

**THE NOTION OF SOUND ART AND SOUND INSTALLATION IN  
THE CONTEXT OF CEVDEK EREK'S OEUVRE**

**BY**

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**ISTANBUL**

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**MA THESIS**

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## PLAGIARISM

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## ABSTRACT

In this thesis study, first the art of installation and especially the sound installation art are examined, and then a broad portrait of Cevdet Ere , as one of the important representatives of this art in our day, is provided. Throughout the thesis, the question: “why the art of installation attained its intensive level of interest in our day?” is tried to be answered through analysis of its historical process over the question “how”. In this sense, new technological opportunities, emergence of conceptual art, and space coming out to be a type of material usable in artworks, and its promising brand new opportunities to artists are appearing as several different fa ades of an answer to that question. It seems as if the space is a fresh blood and a brand new dimension for contemporary art. Installation and sound installation may be said to be the product of new technological opportunities changing the community, cities and environment in general converting and transforming the space from “an input” to a creatable and manipulable item of arts. Thus, it is a comprehensive and inclusive type of art which may host and contain a great many types of ideas. So, the life, works and intellectual and internal world of Cevdet Ere  may be said to harmoniously reflect the direct identity of an installation art representative to us.

**Keywords:** *installation art, sound installation art, conceptual art, space, contemporary art, Cevdet Ere *



## ÖZET

Bu çalışma ile enstalasyon sanatı ve özelinde ses enstalasyon sanatı incelenerek, günümüzün bu sanattaki önemli temsilcilerinden olan Cevdet Ereğ'in geniş bir portresi sunulmuştur. Bu tez çalışması boyunca “neden enstalasyon sanatı günümüzdeki yoğun ilgisine kavuştu” sorusunun cevabı, “nasıl” sorusu üzerinden tarihi sürecin analizi yapılarak bulunmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu anlamda, karşımıza yeni teknolojik imkanlar, kavramsal sanatın ortaya çıkışı ve mekanın kullanılabilecek bir materyal olması özelliği ile birlikte, sanatçılara yepyeni imkanlar vadetmesi, neden sorusunun cevabı olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Mekan, çağdaş sanat için taze bir kan, yepyeni bir boyut gibi görülmüştür. Enstalasyon ve Ses enstalasyonuna, toplumu, şehirleri, çevreyi değiştiren teknolojik imkanlar, mekanı “verili” olmaktan çıkartıp, yaratılan ve manipüle edilebilen hale getirmesinin ürünüdür diyebiliriz. Bu anlamda, kapsayıcı ve çokça çeşit düşünceleri içinde barındırabilen bir sanat biçimidir. İşte Cevdet Ereğ'in hayatı, çalışmaları ve daha düşünsel, içsel dünyası bize bir enstalasyon sanatı temsilcisinin doğrudan kimliğini uyumlu bir şekilde yansıtmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *enstalasyon sanatı, ses enstalasyonu, kavramsal sanat, mekan, çağdaş sanat, Cevdet Ereğ*

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis study will focus on the art of installation and its so-called extension, sound installation, and a historical tracing activity will be guided in the light of the question “why the art of installation is attracting an intensive interest gradually increasing from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has almost come out to be the most important branch of contemporary art”. If we are asked to give a quick answer to this question from the very beginning, we may say that the space concept has added a brand new dimension to the artist and has smoothed the way for far more comprehensive and holistic artistic efforts. This wide curtain, brand new dimension and curiosity of infinity in the arts may be said to be indeed the most characteristic feature of this style of art on one side. When viewed from this window, starting from the post-12 September initiative and opening period when contemporary art started to give its first fruits in Turkey, contemporary art has strengthened its place as one of the most important branches of art.

First chapter is going to examine and review installation concept, and mention about birth of the art of installation and its reflections in our day in Turkey. Second chapter is going to plumb the depths of sound installation, while third chapter, as the most important part of this thesis study, will present an overall portrait of the artist Cevdet Erek. In this sense, Cevdet Erek may be seen as an important figure in our day of an innovative character of the art of installation. This thesis will provide the opportunity to examine how the art of installation – as an extension of conceptual art examined in depth in the first two chapters hereof – has found a living identity in

Cevdet Erek as an artist. Methodologically, beside some field studies, an interview with Cevdet Erek will also be featured herein so as to be able to plumb into details of his identity and to discover his basic intellectual elements.

Among the path to the art of installation, the change of direction of the point of view to arts has been an important step taken forward in the beginning of the twentieth century. When conceptual integrity has started to come to the forefront rather than the existence of arts as an object of humanity, it may be said that modern art has begun to take a position for itself at a location entirely separate from that of classical arts. Art does not any more deal with the identity of objects or things themselves, but tries to find a place for itself in the intellectual integrity of a project as a whole. This intellectual evolution has started to slowly take its place in the whole art world as a consequence of experimental and revolutionary works of Duchamp. In addition, the idea of insertion of space into the subject of art has, though first being felt in the works of first Duchamp and then Schwitters, continued to gain its theoretical depth from and in different fields. The most important one of them may be said to be the specific emphasis laid by the well-known architect Le Corbusier upon the space.

However, the subject of space seems to gain an increasing importance step by step not in only one single direction, but in many fields and directions at the same time throughout the twentieth century. Advancements in sound technologies or many other technological innovations and developments have not only given prominence to the idea rather than the material used in arts, but also paved the way for considering the space as a new element adding a new angle thereto. Ready-made, Environmental Art, Environmental Sculpture, Assemblage, Fluxus, Performance Art movements, and just then, “installation art” concept has popped up. And then, of course, sound art and

even sound installation has also attained a place in the art world starting from the beginning of '40s and by the end of '60s. Sound, as a sine qua non material and element of space, has probably found a place directly inside the art of space. Thus, emergence of sound installation as a separate branch of art has become even inevitable.

At this point, the artist Cevdet Erek, who has carved out a niche for himself as an important and leading name in Turkey and in the world, is worth-examining so as to demonstrate the position of contemporary art as of our day with the help of his sound-based artworks. His works starting from Experimental Rock style music and elongating from architecture to different layers of space and mostly keeping the sounds at the centre thereof are in fact reflecting the boundless and illimitable character of contemporary art while on one hand giving prominence to its conceptual identity. Hence, the relations established by his artworks between subjects and areas/spaces may be examined and discussed from an as wide as possible angle or point of view.

## 1. INSTALLATION ART

### 1.1 Summary

Installation art is a type of art that emerged with the birth of conceptual art at the beginning of the 20th century and endeavors to place the space and time in the artistic work. In this sense, the installation, which focuses on the intellectual message that the artwork intends to convey rather than its objective structure, and which unites many objects through “installment”, can include many types of art within itself. While Duchamp laid the intellectual foundations of installation art and Allan Kaprow demonstrated its first examples in his works presented under the name of “environment art”, the shaping of the identity of installation art took its final form terminologically towards the beginning of 2000s. In this regard, installation art is one of the most interesting types of contemporary art with its ideological structure by its very nature and its holistic dimension that enables containing various types of art within itself.

### 1.2 Notion of Installation

The word “installation” comes from the French word ‘*l’installation*’ and is translated into Turkish as ‘*yerleştirme*’ or ‘*enstalasyon*’. It is used in English as “Installation Art”. ‘*Yerleştirme*’ is defined by the Turkish Language Institution as “deployment, exhibiting, organization of the environment of art works for the public to see and to put them in certain places” (TDK). The purpose of the installation is to turn ordinary objects manufactured to be consumed into an artwork by giving them a different meaning as a result of a process of questioning with an aesthetic concern. Here, the aim of the installation artist is to turn the problem that he wants to demonstrate and explain into an artwork by use of ordinary objects of consumption.

The artist forms the basis of the installation discipline by making sense of space and object (Yavuz, 2019, p. 2).

Installation means placing something in another thing by organizing it. Installation art is defined as a type of conceptual art that produces large-scale artworks designed for a specific place and a temporary period of time and assembled by use of mixed methods. The developments that occurred as a result of the Industrial Revolution led to the exploration of the aesthetic problem of the society and the emergence of new inquiries within the scope of conceptual art. To briefly explain conceptual art, we can say that this notion is used to define the artworks that displayed an unusual attitude in the 1960s. It is accepted as an ‘art of idea’ which aims to question art from a theoretical perspective, to explore its structure and to redefine its purpose. The notion of “Conceptual Art” is used in Turkish as ‘Kavramsal Sanat’. The term refers to the movement that argues a work of art is not a “concrete product”, it is a “concept” or an “idea” (Koca, 2017, p. 97). In conceptual art movement, a concept or an idea behind an art object is at least as important as, and in some instances more than, the finished product. It is also referred to as “Idea Art” or “Information Art” (Kaplan, 2016, p. 23).

The artist makes use of images and philosophical approaches to express himself and to display different perspectives; and this attitude leads to the emergence of new understandings of art. Incorporating material into works of art with critical side of art, artists gravitate towards expressions prioritizing the concepts of experienced space and time. Going beyond the traditional understanding in the field of art and embracing a different form, installation art also benefits from architectural interventions.

Installation art removes borders relating to the object and the space and welcomes and involves the art audience in the art itself by way of performance and



therefore it includes a great many of disciplines such as music, architecture, painting, performance art, sculpture, poetry, and theatre. In other words, installation employs every branch of art as a language to express itself (Sarıkartal, 2007, p. 141).

In 'Installation Art in the New Millennium: The Empire of the Senses', authors and curators Nicolas De Oliveira, Nicola Oxley and Michael Petry state that the artists' and galleries' relationship with a wide spectrum of spaces and objects in our current age forms the installation as a whole. Installation art also deals with some other definitions such as intervention in the architectural structure, interaction with the space, and interior arrangement. These definitions which exist within the notion of settlement have similar meanings. Artists, curators, and critics use such notions to describe original artworks of an artist. Installation art made a difference and stood out from among other movements in the field of art thanks to the increasing variety of materials and freedom of space (De Oliveira et al., 2006, p. 28).

Since the installation emerged during an era when production became of secondary importance, the fact that it presents to the audience the object produced for consumption by recycling it aesthetically may mean that it makes the production central again. Described as the recycling of art, this situation is a direct result of the meaning attached to the object by the artist. Here, the artist creates a new language with the meaning he attaches to the object. In installation art, what matters the most is not the artist's talent but rather the production of an artwork with original ideas giving importance to creative thinking. Furthermore, installation art enables the artist to establish an inter-disciplinary communication as it offers a different experience to the audience. The solution of the artwork, which has no defined beginning and end, is left absolutely to the viewer (Germaner, 2018, p. 48).

### 1.3 Historical Development of Installation Art

Considering the fact that it can use various types of art as a way of expression, and that it is not subject to any restrictions in terms of use of material, and that it is an experimental ‘case’ with the participation of the audience, the installation differs from other art disciplines.

Installation, or ‘installation art’, whose roots can be traced back to Marcel Duchamp’s readymades and Kurt Schwitters, is a hybrid style which gets support from many different visual art disciplines other than architecture and performance in contemporary art. De Oliveira stated in his article titled ‘Towards Installation’ published in 1994 that, in accordance with the notions of ‘assemblage’ and ‘environment’, the installation in early 1960s defined the works that the artist created by gathering together as many materials as possible to fill in a space.(Yeşiloğlu, 2009, p. 68).

When we examine the concept of installation in the 1960s, we see that it was only a term used to express how and in what order the paintings included in an exhibition are hung on the wall while talking about the setup process of an exhibition.

Moving on to the 1960s, the idea of ‘artwork as an environment’ creates an expectation that the art viewer lives personally in the artwork, and even moves beyond that and becomes a part of the artwork. Being among the leading artists in this field, American artist Robert Smithson works also in fields such as geology, crystallography, industrial waste, and science fiction (b. 1938 - d. 1973). Smithson made a distinction between the site (a particular site in a larger space) and the non-site (the re-presentation of this site in a gallery with photos, maps, various materials and documents). This distinction was important because, besides Smithson, other land artists such as Michael Heizer, Nancy Holt, James Turrel and Walter De Maria

worked outside the gallery, but their work remained dependent on the framework provided by the gallery system (Mergin, 2018, p. 37)

Site	Non-Site
Open borders	Closed borders
Series of dots	Sets of materials
External coordinates	Internal coordinates
Reduction	Addition
Indefinite certainty	Definite uncertainty
Scattered information	Collected information
Reflection	Mirror
Margin	Center
Place (physical)	Non-place (detachment)
Many	One

*Table 1.* Robert Smithson, 10 differences between site and non-site (Yeşiloğlu, 2009, p. 69)

The position of the installation art rather improved at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Having been considered marginal in its early years, this type of art started to be very popular in the new century. In a world where change is inevitable, contemporary artists are greatly interested in the concept of time and space. The artists questioned concerns about time and space through special and individual methods and made the installation a means of expression by using the tool and space.

Readymade, whose principles are established by Duchamp, created a conceptual art understanding where material and space are at the forefront. We can define the readymade as the object manufactured for consumption used by the artist without any intervention or used with its deficiencies/deviations encountered randomly during the process of its manufacture. In fact, considering general understanding of art, the readymade can be interpreted as a criticism to the ordinary concepts of traditional art rather than being a work of art (Yavuz, 2019, p. 6).

We can say that being a Dadaist, Duchamp, who laid the foundations of the notion of readymade, had his roots in the revolutionary and disruptive influence of cubism. Cubism focuses on the parts, rather than the whole, of objects and living beings, thereby creating a world divided into categories in an attempt to arrive at the



*Figure 1.* Marcel Duchamp – Bicycle Wheel (1913) MoMa, Reproduction, 1951.

core. Through this attempt, it endeavors to push the limits of the Fourth Dimension. From this aspect, works of Duchamp and the notion of readymade are rooted in this approach. Essentially, Futurism and Dadaism after Cubism is a reflection of the destruction of generally accepted opinion about the information of the visual through epistemological questionings.

“Bicycle Wheel” by Duchamp in 1913 was his most prominent work since it demonstrated some of the things he wanted to do. He presented an inquisitive structure by reversing the perception of the standard material with his distinctive idea of placing the wheel of a bicycle on a chair instead of sitting on the bicycle. With the exhibition of his work titled “Fountain” in 1917, which constitutes a turning point in his journey as an artist, it became obvious that Duchamp pioneered the emergence of a fundamental difference in view of art, and a result of that, he was exposed to many criticisms, positive or negative (Atalan, 2012, 24). With “Fountain”, he changed how the urinal was viewed by way of breaking the usefulness of the urinal and changing the meaning he gave to it. Thus, there had been debates about the higher importance of questionings relating to information and meaning compared to the product itself.



*Figure 2. Marcel Duchamp – Fountain (1917)*  
Photograph by Alfred Stieglitz.

Duchamp proposed the idea of taking an object that does not evoke standard of and value judgment “against visual indifference” and giving it an aesthetic identity (Baykam, 1993, p. 78). The idea of readymade, thus, started moving art slowly from two-dimensional painting into life. In this sense, “Merzbau” by Kurt Schwitters is a significant artwork in terms of the shift towards installation art. He decorated his own room in an “irregular order” with the leftovers of items he consumed. The fact that he built “Merzbau” in houses in 3 different cities and that the one in Hannover was destroyed after World War II enriches the message that he aimed to convey through these works: Schwitters constructed a reflection of the values and structures destroyed after World War I in his work, which can be considered the first installation to be defined an installation later on (Sürmeli, 2012, p. 340).

Using everyday products in his artworks, Allan Kaprow, on the other hand, strives to show such objects to the audience as if they were new works that had never been seen. The products will be detached from their daily ordinary identities and will



*Figure 3.* Kurt Schwitters – Merzbau (1933) Photograph by Wilhelm Redemann.



the artist the unlimitedness in terms of expression and use of materials and space. The installation art became a movement favored by artists thanks to its ability to provide a rich and extensive expression due to being not limited to the use of, only, objects (Yavuz, 2019, p. 6).

