholars who somehow have done a tactical turn in their art in regard to present urgency of a novel and functional media studies at large. They hack, they exploit. Some of them hack health media in order to provide the public with access to medical tools as in the case of gynoPunks. Others accumulate as many media as possible in order that they might come up with novel and more practical ways of public and scholarly computing in any field. The very underpinning of this tactical tendency in media art is its transformatory potential

that resolves problems either in in our mundane everyday lives, or in other aspects of overall survival.

3. THE GLOBAL AND LOCAL: CASE STUDIES

3.1. Grassroots Practitioners: Critical Art Ensemble

Critical Art Ensemble is an independent art collective composed of five individuals who are each a tactical media artist and qualified in different disciplines, such as performance, book arts, graphic design, computer art, film/video, text art, photography, and critical writing all conducted in a tactical manner as it is voiced by them in numerous interviews and talks. They produce art works/events/exhibitions wherever their subject matter best fits their target audience on an interdisciplinary plane. The members of the collective employ their own skills into the projects and collaborate by venturing into the junctures between art, technology, critical theory, and political activism just as all the other tactical media art practitioners. Their objective is to design meaningful works focusing on any cultural condition in diverse venues such as galleries, museums, festivals, the internet, television and radio, bars and clubs and the street *by any media necessary***.** They have been practising their tactical media art since they were formed in 1987. They tend to call themselves "tactical media practitioners" rather than "artists", in that, "artist" is a term for them that has social connotations with the luxury market for which "artists" produce unique objects to satisfy the needs of the elite. They prefer to distance themselves from such associations that determine the traditional categories. This is not because they imply that the majority of artists are serving for elites. On the contrary, they want to reclaim the role of the "artist" as cultural workers/producers from the widespread attitude that positions "artists" or "art practitioners" on the otherside of the labour market, which, in such a direction,

indicates that they identify with their economic superiors (see CAE, 2001). Here, it is clear that they put forth their intellectual labour in a tactical manner that leads the potential reader into a position that it is crucial for him/her to elaborate on even such details, and also demands the reader to meditate on critical aspects of the concepts, which they utilize through an unmediated thinking within and through contemporary contexts.

When you look closely at the works of CAE, it is seen that the fundamental core presented in each project bears a critical inquiry over the subject matter in a selected context. Therefore, they avoid generating new definitions. What the collective aims to address is basically the right to challenge the pre-determined/pre-mediated meanings, concepts, discourses and situations with a more sophisticated interrogation/intervention, and an anticipated outcome that could transform the participants and produce works that unearth, and re-challenges the authoritarian infrastructure of the western culture (see CAE, 2001), which CAE particularly indicate the latter as "one constant" to their interdisciplinary practice.

To illustrate the aforementioned characteristics of tactical media art practices performed by the collective, I would like to start with another project of theirs called *The Electronic Disturbance Theatre* (EDT). In 1998, EDT developed and utilized an electronic tool called *Flood.Net* with the use of internet-based technology whose mission was to support and give voice to Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) after the Mexican government attacked the village called Acteal in Chiapas, Mexico killing 45 civilians including 15 children and 4 pregnant women on December 22, 1997. EDT took action against Mexican

government after this event that would later be commemorated as Acteal Massacre. The act took place on digital media and was performed by presumably 10000 people worldwide generating 600000 hits per minute for two days. This act is described as virtual sit-in constantly attacking target web-sites by the participating computers. The target web-sites include those of Pentagon, the White House, the School of the Americas, the office of Mexico's president, the Mexican Stock Exchange, and the Stockholm Stock Exchange, according to Urizenus Sklar (2010) on *Huffington Post* (para. 2). In the same blogpost, it is also said that "[…] the Flood.Net attack on the Pentagon was met with perhaps the first military response to a hacktivist attack. […] Pentagon servers redirected the Flood.Net clients to a hostile Applet which tied up the attacking computers, ultimately forcing them to reboot" (para. 3).

As it is seen in this instance that the design of the cyber action is made in order to intervene in efficiency of the target web-sites by blocking the flow of information. CAE articulate that "blocking information access is the best means to disrupt any institution, whether it is military, corporate, or governmental" (cited in Raley, 2009, p. 45). Their aim is not to destroy the target web-sites but rather exhibit a disruptive performance that allows for a "temporary reversal […] of the flow of power" (Raley, p. 45). Since the members of EDT are well-aware that "there is only permanent cultural resistance; there is no endgame" (Raley, p. 46) as "power is no longer centralized but has become networked and nomadic; the site of resistance has in turn shifted from the street to the network […]" (Raley, p. 43-44). Therefore, their aim is thoroughly fulfilled. The potential damage is not permanent yet temporary. The virtual sit-in might have caused a financial loss, yet again it is

symbolic than real when considering daily profits of the target web-sites, particularly the stock markets. The idea is to find out the holes that are vulnerable to exploitation in order that the message is successfully delivered to the responsible parties. Tacticians are well informed as Alexander Galloway and Eugene Thacker state that "[p]rotocological struggles do not center around changing existent technologies but instead involve discovering holes in existent technologies and projecting potential change through those holes. Hackers call these holes 'exploits'" (cited in Raley, 2009, p. 11-12). In the age of neoliberal capitalism, strategic implementation of globalization with the mere aim of more financial gain, and networked cultures, the interventions of such tactical art practices are highly performative, informative, and transformative. Such performances not only allow participants to give their voice to an event about which they want to do something in terms of asking responsible parties to put an end to their perpetrations involving in digital disturbances but also (they) have the potential to observe the immediate outcome which is made possible from within the collective action that the *Flood.Net* enables. Also, and more importantly, such practices are very critical in recognition of hidden holes, which could later be modified, repurposed and made to disrupt the functions of any potential agents that are caught in the course of oppression. Hence, tactical media practices do not promise an end to power, oppression, and atrocity. Instead, they design their acts to make their targets' wrongdoings visible rather than letting them remain invisible. The whole process is tinkered, designed and implemented tactically on the digital environment risking nothing with respect to the participants and the practitioners.

Tactical media practitioners are generally criticized of implementing "ephemeral" acts throughout the history. I do not agree with this criticism because the immediate outcome may seem to be "ephemeral" in terms of intervening the efficiency of the targets or the act as a whole is performed temporarily. However, the experience of the act, the engagement of the participants and the after-aeffects of the tactical media performances/aesthetics can be easily observed both in the tradition of tactical media and alt-right movements as we have come to realise. For instance, the artistic acts of The Yes Men have been solidly effective by creating macro scale shifts in the finance sector rather than being an ephemeral parade of moving artists. Hence, tactical media cannot be described as "ephemeral" but as transformative and informative. The participants develop awareness of acting collectively, which may recursively be realized later on. In an interview made with Ricardo Dominguez (2012) on *Hyperallergic*, Dominguez comments on the *Transborder Immigrant Tool* (TBT) project:

> There were three investigations in total. They were all seeking to find a way to stop TBT and to de-tenure me for doing the very work I was hired to do and tenured for, so the irony was lost to no one, not even the FBI. In the end, all the investigations were dropped. UCSD did not find any misuse of funds for the TBT project (three Republican Congressmen had called for the investigation). I did have to agree not to do another VR Sit-In performance on the UCOP for close to four years, but the day I signed the agreement, a number of supporters across the nation did a VR Sit-In on UCOP again — so I am not sure what that means. UCSD dropped its actions to de-tenure

> me and instead gave me merit for my research. One strange element about the agreement that they wanted me to sign, without even giving me or my legal team time to look over, was that it included clauses like: I would never speak or write about what had happened, I was never to create any art work that might disturb anyone and of course, refrain from an artivist performances — none of which I agreed to. How could we do our research if we did? (Nadir, para. 7)

