

First Female Artists in Turkish Painting Art Until Early Republic Period (1908-1930) And The Issues They Touched on

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ABSTRACT: *Positions of women in society changed according to the social development in each culture since early ages. While having been considered equal to men in some cultures, women have been kept in the background in others. As in many areas, it took a lot of time for women to express themselves in art. Having been as effective as men in Turkish societies that appeared as nomads in history, women became of secondary importance socially and politically after sedentism and the acceptance of Islam; yet they continued to be respected. The case was not very different in art. As a result of many religious restrictions placed especially in terms of women rights, women were not able to make their presence felt in art until the end of Tanzimat reforms. After obtaining their rights and freedom with the Rescript of Gülhane, women started to receive art education in 1914 for the first time when İnasSanayi-iNefiseMektebi was established. Our first female artists, who started producing naturalist and realistic work, were highly affected by their social environment and the education they received. With the government support, they also took the opportunity to be educated overseas and they started to work on portraits and landscapes as well as dealing with current issues and using new flows.*

Keywords: *Female Artists, Women in Society, Republic Period, Women and Art*

I. INTRODUCTION

The current study was carried out into first woman Turkish painters and the subject matters they worked. The social issues of our first woman painters with a very late introduction to the art of painting and their education are of great impact on their selections of issues. With the effect of religious bans, they were only be able to go abroad after Tanzimat (Reformation Period) or have private lessons from the foreign artists coming from other countries. For that reason, our first woman painters were influenced by the movements they got to know abroad and formed their works in this sense.

The current study was carried out on the reasons why they were introduced with the art of painting so late, depending on their positions in different times and different communities. The introduction of our first painters with the art of painting, the training they got and the effect of all these on their selection of subjects were investigated.

II. WOMEN FROM THE PAST TO THE CURRENT TIME

The responsibilities and status of woman in the development of social history differ from one age to another and from one community to another. The place of woman in social life exists mostly in the limited environmental condition, under limited opportunities and under the dominancy of man. Being in an equal status in the time of our forager ancestors, women had a word as much as men. There was a need for food to survive. They were making the task of hunting, picking fruit and mushroom up together and cooking what they hunted together. As there was no property, there was no superiority between the genders. Everybody had equal properties and rights. Monogamy had not been practiced yet and all of the clans were dealing with childcare as women had a relation with a lot of men in the group. As people had a permanent settlement, women began to become at the backstage. While men took over the task of hunting and protecting their home made, the fact that women dealt with some works that required less power, took over reproduction, needing for protection increased the dominancy of man. With the agricultural revolution, women started to give more births. More children meant working more and producing more food, raising more agricultural workers and giving more births. Within this cycle, the place of woman became a status giving birth and dealing with house works under the protection of man. John Berger explained it as “Being born as a woman means being born in a special, surrounded place under the property of men. Social personalities of women have developed thanks to their skills being able to live in such a limited, conditioned place.” (Berger, 1990, 56).

Male dominance generally prevailed in ancient civilizations. As an example, Manu legislations in Ancient Indians had a fact that woman is an unskillful, unintelligent and dependent creature. Thinking that her husband is a God, woman has to worship him and fulfil whatever he desires. In ancient Chinese, woman, regarded as the slave of her husband, did not speak much, did not sit at the table with the family and ate the

leftovers. Women were not named after as they were not regarded as a human being. In the Greek tradition, woman who was thought to be the property of man was not regarded as an adult throughout her life. Roman women were slaves as much as the Greek in terms of laws. However, their place was different in society as she gave births and worked in the field. She was able to participate the ceremonies and go to theatre.

In ancient Egypt, the place of woman was different from the rest. Regarded as the complementary of man, woman had the same right as his and could be inherited, have a property and could get married freely. According to Herodotus, free woman was able to carry out economic activities in Ancient Egypt. As shown in the statues of Pharaohs, Goddesses depicted with power, high culture and sportive identities, almost played equal roles with Gods as a ruler. Xenobia, the Queen of Palmyra, Pharaoh Hatshepsut, Nefertiti and Cleopatra were well-known female rulers of Egyptian history. It was given that Pharaoh Mycerinus and his wife Khamerernebt II were depicted in equal status in their statues.



Visual 1. Pharaoh Mycerinus and his wife Khamerernebt II

Access: 10.04.2016. <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/king-menkaura-mycerinus-and-queen-230>

In Turks having had fundamental changes in social and state structures throughout history, the place of woman varied in line with these changes. In Turkish communities living a nomadic life initially, women being able to act in the fields of production, war and politics took over equal responsibilities with men. In the Central Asia, Hakan the ruler and his wife represented the State of Hun and they were symbolizing family after parents. The presence of woman in ruling was carried on in Gokturks and Uyghurs.

As for Seljuk, the status of woman was explained by Sevinç Karol (1983) as follows: “In the documents of Seljuk civilization, women depictions are given in colorful china miniatures in the reliefs. Even in the hunting party, woman is depicted side by side with man. These paintings are of the quality of documents proving that Seljuk people are devoted to their traditions and customs. The names of some Seljuk women are carried on at various monuments. The Islamic social complex constructed by GevherNesibe Sultan, HonatHatun are among famous architectural masterpieces of the Seljuk period in Kayseri. Woman in the law of this era had equal right with man in such issues as heritage, witnessing etc.”