#### **1.4 Installation and Increasing Importance of Space**

The 1970s witnessed some changes in the ideas about the gallery space. In this period, with the emerging awareness of the gallery space, there was an attempt to bring the artwork to fore through making a couple of alterations in the placement of the work in the gallery because of the idea that the artwork cannot be experienced independent of the space. The works of the artists of this new form are shaped on the land. Art products are no longer an art object bought and sold in galleries and have reached the current state that we see in today's understanding of installation. For museums and galleries, the installation has become acceptable since the 1980s. After the 80s, however, it developed rapidly and became a frequently used form of expression in contemporary art (Mergin, 2018, p. 83).

If we want to explore the notion of space in detail, then it would be appropriate to distinguish between site and space. Space, in this sense, can be thought in connection with terms such as the space of capital or the media space, far from being regional and spatial, in the world tending towards globalization (Castells, 2000). Therefore, space can be said to be a phenomenon that is rather reflected in the minds. In addition, the "site" denotes a more internalized position with its location and historical and sociological identity, which is more local and rooted (Lippard, 1997, p. 7). Thus, the use of space in installation works refers to much more than a



physiological and spatial situation and the intellectual identity of the field rather than position.

Le Corbusier, the most important name in modernist architecture, approached the issue of space from the point of the urge to control. He states that the first move in which all living things, be it animals or humans, show signs of life is taking the ownership of and controlling the space (Le Corbusier, 1946, p. 66-67). Therefore, Le Corbusier, who was the leading actor of urban planning throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, underlined the necessity of consciously dealing with the notion of space.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the notion of “space” was included in the art thanks to the installation art. Using the space and the objects in the space, the artists present the art experienced there by enabling and providing new experiences, readings and discoveries over the space. We no longer attribute the same meaning to the places/spaces we pass by and the ordinary, simple objects we use in our daily lives, and they turn into a brand new thing which we wander around, view, sit in or on, or through which we experience different emotions and feelings. This understanding of art offers us the spaces to be experienced. The ‘Spaces To Be Experienced’ mentioned here covers the relationship between everything, including the audience, the space, the exhibited objects, the exhibition space, and even the walls. In a way, the art that is viewed on the walls leaves its place to the art experienced by the audience (Atakan, 2008, p. 15).

Thanks to inclusiveness of space, the artwork presented to the viewer is no longer only the paintings and objects exhibited on the walls, it includes the audience in the art as well, and in some works, the artwork turns to a completely different medium where the audience becomes an art element. In installation art, the work is

not only viewed by the audience. It is also the narration of the artist, the audience as a whole in the formation of time-space and object.

On the one hand, the state of “being exhibited” in the installation works is thought to be theatrical from a categorical perspective (Fried, 1998, p. 45). Exhibition and layout elements and topics such as symbolic expression skills in theater are another area where the installation can be connected in its roots. While we deal with the notion of installation, it is important to take note of Ilya Kabakov’s following emphasis: in this theatrical proximity, considering the experience of the participant, there is not only an impression; the participant is both a “victim” and a viewer (Kabakov, 1995, p. 256). Even though Interactive Installation is accepted as a sub-branch of installation, it can be deduced that the participant is a victim in most installation products since his spatial position is often important. If we focus on the sound, Cevdet Erek, for example, often creates products through the manipulation of obtaining different sound experiences within the current position by using directional loudspeakers. Therefore, the installation has now found a possibility to move within the control of the space, considering the subject as well.

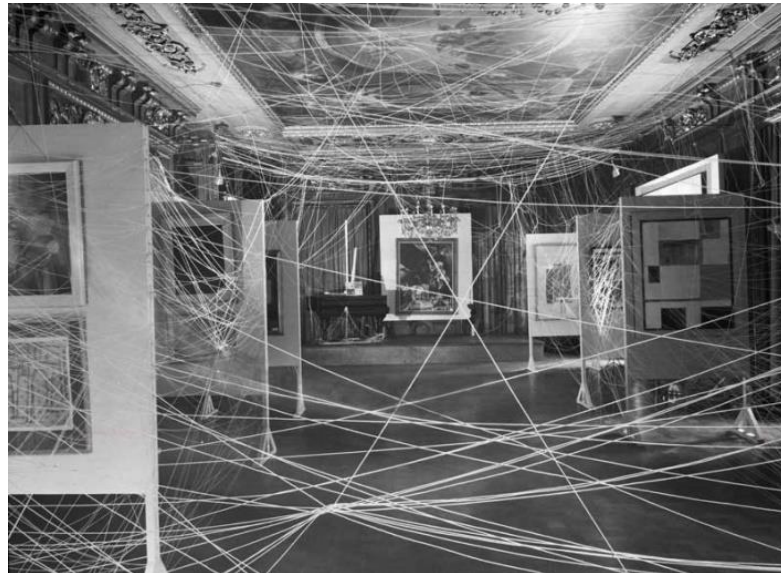
As it was also emphasized by music theorist Toniutti, it is not possible to think of the notion of space without sound. Space, especially a localized space, provides us a different experience. Sound is an integral element of the space, and the space creates the sound at the same time (Toniutti, 1999). Therefore, sound is an intrinsic part of spatial art. An artist would not be able to create an installation without considering sound. This intellectual attitude calls forth the “compulsory” birth of sound installation.

### 1.5 Pioneering Works in Installation Art

Duchamp puts an emphasis on “translocation”, which can be considered a significant stage in terms of the questioning of the notion of space, and argues that art cannot be perceived independent of galleries (Graf, 2007). Marcus Graf states that Duchamp stresses the effect of non-neutral space on the artwork and artist. In this regard, Duchamp attracted attention in the exhibition “*Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme*” held in Paris in 1938 as the “senior of the group” with his work titled ‘1200 Bags of Coal’. Duchamp, who is known for his reluctance to belong to surrealism or any other group, still participated in this exhibition and therefore it symbolized a significant collaboration, even if it was not the first for surrealist art. Decorating the saloon which is a great example of the elegance of the 18<sup>th</sup> century with its beautiful adornments with coal sacks hanging from the ceiling and scattered around the room, and plunging everything in darkness of coal, Duchamp conveyed a strong message regarding questioning the space (Filipovic, 2009). Additionally, when the first surrealist exhibition in the United States of America, “First Papers of



*Figure 5.* Marcel Duchamp – 1200 Bags of Coal (1938). Collection Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris.



*Figure 6. Marcel Duchamp – Mile of String (1942)*

Surrealism”, took place in 1942 during the Second World War, Duchamp again became the one “creating” the space. Being a provocative work due to obstructing the view of some of the works in the gallery by the audience, his second work titled “Mile of String” received a harsh reaction from other artists, but that was the aim anyway: to restrict and question the view (Filipovic, 2009). Here, the fact that he seized the right of other artists in the exhibition to show their works is controversial. With this work, in which the entire gallery is threaded with the string, Duchamp can be said to be inclined towards a despotic, as much as critical, behavior while also wishing to take over the space.

Environmental Sculpture, which is located in the space and is one of the leading art movements regarding the space as an art material, is crucial in the context of installation art. Edward Kienholz and George Segal stand out among the fundamental artists of this movement while Louise Nevelson is considered to be the pioneer. For example, the idea that such works be differentiated from a human by being shorter or taller than the height of a human, and that they be less detailed sculptures is significant (Busch, 1974, p. 27). In this way, rather than creating a sculpture to be

located in the space, the idea of creating a work that can be thought together with the space and that may give a new meaning to the space gains importance. To examine George Segal through this art movement, we can ponder upon the following words by Berna Karaçalı:

“Segal observes the social fabric and human relations. In his works, he focuses on and presents the individual of the city by removing him from among the crowds. The body-sculptures, which are detached from all rules of classical sculpture and the pedestal, which is the strictest rule, are focused on the daily life of the individual. The colorless bodies covered with white plaster bandages that he pulls from among the crowds and the rapid flow of life reflect the social position, pain, and movement of today’s individual as instant traces. These fragments that suddenly appear in public spaces are colorless, static and rigid.”  
(Karaçalı, 2018, p. 561)

George Segal was a leading artist in creating products that were exhibited in public spaces after 1970, thereby opening the public space that was used on a daily basis to



*Figure 7. Edward Kienholz – Roxys (1961)*



*Figure 8. George Segal – 3 Figures and 4 Benches / New Orleans (1979)*

Edward Kienholz, on the other hand, was one of the first artists to exhibit his installation works. For example, his work exhibited under the title of “Roxys” in 1961, which is one of his first works, can be considered as an installation in its current sense. In this work, he recreated the design of a scene from his memories at a brothel. In addition, Kienholz demonstrated a revolutionary attitude (assemblage) to creating artworks with his moves that brought a third dimension to a two-dimensional work (e.g. painting).

Alan Kaprow, as the artist who had a significant influence on the terminological history of the notion of installation, is considered one of the pioneers of the installation with his definition of the concept of “environment art” (Kaprow, 2003, p. 6). Used by Kaprow to refer to an artwork in a closed space, the term “environment art” altered in time, and was later used interchangeably with the concepts of “project art” and “temporary art”. As a result, the phenomenon of transience prompts us, as actors in the space, to reflect upon the concept of art as a temporary experience. Accordingly, the concept of time finds its place in installation art as an important instrument.



Fluxus art movement, on the other hand, highlighted the importance of lived and experienced art with a focus on the flow of time. While emphasizing the value of this experience, they criticized art products, which are set up in museums and static venues, desired by collectors and are marketable (Block, 1993). In this sense, installation art, too, introduces the time as an artistic dimension by offering its participant a time-based experience.

### **1.6 Installation Art and Its Sociological and Historical Sensitivity**

Installation art, which questions space and is in constant and direct relationship with the space, has always had political and ideological sensitivity. It should be noted that when considered within the frame of sociology and political science, the notion of space is dealt with in relation to questionings on power/political power. Space can be defined as a platform where individuals expose and exhibit power relations. However, and even more importantly, it also has a structure which directly displays and shapes power. At this point, Massey's concept of "power geometry" is helpful and effective in explaining the notion of space in the context of sociology (Massey, 2005). In this sense, space is a determining factor in the distribution of power. On the other hand, it is not right to think of space as a timeless, static and unchangeable form. In addition to our tendency to perceive it as the opposite of the concept of time within the scope of the space-time duality, space is temporary and changeable as it is a humanitarian and therefore a social structure.

At this point, how public sphere is defined gains importance since it is where installation works are exhibited. Public sphere has been designated as the place where political power has been showcased throughout the history of the states, and its boundaries have been widely discussed philosophically and politically. As a result of

the expansion of the public sphere by feminists with the emphasis on the slogan “the personal is political” in the modern period, it has exceeded its borders and actually encompassed itself. Hence, not only was the private (i.e. personal) sphere, which is the opposite of the public sphere, included in the public sphere, but also politics and ideology captured every sphere of life.

Considering the fact that installation art puts an emphasis on the idea of approaching and utilizing space as an instrument of art, its products must be included within the scope of public sphere. Using space and perceiving the participating individual as an actor (player) or, when needed, a director in the space, installation art acts in a way to form power relations by being a part of the public sphere, regardless of whether it is displayed indoors or outdoors. In this regard, it will come across opportunities to shape the identity of city, society and individual (Zengel, 2012).

To sum up, although, consciously or unconsciously, all types of art have ideological motivations and act upon such since the period of start of contemporary art production and the domination of conceptual art, installation art differs from other types of art since it adopts and displays an up-front and direct attitude towards comprehending, questioning and maybe changing power relations from a sociological aspect because of the fact that it considers space as its main art material.

### **1.7 Development of Installation Art in Turkey**

Şükrü Aysan is a prominent artist with his works that can be considered a crucial start in terms of conceptual art in Turkey. He contributed to the enrichment of art environment in Turkey with his works on contemporary art as well as installation art, which highlighted and emphasized the intellectual and inquisitive aspects of art. Among his efforts of this kind, we should mention *Sanat Tanımı Topluluğu*



(Definition of Art Group - STT) that he established to encourage efforts relating to the intellectual aspect of art (Özayten, 2013, p. 184). His artwork titled “*Salt Sanatsal Nesnelerle Doğal Çevreye Müdahale*” (Intervention to the Natural Environment with Only Artistic Objects) which was exhibited in 1979 is one of the early examples of Turkish installation works. The work installed around Kilyos in Istanbul, where there are forests and coastal areas, aimed to reflect the contrast by placing manmade and artificial products right at the heart of untouched wilderness of nature. Following the start of its intellectual formation as a project in 1972, *Sanat Tanımı Topluluğu* established and secured its final identity in 1977 and gained its current name after the “installation event” organized by the group in 1980.



*Figure 9. Şükrü Aysan - Salt Sanatsal Nesnelerle Doğal Çevreye Müdahale (1979)*



*Figure 10. Serhat Kiraz – Günlerin Görüntüleri, Bugünün Görüntüsü (1988)*

Artist Serhat Kiraz is one of the founders of the group. Kiraz also gained his place among the first reputable examples of conceptual art works by organizing several individual and group exhibitions together with the group. He tackled art not as a product of perception, but within the framework of philosophical integrity. Besides, Ahmet Öktem, a member of STT and one of the important figures, endeavored to create a visual with the use of light by pushing the limits of technology. Ahmet Öktem, who uses the altering and manipulating effect of light on the image highly effectively in his art, became well-known for his works in which the light hides or reveals an aspect.

One of the pioneers of contemporary art in Turkey, Sarkis Zabunyan who was born in 1938 in Istanbul-born is a crucial figure in the context of conceptual art. Living in France since 1964, Sarkis held exhibitions in distinguished locations in Europe and came back to Turkey in 1985 to participate in the work titled “*Öncü Türk Sanatından Bir Kesit*” (A Cross Section of Turkish Avantgarde Art). “*Çaylak Sokak*” (Çaylak Street), an essential work within the scope of installation art, was exhibited in



*Figure 11. Sarkis – Çaylak Sokak (1986)*

Maçka Art Gallery in Istanbul in 1986. The project presents a synthesis of the combination of audio tapes and different objects. It can be said that the work is the narration of special memories from the childhood period of Sarkis. Rana Öztürk describes the production stage of *Çaylak Sokak* with the following words:

“He took out shoemaker’s bench of his uncle to whom he worked as an apprentice during summer holidays when he was 8-9 years old from the attic and made his uncle reinstall it in the space behind Maçka Art Gallery. On the bench, he laid a statue made from audio tapes of Andrey Tarkovski’s *Nostalghia* movie. In the main space of the gallery, he placed a small bath tub filled with water which was from his childhood and whose function had changed as his uncle started growing tomatoes in it. He floated in the water a small fisherman boat model he found in Sarıyer and used it as a pedestal for another figure he created from cassette tapes. Bringing to the gallery the shoes of his father who could no longer walk, he wrote *Kriegsschatz* (War Trophies) on them using gold leaf. He also included a trinket, an oil painting canvas from 1963, and newly made watercolor paintings of all these objects.” (Öztürk, 2008, p. 54-55)



Figure 12. Ayşe Erkmen – Am Haus (1993)

The entire process of preparation of this work is extremely striking considering the fact that it should be interpreted in accordance with the integrity of personal, subjective and candid moments in the life of Sarkis. The fact that production is so dependent on the personal story determines the strength of the project.

Ayşe Erkmen is an artist who exhibited her well-known works in the field of installation mostly in Germany rather than in Turkey. When she went to Berlin in 1993, she worked as an instructor at Kassel Art Academy and produced her artworks. Created during her first year in Berlin in 1994, “*Am Haus*” (At Home), one of the most important famous works, is the product of her feelings that arose after being away from her home. In this work, Ayşe Erkmen, who wanted to create an expression of emotion specific to Turkish language by way of using the Turkish suffix “-miş”, placed on the façade of a house 40 suffixes including -miş and its conjugations (e.g. -mişsiniz, -müştü, -mışız). The meaning the suffix -miş conveys is not expressed so easily in other languages; hence, it is a flexibility of Turkish. The neighborhood



*Figure 13. Ayşe Erkmen – Tünel'e Heykel (1994) İstiklal Caddesi*

where the artwork was installed is Kreuzberg which is densely populated by the Turks so the Turks who understand the expressions were able to notice the flexible structure of Turkish. With the use of purely Turkish linguistic structures, Erkmen was able to achieve a different impact as Germans were not able to understand what was on the outer walls of the house and therefore were alienated, contrary to the foreignness of Turks in Germany. The project, which had initially been planned to be exhibited for a certain period of time, remained as a permanent part of the building.