In Rita Riley's (2009) words, "these artist-activists may not necessarily be invested in the idea of a fundamental structural transformation, but they are invested in cultural critique, itself invested with a transformative power that may not be immediately perceptible but in which one must place a certain belief" (p. 14). This certain belief tends to realize itself in new ways of hearing and seeing that the tactical media has the potential to offer although media studies parallel to any scholarly studies are "trapped in progressive trajectories" (Zielinski, 2006, p. vii). So, how come we can argue that these acts serve only for ephemeral temporalities while at the same time they transform even the idea of art? Timothy Druckrey, in his introductory text for Siegfried Zielinski's (2006) *Deep Time of Media: Toward an Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means*, clarifies his ideas concerning the evolution of media until today:

> An anemic and evolutionary model has come to dominate many studies in the so-called media. Trapped in progressive trajectories, their evidence so often retrieves a technological past already incorporated into the staging of the contemporary as the mere outcome of history. These awkward histories

> have reinforced teleologies that simplify historical research and attempt to expound an evolutionary model unhinged from much more than vague (or eccentric) readings of either the available canon or its most obvious examples. Anecdotal, reflexive, idiosyncratic, synthetic, the equilibrium supported by lazy linearity has comfortably subsumed the media by cataloguing its forms, its apparatuses, its predictability, its necessity. Ingrained in this model is a flawed notion of survivability of the fittest, the slow assimilation of the most efficient mutation, the perfectibility of the unadapted, and perhaps, a reactionary avantgardism. In this model, there is less failure than dopey momentum and fewer ruptures than can be easily accounted for. As a historiography, it provides an orthodox itinerary uncluttered by speculation or dissent, unfettered by difference, disconnected from the archive, averse to heterogeneity. (p. vii)

As a prominent media archaeologist, Zielinski draws attention to linear and progressive evolution of media studies that has come to play an essential role in thinking habits of societies, which also inevitably have shaped the general attitude of media scholars. The aforementioned insights might be taken as severe criticism of media studies. However, once one goes through the works on the political economy of media, it becomes clearer that how policies determine the conditions of media throughout the media history.

In 1960, Dallas W. Smythe penned an article “On the Political Economy of Communications” where he analyses “three broad policy areas: production policy, allocation policy and policy on capital, organization and control” (p. 563).

Throughout the article, Smythe argues how the effects of the policies condition individuals in their social settings and concentrates upon the media industries in 19th and 20th century:

> The essential condition, historically, for the emergence of the technology and organization of communication agencies was capital – the purchasing power which could be applied to the development and construction of machines and to the payment of operating expenses while markets were being developed for the profitable conduct of the communication agencies. (p. 566)

Going back to Zielinski's account that echoes with the Darwinist model of evolution, it is necessary to re-read his words with references to organizational structures of agencies and thus "the pattern of control through which power is exercised over them" (Smythe, 1960, p. 566) Capital, as the ultimate control apparatus of power, whether owned by an individual or group or government has always dominated the media industry and given shape to its products. Zielinski's emphasis on "the survivability of the fittest" refers to nothing less than "monopoly products" that are shaped by power structures as "concentrated at the end-product", which is us ourselves, categorized as "the audience." Borrowing from Zielinski, "the fittest" and "the most efficient mutation" are the conceptions that require to be meditated within the context of political economy of media. Then, it is possible to render how and why "heterogeneity", "speculation and dissent", and "difference" are deliberately excluded from the historicity of media.

In this context, tactical media play a very significant role as an attempt to evade the restraints, e.g. those out of capitalist needs and power relations, through which media emerge. Although I will be expanding the issue as related to media studies and how tactical media may contribute to them (media studies at large) in the following chapters, I would like to signify some relevant points along with the examples given throughout the case studies in order to create a successive coherence which will then lead us to ponder more critically upon the relevance between tactical media and media studies.

Another art project that is worth featuring within this frame is the *Transborder Immigrant Tool* (TBT) started out by the same collective, EDT, in 2007. According to *arte-util.org*, the project is still ongoing. EDT along with a group of poets and professors develop TBT with the purpose of minimizing the number of deaths related to, and improving the conditions that provide the immigrants with a safe journey crossing, the Mexico-U.S. border which is located in a "vertiginous and deserted geography." When one looks through the description section on the same website, the idea is striking in terms of its creativity: "The TBT consists of a GPS system (in this case, standing for Geo Poetic System) with 24 hours of experimental poetry aimed at providing not only inspiration for survival, but also information on food/water caches, security activities, and directions to potentially safer routes." The art project was merging poetry with mobile phone technology promising both material and spiritual needs for the immigrants of both geographies to survive during the course of border crossing in the Southern California desert. This project which would later lead to controversy among both

governmental and academic institutions was funded by University of California, San Diego at which one of the principle investigators of the art project, Ricardo Dominguez, is an associate professor of visual arts, and maintained by California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2) at University of California, San Diego.

In *tacticalmediafiles.net* (2011) (curated by David Garcia, one of the academicians still working on tactical media), it is stated in an article, "Transborder Immigrant Tool Project Description," that the technologies that made such project possible were "[…] multiple distributed geospatial information systems (such as the Goggle Earth Project for example), GPS (Global Positioning System) and the developing Virtual Hiker Algorithm by artist Brett Stalbaum" (para. 1) The *Virtual Hiker Algorithm* is described as "pre-movement pattern modelling […] an algorithm that maps out a potential or suggested trail for real a hiker /or hikers to follow" (para. 2). Such information systems as the Google Earth Project and GPS that are initially designed for simulation, surveillance, and the resource allocation as well as managing big corporations are repurposed, modified, implemented and distributed freely in an open source environment in order to save lives of the people of both nations who are treated as the bottom segment of societies, the immigrants. One of the most defining characteristics of tactical media art practices is the idea that Michel de Certeau (1988) suggests in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, that is: "[…] the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong [...]" (de Certeau, p. xvii), at the same time, it is the idea by which tactical media (art) is inspired. Designated as the weakest and the most vulnerable in a system "too tightly

woven for them to escape from" (de Certau, p. xx), the immigrants are granted with humanitarian aid by the art project utilizing aforementioned technologies (that are not specifically designed for the sake of regulatory immigration policies) raising awareness to the radical problem of immigration, inequality between classes and race. Bringing the phrase *by any media necessary* forward, EDT also mediates poetry into the system aiming at disoriented conditions, which are more likely to occur among immigrants vulnerable as displaced individuals. Making poetry as well as food and drinks available through TBT as uploaded/downloaded on the cheapest Motorola mobile phones, EDT deliberately refuses policy construction practised in almost any institutionalized tools of knowledge production because their approach is nourished with amateurship which is highly valued by CAE, and seen as a practice that challenges professionalism through its inherent hierarchies, and that encourages experimentation and collaboration with its non-hierarchical features by definition. Although TBT is funded by University of California, San Diego, it is designed with the appreciation of amateur practice, creativity arisen from collaboration and non-construction of policies. That, being the fact, could also be the underlying reason why TBT and its collaborative parties have been exposed to several investigations carried out by three Republican Congressmen, FBI Office of Cybercrimes and UCSD. At this point, going back to the interview above, it becomes essential to rethink the transparency of Dominguez's righteous articulation over the manifestation of the art project and how he evades the conflicts concerning TBT in relation to that. Nothing is found illegal, yet the whole critical interdisciplinary practice was received as a kind of threat by the institutions and

their policies. Reminding that the primary intention of CAE in general is not meant to break the law, but to disturb it stirring controversy around the subject matter. All is orchestrated in a tactical manner.

Besides these symbolic outcomes that the project yields in terms of raising critical questions around a specific subject matter, it is also operable to some extent except the fact that not all immigrants speak Spanish or English, but various other indigenous languages, as well. Also, they have failed to take account of the fact that not all the immigrants are literate. After the feedbacks, EDT reduced the depth of menu navigation. Despite the controversy and a few defects, TBT was awarded the Transnational Communities Award in 2008 funded by Cultural Contact, Endowment for Culture Mexico-U.S. along with two Transborder Awards granted by UCSD Center for the Humanities, and exhibited at California Biennial in 2010, and Toronto Free Gallery in Canada in 2011.

TBT was also realized by the help and solidarity from two NGOs, Water Station Inc., and Border Angels who have already been providing support to immigrants by placing water caches along the Southern California desert. According to Ricardo Dominguez, the realization of the project could not be possible without them as well as California Biennial and Toronto Free Gallery who also contributed by giving voice to TBT.

Consequently, CAE, one of the actors in *N5M* events, not only contributed to tactical media art practices but also had a significant role in underlying a few principles that seem to shape tactical media (art). In *Digital Resistance:*

Explorations in Tactical Media, they give a brief account on how *N5M* events set forward the emergence of a basic definition of tactical media, which would cause mixed feelings among the participants. CAE (2001) reveal that:

> Once named and defined, any movement is open to co-optation. Should tactical media become popularized, its recuperation by capital is almost inevitable. Definitions also create boundaries. What was once so liquid would become increasingly structured and separated as the movement was theorized and historicized. (p. 5)

I agree with what CAE convey about definitions and their inherent affection with institutionalization that could only be utilized as a material in the hands of tactical media art practitioners. Accordingly, I am trying to give a thorough frame that could best suit the intentions of tactical art practitioners rather than generating an alternative definition for doing the contrary only suits capitalism's book; it absorbs/digests any potentiality that works against itself with a final touch of recycling dissent into products. My effort is to offer a comprehensive articulation meandering between different case studies from various ranges of artistic fields with the attempt to take a fresh look at how the *tactical* might also be employed within and through the artists' works and their modes of (re)presentation. Stating this concern of mine, I now can conclude with the insights of David Garcia, suggesting that what CAE are scared of has recently come true. On the blog of *new-tactical-research.co.uk*, there is an interview between Craig G Pennington and David Garcia posted by Garcia himself on April 4 in 2017. It seems that the inevitable recuperation of tactical media has become so much visible with the recent

phenomenon that has stormed the media landscape, post-truth and fake news. It is a crystal-clear fact that the idea of fake news is not something new, on the contrary, "[f]ake news in the form of fake newspapers have a long history. For example, there are newspapers declaring allied victory in the Second World War before it happened by the Flemish resistance. Or Polish Solidarity, who faked a national newspaper announcing the end of Marshal Law" (para. 5) as David Garcia reveals. Also, it is known that the tactical adaptation of fake new was carried out by The Yes Men aiming at the exploitation of power and raising awareness around certain issues. Composed of two activists, The Yes Men utilized pranks and fake news in order to disclose what the truth is, not to sweep it under the rug. However, today's fake news is being utilized to promote the interests of the powerful. Observing the media atmosphere in Turkey along with that of the United States of America, *post-truth* has evolved into a major concern in today's culture. When asked how post-truth and fake-news hijacked by the power might be countered, David Garcia responds:

> An indication of a potential route forward could well sit within the idea of 'tactical media', an influential movement that flourished in the 1990s that fused art, political campaigning and an experimental use of the media itself; manipulating media platforms and turning prevailing messages on their head for artistic and political purposes. The tactical media movement has inherently embraced the idea of 'fake news' for decades, but with a very different purpose than Bannon and co. (para. 4)

To what extent proposing the route of tactical media in this case might be effective is another subject of debate, yet it seems so critical in terms of reflecting on

alternative tactics to reclaim the curtesy of tactical media whilst the powerful actors of the far right keep on utilizing social media tools with fake news, campaigning non-stop and creating new enemies for themselves, thus demonizing them, especially independent media, entities or institutions that are not "crafted in the image of themselves." These are the questions that will be sought answers in Chapter 4 where I will raise the subject in relation to media studies at large.

All in all, CAE distinguish themselves as prominent tactical media art practitioners who have not only posed intriguing questions around delicate subject matters but also contributed immensely in giving shape to the movement. In order to have a proper idea about what tactical media art is, it is enough yet demanding to make a study of their website where one can delve deeper into each and every project that they have fulfilled to this day. Fusing art, media, technology and activism together, they break the entrapment that these disciplines may cause (also by excluding the others out of the field by disallowing them to experiment, learn and share) and help contribute to those disciplines with other disciplines and show the hybrid outcome made possible only through collaboration and amateurship. Making *molecular intervention*, tactical media bring "[…] a relief from capital's tyranny of specialization that forces us to perform as if we are a fixed set of relationships and characteristics" (CAE, 2001, p. 6). For the ones who really want to make change, yet feel like an outsider or excluded, CAE (2001) offer an escape from "the unbearable weight of being artists, and within the specialization of art [they] could separate [themselves] from site-specific artists, community artists, public artists, new genre artists, and other categories with which [they] had little or

no sympathy" (p. 7). When considered from this point of view, tactical media invite any individual who aspires to learn, act, and accordingly share with others. CAE, as the starters of EDT should have aimed at more encounters providing another option for civil disobedience and digital resistance. This urge to be always on the look for new encounters should also be taken into consideration as a tactic in the age of neoliberal capitalism in which dissent is confronted with networked, and nomadic power apparatuses causing more isolation in a given society. In respect to this, their effort in looking for new territories to make these encounters possible can be nothing but tactical.

Throughout this sub-chapter, I have exemplified two art projects by EDT. The first one was a virtual sit-in project made possible through *Flood.Net* resulting in crashes of the targeted web-sites raising awareness about Zapatista Army of National Liberation. The second one was *Transborder Immigrant Tool* designed with the aim at supporting the immigrants of Mexico and the U.S. I have discussed how they utilised certain media by merging them together to help realize and attain a certain goal. And, by inquiring into the history of CAE, I have laid the foundation about the critical and historical origins and evolution of tactical media. As a result, I have clarified the significant aspects of tactical media art practices that have the potential to expand the scope of media studies whereby they (media studies) can also be seen and thought as an expanded field of art *in situ*.

3.2. Tactical Appropriations: Richard Prince and the *New Portraits*

The United States Court of Appeals, Second Circuit (2013) introduces Richard Prince as follows:

> Prince is a well-known appropriation artist. The Tate Gallery has defined appropriation art as "the more or less direct taking over into a work of art a real object or even an existing work of art." [...] Prince's work, going back to the mid-1970s, has involved taking photographs and other images that others have produced and incorporating them into paintings and collages that he then presents, in a different context, as his own. He is a leading exponent of this genre and his work has been displayed in museums around the world, including New York's Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Whitney Museum, San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art, Rotterdam's Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, and Basel's Museum fur Gegenwartskunst. As Prince has described his work, he "completely tr[ies] to change [another artist's work] into something that's completely different." (Cariou v. Prince, para. 3)

This introduction of Richard Prince is symbolic and eloquent when the case in question raises heated debates in art venues and even among the audience. As a remarkable figure in appropriation art, and rephotography, his works have been subjected to disputes settled in courts. In this sub-chapter, I will address some of the issues with regard to appropriation art and specifically the works of Richard Prince called *New Portraits* from my stand point that would let me attribute to the tactical aspects of his artworks along with media archaeology that paves the way to understand what social, cultural and artistic implications are undertaken beneath the surface concerning *New Portraits*.

In 2014, Richard Prince exhibited 38 Instagram selfies and portraits that were screenshot, resized and ink-jet printed on canvases at the Los Angeles based Gagosian Art Gallery. Leading an unsettled controversy that is still relevant today around his act, it seems that the art scene will never exhaust the fever that Richard Prince apparently is unlikely to bring down. These specific series titled as *New Portraits* required only a few actions to be fully realized. He probably first selected the portraits of other users on Instagram, then added his own sarcastic/ironic comments under them with a few emojis—unless the account is private, the (self)portraits are already public—screenshot the selected portraits and selfies including his comment along with others' comments and ink-jet printed the materials by resizing them according to his own needs, and finally hung them on the walls at Gagosian Gallery. Each stage was planned, and processed accordingly. Including all the tension caused both by allegations of theft and by assertions about his genuity, the whole project was seemingly designed according to Prince's own intentions. That is to say, the controversy was deliberately stirred by Richard Prince himself through his *New Portraits*.