Erkmen's artwork titled "*Tünel'e Heykel*" (Sculpture to the Tunnel) placed at the exit of the Tunnel in Taksim, Istanbul attracted a great deal of attention in 1994. In addition to being located in the center of Istanbul, this project, which was selected by Beyoğlu Municipality from among 55 project proposals, has always remained popular due to some issues such as the posters hung on it and removal of the statue. The sculpture employed French-style wrought-iron latticework due to its harmony with European-style stone buildings of Istiklal Street. The long chimney-shaped structure





*Figure 14. Cengiz Çekil - Embriyon / Kabuk + Rezistans / Enerji) = Bir Sanat Yapıtı (1976)*

was also designed considering the neighborhood. The artwork became a part that was in a complete harmony with its surroundings, rather than being a sculpture, and became an integral part of the space. The only “incompatible” feature of the sculpture was a strip of grass on the ground in the middle of the column. It was as if the column was protecting with its bars this tiny piece of nature from the surrounding area covered with stone buildings. In short, the work is more than a standard sculpture work; it is a work that communicates with spatial elements.

As one of the early important contemporary artists, Cengiz Çekil made an effort to produce conceptual artworks. The installation work titled “*(Embriyon / Kabuk + Rezistans / Enerji) = Bir Sanat Yapıtı*” ((Embryo/Crust-Resistance/Energy) = An Artwork) in 1976 was exhibited in Istanbul Archeology Museum and was, in fact, neglected by art circles. In his work, Cengiz Çekil;

“placed in an empty cube that he formed by joining one-meter long iron rods a human figure made of a mixture of plaster and polyester in the embryonic position, and also dressed this figure in clothes. Right next to it, there is a tomb built from briquettes, and its floor is filled with soil. A resistance is placed inside the soil, and when electric current is switched on, the resistance turns red.” (Yıldırım, 2010)

It can be said that with this work making references to the life-cycle as an idea, the artist incorporated and presented the conceptual thought in his art by way of creating a connection between energy and resistance.

‘80s can be seen as a period during which a significant economic expansion was initiated in Turkey, and Turkish art circles had the opportunity to establish international collaborations with Western art movements. Following the remarkable revolutionary emergence of installation works at an international scale in the 1960s and the spread thereof in ‘70s, the launch of the International Istanbul Biennial, which has been a prime event in Turkey’s art history throughout the ‘80s, strikes attention as an initiative encouraging and promoting interest and involvement in contemporary art and production of contemporary art works. Started off under the name of International Istanbul Festival and renamed later on as “International Istanbul Biennial” organized by Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSİV) and later, the event has been a milestone for Turkish contemporary art endeavors. Many researchers deem the biennial culture a groundbreaking element in how art is viewed, taking into account that artistry and curatorship notions gained importance in modern sense, visibility of installation works increased, and international interaction increased and intensified (Öcal, 2009).

Füsün Onur, who rose to prominence with her works especially in the field of abstract sculpture, became a well-known figure in installation art circles from ‘70s to ‘80s. Füsün Onur is a crucial artist because she suggested a sculptural understanding that can be considered within installation art (Yılmaz, 2009, p. 212). Although she is not a feminist, Onur, who is known for her sensitivity to the women issue and for her political works, also brought novelties to the Turkish art environment with her participant-based artworks. Being exhibited in Harbiye Military Museum within the scope of the Istanbul Biennial of 1987, her critical work titled “*Gölge Oyunu*” (Shadow Play) reflected the conflict of social classes. It shows to the audience the shadows, which maintain control with the ropes hanging from the ivory towers, managing the lower class without getting in the dirt. The playful stance of Füsün Onur in this clearly political work reflects the importance she gives to the idea of “childishness” and “game” which is frequently observed in her other works.

The biennial became a standard international term used to refer to an art event held “every two years”. In this regard, ‘90s can be noted as the period when Turkish



*Figure 15.* Füsün Onur – *Gölge Oyunu* (1987) Bienal IKS.



artists experienced self-confidence issues in relation to identity in the international arena. As Cevdet Erek put it, believing that it is worthwhile to study in the west to produce artwork and be known in the international arena and not being able to feed on one's roots can be mentioned as some of the problems for the growing contemporary art environment of '90s in Turkey ("Türk sanatına olan ilgi, güvensiz 90'lar kuşağına iyi geldi", 2011). During the 2000s, Turkey's increasing recognition in the international platforms and the growing interest in Turkish art have led to emergence of installation artists such as Cevdet Erek and given them the possibility of international representation.

On the other hand, Haşim Nur Gürel, who played an important role in the establishment of Istanbul Modern with his emphasis on "the importance of marketing" and defended the opening of modern museums and organization of exhibitions to serve the purpose of cultural marketing, has a notable place in the increase of production in the field of art in the neo-liberal economy. Emphasizing that we should "market our culture" in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, he uttered the need to encourage



*Figure 16. Ayşe Erkmen – Kütüküt (2013)*  
Photograph by Senada Sokollu, İstanbul Bienal.

the foundation of organizations and initiatives similar to Istanbul Modern, which opened in 2004 (Gürel, 2004).

We can say that the idea in current projects is based on environmental and nature awareness. For example, Ayşe Erkmen's installation work titled "*Kütükütüküt*" (bangbangbang) exhibited at the 2013 Istanbul Biennial was quite provocative. Outside the biennial building, visitors were welcomed by a cannonball hanging from a crane, which is used for demolition, positioned by the façade of the building in a way to hit it. Organized under the title of "Mom, Am I Barbarian?", the biennial seems to have been affected by the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul in 2013. Nonetheless, this work rather conveys a message relating to the "urban transformation" which was the trending issue of the period in Istanbul and across Turkey.



*Figure 17. Alper Aydın – D&M (2013) (Source: Yavuz, 2019, 45)*



*Figure 18. Yaya Sergileri (2002) (Source: Wow Turkey, 2003)*

Additionally, Alper Aydın's "D&M", which appeared in the Istanbul Biennial in 2017, is a work that reveals environmental change and destruction of nature. The work in which a bulldozer bucket corners tree branches and shrubs into a corner in the exhibition is concerned about directly conveying an environmental message and demonstrates the idea that the urban construction corners, withers and slowly kills nature.



*Figure 19. Yaya Sergileri (2002) (Source: Wow Turkey, 2003)*





Figure 20. Yaya Sergileri (2002) (Source: Wow Turkey, 2003)

“Yaya Sergileri” (Pedestrian Exhibitions), the first of which took place in Istanbul in 2002, represents an important step for the art to overflow into streets and find a place in public sphere. Aiming to intertwine a large mass that could not participate in the cultural environment with art, this project brought many important artists of the period together under the curatorship of Fulya Erdemci. While among them was Cevdet Erek’s first work titled “Avluda” (In the Courtyard), the artists used streets, sculptures at an urban scale, spatial arrangements and billboards.



Figure 21. Yaya Sergileri (2005)

While the second *Yaya Sergileri* event, which was co-curated by Emre Baykal and Fulya Erdemci, was held in 2005 with the participation of a group of artists from around the world, including Haluk Akakçe, Ayşe Erkmen, Ebru Özseçen, Kemal Önsoy and John Körmeling. This project could not be continued due to destructive damage to the works.

However, in 2007, the newspaper *Radikal* organized street exhibitions similar to *Yaya Sergileri* to celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and displayed the works of 47 artists on its billboards in Taksim, Bağdat Street and Nişantaşı under the title of “RadikalArt: Art Overflowed to the Street” (Gençel, 2014, p. 33).



Figure 22. Yaya Sergileri 2 (2005) (Source: Wow Turkey, 2005)

## 2. SOUND INSTALLATION

### 2.1 Summary

Sound installation gained importance in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the development of sound art both conceptually and technologically throughout the century. The perception that developed through music and changed with the increase in technological opportunities after World War II paved the way for the artists to include space in and exhibit innovative and original works. If we want to list historical events in this sense, we can mention the products and intellectual contributions of Varèse and Le Corbusier with the works exhibited at the Philips Pavilion within the scope of the 1958 Brussels Festival, prior to that, Schaeffer's transformation of sound into an object with concrete music, conversion of sound into practice and a creation that can be exhibited, with Fluxus and Minimalism movements over time, and then moving of the art to the outdoor spaces and the public sphere with Max Neahaus, and, as of '70's, incorporation of the concept of body into space and the acceptance of body, rather than ear, as a sound receiver. Sound installation has the potential to accommodate sociological and historical grounds, as well as being a holistic art style that, when needed, should include the external factors of the auditory landscape in the public sphere, and it makes sound an instrument open to use by objectifying it.

### 2.2 Sound Installation as a Notion

Considering the overarching nature of installation art over all arts, it is obviously difficult to make categorizations by focusing on the differences in form and material used. Installation works are results of a holistic process during which space,

time and therefore the participant are envisioned in the work, each of them as integral elements of the work. In this sense, it can be said that sound is a *sine qua non* for the space. Hence, it is important to firstly consider sound separately from music.

As an artist who used the term “sound installation” in the 1960s, Max Neuhaus thought of sound as a phenomenon without beginning and end. Therefore, a sound art that exists in space rather than in time determines the basis of sound installation (des Jardins, 1994, p. 130). The issue of time is considered the fundamental requirement for the creation and existence of sound. However, sound installation does not have a specified time interval, unlike in music. With the help of digital players and cassettes, a permanent sound, lengthy and uninterrupted, is created in the space, and this can be mentioned as the most evident distinction of sound installation when compared to music (Licht, 2009, p. 3). Therefore, the concept of a beginning or an end loses its significance in sound installation.

According to another definition, the concept of sound, which should be considered separately from music, sound art becomes possible when considered together with visual art. In other words, in this type of art, sound feeds on visual art products (Toop, 2000, p. 107). To address this point of view within the scope of installation which is a spatial art, it is definitely necessary to think of it on a larger scale. Viewing sound inside the space as a sculpture that shapes the space and perhaps owns it is indeed important. In this respect, sound is a physical and natural material of the art created in the space (Schulz 2002, p. 14).

At this point, we should address the concept of sound sculpture. Sound sculpture should be differentiated from a musical instrument. As the first example, we can list lithophones ancient Chinese stones vibrating after being hit. In the modern sense, on the other hand, the first example can be the ball of twine in Duchamp’s

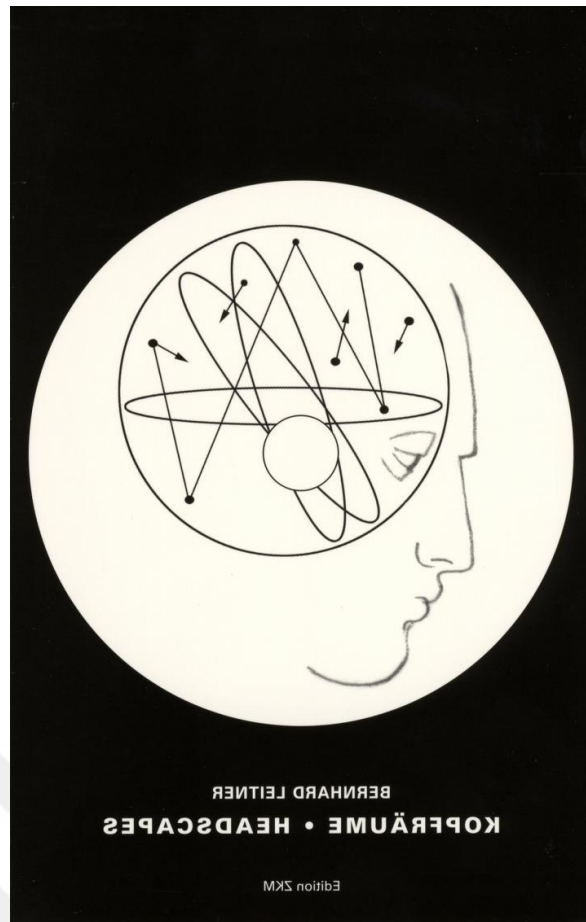
work in 1916 titled “With Hidden Noise”, which creates different sounds when shaken. We, therefore, can say that sound sculpture is able to provide important expansions in artworks within the space.



*Figure 23. Marcel Duchamp – With Hidden Noise (1916). The Israel Museum Jarusalem.*

A contemporary example shows that we can think of sound sculpture in quite different forms: Austrian sound installation artist Bernhard Leitner created a CD the sound of which could only be heard through headphones, not through speakers or from outside. He emphasized the fact that there were three-dimensional sound sculptures in this CD, and he designated the mind of the listener as the space (Leitner, 2003). In short, we can say that the notion of sound sculpture is an intellectual treasure in terms of conceptual art.





*Figure 24. Bernhard Leitner – Headsapes (2003)*

### **2.3 Relationship between Sound Art and Sociological & Historical Background**

If we examine the issue on a political and sociological basis, the term “situated listening” coined by Gascia Ouzounian offers an expansion. Describing “situated listening” as the form of “particular, placed situation(s) of hearing”, Ouzounian emphasizes the importance of “where” and “how” something is heard as much as “what” is being heard. Therefore, social, political and imaginary spaces are also involved in “situated listening”. It considers memory and history through the temporal dimension of the space as well as its structural and environmental, and even social, dimension. Hence, emerges a new concept called “situated knowledges” in the place where the experience occurs (Ouzounian, 2006, p. 72).

Considering the human voice, it can be said that it is a determinant as it is released into the space and then becomes a concrete substance from the moment it leaves the body. In this sense, while sound and space present an identity and even guide and determine the identity, the source of sound gains importance. When we consider it in relation to sex or ethnic origin, we realize the determinative and dictating power of the source of sound in space. The concept of “Male Gaze” that indicates, in visual arts, the act of looking is done by men whereas women are the object to be looked at is a phenomenon that has survived from the Renaissance period until today (Berger, 1973, p. 45-47). Similarly, the issue of who controls the sound and to whom it is directed in the public sphere becomes important in respect of sex. On the other hand, the surrounding characteristic of the female voice in the house, its determinative impact on the child, and its ability to build the private sphere as time-space are also notable.

On the other hand, the term “soundscape”, which was created by imitating the word landscape, deserves attention. This concept can be defined as the sum of all sounds that can be heard in an area. However, as in the concept of space, the humanitarian and social aspects of soundscape precede its physical content. Elements such as history, life experiences, expectations, and cultural background may determine sensitivities of a site relating to the sound (Miller, 2013, p. 729). The concept of soundscape is frequently used in spatial researches in fields such as environmental relations, architecture and environmental engineering. Nonetheless, “soundscape” strikes attention also in music, and mostly in sound art. For example, soundscape will be quite important regarding a public space installation and will be directly related to the identity of the product. Situations such as a traffic problem, birds chirping or loud child voices are elements that need to be considered within the

scope of and included in the spatial design, as they constitute parts of the identity of the artwork.

It can be said that all the topics addressed hereinbove are subject to examination and are questioned in sound installation works, and are applied and addressed in such works through various manipulations in a way to enable the participants to experience the artwork and provide conscious feedbacks. Considering Cevdet Erek, we can say that his works are directly influenced by and intellectually and ideologically based on all these social and political factors.



*Figure 25.* Four types of soundscapes (Chaotic, Lively, Boring and Calm) and their basic dimensions (Eventfulness vs. Pleasantness and Affordances vs. Complexity) (Van den Bosch, Andringa, 2014)

## **2.4 History of Sound Installation**

### **2.4.1 Acoustic Space – Visual Space Duality**

In 1949, Arthur Alberts traveled across the region from West Africa to Timbuktu and recorded local musics. This was such an interesting experience for the locals that some think their voices were being stolen and they tried to attack Alberts (Eagleman, 2013, p. 2). The fact that sound is always temporary and that it forms the backbone of the entire culture reveals a huge distinction: auditory culture and written culture. Associating the almost extinct position of auditory culture with the intense pressure of modernism on “primitive” societies is inevitable. On the other hand, the emergence of the thought of sound as a recordable element and the technology enabling this vision in modern era is revolutionary in many ways. We should also highlight that this is a building block of contemporary installation art.