New Portraits exhibition was not the first of his appropriation art based exhibits, which would possibly not be the last. Before the exhibition which took place in 2014, he had experienced several judicial processes because of the same accusations: theft or plagiarism. His *Cowboy* series (1980-1992) was also created with rephotograpy. He was capturing a photograph off of a photograph that was taken by a photographer hired by Marlboro, the cigarette company for their advertisement project. This work had not led to any lawsuits filed against him, but

had been acknowledged by the photographer Sam Abell who accused Prince of plagiarism in an interview video that is posted on YouTube declaring "I'm not particularly amused […] it's obviously plagiarism, and I was taught by my parents the sin of that."

In the case of appropriation as an artistic technique, plagiarism cannot be the attributed subject of discussion. If not, we had better rewrite the history of art over again. Furthermore, the term plagiarism is more appropriate to use in the case of scientific works. Yet, in artistic cases, one can accuse others of theft/stealing whether the artistic statement related to appropriation is made or not. These sorts of situations seem most likely to end in court. In 2008, photographer Patrick Cariou filed a lawsuit against Richard Prince and Gagosian Gallery for copyright infringement after he noticed his photography was appropriated in Prince's *Canal Zone* work. Prince had used 35 pieces from Caribou's book *Yes Rasta* by making slight changes on them, and made 28 paintings out of Cariou's Rastafarian images. Although Prince and Gagosian Gallery were found guilty in 2011, the US Court of Appeals then reversed the case proving that Prince had used Cariou's work in a transformative way, acknowledging that the appropriated work of Prince results in something completely different. As is seen in these cases, Richard Prince knows what he is doing, and it seems that he ignores what others have to say about his work. It is because "[p]oetry is the private freedom to think without permission from others" as Christian Bök (2017) tweeted (@christianbok) in relation to the politically corrective debates surrounding the latest cultural appropriation accusations against some artists in Canada. As a master of appropriation art, Prince

was also aware of what comes after *New Portraits* would trouble him more than ever until today. Among the portraits, there were celebrities as well as ordinary people including Kate Moss, Pamela Anderson, art dealer Tony Shafrazi, the former vocal of Sonic Youth and artist Kim Gordon, and model Lara Stone. The work has stirred a huge controversy again among make-up artists, photographers, the subject of the portraits, in short everyone including the directly involved parties. Suicide Girls, a well-known pin-up model community, whose portraits were also appropriated by Prince, reacted to the issue by re-appropriating Prince's version of themselves adding the reply "true art" to Prince's comment and selling it for $90 a piece whereas Prince's version was sold for $90000 at the gallery. Seemingly, their act was thought to be a protest against rich gallery owners and millionaire artists like Richard Prince. However, they did not sue him. Instead, the founder of the Suicide Girls known as Missy Suicide (2015) wrote on their website:

> If I had a nickel for every time someone used our images without our permission in a commercial endeavour I'd be able to spend $90,000 on art. I was once really annoyed by Forever 21 selling shirts with our slightly altered images on them, but an artist? Richard Prince is an artist and he found the images we and our girls publish on Instagram as representative of something worth commenting on, part of the zeitgeist, I guess? Thanks Richard! (para. 1)

Theirs was a reaction with mixed feelings which did not tend to denounce Richard Prince and his works of art. However, even after the US court ruled in favour of Prince in 2013, the photographer Eric McNatt filed a lawsuit over the portrait of

artist Kim Gordon for unauthorized appropriation of photographs of his in 2016. Prince's judicial troubles are of course not limited to these. However, we needed to document a few of them in order to argue more broadly on the copyright, authorship, authenticity, DIY capabilities of digital media platforms such as Instagram in this specific context, and appropriation as an artistic technique in the age of technological (re-)reproduction.

As Walter Benjamin (2008 [1935]) aptly puts in "The Work of Art in The Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," each period of artistic movements in art history came with "the organization of perception at the time the art was produced" (p. 23). Despite all the circumstances such as draconian copyright management and organisation that relatively made reproduction harder when compared to the last century, for Benjamin, "[i]n principle, the work of art has always been reproducible. Objects made by human could always be copied by humans. Replicas were made by pupils in practising for their craft, by masters in disseminating their works, […]. But the technological reproduction of artworks is something new" (p. 20). Later, in his article, he would extend his insights claiming that the technological reproducibility "[turned] an increasing number of readers – in isolated cases, at first- […] into writers" (p. 33). Taking today's digital media into consideration, Benjamin is definitely more than right. Therefore, it is necessary to ask that specific question regarding Prince's primary intention. Why do the majority of leading figures in art community and art audience still seem to refuse the aesthetics of appropriation that have long been introduced in the art scene since the appearance of such figures as Andy Warhol and Picasso?

The most probable answer manifests itself when meditating on New Portraits as the operating paradigm that hits art industry in its heart, the capital. Therefore, the recessive and aggressive attitude grown in art community reveals their hypocrisy while the same figures glorify the avant-gardism Andy Warhol and his contemporaries like Marcel Duchamp brought to front. So, it is almost impossible to say that they are uninformed by the new aesthetic form that new era produced and manifested through its existing media. Richard Prince, when asked about the image of the artist, replies: "I like to think of the artist as an exceptionally well person. Counterpoint, mirror, and reflection, […]" (Prince, 1992, p. 136). In *New Portraits*, what one sees in the foreground are the portraits and selfies of individuals re-mediated (see Bolter and Grusin 1999) in a public space, gallery. The representation of individuals on Instagram becomes the representation of a whole culture whether it is the mode of self-representation in digital age, or the questions the work itself provokes for the art industry. In this respect, Prince should be given credit as not only the author of his critical endeavour designed so tactically, but also as a good reader who is capable of reading the semiotic regimes underlying American culture, and investing himself in unmasking these regimes *by any media available*. As for the audience of his works, *New Portraits* therefore can potentially be seen as the message through which Prince encourages any person to become good readers, that is to say, writers-to-be, authors-to-be, pointing out that there exist various media around us by which we can address a complex issue and then circuit-bend the traditional modes of perception as well as representation, which is organized and shaped by the art and artists of each artistic period as Benjamin

informs us above. And for an artist who is constantly attacked and abused by his peers, yet who never stops doing his thing, there must be quite a deal of issues waiting to be raised from his work of art. However, the question is *when?* That is when we are ready to receive the present spectrum of our current crisis of mode of perception widely before our eyes, when perhaps we grasp that *aura* is reproducible. That is, when a work of art is reproduced, it is born in a new historical period and a new context. Walter Benjamin (2008), in his famous article, "The Work of Art In The Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," discusses *aura* or *authenticity* throughout the history and hence the perception of each epoch that determines how an artistic object is received. He exemplifies the concept of aura with references to artistic perception that a certain piece of art work comes to being in a certain period of history through certain media. Hellenistic and Roman periods are the ones that the uniqueness of a work of art is measured by its traditional value that is cult. He reminds the reader that earlier periods of art history reveal the fact that the authenticity (aura) of a work of art is inseparable from its ritualistic and religious basis. Cult value makes the artwork inaccessible for the public. He adds that "[w]ith the emancipation of specific artistic practices from the service of ritual, the opportunities for exhibiting their products increase" (Benjamin, 25). With the advent of modern age when reproducibility has been accelerated with photography, the exhibition value of a work of art has increased. "The stripping of the veil from the object, the destruction of the aura, is the signature" of a perception which has come with the inevitable increase in the reproduction of the artworks (Benjamin, 23). He goes on to say that "[b]y replicating the work many times over it substitutes

a mass existence for a unique existence" while he tries to reach "a general formula that the technology of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the sphere of tradition" (Benjamin, 22). While contemplating on the aforementioned insights of Walter Benjamin, it seems that it would be repulsive to interpret his discussion on the concept of aura as an unmediated criticism of the destruction of the authenticity of a work of art by the technological reproducibility and also would be lacking in construing with the technological conditions of our present day. However, what Benjamin seems to be more into throughout his article is the modes of perception and the transformation of the perceptions throughout the history regarding the concept of aura.

Last but not the least, I invite the reader meditating over the very statement by Benjamin, "technological reproduction can place the copy of the original in situations which the original itself cannot attain" rather than a mere discussion whether aura is dead in the age of technological reproducibility. Thinking otherwise would be *unmediated thinking.* With respect to the question "when?", Benjamin formulates an answer which can span over a wide spectrum of time: "Just as the entire mode of existence of human collectives changes over long historical periods, so too does their mode of perception" (Benjamin, 23). Therefore, can we speak of a crisis in the case of our mode of perception today? And the artworks like those of Richard Prince actually have the potential to accelerate this crisis to its peak?

In conclusion, Richard Prince utilizes any media available in a tactical manner in order to pose critical questions around certain and complex subject matters transforming and re-mediating the media (taking them from personal

galleries, from Instagram and by placing them in spaces like galleries). He is questioning the issues of authorship, power of a work of art, cultural production and sharability in his own contextual framework. And in fact, he appropriates his artistry not over the conceptualization of his works, but the tacticality that he performs and conducts while realizing his art. I may say, the realization of aesthetic remediation by totally changing the signification of the appropriated ("original") material, thus evoking a re-definition of the concept of ownership/authorship.

Very briefly, I cannot help but contemplate over a linear archaeology of Instagram following the medium-platform through its progressive transformation that has given birth to Instagram. The furthest time scope in past would be a good starting point, the invention of the camera obscura (an Arab physicist, Ibn al-Haytham wrote his *Book of Optics* in 1021 AD), and then Kodak, the camera company that dominated the industry in the early 19th century providing people with a tool to photograph themselves, commodifying moments, later there appear polaroids encouraging everyone to own a private camera to save memories for our own archive, which have finally been made possible for the integration of camera into mobile technologies of today that paved the way for Instagram. A kind of personal gallery that interacts with galleries of others, a place where the majority is very busy with experimenting taking selfies, which adds more *exhibition value* to its existence, on the other hand, a platform of readymade materials that are ink-jet printed on canvases and placed in a gallery. Do not underestimate the linear philosophy that has been shaped by the linear dominance of these aforementioned media. That is to say, an exclusive reading of *New Portraits* also invites one to

revisit the philosophies emerged in media studies, and to fuse them through *mediated thinking*, and finally to get rid of them in order to contextualize the current situation in its new complexity and syntax. Namely, I may argue that it is the only way to contribute to making of culture, proposing to become active agents in understanding and evaluating the concepts that determine the mainstream along with our framed and pre-mediated role in it. Rather than filtering each and every occurrence by means of given articulations over them, I suggest making new philosophies of media by not excluding the possibilities of tactical media art practices which offer the opportunity for media (landscape) to incorporate their dynamic characteristics into interdisciplinary knowledge production.

3.3. The Turkish Context: Multi-media Tactics of 2/5BZ

> As I mentioned last week and I have just come back from Turkey and Bulgaria. And, in Turkey I picked up, as always, a lot of cassettes and stuff […] and only one really rather astonishing recording that is by a one man band called 2/5BZ, and what he does basically is, I think it is fair to say […] [he] is extraordinarily interested in Turkish B-pictures and to this end, he has a magazine [in] which he [collages] texts, photographs and pictures of B-picture heroes and some of the stills of films and stuff and writes a lot of stuff in Turkish which I cannot read. And all of it, as far as I understand, is about Turkish B-pictures from the golden age of Turkish film whenever it may have been and he also goes around and tracks down these people, obviously now most of them getting on a bit and there [he] records

> interviews with them and incorporates these interviews, portions of them, into his music. And so, this is 2/5BZ and really, I can't tell you very much better than that, beyond the fact that this is available on a cassette. If you go to İstanbul and know where to look.

And, "I Am Not Joking", "*Şaka Etmiyorum*" is heard. This is how influential radio DJ John Peel introduced 2/5BZ on his program on November 26, 1994 according to the video on Youtube uploaded by Berbat Zöksal, another pseudonym for Serhat Köksal (2/5BZ). "*Şaka Etmiyorum*", is an audio collage of "*Sivas Ellerinde Sazım Çalınır*" by Selda (Bağcan) and some Turkish B-pictures with incisive cut-up lines all of which assembled together to make a critique of the Sivas Massacre in Turkey. Below the video version of it on YouTube, in the info section, it is written:

> On July 2, 1993, a group of Islamic fundamentalists surrounded the Madımak Hotel in which many intellectuals were staying for the Pir Sultan Abdal Festival in Sivas, known as a stronghold of Islamist movements. 37 other intellectuals and participants of the festival, who stayed inside the hotel, were killed. Security forces and officials were criticized for not stopping the massacre.

When playing the audio-visual collage video, the quoted explanation above also shows up and stays on the screen for a while as an annotation. There are two basic melodies that go together: One of them is the well-known song "*Sivas Ellerinde Sazım Çalınır*", sung by Selda Bağcan in psychedelic folk rock form, the other is a simple beat recalling the rhythm of a mass marching improvised by 2/5BZ while he dubs. These two forms are simultaneously played and cut-up throughout the work

accompanying the famous phrase of the protest; "*Sivas'ın Hesabı Sorulacak*" which roughly translates as "Sivas massacre will be avenged" in a tone that actually states that perpetrators of Sivas massacre will be called to account for. This phrase along with "I am not joking" which is uttered by an actor with an accent that later in time have been adopted mostly in humorous situations are repeatedly utilized as chorus through the work. These chorus-like two phrases are accompanied with old newspaper clippings of demonstrations and visual collages of old famous actors and actresses of *Yeşilçam* period after the second world war that paved the way for adaptations like Superman, Zagor, Tommiks, Tarzan and Batman along with the stories based on poverty and inequality in Turkish cinema. In between two chorus, there is a portion of lines that are mediated from some Turkish B-pictures such as:

> You will die alone/ you will be gone reduced to ash/ You will die alone/ You will die in the end/ I have always wondered what would you do if the things you have inhumanely done to others would have been done to you one day/ Now I see you are scared/ You will be scared shitless.

This part is where we can see a collage of Yılmaz Güney, who was a famous film director, actor, screen play writers, and novelist and won Palme d'Or with his film *Yol* at Cannes Film Festival in 1982, with a pair of scales in his one hand and a gun in his other hand, along with collages of Aziz Nesin, a well-known novelist and humourist, with his writings on capitalism and religiousness criticizing Islam. Aziz Nesin was also among the ones who attended Pir Sultan Abdal Festival in Sivas on the day the massacre was carried out, yet fortunately able to survive. The selection of these two figures, who had always had controversies with the state, accompanied

with the lines above, which is apparently a call to the perpetrators of the massacre, frames the message that 2/5BZ tends to deliver. He delivers his message in a very non-conventional way; bringing to the front the two figures who relentlessly fought for free speech and equality in Turkey by harmonizing them with the contemporary aesthetic forms like dubbing and culture jamming, which ensures him a special place in underground culture in Turkey, and all around the world. As for his intention with 2/5BZ (2011), he explains on *norient.com* in an interview:

> I tried to create a relation between the speeches of politicians, and dialogues taken from Turkish movies from the 1970s which had been oozing into the society's subconscious. It was not just a funny collage, but was some kind of resistance, supported with visuals and material created by myself and told in a different language. I was also impressed by sound technicians and effect designers of the Turkish pop cinema of the 1960s-70s, who usually edited the musical scores for these films by drawing on material ranging from traditional Turkish music to Western Avant-garde tunes using cut-up techniques. I still believe that these people, who affected my subconscious when I was a child, were highly creative. Tuncer Aydınoğlu, Yorgo Ilidais, Suudi Yılmaz are some of these sound technicians and effect designers. I also published the interviews I made with these people in my photocopy zine "Gözel Mecmuası" (Gözel Zine). Later, I started editing video and sound spontaneously and live on stage. What I found exciting was that, I was trying to do what these sound technicians and effect designers once did, but live on stage. If the relation between video and sound develops

> hypnotically on stage during the performance, the humorous and political statements that I use are passed to the audience. This is what I want to do. But, of course, sometimes underscript things out of my control happen. (para. 6)

Later, in an interview in *Express* magazine issued in March 2017 for the question how he positions *Gözel Zine* in the collective memory, he would reveal that he published the zine with the name "*Cönk*", and explain the meaning as the diaries where poets, singers and minstrels had kept their writings along with the writings of other minstrels. He picks that name referencing those who struggled in various ways including the ones who also mediated the sense of humour, emphasizing that the collective conscious of this geography is brimming with such diverse experiences and insurrections of popular heroes, which basically attracts his attention. He started *Gözel Zine* in order to unearth the experiences of those who opposed the systematic assimilation of the power. Departing from this objective, he pursued the stories of old *Yeşilçam* cinema workers; directors, sound technicians, scriptwriters, figurants, and electricians.