Literacy should be mentioned as an important factor that separates the modern period from the past. Marshall McLuhan, who strictly differentiates between written and oral culture, states that these two worlds are also spatially separated from each other. He suggests that the literate modern world develops a perception through visual aspect of the written word and therefore is a visual space while societies with oral culture can be associated with the acoustic space (Carpenter, McLuhan, 1953, p. 65-70). Thus, he argues that Western societies are normative, linear and definite based on their perception of visual space whereas acoustic space is neither linear nor layered (McLuhan, 1960, p. 207). Furthermore, he posits that, considering the dark, chaotic and scattered characteristics of the pre-literate societies, the invention of writing brought visibility to the speech and provided another means of control.

This dual thinking between sound and visual, on the one hand, takes us to the contradiction between primitiveness and modernity. In this sense, it has been a common understanding to highlight the chaotic nature of the sound and to emphasize its uncontrollable nature. John Cage addresses the liberating impact of spatial music by emphasizing the unpredictability of sound, hence the indeterminate nature of spatial music. This understanding leads and enables artist to get rid of his ego (Cage, 1961, p. 59).

#### **2.4.2 Schaeffer, Varèse and Le Corbusier**

Edgard Varèse, who has an important place in the history of sound installation, held a concert with his music piece containing wild, whiny and scream-like electronic sounds at the Brussels World's Fair of 1958, and he stated, "I heard my music literally in space for the first time". This disorganization and chaotic state was experienced at an uneasy time when nuclear armament gained importance (Strawn, 1978, p. 141). As seen in this example, the idea of freedom and disorganization includes a "primitiveness" that transcends the normative nature of music and surrounds the concept of sound. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that this idea can also be perceived as an effort to establish control over the freedom of sound and to ensure its place within art by controlling it. Likewise, with the advance of technology, the emergence of recorders and tapes constructed the space through the manipulation of the sound, while building the free expression of the sound to determine the whole space in a despot manner. Therefore, art's fundamental controlling and manipulating attitude toward the material can be questioned.

Varèse thought about the creation of unlimited music and questioned spatial music long before magnetic bands appeared. Saying that he thought of all the sounds

outside to make music, Varèse pondered upon how to incorporate these sounds in music (Strawn, 1978, p. 141). As Varèse is a musician, his works can be considered as spatial music rather than sound installation.

The opening section of his work “Déserts” in 1954, one of his revolutionary works, was designed as a combination of spatial sounds and orchestral music from two different radio frequencies (Mattis, 1992, p. 558). Although the implementation was difficult, he exhibited his innovative ideas through his work titled “*Poème électronique*” at the 1958 Brussels World’s Fair, thereby becoming an important figure in the history of modern art. This work contained a heavy use of technological equipment and detailed sound effects. It is stated that the artist employed between 300 and 425 loudspeakers. It is regarded as one of the most ambitious and enthusiastic works of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with its repetitions and backward playing, abundant recordings, and “aggressive” style (Trieb, 1996, p. 203). *Poème électronique* secured a fundamental place in sound arts due to its aggressive attitude towards perception, its focus on sound by breaking free from music, its presentation of a collage of external sounds rather than the sound of instruments, and its use of the opportunities brought by technology.

At this point, Varèse’s work is considered one of the best pieces of the concrete music style known as “*musique concrète*”. When Pierre Schaeffer introduced the concept of concrete music in 1948, he meant the music in a designated and standardized environment that implied the new technological products of the era, such as disc or tape. The idea of creating music through the sound object will form the basis for encouraging the creative and innovative ideas of the future. It can be said that Schaeffer started the most pioneering movement of sound art with its inclination to the concept of sound rather than music and the attempt to create music through the

repetitions of sound as well as the dominance of technology, the endeavor to establish language and to narrate a subject (Schaeffer, 1952, p. 230).

Considering the fact that the sound is detached from its core meaning and manipulated with repetition and placed in a separate subject, it should not be perceived as naturalism or incorporating natural sounds into music. It is especially noteworthy that it has no reference to nature and it strives to produce brand new sounds. It is more of an art construction through distorting and dramatizing sounds and that is completely different from imitating nature (Terucci, 2007, p. 214).

Schaeffer produced his works based on the principles of finding the theme in the sound and repetition of that sound. Manipulation and particularly “loop” concept, i.e. the musical language formed by the use of sound repetitions is quite a revolutionary innovation in sound art. For a start, he did not object to the use of instruments, but it was essential to create the desired theme and the musical language on its own through manipulation of that particular instrument, (Terucci, 2007, p. 214).

On the one hand, the effect of conceptual art can be observed through the effort towards the abstraction of sounds and the meaning of the message to be conveyed. Considering the sound art and sound installation, on the other hand, we can say that there arose opportunities for the transition from music to sound and nature to space, or in other words, the way to modern sound installation works was evoked. In particular, the idea of sound object can easily lead us to the idea that sound is a material and that this material can be used like a brick or iron. Therefore, sound art is possible by perceiving sound as “equipment” for art.

Le Corbusier, as a leading architect who shows interest in the whole space, supported Varèse in his work and became the art director for *Poème électronique* at the Philips Pavilion at the 1958 Brussels World’s Fair. Le Corbusier valued the idea

of reflecting a utopian unity in line with the concept of “progress” within the theme of the development of humanity, which was the subject of the fair. His famous concept “*espace acoustique*” accordingly represents his understanding of architecture based on unity and concordance. It can be said that, in fact, Le Corbusier was in search of a finale of the visual and auditory space contradiction as a duality established by McLuhan and Edmund Carpenter with the concept of “indescribable acoustic”, which he considered the fourth dimension. However, this idea of acoustic rather means a visual harmony, acquiring a new dimension for reflections of visual in harmony. There is not an acoustic design as sound (Le Corbusier, 1993, p. 66). In other words, for Le Corbusier, acoustic space is the effort of visual radiations to form an architectural language together with the non-layered, fluid aspects of sound (Pearson, 1997, p. 178). On the other hand, Philips Pavilion, which was supported by films and reflected the rise of humanity with the integrity of various artworks, was quite revolutionary for 1958 and the herald of what might happen in the future.

Innovations in sound technologies are one of the important reasons behind this revolutionary change in the music world towards the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Varèse expressed his groundbreaking ideas before the technology emerged; however, technology brought these ideas to life. Likewise, technological possibilities and sound engineers were Pierre Schaeffer’s biggest supporters when he, as the creator of the concept of concrete music, was pushing the boundaries in terms of perceiving sound and building products with it for the purpose of art with the creation of terms such as “symphony of noises” (Schaeffer, 1952, p. 4), “sound object” (Schaeffer, 1952, p. 6), “sound fragments” (Schaeffer 1952, p. 12).



## 2.5 Acquisition of Identity of Sound Installation Works

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the sound arts further expanded to include sound installations with the impact of minimalism and Fluxus movements. As mentioned in previous chapter, Fluxus movement displayed an attitude against the commoditization of art. George Maciunas was the founder of the movement while John Cage became the primary influencer of the subsequent artists within the movement. The core of the philosophy of Fluxus movement can be summarized as the idea of an instant and living art form and an art perception through the construction of sounds from improvised movements, as a form of expression of this group.

Fluxus can be understood by focusing on the idea of turning the concept of readymade in Dadaism into ready-made action (Antmen, 2013, p. 205). In minimalism, however, the dominant approach can be outlined as “what you see is what you see”. From this point of view, the emphasis that there is nothing other than the existence of the work is important. The concept of “noise” in Fluxus is replaced by a state of natural silence in minimalism. As an example of minimalist artwork, we can mention Robert Morris’s work titled “Box with the Sound of It’s Own Making” in which the sound recorded during the production of the box is heard from inside a simple box through a loudspeaker.

Max Neahaus is one of the leading artists who play a valuable role in the transfer of sound to space, from galleries to works that put the environment at the center of art (Labelle, 2015, 151). In this regard, Neahaus’s “Drive in Music” in 1967 is a notable example of artworks exhibited in public space, available to everyone. It was an innovative installation that included different radio transmitters attached to trees at certain distances on the road from Buffalo to New York, and produced various sounds depending upon the speed and direction of each vehicle passing by.

Furthermore, it was significant since it was open to everyone and everyone could have different experiences according to the weather (Belgiojoso, 2016, p. 80).

It can be said that during the '70s, body became a frequently addressed topic in sound art works. Going beyond the idea that sound is a concept related to ear, the fact that hearing happens as a whole-body experience and that the body becomes the target of sound gained importance. In addition, we can mention again one of the recent works, Bernhard Leitner's work titled "Headscape" for which he stated that he produced three-dimensional sound sculptures inside the mind that could only be listened to with headphones. It can be said that creating a "mental" listening space, which may be considered a separate topic in this context, is a different listening style. In addition, it can be thought of as the area that Laurie Anderson described as the "most inner place of sound" (Anderson, 2003, p. 203). The concept of headscape is quite enriching and stimulating in this sense.

In addition to the positive approach to the development and influence of sound technologies on the then-current century, an unfavorable understanding thereof emerged with the development of the environmentalist movement as of the '70s. In this sense, the notion of "sound souvenirs" is important. This term is currently used to refer to sound records presented as a souvenir. However, having an environmental sensitivity, Raymond Murray Schafer, who invented this term, aimed to point a finger to sound pollution. Sound souvenir in this regard implies storing sounds that will tend to disappear and preventing their disappearance, thereby transferring them into the future (Schafer, 1994, p. 240).

The primary point of emphasis in Schafer's approach is the production of sound souvenirs as a notion of noise. This is a criticism directed at the process of the separating sound from its original state, purifying it from its natural tone, and giving it

a new identity by strengthening in the end (Schafer, 1994, p. 90). Therefore, sound loses natural characteristic and becomes artificial and more of a noise than it already is. Considering that the music is played millions of times in separate cassette players in everyone's hands, the increase in sound pollution is a striking problem.

## **2.6 Relationship between Technological Developments and Art – Use of Technological Means in Sound Installation**

Would sound installation be possible if art was not supported by technological developments? Answering this question is not that easy. As seen in Duchamp's sound sculpture work (With Hidden Noise), it is indeed possible to create a sound art work without using the possibilities of technology. However, if we expand our understanding of technology and take into account the notion of industrial production, rather than only thinking of recording devices or sound amplifiers, the twine in his relevant work might not have been produced without the help of technology. Therefore, we can say technology is always intertwined with art. From this point of view, it provides a great deal of opportunities to art and broadens the perspective.

On the other hand, it is possible to think of technology as the development of cultural perspective. Within the scope of this sociological definition of "technology", it would not be wrong to say that the process of controlling the environment and thereby making it an instrument of the artwork is a technological development as an artistic thought. Throughout the period from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until Le Corbusier, modern societies and states had gone through different stages and had intellectually reached new technological levels when we take into account the perception of environmental control, the idea of environment as an "arrangeable" entity, and the process of creating modern cities "in order".



*Figure 26. Scott de Martinville - Phonautograph (1857) (1865 made by Rudolf Koenig).*

Considering the above-mentioned aspects of technology, it is no longer possible to belittle, underestimate and reject the place of technology in art. As demonstrated here, art in any period becomes only possible through the use of technological opportunities; and because technology greatly increases the possibilities and means of art, it is unnecessary and irrelevant to adopt a “conservative” attitude towards it.



*Figure 27. Thomas Edison – Phonograph (1877)*



*Figure 28. Emile Berliner – Gramophone (1887)*

The birth of the idea of sound art was facilitated by the advancement of technological opportunities, as much as by innovative ideas of geniuses such as Duchamp. In this regard, sound recording technologies are especially important. We can say that it would almost be impossible for nearly all sound installations to be realized without the opportunities brought by recording technology. At this point, the historical timeline presented below demonstrates the direct relationship between the increase in production of sound art works and absolute introduction of sound recording technologies to our daily lives after 1950:



*Figure 29. AEG produced a more practical version of Magnetophon in 1935.*

Year	Sound Recording Devices	<i>Developments in the World of Recording and Broadcasting</i>
1857	“Phonautograph”, the world’s first sound recorder, was invented by Scott de Martinville.	
1877	Thomas Edison invented the world’s first cylindrical sound recorder, known as “Phonograph”.	
1887	Emil Berliner invented the “Gramophone”, the disc-shaped record player.	
1888	Oberlin Smith presented the idea of magnetic recording to the world of science.	
1898	Valdemar Poulsen invented the world’s first magnetic sound recording device under the name of “Telegraphone”.	This device uses metal wire magnetically. In the future, this method was not demanded.
1902	DC-bias recording patent was filed by Poulsen and Pedersen.	This was an attempt to increase sound quality.
1920		Commercial radio broadcasts started in the USA.
1921	Carlson and Carpenter submitted patent application for AC-bias recording. (USA)	It was a technology that recorded a better quality sound level, better reduced noise when compared to DC.

1928	Fritz Pfleumer produced the tape recorder known as “Sound Paper Machine”.	It was the first prototype of tape recorders operating with modern logic.
1934	German AEG company produced “Magnetophon”.	The company improved the Sound Paper technology and produced magnetic tape and tape recorder.
1939	Wooldridge (in the USA) submitted a patent application for new recording technology with AC-bias.	Recording technology improved day by day.
1940	Weber and von Braunmühl applied for a patent for AC-bias. (Germany)	During World War II, technology improved independently in Germany.
1948	Ampex company released the Ampex 200. It developed its technology by building on the magnetophon from Germany.	Columbia announced the introduction of LP record format.
1958	RCA Victor introduced the RCA Box system.	RCA Victor - 45/45 stereo recording technology became highly demanded among home users.
1962	Philips performed the “Compact Cassette” tests and introduced them to the market by 1963.	“Compact Cassette” is the best known cassette model in the world. This box model, the first to come mind when it is about

		cassette, had been the most common type in daily use for many years.
1963	Grundig launches Telefunken and Blaupunkt DC-International format to the market.	
1970	BASF introduced chrome tapes to the market.	
1973	Sony launched double-sided DUAD (chrome) tapes.	
1973	Sony TC-2850D “Cassette Densuke” was launched.	It was a product that facilitated a huge increase in live recording.
1975		The production of the consumer-oriented Video Tape Recorder “Betamax” began.
1976		Consumer-oriented Video Cassette “VHS” was launched.
1979	Sony launched the first Walkman onto the market.	
1982	Compact Disc, i.e. CD, technology emerged.	It is the model that is known and commonly referred to as CD.
1983	Walkman WM-20 was launched onto the market.	It is a cassette-size Walkman model that can easily be carried in a pocket.



1987	The production of consumer-oriented DAT began.	Digital Audio Tape -
1992	MiniDiscs (MDs)	Products that can be called mini CD emerged and experienced a quite limited demand.

*Table 2.* Historical Development of Sound Recording Technology. Prepared by adjusting the list “National Museum of Nature and Science - Survey Reports on the Systemization of Technologies; Vol. 17 August 2012” and by adding comments. (Source: Kimizuka, 2012)

Originally manufactured with a focus on acoustic sound, devices such as phonograph and gramophone were increasingly creating a music recording and sales market. Sound recording technology, which gained a different dimension with electronic enhancements, on the other hand was still employing discs. However, in Germany, there occurred developments in magnetic tape in an environment not so open to the outside world during the Nazi era.



*Figure 30.* Philips – Compact Cassette (1962-63)

The first product of cassette technology that will be groundbreaking in the following period. It is now much easier to record and listen.