At the time when he released the album in a cassette form with Do-It-Yourself (DIY) method, in 1994, the album was called *Opua Dişın-Düzenin 7 Ceddine* ("opua dişın" is an onomatopoeic word phrase for gunshot sound in Turkish whilst "düzenin 7 ceddine" translates as "against seven generations of the system") with a photocopied cover of an image of a man in leather jacket with a gun while he was clenching his fist. The man was standing without a head. In the same interview carried out with *Express*, he (2017) states that he has done it

deliberately to point out the anonymity of the character on behalf of those who put up a fight against the power, and its seven generations from past to present. He also wants to depict that "we are descendants of a generation who have not taken aback by oppression for at least 10 000 years" (p. 15). Somewhere on the cover, "*Türkçe Sözlü Aşırı Nanarşist Müzik*" (meaning "Extremely N-anarchist Music with Turkish Lyrics") is written. This was on the whole how the album was represented by 2/5BZ.

All these elements ranging from the fusion of music genres to collages of visuals are composed tactically together utilising the aesthetics of appropriation (newspaper clippings, samples of others' songs) resulting in an entirely peculiar work of art. Thus, it demands a close attention in order to read the artistic intention of 2/5BZ. That is also why each piece requires to be described in detail as I have attempted to do so for "*Şaka Etmiyorum*" (I am Not Joking) up to here. In an interview made with *norient.com* on January 18, 2011, 2/5BZ aka BerbatZök or Berbat Zöksal explains the content of his projects:

> As for the content of the project, with the establishment of private TV channels in the early 1990s, the whole society was exposed to massive bombardment of all elements of popular culture. In addition, political discussions on TV were broadcasted so often and were very significant during the same period. In the late 1980s I already had started to collect material of 1970s films and music which belonged to the age of my childhood and were real rarities in the flea market due to some political and social circumstances. I started to mix these media with contemporary

> material mentioned above and edited, crashed, converted and reproduced them with basic equipment and simple techniques available in that time. The late 1980s and early 1990s were also the period when I started to believe in and commit myself to my work. (para. 5)

As can clearly be seen, 2/5BZ is a tactical media art practitioner whose archival intuition is highly visible in the way and techniques he stores and distributes his artistic oeuvre, that is to say, even the most marginal works of his are easily accessible *by any media available*. On *gozel.tumblr.com*, he archives the materials he has so far used and makes them available to anyone who would like to make use of them. So, his tacticality is informed by a genuine sense of knowledge preservation and archival that are culturally concerned to practical ends. Hence, he is a true remix artist not only thanks to his multi-media collage craftmanship but also thanks to the method through which he also drastically remixes/ remediates *by any media available*. His works includes different media types, such as cassettes, zines (*Gözel Mecmuası*), video collage channel *Gözel TV*, and *Gözel Radio* among others. Acorrdingly, he takes advantage of almost all social media platforms such as Youtube, DailyMotion, Vimeo, Soundcloud, Twitter, and Facebook on a hypertextually intermedial plane. He also started the project *Roaming Biennial Tehran* in İstanbul, Belgrade, and Berlin. With his own words in the same *Norient* interview:

> I do not take the biennial and similar big cultural events seriously because I believe that these kinds of big cultural events are related to major global economic decisions and plans and are existing only as decoration or a shop

> window. With a Do It Yourself approach we established the free and independent [*Roaming Biennial Tehran*] in order to avoid being a part of this shop window. With the participation of more than 600 artists from all around the world, it was a big DIY-organisation. These organisations in Istanbul, Berlin and Belgrade have been supported by friends who made these biennials happen. I also did not accept any support offered by global companies and institutions.
>
> (para. 16)

Departing from the insights of him stated above, it is apparent that his social, political and cultural awareness shapes his artistic method which is fed by DIY aesthetics with the aim at eluding any kind of institutional intervention or patronage just as tactical media art practitioners do. To this day, he has produced his own or collaborative art works by burning CDs, Xeroxing zines, organizing independent biennials securing travel expenses with fake train tickets that are fabricated and mediating some social media platforms such as Tumblr and Soundcloud among others to publish his radio performances he has carried out for various radio stations in İstanbul, Berlin, Prague, Munich, and Vienna to name a few among others. Basically, he performs as a true radio DJ who makes use of collage, sampling, field recordings, cut-ups from interviews, movies, news etc. So, his radio programs alone are artworks. On one of his Soundcloud accounts, *Gozel*, it is described as:

> GOZEL RADIO; (Radio Producer & Dj Sets) GOZEL LABEL, RADIO, EVENT, AAAARRRTT FOUNDATION, gozel is attracted by the sound and music of places not touristy nor otantic marketing but f*cked up places

aiming a story telling act by sampling the 2/5rd world attitude.: Nurkish 60's-70's Funk, Soul, Jazz, Psych, Folk vs Turkish

Apart from the fact that the music of *Gözel Radio* serves neither the industry nor its marketing based aesthetics, there are two significant details that I need to point out in this narration. First, the humorous and ironic tone that he also manages to tactically incorporate into his works, mostly ridiculing the politicians, corporate leaders both locally and globally. In one of his interviews, he would later point out that he mediates humour as a tool of resistance just like in the way the minstrels, poets, public heroes used to do. Second, by his preference to use "Nurkish" instead of Turkish, or "Nottoman" instead of Ottoman, referring to the accent that prevailed the Turkish B-pictures, he also implicitly ridicules the signification of Turkishness that has occasionally been utilized by the Turkish state throughout its history in order to supress other ethnic, religious and political communities by enacting it in the constitutional law adopted since 1980 (after the military coup d'état). And, "Nottoman" is apparently used throughout his productions ridiculing the escalating Neo-Ottomanism in Turkey. In this sense, he plays with the words, the language and its possible connotations in a novel syntax in a tactical manner.

2/5BZ performed an audio-visual session at Transmediale on February 6, 2016. Transmediale is an international platform for multi-media art and culture held for a week in Berlin every year. According to *Transmediale.de*, in its archive section, "2/5BZ has performed live audio-visual performances under motto 'NO Touristik NO Exotik' in 91 cities in clubs, festivals, squats, and exhibitions."

However, the motto he designated for his Transmediale performance was “Gezilla Destroys Isistanbul”. The event had been explained as is below by Transmediale:

> New global power complexes demand new multi-sensory ways of seeing power and sensing one’s own position in it: new sets of sensory politics. Following the concept of “altered states”—a geopolitics spectralized by sensory overload and dispossession and by the relocation of power in the post-democratic or post-digital era—the performance GEZILLA DESTROYS ISISTANBUL will reconsider what is (or was) referred to as Europe. It will also engage the Golden Age Global Hologram Doctrine, Isistanbul, and Anxt Hase States, and feature modern isolation tanks as part of the new inventory of “hardcore ultra-modernism.” Isistanbul is also the title of a video-essay by Serhat Köksal, included in the upcoming *after.video/assemblages*, which is the first issue of a new hybrid “video-book” series by Open Humanities Press.

According to his latest interview in Express, he informs us that now he is on his *Gezilla vs. Isistanbul* tour in İstanbul and Batman as in Germany, Austria, Poland, and Holland performing audio-visual sessions. Gezilla appears in the form of a dinosaur occasionally throwing flames over the “Nurkish-Nottoman” flag in the video footage of Transmediale performance on Vimeo. Juxtaposition of Hatsune Miku, the anime character of the performance/installation that was screened within 2016 programme of Transmediale, with the newspaper clipping of a child soldier carrying an arm is another prominent visual material that is repeatedly projected through the video. Hatsune Miku performance is described as a “performance that

draws us into the multiplying realities of a 21st century pop star, and traces the dynamics at play between fans, corporations and social desires" on the website of CTM Festival, which takes place simultaneously with Transmediale as a collaborating festival. The clipping of the child soldier is recursively projected on the image of Hatsune Miku, denoting the contrast between these two representations of different realities, yet also combining them as a reference in order to disclose diverse critical issues that include both popular and artistic tactical media practices as can be seen in the way technical media used—which also complements the above quoted self-description of the performance on Transmediale website. Such works reflect constructively on the aesthetic and material processualization of general media and mediation by the means of practice and theory at the same time in our epoch where technological accelerationism influences all aspects of our lives.