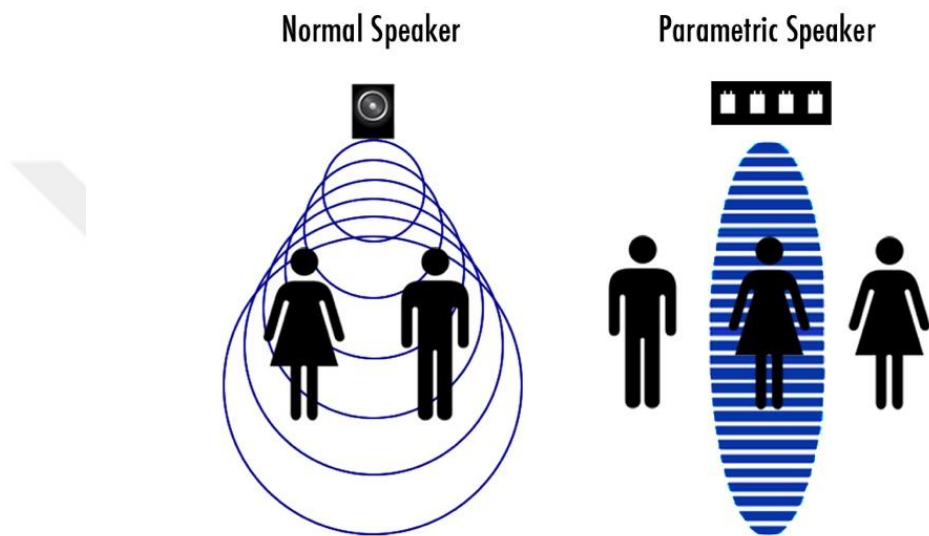
*Figure 31. Sony - Walkman (1979)*

Prior to this, individual use of cassettes has progressed, especially Cassette Densuke (1972). Walkman, on the other hand, marks an era as it is easy to carry.

After the end of World War II, with the transfer of knowledge on advanced tape recording technologies from Germany to the USA and the development of radio recording technology, the audio-music market developed quite rapidly. It is known that by 1953, 1 million households in the United States had audio tape devices (Brew Disk-To-Tape Revolution, 1953, p. 1). This is a process had gained such momentum that the Iranian Revolution in 1979 is said to have occurred after Ayatollah Khomeini's supporters secretly listened to his tape recordings and united with each other (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1990). Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that the fate of audio (and video) installation works has been determined by the development of these technologies and their introduction to consumers' use.

As an example, we can mention Cevdet Erek, who designs his works with directional loudspeakers. These loudspeakers are high-end technology products that can transmit sound directly, almost not spreading it around. We can say that Cevdet Erek thus has the opportunity for effective brush strokes as an artist. Such devices,

which increase the potential of separating sounds from each other, further expanded the limits of means expression and increased the artist's ability to control sound.



*Figure 32.* Functioning of Directional Loudspeaker – Also known as parametric speaker.

### **3. CEVDET EREK AND HIS ART**

#### **3.1 Summary**

As one of the important representatives of contemporary art in Turkey and having a fairly prestigious place in the world as well, Cevdet Erek is one of the leading names confronting us when we focus on sound and installation art. In this sense, Cevdet Erek has generated various different works on the focus of sound and architectural origin space after 2000s by making use of his drummer days in the band “Nekropsi” and his past in architecture education. From his music works to his cinema experience which may be named as experimental, he has at all times strived for “establishing a link and relationship”, with his own words, with large-scale projects, without ever leaving his spatial questioning aside. This practice of association and affiliation also host his social, historical and anthropologic sensitivities in itself as well. With his recent projects and works, named “Çın” produced in 2017 and “Bergama Stereo” produced in 2019, the architectural and structural narration being of equipotent with and even having the edge over sound contained therein is surely a visible and noticeable change in his art.

#### **3.2 Experimental Rock Group before Contemporary Art Works: Nekropsi**

Cevdet Erek has come to be known as drummer of experimental rock group named “Nekropsi” founded together with his friends during his high school years. Nekropsi is a musical group founded in Kadıköy and often putting emphasis on being



*Figure 33.* Nekropsi Members Kerem Tüzün, Cevdet Erek, Cem Ömeroğlu and Gökhan Goralı. They have always made use of local elements while making rhythm based experimental Rock music.

a “Kadıköyer”. Nekropsi was a warm-up group in Istanbul concert of the series of concerts organized under the name of “Plant & Page - No Quarter” by Robert Plant and Jimmy Page as two leading names of Led Zeppelin rock group. When they got on stage, they have introduced themselves as “Nekropsi from Kadıköy” (Erkal, 2017).

Kadıköy is stated to be one of the most important centres of “metal music” showing up in Turkey in 1990s (Konyar, 2010, p. 128). Nekropsi has, within this sub-culture born in Kadıköy, started to make music by a style which has arisen in the form of hard and quick drum rhythms in accompaniment of fast and sharp electro-guitar riffs, termed as “thrash metal” in its first days (Buckland, 2016, p. 2). After this thrash metal period, with their first album named ‘Mi Kubbesi’, they have caught a unique

style and tone where local instruments such as darbuka (goblet shaped drum) and bandir (frame drum) are also played, besides drum, by Cevdet Erek. In a program named “Sohbet Muhabbet Faslı”, this album has been defined by Güven Erkin Erkal as an album “close to the style of Moğollar even more than Moğollar of today”, with reference to an author whose name he could not recall thereat (Erkal, 2017).

In “Mi Kubbesi” album, lyrics have been substitutes by a vocal phenomenon based on sound. On the other hand, it is attention grabbing to note that they cannot name the style of music they make in those years of their first album (Erkal, 2017).

After Mi Kubbesi album, an innovator look at their music has come into prominence, and this has in some ways guided and directed the future career of Cevdet Erek. When saying that indeed he does not see Nekropsi group as “a real musical group” and with his statement that “as a group we are not waking up to it every day”, Erek is in fact making reference to Nekropsi’s being a project kept aside for the sake of experimental musical production (Taylan, 2019).

Cevdet Erek, after graduating from Faculty of Architecture in Mimar Sinan University, has, due to his interest in music, changed his course and received a post-graduation study in the newly opened unit MİAM (Advanced Musical Research Centre) of Istanbul Technical University. He emphasizes that his interest in sound technologies and in relations of sound with space has arisen in those days (“Sesin kendisi ve mekandaki durumu ilgimi çekiyor,” 6 May 2011). With his interest shifting towards “Time and Rhythm” focus, in his doctorate thesis, he has been directed to “the relations of measured time with sound and rhythm”. Briefly, his orientation towards sound arts can be easily observed with the change in his interest focus and his intensification on sound, time and space perceptions rather than music.



### 3.3 Installation Often Finding a Place in Public Space: Yaya Sergileri

His first project which can be termed as a contemporary art work has taken place among the works named “*Yaya Sergileri*” curated by Fulya Erdemci. The exhibition held in the year 2002 coincides with the period of post-graduation study of Erek in Istanbul Technical University. At a time when public space studies were not frequently seen in installation works, Erek’s project was composed of an unused chemical laboratory rearranged for the project with a new spatial design containing



*Figure 34.* With his first work “Avluda” produced in the year 2002, as may be classified as a sound installation work, Cevdet Erek reflects the perception of an interior space court by inhabitants of ITU building as a space wandered off and as a relaxing and refreshing atmosphere without even realizing it. At the same time, with accumulation of the noise of city in the inner court, and with windows and doors producing their own sounds by almost ignoring the inner court, it has gathered attention as a project reflecting a strong spatial identity.

also yard images and sounds ( “*Mekanla uğraşma konusunda hiçbir sınıırım yok,*” 2011).

The project “Avluda” included in the *Yaya Sergileri* is said to contain an innovation of that time with its attitude of scrutinizing public space and semi-public space concepts. Given that an inner court cannot easily be seen by someone outside the university, and external sounds have their reflections in inner court, and the inner court is in fact a space which is from time to time looked through windows by inhabitants of university, this work has created a composition worth examining and questioning. In the work installed inside the old chemical laboratory being used as a storage depot since more than 15 years, an assembly created by 3 different video images constitutes the physical content of the installation work. The theme questioned therein is the effort to create an insight by scrutinizing the time – space change in the axis of semi-public space concept. In the work, windows left open are continually opening and shutting under the effects of wind, and people are looking at the inner court, and entrance is not forbidden, but it is still empty... By using such examples, a collage work has been produced, and the emptiness and being left empty feelings have left an influential feeling on participants through the composition of natural sounds (Erek, 2015).

After his “Avluda” project in *Yaya Sergileri*, new projects have been started to be demanded from him, says Cevdet Erek. With this project, Cevdet Erek may be said to have opened up to the contemporary art world ( “*Mekanla uğraşma konusunda hiçbir sınıırım yok,*” 2011).

One of the important things that may be said about Cevdet Erek is that he differentiates himself from other artists interested in installation works with his architectural knowledge and his interest in buildings. His projects do not exclude, but



on the contrary are compatible with space, and establish a close and tight relationship with buildings, and this is the most important and leading cause of his success in creating an organic installation work. This is also expressed with different statements in interviews with him. For Cevdet Erek, his past experience in the Faculty of Architecture in Mimar Sinan University, known as one of the most important and difficult schools of architecture in Turkey, has almost been embedded in his identity as an artist, even though he has changed his field not seeing his personal future thereat.

Nekropsi, as a musical group which has halted its production, was inactive in the first half of 2000s. The Group has returned with a new album “10 Yılda Bir



*Figure 35.* Nekropsi’s “On Yılda Bir Çıkar” album with its striking cover photo. (2007)

Çıkar” in 2007, and has staged its production with a concert that may be classified almost as a sound installation work. As a part of opening of Istanbul Biennial of 2007, the group members have played their instruments with each standing at a separate step. Each of these 4 separate platforms is presenting only its own sound to the audience, while all instruments are combined to produce music at veranda where the audience is the majority (Vazquez, 2009). The message in this work may be said to have intensified on the idea of idiosyncrasy and accompaniment inside the space.

### **3.4 Cinema and Sound Installation**

Although they are fed from different art styles and types, cinema and sound installation may be said to have a rather close interrelation as they find their identity inside the integrity of space and sound. In his efforts destined to create and exhibit his works inside different areas and fields, Cevdet Erek has made use of this affinity by taking part as music and sound director in two motion pictures. With “Sivas” scripted and directed by Kaan Müjdeci and “Abluka” by Emin Alper, he has strived for making benefit from the facilities and opportunities of contemporary art within the frame of motion pictures. According to Erek, the basic difference between these two branches of art is indeed the difference between continuity and “finishedness”. Only the finishedness of a world installed within the frame of script and the continuity of a time stretching away inside the space may separate cinema and sound installation from each other (Akbulut, 2016, p. 56). Furthermore, with a statement reminding his integration desire in his installation works, Erek emphasizes his wish to reach an integral sound-music “having a single aesthetics” in those two motion pictures (Akbulut, 2016, p. 56).

Particularly if and when we examine Abluka motion picture in general and with a focus on sound, it seems possible to obtain ideas close to sound installation theme. The motion picture, with its script and theme, has been based upon the tyrannizing and surrounding effects of space. Emin Alper, as scriptwriter and director of the motion picture, has chosen as the space the slums of Istanbul as of the beginning of 2000s when terrorist acts were topical. And sound has come into prominence in order to create the suffocating and whelming effects of this space up to the paranoia from time to time. In an interview made with him on Abluka, Cevdet Erek says that before that motion picture, the sounds based on “darkness, paranoia and being stuck” feelings have already accumulated in him by time. He also emphasizes the closeness of these complex feelings to him, and mentions that they come from sound – noise music (Dostgöl, Kayıran, 2016). Thus, this predisposition and harmony have created a successful work at the end.



*Figure 36.* Sivas motion picture supported by Cevdet Erek with his sound works, though criticized due to fighting scenes of Sivas Kangal dogs, has been met by a rather great interest. In the motion picture featured by wide and spatial outer space scenes reflecting not only spaciousness, but also wild tension of the nature, the musical and sound production was one of the important elements raising the mode of the motion picture.

### **3.4.1 Abluka Motion Picture through Space and Sound Relations**

For the sake of emphasizing the difference between cinema and sound installation, Abluka motion picture may be at our agenda through space and sound analysis, and our inspections will help us to understand Cevdet Erek at the sound installation point. Just at this point, it is possible for us to assess Abluka motion picture as a script of Emin Alper proceeding with the space whelming and suffocating individuals with its tyrannizing and sickening effects to the extent of making them paranoiac. Cevdet Erek seems to have given a material support to Emin Alper in sound design and musical terms, but at the end, the value of this work of art is fairly open to further analyses and determinations in terms of sound installation, and it is fairly valuable, in our opinion.

Abluka is based on a script proceeding with police oppression theme of 2000s when Istanbul was under intensive pressure of terrorist attacks. The motion picture, from its first moment, in broad strokes provides the audience with a general feeling of the repressive atmosphere of ghettos, and their actually being at the city centre, but in fact being rather far away from the city, and almost the whole load of city being on the ghettos. Close camera angles, oppressive interior spaces, and preference of fairly depressed angles even in exterior shootings create and lead to a rather strained and stressful portrait. The motion picture, featured by the pressure of space to such a great extent, draws the interest of contemporary arts in all senses. Dark rooms, and reflection of the old and poverty to audience with the help of decors may be deemed to be fairly successful.

However, sound design has almost raised the bar of this terrific repressive atmosphere, almost noising it around. Speaking spaces have, at the moments of silence and at the time of sudden transitions to noisy plans, added an effect-increasing realism, and expressed the oppressive effects of space. All traffic noises and dirty



*Figure 37.* Abluka Motion Picture supported by Cevdet Erek with his sound works (2015)

crowd sounds of the city and highways are flowing over onto the ghetto throughout the motion picture. Interestingly, this bottom and base sound continues non-stop, and in close shots, we are exposed even to breathing sounds of the main character. Sounds of old wares, refrigerator and white light inside the house make our ears soiled, and exposes us to the loads of this world. This ghetto is already dirty or being soiled in all senses, and covers all individuals with its dirt, and keeps them under pressure infirmly and morbidly almost to such extent to drive them suicide. At this point, music is almost the follower of sounds of space, and Cevdet Erek does by no means refer to any additional intervention thereto. Rhythm with no melodies therein is implemented with the intention of increasing the tension and crowning the excitement and tension atmosphere in accompaniment of percussion tones. In this sense, Abluka exhibits full loyalty to the space as far as possible. The drama of characters of the space itself determines the progress of the motion picture.

Assuming that soundtracks generally constitute the element containing melodies and rhythms determining the overall atmosphere of motion pictures, we can say that music is almost not needed ever throughout this motion picture. Characters full of tension and fear toll the death knell for themselves, and the space adequately creates its own noise. Scenes directly dividing the silence with gunshots, a dog groaning with pain inside the darkness, sound of fire, sounds of stirring of items in piles of rubbish, and “female” voice of beautiful neighbour for a man just got released from prison... And the main character’s staying calm and silent in general senses also gains a separate importance at this point. Main character and his brother, who is probably even more silent and speechless than him, feel the existence of space as a pressure on themselves throughout the motion picture, and they probably do this mostly by listening at all times. After all, the most important “mysterious” element of

domination of space on us is the sound itself; though we have already emphasized this idea throughout the sound installation subject, it is rather important to underline it once more.

The city is hanging over and leaning against the slum (ghetto) both as a sound and as a space. A new city is being built indeed; mass housing sites are built, and in fact, uncontrolled vacant lands are being taken under control. Dogs are murdered; police instils a garbage collector as a policeman bird to the ghetto, and even the taverns of slums are moved to hidden back halls so as to escape tax, and just then, the spaces get narrower and narrower. And personal reflections of this feeling may be seen in such idea of our main character that he is being followed, and his brother locking himself in the house. Likewise, terrorists are also in a struggle of staking their claims on the space. Shortly, the source and purpose of the whole tension is the space itself, because we should never forget that the land of Istanbul is really “golden”.