To conclude, 2/5BZ promises a rich repository of artistic appropriations of diverse media tools that are prolific both quantitatively and qualitatively. Throughout this case study, one of his earliest works from 1994, "I am Not Joking" is examined as the prototype of his entire artistic production within both material and contextual frame that the work is situated into. *Gözel Zine* and *Gözel Radio* are introduced by focusing upon his tactical intentions that he commits such as archiving the materials and unearthing the long-forgotten stories of cultural heroes besides the DIY method he engages in the production of both platforms. Tacticality appears both as the most utilized tool in terms of constructing audio-visual stories/narratives and as the fundamental method of DIY or DIT aesthetics,

especially in the instance of *Roaming Tehran Biennial*. I also exemplified *Gezilla vs. Isistanbul* performance conducted for Transmediale within its material and contextual structures.

Finally, 2/5BZ deconstructs the contemporary art world and relations thereof in Turkey by the way he tactically mediates cultural and medial elements together. As also is depicted as a signifying element in the artworks of appropriation in the case study of Richard Prince, appropriation is utilized as a mirroring tool of the issues that the artists tend to raise. As for the case study of 2/5BZ, he principally and also tactically refuses to collaborate with any institutional body unlike Richard Prince.

4. IMPLICATIONS OF TACTICAL MEDIA ART FOR THE BETTERMENT OF MEDIA STUDIES

Siegfried Zielinski with Silvia M. Wagnermaier (2005), in their article "Depth of Subject and Diversity of Method: An Introduction to Variantology" in Volume 31 of *Variantology 1*, note that:

> The first academy that was devoted to experimentation in natural philosophy, the sixteenth century Accademia dei segreti in Naples, had only two criteria that prospective members had to meet. One had to bring in something original, and in this sense new, about the world, and one had to be prepared to share this knowledge generously with others. (p. 9)

I argue that the technological and philosophical underpinnings of our culture offer a wide range of experimental potentials to be realized not only by media studies but also by the whole scholarly fields of academia in general, which comes out both as a natural outcome of the intersecting evolution of knowledge production and as fundamental needs that the academia, by definition, is supposed to meet: producing and sharing knowledge, and preservation thereof.

Media Studies have produced an abundance of works which broadly concentrate on political, social, cultural and economic implications of the issues regarding communication and mainstream media, and been dominated by the linear perspective which observes the media through its histories as well as a continuation of the former. However, today, none of the disciplines as sole academic structures can be sufficient enough to study any subject of matter in its full complexity. Our epoch has brought new relationalities, new concepts, hybrid textures to the

foreground that require new visions, which is, in our case, the mediated thinking. It is because, from macro to micro, each problematic comes with its inter-contextual and interdisciplinary issues. Today's media laboratories appear as the new grounds for these interdisciplinary experimentations pursuing new forms of knowledge production with an affinity to DIY and DIT aesthetics of tactical media practices. They are maintained by collaboration of individuals and/or institutional bodies. As is in the case of MIT Media Lab, according to their website, "[t]he [l]ab grew out of the work of MIT's Architecture Machine Group, and remains within MIT's School of Architecture + Planning." On their website, the interface "about the lab: mission and history" is designed to give the background which reads as:

> [F]irst decade was at the vanguard of the technology that enabled the digital revolution and enhanced human expression: innovative research ranging from cognition and learning, to electronic music, to holography. In its second decade, the Lab literally took computing out of the box, embedding the bits of the digital realm with the atoms of our physical world. This led to expanded research in wearable computing, wireless "viral" communications, machines with common sense, new forms of artistic expression, and innovative approaches to how children learn.

Beyond any doubt, the innovations led by MIT Media Lab determine our technological and social condition to a degree that variations of this media lab mushroom globally nowadays in different geographies and institutions. Acting as the gate-keeper of today's technology, MIT Media Lab shares a few significant

similarities with the way how tactical media projects are realized in terms of collaborative and interdisciplinary approach they employ.

Although the lab itself is a working unit of School of Architecture and Planning, an institutional structure, meaning it works under specific policies and when met the needs of those policies, all the expenses are provided by the very institution itself occasionally incorporating with other institutional bodies, it is obvious that MIT Media Lab way realized the transformative and innovative power of interdisciplinary collaborations just as we have observed through the case studies of tactical media art practitioners. Today there are various imprint research labs and projects that conduct their research under the umbrella of the Media Lab at MIT. These include ongoing research on various advanced technological media milieu such as tangible media and fluid interfaces along with studies on the mediated matter and others. Thus, in the case of the MIT Media Lab we witness researches that incorporate experiences of both scholarly figures and artists who produce in these media of study. They have established a traditional laboratory for mediated thinking and knowledge production where speculative and tactical scholarship meet artists that tactically mediate through these research-based environments.

Not limited to MIT Media Lab, the number of fab-labs and maker-labs has been increasing in parallel with the ubiquity of media throughout the recent decades. Nowadays, we can encounter a newly established maker lab, or a fablab on the local context too, which indicates that artists and researchers in Turkey are simultaneously transforming their working environment along with their peers in the global world. Today, there are a significant number of these media lab-like

places where people make and unmake things and media in Turkey. Universities have also taken an interest in this direction in recent years. The New Media Lab and Fab Lab at Kadir Has University; DECOL Collective and Academy supported financially by The Development Agency and was established by Bilgi İletişim, and C-Lab at Istanbul Bilgi University; SimLab at Koç University; The Big Data Analysis at TOBB ETU along with the Game Lab at Bahçeşehir University and the Media Lab at Boğaziçi University are several examples in this context. Accordingly, these laboratories conduct research under specific administrative organizations at different scholarly bodies of universities. Their research areas range from general mass-media studies to economically concerned big data very analysis to art through non-art practices. This transformation is mainly due to a demand from contemporary youth and research-based artists who are also well affiliated with academy.

For instance, in the example of DECOL, artists, students and scholars produce multi-media, sensory art works, or projects that incorporate various art making processes where existing and developing media are already mediated. Through such a rubric of tacticality, the art produced within this collective assert an academic variation of itself, and infiltrate the academy where a new generation of research-based artist-scholars help the media studies transform so as to mediate knowledge in accordance with the prerequisite of the day in both scholarly and artistic fields. This phenomenon is nothing but the attempt at making one's own tools, making them together, learning together and sharing knowledge with others.

In the same issue of *Variantology 1*, Zielinski and Wagnermaier (2005) inform the reader about what caused that phenomenon:

> [T]echniques of production, distribution, and consumption of images, sounds, and texts that had formerly been separate were now bundled together. This is what made the media into a central phenomenon. In recent decades the arts, too, entered into a tactical alliance with them. At the beginning of this new century we have now also reached a new situation in which mechanical, electronic, and digital techniques are integrated as a matter of course into creative processes, just like the electricity and water supply in our houses. (p. 10-11)

Therefore, researching media phenomenon "in the deep strata of the relationships between art, science, and technology […] is just one modus operandi among many others" (p. 11). The authors here imply that they acknowledge all other possible variants to establish diverse relations between any disciplines. However, our focus of interest here in this study is to display the reasons why tactical media art practices should be seen as a guidance in order to enrich media cultural discourses and how media studies can utilise the methods and dynamics of tactical media art practices.