Our main character seems like doing a sociological analysis while examining and reviewing the waste bins as a requirement of his job duty. Waste bins may be said to be the most important site for examination of wastes of the local people. Our main character researching chemical substances for bomb making browses the space on the other side. Just for these reasons, the installation which may be defined and characterized as an art of space can always make political and sociological deductions, and can handle and manage its questioning in a wide scale from ideology to class conflicts and struggles. That is why it may be said to have become as one of the fields where contemporary art is the strongest. Two important differences of installation from cinema are that time and space are lived by individuals as an actor (a participant). Nevertheless, Abluka offers us a fairly valuable opportunity for us to think over the installation and sound installation art. Particularly it is a rich world that



can be used to understand the art of Cevdet Erek and the intellectual framework of his artistic style. The product of his mental and intellectual conformity with Emin Alper may be said to be really productive.

### 3.5 Noise and Blockade of Space: Çın

Sound installation work named ‘Çın’ (or ‘audible architecture’ with Cevdet Erek’s own words) is exhibited in the Pavilion of Turkey in 57<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennial in 2017. Installation work resembles an atmosphere creating the impacts of a colosseum where gladiators are exposed to intensive noise. The artwork is designed in a concept where participants may go on an excursion inside a large area and may collect and acquire unique and special experiences, and is comprised of Venice bridges, a ruined city, stadium, closed spaces, and “public space” reminding block buildings allocated



*Figure 38.* Front section of large spatial work of art of Cevdet Erek, named “Çın”, exhibited in the pavilion of Turkey in 57th Venice Biennial in 2017, which has drawn great interest and may be categorized as “audible architecture”.



to private people, and the main axis created by sound therein is the creation of a noisy and repressive atmosphere with a composition of various different sounds.

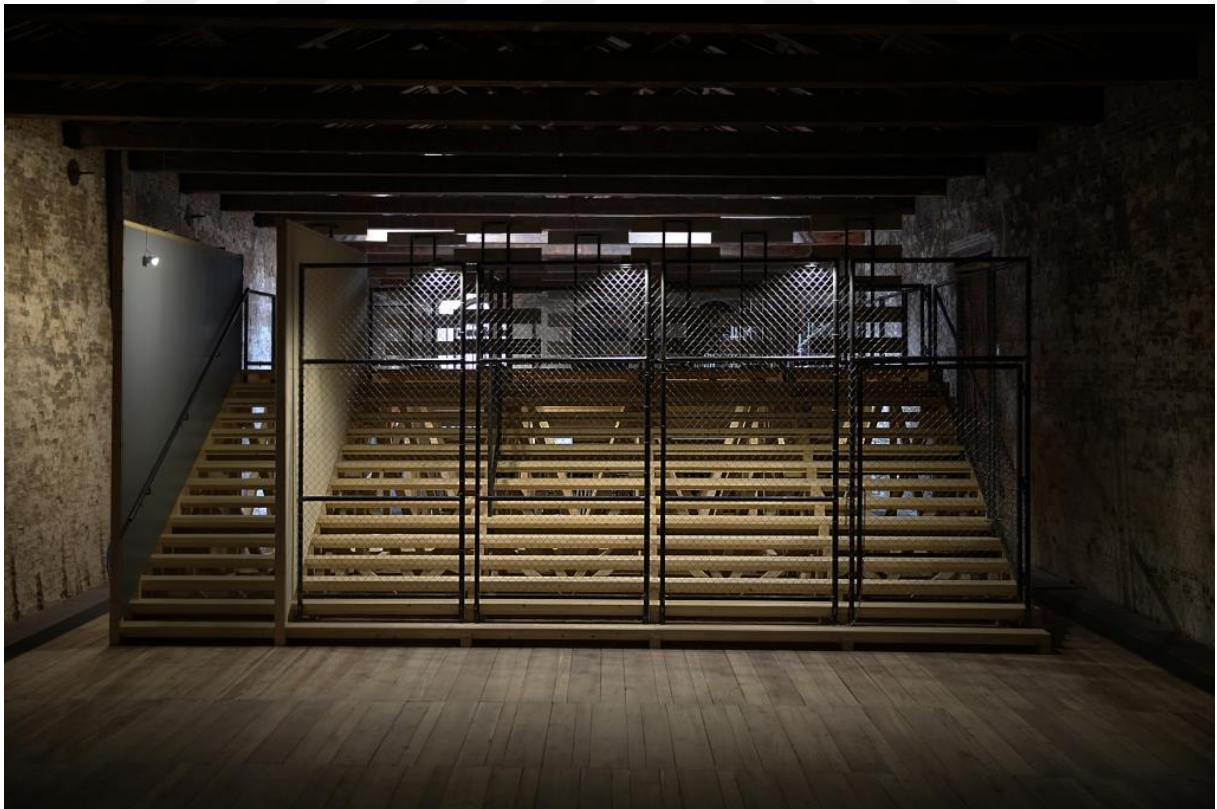
The word “Çın”, as a mimetic word”, stands for and refers to imitation of a tone of sound in Turkish. Accordingly, in “Open Table” session organized in Venice Biennial, while answering the questions of leading participants as to the cause of choice of the word ‘Çın’ as the name of his project, Cevdet Erek said: “Çın (jingle) sound is a sound standing as a sign, signal and call of message before the message itself”. Considering the buzzing (reverberation) aspect, he has stressed out that it is a response given by space to a sound (Yalçinkaya, 2017). For this reason, at this point, just at the time of naming his work, Erek has demonstrated to have engaged in more holistic questionings by laying stress upon the initial physical structure and formal composition of sound rather than the underlying meaning thereof. In this sense, this project is named after buzzing (reverberation) being the consequence and product of the first relationship established by sound with space. Another emphasis put also on the oppressive and noisy aspect of the word “Çın” is also separately felt when one goes deep enough to the real identity of the project.

According to Erek, the aim of the project is “in the simplest terms” to think that the external façades of modern buildings are designed over sound (CNN Turk, 2017). In the work of art where relationship with sound is questioned within the limitations of space, not only the despotism and orientation of sound, but also the spatial references made by it are also mentioned and uttered. 35-directional loudspeaker, used in Çın project for transmitting acoustic sound waves directly across without fully spreading over, has determined the main identity of project. Each loudspeaker reflects the voice of a separate individual, and as one approaches the source of sound, he starts to understand what is said thereby. And when one stays and stands behind, the sources

of sound are directed collectively to the audience and turn out to an oppressive and despotic wave. And when we examine the contents of sounds, sometimes we hear a wild rhythm and small whispers, while sometimes large sentences expressing the feelings of society come to our ears. As a whole, all these voices and sounds may be likened to parody of chaotic structure of Istanbul as a space (Gabi, 2017).

Perhaps, a more comprehensive description may also be made as follows: Çın may be expressing the parody of space “tingling” the overflow of statements and speeches guiding, directing and suppressing the masses of people as a whole, besides mental derangement of Turkey after the coup d’etat attempt of the year 2016.

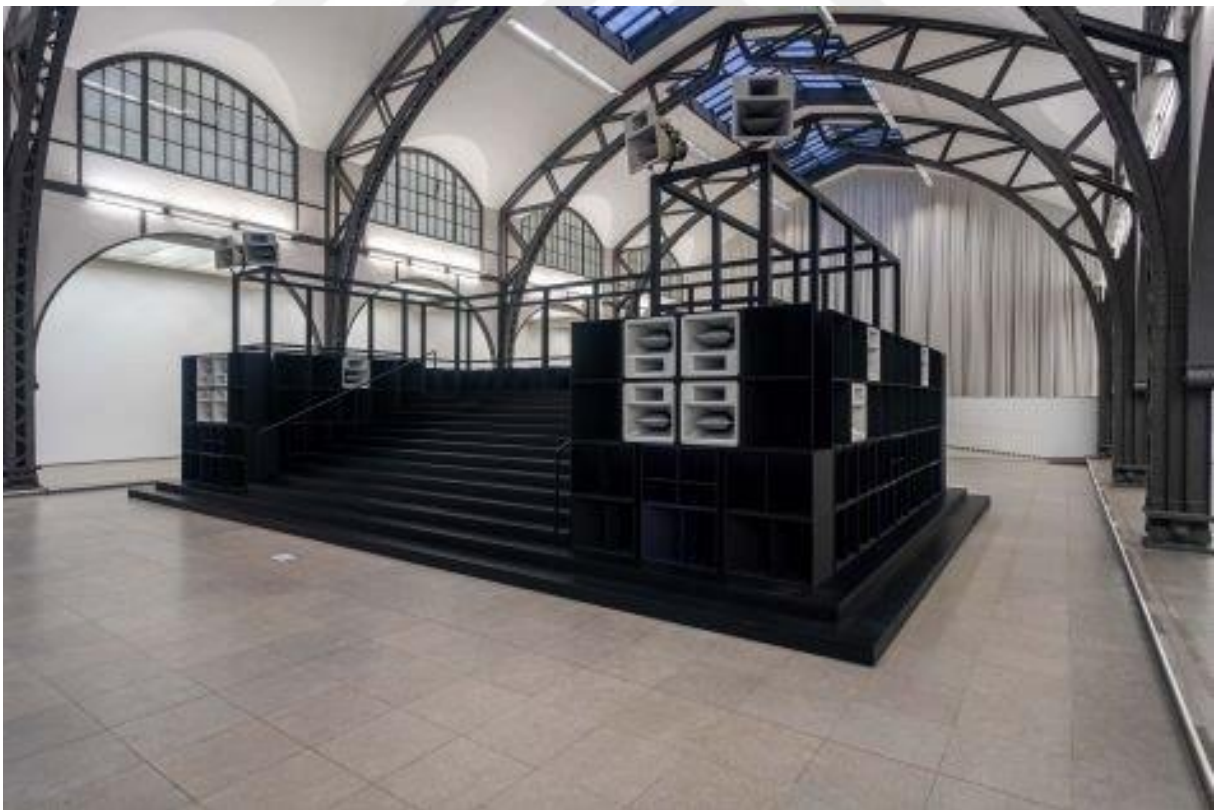
The separatist impact of space is represented by the sitting area separated by a mesh. As a separatist statement, this wire mesh is an abstract manifestation and reflection of separation of privileged or aggrieved minority from other segments of society. Cevdet Erek, as a Kadıköyer having Fenerbahçe Şükrü Saraçoğlu



*Figure 39.* Back section of the installation “Çın” (audible architecture). The separation from the outside area of the seated space covered with wired mesh, closed with a chain is felt.

experiences, says that since his childhood, he has been fed by the massification effects of football stadiums, and by the experiences of separation of groups from each other by wire or other spatial designs dividing them (CNN Turk, 2017). When considered together with several different versions thereof, these experiences may be said to have been met and welcomed in other spaces. The subject installation work has been designed in accompaniment with these abstraction and basic figures.

Çın makes the participant feel the pressure through the background noise of majority having a massification effect. This feeling is vaccinated via “noise” concept. This can further be perceived as a reference reminding the oppressive regime and the political chaos (Esen, 2018, p. 289)



*Figure 40.* Sound installation (audible architecture) work named “Berlin Stereo” exhibited in Hamburger Bahnhof Museum in Berlin in 2019 has been created by Cevdet Erek through an abstraction of Altar of Zeus. (Photograph by Mattias Völzke)

### 3.6 Artwork Where History Finds its Voice and Space through Opposing Views: Bergama Stereo

Bergama Stereo project has been offered to participants as a part of Ruhrtriennale in Turbinenhalle in 2019, and has then been exhibited in Hamburger Bahnhof Museum's historical building. The artwork redesigned specifically for Arter gallery in Turkey in 2020 is structured as an abstraction model of Altar of Zeus in Pergamon city. Erek has drawn an Image direction for the project by considering the large marble stones of project in the form of large loudspeakers.

Bergama Stereo, as its name depicts, is a concept created with reference to "stereotype" perception. A chaotic war among fighting ideas resembles a struggle of gods with titans underneath the temple. However he does not refrain from frankly



*Figure 41.* Famous Altar of Zeus was stolen, according to some people, and purchased, according to some other people, from Turkey, and taken to Berlin and is now being exhibited therein. This historical work is indeed a religious artwork having a gorgeous and magnificent structure within the integrity of famous frescos reflecting the war between gods and titans.

This historical and social intensity on this building, together with its archaeological significance and the still continuing legal conflicts, besides its religious theme, has constituted the main vein feeding Cevdet Erek. As if the building has become even heavier by the burden of its past, rather than its own load.

saying that he has made an effort therefor. According to Erek, the artwork may be perceived as a chaotic struggle among sounds produced by manipulation of drum sounds. Some of these sounds have been built over traditional suspended drum “samples” used by Erek in his album “Davul” produced in 2017 (Taylan, 2019).

In the intellectual base of this project, Erek says that international transportation of the altar has drawn his interest. The temple being stolen from Antique Pergamon City, and a part of it being sold and carried to Berlin, and after the Second World War, its being “given as a gift” first to St. Petersburg and then to the West Germany, and Turkey requesting the return of the Altar, and organizing protests thereon... This story may be said to be one of the main themes of the project.

### **3.7 Review of Artworks of Cevdet Erek on the Basis of Abstraction Concept**

By definition, the “abstraction” concept is one of the leading activities determining the works of design in art products and particularly in architecture.

Abstraction word comes from “abstrehe” root, and this Latin word means to extract something from somewhere. It may be considered and thought as departure from concrete and arrival at abstract, and may also be termed or expressed as generalization, conceptualization and reaching the core/essence (Yoleri, 2010). When considered in terms of architecture, abstraction may be defined as insulation of the core/essence inside elements, and simplification by reduction of details, and description by making use of geometric expressions (Gençosmanoğlu, 2001).

If considered and thought in the light of these definitions, “abstraction” is one of the important concepts of contemporary conceptual art, but the effort of abstraction comes even to the forefront in the installation works with a strong architectural aspect.

As an artist with a high architectural perception and desiring to think holistically on spaces, Cevdet Erek is often engaging in abstraction in his artworks.

Therefore, Bergama Stereotype is not a miniature of the Altar of Zeus; it is only a sound installation work which hosts and contains physical, architectural, historical and sociological life experiences reflecting the characteristics of this Altar, and of course, also reflects the point of view of Cevdet Erek to this historical know-how. If his artwork “Çın” of the year 2017 is also considered likewise, the “abstraction” is not a one-to-one reduction of a stadium or an antique city, but is a recreation process together with the conversions over a certain concept relied upon therein. What’s abstracted then in the artwork ‘Çın’ is the oppressive effects of architecture and sounds of spaces extracted from the historical examples, modern urban life and maybe, from football stadiums in order to be presented as a created artwork. Thus, while we can say that Bergama Stereotype is directly the abstraction of an artwork (Altar of Zeus), the artwork ‘Çın’ represents an abstraction of a plenty of works and experiences in the axis of noise – oppression concepts.



### 3.8 Interview with Cevdet Erek

*(On 31 May 2020)*

*When we look at your works, we see curiosity rather than a target. A curiosity about the relationships between time, space and sound. You seem to be exploring rather than pursuing a goal. Are you a researcher?*

I can describe myself as a researcher, yes. I have my own research projects, and then I have been working as an “official” research assistant at the university for years. But I mostly stayed away from introducing myself as a researcher. Because I’ve always believed being a researcher is distinctive way of working, an earnest intention. You need to devote a huge part of your life to it. Still, I am a person who seeks to learn and synthesize more about certain topics of interest. I am not someone who just works with emotion or inspiration.

I can say that I do researches on my own, I have a curious character like many others. I experiment on my own, but I don’t know if most of these efforts are worth mentioning compared to the work of devoted researchers. But anyways, I always have a sense of curiosity within me. This motivation was the main reason for my involvement in this work. If you look at it, nobody guided or directed me to work in this specific area. When I was younger, the tendency towards art and, in particular, music is started absolutely because of my curiosity about musicians and how music is made.

On the other hand, I cannot say I have no goals in the work; I am a person who likes to publish works and finish artworks. And, actually, most of my works were realized because there was a target. Also, let’s not forget that most of the exhibitions happen thanks to deadlines. None of these are the works that are done in workshops; they are definitely not individual works that I could do on my own. After all, although

I have anticipation about the goals when I set off to work towards them, the works are fully realized within the process.