As I have argued in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, tactical media art practices have already started to change Media Studies both from within the academia and from outside. Many scholars inside the academia continue to contribute to the field by focusing their studies on tactical media theoretically and practically. Besides, they organize tactical media events both within the academic circles and with the independent art, media, science platforms. Illustrating one of the recent events as

such, David Garcia, a professor who works at the department of Digital Arts and Media Activism at Bournemouth University, and also the co-founder (with media theorist Eric Kluitenberg) of the award-wining *tacticalmediafiles.net* has recently curated an exhibition *How Much Of This Is Fiction?* along with Annet Dekker, in collaboration with Ian Alan Paul. On their website, the event is described as follows:

> How much of this is fiction focuses on politically inspired media art that uses deception in all its forms. At the heart of the exhibition is the desire to address one of today's most urgent political issues: the radical shift in the boundary between fiction and reality in public discourse, in a world increasingly governed by 'post-truth' politics. How much of this is fiction. shows the artist as 'dark jester', as trickster, using a variety of hoaxes, hacks and ruses to reveal the hidden workings of power structures and the possibility of alternative futures.

Raising critical questions around today's issues such as fake news and post-truth, Garcia argues that what once was utilized by tactical media is now adopted by extreme right in order to manipulate the truth and dominate the social media platforms. According to him (2017), on *fact.co.uk*:

> Today, media interventions have become normal everyday practice and captured in the business models of YouTube and other social media platforms. But in my view, today's radical Tactical Media innovations are being led by the extreme right who won the meme-wars that helped to bring Trump to power. And the battles are being fought on the unregulated

> message board sites and the far-right websites. Steve Bannon who is Trump's media guru has been quite open about learning from the radical left's use of media. Those on the liberal and radical left need to learn the lessons of the meme war.
>
> (para. 7)

Namely, it means that the alt-right and neoreactionary circles have already seen the bigger picture and started to utilize, and at times abuse, the ecologies of media through the direct employment of tactical media content, thus knowledge, production to the degree that today there are meme-economies online where actual, or fictional, transactions are carried out whereby the context of the most influential memes are re-structured. This is a case that is being critiqued within the liberal academy nowadays through the context of the accelerationist philosophy. Accordingly, this means that some part of the academy, especially those who work in critical theory and media studies are now confronting with the fact that conservatist sections of the society have come to terms with the mediated thinking, and something should be done.

To contribute to the scholarly debate on how to mediate our thinking and knowledge in the media studies, I recommend that we need to reflect, first upon the unmediated ways of knowledge production and archival in the media studies which also indicate that there needs to be a change. It is not merely related to the technological acceleration and advances that we are being shaped, even mediated through, as humanbeings today. It is also related to the new signification process and syntax that are in effect today. The acceleration of the media technology along

with others demand new interfaces, new spaces and novel theoretical contexts. Secondly, we need to come to terms with the fact that ours is an epoch of transformatory experiments, that is to say, we need to open more spaces in the media studies for speculative and experiential ways of knowledge production in order to reach a flexibility with which immediate problems concerning science and academy should be practically met. Tactical media art practitioners in this case are satisfactory examplaries in that they both transform the academy and arts along with the media they make use of. Critical Art Ensemble, for instance, have been experimenting with media and media ecologies to bring forth cultural revolutions both on mundane everyday socio-political plane and cybernetics at the same time. The way in which they mediate their concepts and related medial forms has also impacted the academy to the degree that the academy itself support them both by funding and spaces at academy. Similarly, Richard Prince's Instagram portraits through various remediation techniques is not only an extension of his personal artistic methodology, but also it is a manifesto act that clearly states that today media are various, and rather accessible, as they are ubiquitous in our everyday lives whereby anyone who systematically and tactically wants to use these can do so in order to produce and authorize their own art work regardless of its context. He urges people to make, to remediate through already existing art techniques in the so-called avant-gardist traditions. The only thing that differentiates him from the likes of Marcel Duchamp is that Richard Prince always announces that he is the author of a certain artwork whether it is an appropriation piece, or not. Today, we can witness the echoes of the way appropriation art remediates existing information

along with myriad media in the halls of critical theory, cultural management and media studies departments and programs at academy where new students of liberal arts emerge to reclaim a maker position through any media available. It is also the number one reason why the conceptual art is working closely with the academy as a tactical media practice. In the local scene through the case of 2/5BZ, we also understand that tactical media require an instantly constant redistribution and feedback economy. Serhat Köksal aka 2/5BZ makes use of existing social media/communication platforms to claim a space, or spaces of interaction, that are always rendered up-to-date. He shows us that, in each local context tactical media can be utilised to meet certain socio-cultural, and politico-economic issues. By not denigrating the technological advances, he mediates the political folklore of Turkey and its past with the ever-changing media ecologies. All throughout his career, 2/5BZ has taught the new generations that technical and artistic media is any media that is available to you at a given time, and by proclaiming these as an amateurly spirited DIY practitioner, everyone is able to voice their concerns in a mediated form of art and knowledge making.

In this case, media archaeological approaches both in theory and practice, as examplified above are today prevalent among the makers, who are scholars, students and artists alike. By employing tactical media practices in the context of media archaeology through a non-linear investigation of media as indicated by Zielinski and others, I think that we are also re-mediating media studies.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this dissertation, *New Avenues in Media Studies: Tactical Media in Contemporary Art*, I have tried to find answers to my research question and the other relevant questions. My research asks the question how tactical art practices in contemporary art transform media studies and media discourse and how media studies can take advantage of the aesthetics of tactical media in order to enrich its heterogeneity with diverse collaborations *by any media necessary/available*. My objectives include providing an insight upon my research question as well as providing a theoretical framework by undertaking an analysis of tactical media art practitioners/artists abroad and in Turkey, which has allowed me to contemplate on the transformatory effects of tactical media. In order to pursue my research, I applied Media Archaeology as a methodology situated within critical contexts such as tactical media (art), and appropriation art.

In Chapter I, I provided the problemization of my research question along with the aim and objective, and provided defitinitions for respectively tactical media, appropriation art and media archaeology.

In Chapter 2, I provided an insight on critical aesthetics and definitions of tactical media (art) by contemplating on the origins from Europe and the U.S. *(N5M* events in Europe, and CAE in the U.S.) both inspired by Michel De Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Besides, I framed examples through the evolution of tactical media and from contemporary practices.

In Chapter 3, I showcased CAE, Richard Prince and 2/5BZ. In each case study, I first gave a general background on these artists and their works. Then, I

investigated how these artists utilize tacticality through and by the media, and how their tactically mediated artworks help create the contextual framework of their arts. This chapter allowed me to concentrate more upon the diverse ways tactical media art aesthetics can provide for art, media and critical theory. I applied media archaeology mostly inspired by the insights of Siegfried Zielinski, which helped me realise my research as an archaeology of tactical media utilised in art, and science.

In chapter 4, I evaluated the findings and insights that the case studies provided me with onto media studies and its transformations. I argued that tactical media art practices offer various opportunities for media studies to be inspired by such interdisciplinary perspective that encourages collaboration with others not necessarily within the academia, and enriches its heterogeneity since media studies can best fulfil the betterment of its disciples and domain by integrating themselves in arts, science by offering free space for the makers, media theoreticians, artists and scientists-to-be.

In conclusion, rather than remaining in stuck between any possible legitimacy of appropriation, and tactical media, this dissertation of mine focuses more on a "constructive drive […] a desire to respond, with technical means to the […] companies' techniques for the programming of desire" along with the traditional perceptions of aesthetics that are still prevalent when observing a work of art (Holmes, 2009, p.60-61), and suggests more contemplation on, for instance, how and why *détournement* of Punk movement along with Plagiarist movements such as Neoism have become an invitation to respond to "capital-intensive communications" (Holmes, 2009, p.60). To what extend do DIY practices with their

potent to speak from a radically democratic voice contribute to studies carried under the wide range of media studies? Does this contribution finally help our mode of perception in crisis, find a stability in a new one, and suggest a potential for new inspirations? Questions like these have been raised, debated and also pointed at the potential readers of this dissertation.

Therefore, I consider this dissertation of mine as a needed and constructive critique of the contemporary media studies through a media archaeological investigation of tactical media arts. I do hope it will encourage researchers and scholars alike to conduct similarly much needed investigations in the related fields.

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