*It seems like you have questions rather than answers.*

I guess my desire to associate and relate things are stronger, rather than questions or answers. I have questions, and the answer is the work itself. For example, can multiple instances in history and elements such as sounds in space, etc. come together? This is a question I had. I give the answer by creating such a work. For instance, I can say that “Bergama Stereo” provides answers to many questions since it is open to active participation of visitors. However, since I don’t “speak” to answer those questions, many people are not actually aware.

*You are a member of Nekropsi who always proudly says that he is from Kadıköy. Kadıköy is famous not only for its crowd and noise but also its intimate social environment. Is your house in Turkey still in Kadıköy?*

I spent the best times of my childhood – five or six years – in Kalamış and Kızıltoprak. Very important places for us, in terms of our culture. For me, it was a beautiful world. Maximum four- or five-storey apartments, tree-lined streets and gardens... Backyards of the houses were like both a garden and a car park. It was an environment where it was safe to play on the street, where we could spend the whole day on the street, where there were few cars.

In relation to our group Nekropsi, however, I can say the following. Except for one member of our team, we all spent our university years on the European side of Istanbul. We had a studio called Atlantis in Kadıköy-Altıyol on the Anatolian side, which was operated by the members of an older music group Akbaba, and we were



renting an underground damp rehearsal room, where I would probably not be able to stand even for ten minutes today. It was not only us, there were many groups then; for example, Athena was next to us in those rehearsal rooms. In other words, we were constantly going to rehearsal to Kadıköy from 1993 to 1998-9 at that time. Going to Kadıköy means getting on the ferry, strolling up the hill from the bazaar, rambling through the back streets. In fact, in those days, there was never a wild nightlife like today; that noisy nightlife was in Taksim during that period. Therefore, there was continuity in our lives with activities such as wandering around, maybe visiting music stores, buying tools for repairing works, eating, drinking something once in a while, and going to the shore in Moda every now and then.

*If we focus on the notion of noise, does Kadıköy have a place in your sound art works?*

Well, if we consider the notion of noise, then I should definitely say that it was heavy metal and its heavier versions that introduced me to noise. I did not grow up receiving music education in my family or school; I was someone who was taken by what he heard and liked, like almost of the other kids. I was listening to music available to the most of the people; for instance, the first cassette I bought was Michael Jackson's Thriller. Well, looking at it now, I realize how lucky I was. After that, I quickly discovered whatever was available during our times, TV pop from Duran Duran to Madonna; and after I came across Heavy Metal, all of a sudden in the mid/late '80s, I jumped into heavy metal culture that was formed by the youth of the period and that found fans in Turkey as well.

Its link with Kadıköy is actually Akmar Pasaj [arcade]. Everyone used to go there to buy cassettes and merch. Store owned by Hakan who is currently a member

of Pentagram (maybe the first of the most important groups in Turkey in the field of Thrash Metal) or other stores, and the opening of Zihni that is still operating today, and the cassettes we bought from there... My introduction to noise happened through such music which is called “noise”. The music itself is noisy, and it is, by its very nature, a work that organizes and markets noise. Such genres like noise rock or industrial metal are mostly byproducts of heavy metal. So, we can explain its link with Kadıköy like that; there was a development of culture linked to Kadıköy by way of “going there to make music”. There were concert organizations towards the end of ‘80s, thereby proliferation of culture.

The second link between noise and Kadıköy, on the other hand, might surprise you; Kızıltoprak means 200 meters distance to Fenerbahçe Stadium. The street that I spent those I mentioned earlier are somewhere between Fenerbahçe’s training field and stadium. When I think of the late ‘70s and early ‘80s as a kid, it was a place we



*Figure 42.* Fenerbahçe Şükrü Saraçoğlu Stadium before the last renovation in 1999-2006. We can say that it has an area of impact reaching until Bağdat Street and Pendik, in the direction extending to the bottom right. Anatolian side of Istanbul, in this sense, is a supporter Fenerbahçe.

could call a Fenerbahçe land, and the wider “hinterland” stretching from Kadıköy to Pendik. In the thrill of childhood, it was important to go to the match and to be around the stadium at the time of the match. My father made a mistake and took me to a match, it might be 1982, I was 8-9 years old, and it was a championship match. I was incredibly impressed. I call it the old football culture, very different from today’s culture; it was the times of older Fenerbahçe stadium, not Ülker - Şükrü Saraçoğlu Stadium which replaced it. Unlike current stadiums which sometimes remind luxury shopping stores, it was a concrete, forlorn stadium with closed tribune. Maybe it was a place to which mostly lower income citizens used to go, where there were rather males, but it was a different culture. Flags were sewed from cloth, banners were hand painted. Of course, there are those cheers that get you carried away. I was overly impressed by the cheering and flag culture.

If you ask, why, well, cheering culture means co-action of hundreds of people but let’s not think about it only as a whole. Someone whistles, another does something else, and there is also mutual mocking. Then I made recordings in stadiums for years; of course, not only in Fenerbahçe stadium, we would go to Ali Sami Yen or İnönü stadiums of rival Istanbul teams’ with my friends. Rather than football itself, tribune, sounds, applause, whistles, and anonymity are the center of my attention here. You know, in a political demonstration, the sound starts and spreads from somewhere; you can think of Gezi or other examples.

These are of course some personal experiences. I don’t mean to talk from an academic point of view; I did not conduct a work of musicology or soundscape studies on the topic, but I looked at these places and tried to understand. When your question concerning Kadıköy and sound art came up, I had to mention football. Then I kept on going to rehearsals in Kadıköy during my university years sometimes with a

comparable spirit, like I was going to match. That's a ritual as well, you get on the ferry, wander in the bazaar, and the mood changes after all when you get to Kadıköy. You meet a friend in the bazaar, have a beer, and walk to the stadium.

The football thing maybe becomes sympathetic now, only when you establish a bond during childhood mostly if you are a boy, you play football. In addition to these, I've always enjoyed crowd watching; I took pleasure in observing people while they were watching the match. It goes without saying that, unlike today, we were not scared of being among the crowd. It's not only related to coronavirus, we are nowadays afraid of crowds, maybe considering the events in Istanbul experienced in the last 8-10 years.

*The noise of crowds is frequently felt in your works, for example, your work titled "Çın" at the Venice Biennale.*

Yes. For example, I've also always been curious about political crowds, irregardles of supporting or not supporting their ideology. I liked examining those who write or chant slogans. In the University period, it sometimes felt more like a continuation of a similar culture, with the music, *halay* [Anatolian folk dance], slogans, demonstrations and hand-made banners in political groups. People who gathered around an idea, maybe they had a different tone.

We can say that we witnessed in Gezi Park events for the first time football culture and this [political] culture go hand in hand. In fact, at some points, people from football culture led the crowds in demonstrations. I had various opportunities to observe and examine this situation during that process; this issue specially attracted my attention. Those football clubs' supporters also appeared in the following Labor Day celebrations, and this was a brand new experience for me at the time.

*Okay, let's go back to the notion of noise. Isn't it actually the sound itself? What would you say about the relationship between sound and noise?*

Within the scope of sound technology, noise can be defined roughly as follows: The sound that does not include information, is unwanted and is created by the system in a transmission. In other words, in sound recording technologies, there is noise, we can say that it is the noise made by the system besides the recorded sound. I guess you did not ask this, I am aware, but it comes to that: what are we going to call “noise”? what are we going to call “sound”? Does sound become noise when it is undesired and happens at an unwanted pressure? I mean, I beat this bell in front of me during a concert. If I hit the bell in a normal room, you can't bear it. On the other hand, we amplify the sound with microphones at a concert, and the listener prefers this music. You can't bear it when you don't want to listen to this sound, when it comes from your neighbor or wakes you up in the morning.

Maybe this is the oddness of our era, of the industrial age. The pioneers in this field always refer to the industry. Let's think about futurists; they're referring to the sounds of war, motors. They're always establishing links between industry, technology, and city noise. So, to be frank, there is no differentiation between sound and noise for me. However, I know that when it's not wanted, sound – I won't say noise maybe but – becomes a big source of disturbance and torture. For instance, we make our music in a concert hall; we try not to expose someone to our music (maybe for them, our noise) in the middle of the street. I don't find it right to say things like “Everyone should hear me”, “My noise is my expression”, etc.. Especially in a place like Istanbul where we torture each other with noise... Sometimes I find an absolute auditory comfort in this current period of lockdown (due to coronavirus outbreak).

*Don't sound installation and installation works in general lose their meanings when they are detached from their space as an art emerging in cooperation with the space?*

Here, I would like to specially emphasize this notion: self-specificity. Maybe not every installation is like this, one installation might have been done at a workshop, and if it meets certain conditions, it might be displayed in every corner of the world. Thus, the critical point here is whether or not the artwork is produced specifically for a space. I, for example, am someone who prefers doing “self-specific” or “situation-specific” works. I mean, you show me an area, and I create an artwork for this place to be displayed once, for two weeks, for three months, or to stay there permanently but it might as well be removed later on. Can that work be transferred to another place? Probably. Its variations can be created. It can be adapted if the work and the artist is flexible. This installation might be in a certain form but it can be altered for the other place. In other words, if we think of installation as some kind of expansion of painting, sculpture or photograph, it is possible.

We can produce the work inside the place, rather than in the workshop, which is what I've been doing for several years now; nearly all of my projects are works that are produced in the place. Even if I'm away, I produce my work in accordance with the answers to some questions such as what is that place, when is it going to be displayed, where is the museum, what about the architecture. So, if the work is self-specific, then moving it to another place would not work. Well, of course, this art has no fixed rules. For instance, I produce a work, and two years later, someone comes and asks “you did a work on that concept, can we also think about that work for this

place?” I sometimes say yes, I make an adaptation, an improvement or a part of the series there.

What I mean is that it can lose its meaning or gain a new meaning when it is detached from its originally intended space. This question reminds me that a little bit: to create a piece of music for a specific artist to play it. Yes, it can be written for that player, but someone else might play it and it might be a different situation. Creating variations, I love them. I like to set a rule myself and create a work according to the rule, but it is also a pleasure to break them. At the end of the day, it is a work of art.

*Is an absolute portability possible? From an art perspective, is the idea of passing the work to the future important? Isn't art an activity that satisfies our desire for to be immortal?*

Portability is not 100% possible, but why not, even the form can be changed. A work made of wood and glass can even turn into a poem in the other place if the idea is important. I think it is about life and I believe the artist should be open to reevaluation his work, instead of setting unchangeable rules. Of course, while creating a work, it is very amusing to set your own rules and work around it. The idea that the product is passed to the future is significant, but in my opinion it should not be exaggerated. Yes, we artists want to be acknowledged, applauded, immortalized. These motives are at the core of this work for most people. But at the end of the day, your efforts are not what will immortalize the work. What remains from the work, this is considerable; sometimes what remains of a huge architectural work is only the brochure. For example, a piece of wood I took with me from the construction site will be the only physical remnant from Bergama Stereo. It is such a huge work, but a temporary “pavilion” after all. What isn't temporary anyway?

In the press conference for Bergama Stereo in Germany, someone asked me a question, a bit provocatively. To be honest, she was not a kind person. He said something like “The Altar of Zeus was taken from Turkey to Germany, and now are you trying to take it back by way of a symbolic work? You will never get the altar back; it will stay in Germany.” I’ve never had such a purpose, mine is an artwork. So, I said, “The Altar of Zeus might not necessarily stay always in Berlin. How can you be sure that there will be a state called Germany after 200 years.” Her eyes were wide open. But isn’t history like that anyway? I said, “Or even Germany and Turkey will be one country.” She was even tenser. “Or, the two countries will remain the same, and some type social democratic leaders will become leaders of these countries, and maybe they will say ‘well, this stayed here for a hundred years, now, let’s move it from here and to Sri Lanka.’” Am I making myself clear? Maybe, the most important works of Germany will be moved from their places in future. So what is with permanence anyway?



*Figure 43.* A photograph from *Rulers and Rhythm Studies*. (2007-2011)



*If we talk about the financial aspect of a sound installation work, the structure must be quite expensive. For example, you used 34 high quality directional loudspeakers in Bergama Stereo. It also has a structural dimension. So isn't it difficult to find sponsors to provide economic support for a sound installation work?*

Actually, no, not all sound installations are like that. My recent works “Çın” and “Bergama Stereo” contained certain sound equipment but another large portion of the budget was spent on architecture. Most sound installations are created only with the use of sound production equipment. We can say that in my case, it is a bit different, otherwise the majority of sound installations are based on loudspeakers, devices, or processors to provide interactivity.

When it comes to Bergama project, yes indeed, it was costly. It was realized with the funds from German State. I was invited to hold an exhibition by Hamburger Bahnhof Museum. I proposed the project and the museum accepted it. Afterwards, they presented this project to Kulturstiftung, Germany's largest art fund, to receive a grant. They granted funding, thereby making the project possible. Or it was not like an artwork that you can do at home or workshop. Then, when Arter [art center in Istanbul] invited me to hold an exhibition, and we decided to do it here since I wanted it so much. Well, as you know, Arter is an entity with a strong budget. But, on the other hand, I also have installations made of 2-meter synthetic carpet that costs 20 liras. Or I have works with very “rubbish” loudspeakers. One plastic ruler, one drawing (Rulers and Rhythm Studies) works, for example... So, let's say it was specific to that work, it was a bit costly.

Not in Bergama, actually, we used directional loudspeakers in “Çın”. In Bergama, on the other hand, some loudspeakers had a high directional capacity but they weren't exactly directional. The ones used in Çın, however, are categorized as

directional. The ones used in Bergama were more like the huge devices used in the clubs or festivals.

I think I wouldn't have been able to realize this work on my own, but I would have done something else, a more economical work that I could implement in Istanbul would come to life. In fact, we did it that way for years; when we recorded our first album, I didn't even have a proper drum set. For many years, I practiced air drumming. I didn't have a drum at home, I didn't take courses on it, and my family didn't support such music.

However, in this type of art, that equipment is sometimes necessary for the architecture, the concert, unfortunately. Actually, we can look at the work titled Shore Scene Soundtrack that was made of a synthetic carpet; it became an installation with the hanging of a carpet onto the wall, and the carpet was synthetic. It was a carpet we found in the museum. The installation became possible when the viewer touched the carpet with his hand, and the booklet of the project was printed.

Finding a sponsor is definitely a challenging process. Unfortunately, I am one of the few artists in the country that is blessed with this chance. Why? Because the more



*Figure 44.* Sounds of waves obtained by touching synthetic carpet and many other carpets. “Shore Scene Soundtrack” by Cevdet Erek – 2007

you're known, the more opportunities you have for support. But still, we can speak of an improvement in this regard over time. There are classes at the universities; the equipment of the university is used. That's why we can say university is still valuable, despite everything. It will be a bit of a cliché, but it's a place where the common people's kids can get education, no matter what. Therefore, I do not depict a quite pessimistic picture. In addition, there are many things to do without a sponsor.

*Do you have the opportunity to focus on technical issues in your academic studies at MIAM [Centre for Advanced Studies in Music at Istanbul Technical University]? We know that Sound Technology departments also focus on areas such as speaker acoustics or the physics of sound. Where do you position yourself in this technical world?*

In our work, it is nearly impossible to do something without technical knowledge you just mentioned. One needs to know about computer music, acoustics, psychoacoustics, etc.. Maybe, our department was not giving sound art education but rather sound engineering and design education. Then, a new department called sonic arts was opened. I am glad, however, that I attended that department because I was able to feed myself about sound technology, recording technology or digital technology.

MIAM is a music school. Sound Engineering as we use it in the school is a term used in music production. So, we don't manufacture loudspeakers. The technical section was also established by musicians mostly to serve the purpose of music by recording and producing it. It was thought as a place for advanced studies in music. It is a department that was founded by an classical instrumentalist like Cihat Aşkın and a contemporary composer like Kamran İnce. It is a department that was planned

mostly for recording music. Characters like me are partly an accident. I mean, I didn't receive education on sound installation. I was educated on sound recording, sound production for music. And I am glad it was like that. Because considering the knowledge I acquired here, the perspective on sound, combined with my prior interest in music, I can say that I luckily made a good choice in terms of associating some things. Regarding speaker acoustics, it's possible to research and learn more about it at the department, and maybe to do some small experiments, not more than that.

*How would you criticize sound installation where art and technology are so intertwined in terms of technological competence? Do you think technical knowledge is an added value in terms of art?*

I am at least able to read the brochures of loudspeakers I want to work with. I can have a discussion with those who use them in real life and those experts who produce these devices. I can set up these systems if I have to. However, at the end of the day, I leave the job to the real technicians if I can. Also, I have the opportunity to record on my own, process records on computer, I can do playback or interactive media, etc.; all because I was educated on that. I believe everyone can dream about working with sound, even though one did not have education, just as I believe education is not a condition to make music. On the other hand, if you work with a microphone, recording device, loudspeaker, sound program, then technical knowledge will definitely empower you. I don't mean to say that it is not possible without such knowledge, I can wholeheartedly state that I don't believe in this idea. But then, you can only dream the sounds, and you will be forced to work with people with this knowledge. On the other hand, even though I have been in this for years, I see it as a necessity to continuously work in collaboration with experts.

Everyone can dream about a sound installation because mouth, words or ears that we use to communicate in any given space provide us this knowledge fundamentally. In this sense, everyone can imagine installing sound somewhere. To some extent, we all do it, for example we install doorbells. Plus, it is now possible to attend different courses online. But in sound installation, one can focus on many topics, considering observations as a human being, outlook on life, perspective on sound, relationship with art or current issues, etc..

*Together with these questions, what kind of criteria we can establish for an installation artist that is interested in sound and wishes to perform his art through relationship between sound and space? Or, is it possible to determine criteria for art?*

I can say that I don't have criteria or a list. I also don't work with such a list at the university; on the contrary, I care more about what people can do by starting from their own curiosity and their skills. These are the unique properties of individuals; of course, many things must accompany these, but I've no list and maybe I shouldn't have anyway. In music and art, we can never know what will bring us innovation, what will break a new ground. Besides, although I perform arts in relation to tradition, I am someone who likes to play with them, renew them, not destroy but kind of bend them.

*What were the pioneering artworks that directed you towards this type of art?*

Like the title of “The 400 Blows” the famous movie, uncountable works. But in terms of sound installation, Austrian artist Bernhard Leitner comes to my mind at the moment. I refrain from mentioning a particular name actually, because in fact there are also many musicians’ and architects’ works, not only artists official artworks. I went to see Documenta exhibition in 2002. I should specially emphasize that it was impressive for me. Actually, it coincides with the year I held my first exhibition. Many was not sound installation, and maybe not even installation, there were works in different languages. The thing that fascinated me the most was seeing many languages together, feeling this sense of freedom.

But I won’t give too many examples about sound installation. I can say that my inclination towards this area emanates from my dreams about architecture, sound, technology, archeology, space etc. I can also say, [my dreams about] society, I wouldn’t want to say sociology, or I would shyly say it, because it’s a discipline.



*Figure 45. A sound source playing a different beat for each seven days of the week – Week – Kunsthalle Basel – 2012 (Source: We Find Wilderness, 2012)*

Sociology is a field with its own perspective; I am a bit ignorant in this field.

However, I was interested in society in general.

On the other hand, many of my installation works contains rhythm, and the root of rhythm is music. We can mention anything from techno music to any other danceable rhythmic music. So, music is my main source of inspiration. We talked just a little about Nekropsi, but I was playing drums in that group, and we were making rhythm - dominant music, or even just a rhythm for its sake. I also would like to remind that the rhythm element is highly dominant in my sound installations. Not only musical rhythm though, also rhythms relating to the non-musical elements, for example, the thought of time. The rhythm of week, for instance, I have an artwork (Week) about week. Sunday and Monday both have their own reflections in our lives, don't they? It is such a social structure that it's not natural if you're aware. It's not like a year, month or day and night, it's social. I mean, we start work on Monday, something like that. That's a matter of rhythm, too. We can mention Henri Lefebvre's Rhythmanalysis here as a note.



*Figure 46. Rulers and Rhythm Studies – 2007-2011 –Photograph by Özgür Atlağan – (Source: Cevdet Erek, 2011)*

When I was studying architecture, one of our professors had a thesis on rhythm in architecture that drew my interest, and I viewed it, thinking “well, let’s see what it is about rhythm in architecture”. It was addressing the themes on rhythms of visuals or façades, like the rhythm in art. Rhythm is something used very often in art, painting, architecture, graphics. Not just a repetition though, a rhythm. The “time” aspect, which we mentioned earlier, can be found in many of my installations. It’s not so manifest in Bergama Stereo, though the materials of these two works are rhythmic in and of themselves. But, I can say, for example, my work titled “Room of Rhythms” in Documenta or the “Week” I just referred to, these are directly related to time. Besides, I don’t know if it caught your attention, I have a work on rulers: Rulers and Rhythms. I can’t think of it now but I’ve always thought about “pioneering inspiring works”, maybe I could prepare a list.

For example, it was one of the acquisitions in the purchase event as part of the “Just in Time” exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum in 2006: can you write 5 references or works that influenced you? Let’s check the catalog now and I will remember what I wrote back then (*goes and brings the catalog*)...

Look: none of the five examples I told was from the field of the installation art. One was an image from the concert of Pink Floyd at Pompeii (I mean, its video). Another one was [the novel] *Huzur* by Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar. The feeling brought by this book was important for me, I didn’t produce any work directly related to it. It was valuable in relation to the notions of space, Istanbul, time. Another one was the Therme Vals (baths) building in Switzerland by Peter Zumthor which I never seen in place but was familiar with photos and plans. Then, the courtyard of Mihrimah Sultan Mosque [in Istanbul] by Mimar Sinan, which fascinated me so much in an accidental visit. And, lastly, minimal techno DJ Magda, she is still active by the way. Well, now



looking at the catalog of the show printed at that time, I wrote these names. There are two more different names from the music field, in addition to Pink Floyd. Ahmet Hamdi can be considered in connection with history-time relationship, of course, he is also a master of language. One is an example of classic architecture while the other is a modern one. So, I didn't list so extravagant examples, these were sources for me back in 2006.



*Figure 47. Pink Floyd – Live at Pompeii (1972) – Source: The Magger.*

*Then I have another general question for you. Is art functional?*

Yes, art is functional. The function can be to earn money for someone, I mean the artist. It can also be the making of a tool by the artist that will help change the world. I gave a general answer since the question was general, but the question is “what is its function for me?”, then I could say it could also be pedagogical. We all learn while making art, and at the same time, you also teach without realizing it. You make people experience something for the first time. Being an artist is also a profession. “No, I just write poetry for the purpose of art, I earn my money by working as a dentist. Writing poetry is for my own pleasure.” That’s beautiful, too. “I write books but I don’t do it to earn money.” That’s awesome. However, if you wish to place such efforts in the center of your life, things could also be different. In short, we shouldn’t forget that for many people, it is both a means of subsistence and a way to gain recognition, satisfy themselves -a psychological function.



*Figure 48.* Peter Zumthor – Therme Vals (Switzerland) (1996) – Source: Milliyet Emlak.

*Your latest work Bergama Stereo is a work that you realized upon being influenced by the historical development of an altar. There is the Altar of Zeus known to the public with its theft history, and in your interviews, it is understood that you have gone deeper in and fed yourself from this history.*

We can say the altar was built first and then it went through a series of events. In fact, it goes through a historical process; it firstly disappeared, then it was brought into daylight by excavation, it was taken to Germany, and it was turned into a museum.

And yes, I did my best to go deeper in the sources related to this topic. I created a composition myself from different sources, archeological or architectural, and artworks.

*Can sound installation and installation works in a broader sense contain history and sociology within themselves?*

Of course, they do. But, let me clear my position in the term “sound installation” at this point. I’ve been particularly trying not to call my works only “sound installations”. The installations have sound, mostly it is central. However, I believe that architectural, visual or other aspects of my works such as Bergama Stereo and Çın is not less important than the sound. For example, my works are not like the ones seen in the dark where the artist says “okay, close your eyes and you will hear a spatial sound.” No. There is visibility, eyes are open, smell and touch senses are at work, walking, sitting, reading is possible. Therefore, I don’t categorize my works, especially recent ones, as sound installation.

In our interview published in the magazine *Son Sanat Dünyamız* by Yapı Kredi Publishing House, we used a phrase “work with sound” (in Turkish: *sesli çalışmalar*).

I prefer using the word “with sound” (*sesli*) instead of sound installation. This is important for me, it emphasizes that these are works that have voices/sounds but are not only made of sounds. Architectural doesn’t mean only to build something as a part of the artwork; it also includes using the thing you built, going up its stairs, using the objects, positioning yourself and directing your movement... Of course, sound is at the fore front for many people. Many people use the phrase “sound installation” or they call me “sound artist” since sounds do not at least fall behind the visual plan, since it is at the center of the work, but I don’t usually prefer these phrases. In Turkish, we decided to call it “an audible architecture” or “architecture with sound” (in Turkish: *sesli bir mimari*).

Yes, it can contain within itself history and sociology. I can even say, “it definitely does.” It can establish associations with history and the perspectives on the social.

*Can space and sound reflect history in their content?*

I would phrase this sentence maybe a bit more differently, but of course, I can link it with history, I can take history as a reference. For instance, the relationship between memory [both the process of recalling past events and the past events themselves] and sound and music is quite noteworthy at this point. We can link the artwork with history, but it might be interesting to tamper with official historical narrative.

*What would you like to say about social structure feeding the space?*

If I talk for myself, I produce my works with the consciousness that my works will be viewed by the people who are the parts of the social structures that I am a part

of and I observe. My work is presented to those people. I desire the establishment of an association with them. I try to do art that is inviting as much as possible, and that targets people from different economic or cultural groups, though every individual is unique. Of course, we can say that especially for my last two works. My initial examples were, for instance, particularly related to sociability. We talked of football, Kadıköy, music culture, political demonstrations, etc.. These were all examples of sociability. In fact, my works can sometimes even be overly social. However they have a “writer”; they are the works of an artist although they’re produced by types of collaboration. They are mostly exhibited in museums. We’re not sure who sees them in the museum.

When you look at it, installation art is more like an individual effort, cold, anti-social... Most artists have such an attitude. Yet, it’s not always really true. I individually make a special effort in this regard.

### **3.9 A Brief Analysis on Interview with Cevdet Erek**

As seen, Cevdet Erek, as a reflection of the art and artists of installation, draws a portrait of an artist representing a holistic activity with his overarching and inclusive efforts destined for establishment of relations with different areas and fields most of the time. Besides his architectural and musical history, his defining himself as a permanently “searching artist” (rather than an academic researcher), his being open to innovations of every kind, and the diversity of his artworks from the beginning to the recent periods, do not only demonstrate and indicate the efforts of Cevdet Erek to surpass the borders, but also prove the need of an artist model dealing with the art of installation to be fed and nourished by diversity as far and much as possible. Nevertheless, Cevdet Erek has in fact adopted a rather realistic attitude, since we

cannot mention about any idealism or any window dressing or illusoriness of passionate feelings as often and commonly seen in all artists. Cevdet Ere  expresses himself rather simply and directly. This may, of course, be a personality trait of him. However, besides, it may also be said that his interest shown to more than one field and area may have built a more holistic and integral curtain for the artist and may have helped him in achieving a rational and analytical insight and judgment.

In this sense, as an architect, his Le Corbusier character and architectural perception may be emphasized as an example. Space is indeed there only for control purposes. Space is made a material of art by being manipulated in the art of installation. In fact, this is a rather rational and controller attitude. In a model of artist dealing with more minimal arts, it may not be possible to see the same, and artist may not even be able to control himself most of the time, according to the overall artist typology. However, when we look at the matter from an architectural perspective, everything will surely change. In this aspect, installation is far more controller, analytical, and self-conscious in practice. It may be said that there is a difference between “a musician losing himself and his consciousness while playing drums” on one side and Cevdet Ere  as an installation artist on the other side, when viewed from this point. Of course, these sentences are, at the end of day, only a mind gym and exercise rather than proposing a definite and final judgment thereon.

## CONCLUSION

In this thesis study, first the art of installation and especially the sound installation art are examined, and then a broad portrait of Cevdet Erek, as one of the important representatives of this art in our day, is provided. After discussing the birth and identity achievement stages of this style of art and analysing Cevdet Erek as an example thereof, a historical tracing activity is carried out with the intention of finding an answer to the question: “why this style of art has so quickly become popular, and exercised influence and control over the contemporary art in general”. This historical tracing activity has demonstrated to us the liberating effects of the conceptual art’s relieving arts from materials, and has also brought to light the eye-opening and stimulating capacity of a deep opening and a new dimensional opportunity brought up through conversion of the space concept into a new material of arts. Thus, with the space concept, the artworks have become far more holistic, comprehensive and overarching, and this in turn has been a tool for relief from borders in the hands of an artist already prone to overcome and surpass the borders. But, of course, there are always new borders built, and the installation artists directed towards the space concept have in fact meant the borders built around the society and the human beings in general in their efforts to push the limits and borders continuously all the time. Because isn’t in fact the space itself a type of limitation and border?

In this thesis study, the question: “why the art of installation attained its intensive level of interest in our day?” is tried to be answered through analysis of its historical process over the question “how”. In this sense, new technological opportunities, emergence of conceptual art, and space coming out to be a type of material usable in artworks, and its promising brand new opportunities to artists are

appearing as several different façades of an answer to that question. It seems as if the space is a fresh blood and a brand new dimension for contemporary art. Installation and sound installation may be said to be the product of new technological opportunities changing the community, cities and environment in general converting and transforming the space from “an input” to a creatable and manipulable item of arts. Thus, it is a comprehensive and inclusive type of art which may host and contain a great many types of ideas. So, the life, works and intellectual and internal world of Cevdet Erek may be said to harmoniously reflect the direct identity of an installation art representative to us.

When considered through the artist Cevdet Erek, it may be easily seen that a lot of conceptual branches of contemporary arts have the capacity and opportunity to be fed from each other. With his music and architectural part, while putting his signature under a plenty of innovative, unique and specific artworks in the art of installation, Cevdet Erek is indeed making some social and historical references. From this perspective, the contemporary art of installation is at the same time providing the artist with the opportunity to give an intellectual message to his audience (more precisely, “participants” or “experiencers”). Although it is not correct to make ideological deductions at all times, in the intellectual palette of a social observer, these elements have the chance to be inserted and introduced to the artwork as an instrument. This is very clearly seen in Cevdet Erek; though he obviously does not have any political or ideological orientation in his art, we may easily say that the artist is indeed not standing far from these existentialist elements of society, and is abundantly fed by almost all social events including slogans, marches, football fan groups and meetings.



The art of installation has actually departed from a rather heavy idea such as being the art of space, and may now be said to aim to perform almost the art of life itself. It is possible to define the art of installation as a holistic and integral work of art which is based on a theatre-like space concept, and where the participants also experience the artwork as actors or actresses on the scene, and the sound, as one of the fundamental elements of space, embraces the participants inside its “spirit”, and directs them, and gives its messages to them. Separately and differently from “location”, space hosts both social and historical temporality in its body, thus at the same time serving to this holism and widening and widening the palette of the artist. Hence, at the end of day, we have in our hands a limitless and borderless opportunity of art hosting and covering almost all elements of the life in it.

From all of these perspectives, we may mention about a type of art which satisfies and meets the permanent searching efforts and innovative curiosity of Cevdet Ere . From its first experimental music days to his recent artwork Bergama Stereo, Cevdet Ere  seems to have at all times tried indeed to make new discoveries in a lot of fields, because conceptual art, particularly installation and sound installation arts are providing these opportunities to the artists. What remains behind is only the insatiable discovery appetite of artist.

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