With the acceptance of Islam by Turks, there became some negative changes in the status of women in the society. EmelDoğramacı (1992) stated the change in the status of Ottoman woman as follows: The wives of Sultans comprising the administrative staff were caged into Harem and they were given the task of taking care of man and children alone. However, this woman in the Harem was ranked in the secondary position as she did not join in production. Woman in the rural area was able to join in social production, commercial and industrial activities in urban life. Despite this fact, woman in the rural area was regarded as a second class citizen just like the woman caged in the harem because of determining the norms that were necessary for human relations by the cultures of administrative classes.

It was only made possible for the women with a social personality developing in such limited conditions in many geography to be included in the field of art through their participation in social life at first hand. In addition, the existence of women in the field of art are concurrent with the steps taken in order to bring them to the equal level with men once again. Taking over a great many tasks in the years of war in the period of Ottoman in the absence of men, women started to appear at close status to men following the war. Liberalization of women in the courses, schools and associations opened after the period of reformation was one of the most significant steps taken in order to make women equal to men.

Women made handmade works in the form of decoration in the period Ottoman. Some wealthy family with a desire of making their daughter have a western style education hired some private teachers and then sent their daughter abroad to have art education. Mihri (Rasim) Müşfik (1886-1954), CelileHikmet (1883-1956), MüfideKadri (1889-1911) and VildanGizer (1889- 1974) are some of the first painters having a training in their

own effort. The most important common features of woman painters in terms of the period they lived is that all of them are the daughters of highbrow, intelligent and high level families. In particular, DenizBayav explained the reasons why high level families guided their daughters to art in the period when the faces were turned to the West as the Ottoman lost power, and changing and seeking started in line with the Western ideals as follows: "Fine art education gained importance among families choosing a lifestyle in parallel with the westernization ideals of the Palace. Art is essentially a field of talent for the image of hall lady desired to be formed (2014, p. 16). Extending the limits in order that Turkish woman could improve herself in the field of painting became with the opening of "İnasSanayi-iNefiseMektebi" (Fine Art School For Girls) established particularly for girls over the fact that girls were not allowed to Fine Art School know as MimarSinan University of Fine Arts today including girls students at education in 1914 in the leadership of MihriMüşfikHanım. There was no state institution training girls officially for art education before.

III. PIONEER WOMAN PAINTERS

Artistic tendencies of the artist with the perspective for community and woman brought about the formation of various types of woman images. The woman figure in the artistic works produced in our country has sometimes been used only as an aesthetic element or as a component to transmit social messages in some cases (Uzunoğlu, 2008: 6). Woman artists were mostly the daughters of the bureaucrat families close to the Palace. They had their first training as private lessons at home or in such foreign schools as Notre Dame de Sion, Usküdar American College for Girls. Following this training, they either went abroad or had their training from the westerner orientalist artists coming to the country or attended to InasSanayi-iNefiseMektebi (Fine Art School for Girls).

After their education, their realistic and naturalist styles were varied with new art movements and their subject matters were mostly daily life, new lifestyle, portraits and landscapes. One of the pioneer representatives of women in Turkish art, MihriMüşfikHanım was the daughter of Circassian Mehmet Rasim Pasha, a teacher in Military Faculty of Medicine. MihriHanım, having a good training, was also a student for FaustoZonaro, a Palace painter under the protection of Sultan Abdülhamid. She was one of the famous painters following the Period of Revolution and she was granted the title of first Turkish woman painter with her success in painting.

MihriHanım never gave up following art in her life full of passion, courage and extraordinariness. She escaped to Rome by leaving her magnificent lifestyle behind in period when going abroad to Europe to have a painting education was not allowed. Then, she carried on painting in Paris, the centre of art, in her house which she used both as a home and an atelier. MünevverSürücü put an emphasis on the fact that MihriHanım improved by escaping and chasing the art in the thesis with a title of "A Study into Woman Painters through the Image of Woman in Turkish Art of Painting as follows: "It is not possible for a Turkish girl to go to Europe for painting education in the period of reign when women were almost abstracted from social life, lived completely based on man, but only had their training to be a good spouse for their husbands for a certain time. (2011, p19).

Just like her own character, the works of MihriHanım are of an original content. The women of MihriHanım, who mostly dealt with self-portrait and women portraits in her paintings, are completely different from those of Osman HamdiBey and that of the Ottoman woman studied up to that time. The women of MihriHanım do not have a passive side. They are not within the objects and clothes decorated with the motives of the Palace, bath or East. She reflects the woman figure in her painting just like herself, as an image of a free Western woman trained with her clothes and stand, self-confident, strong, open-minded, being able stand on her feet." (Sürücü, 2011, p. 12).



Visual 2. MihriMüşfikHanım Self-Portrait

Accession : 09.01.2016. <http://arsiv.indigodergisi.com/54/nk.htm>



Visual 3. MihriMüşfikHanım

Accession: 07.01.2016. <http://indigodergisi.com/2016/01/mihri-musfik->

SevilDolmacı told about the difference of her women in terms of their modern side as follows: “Her women are not from the house of the East, baths or the rooms in the Palace. They do not have a passive status; however, it does not allow a provoking status or something that intimidates us. When it comes to the woman portraits of the artist, it is likely to say that all of them are wealthy and strong women, in other words, they are all western minded modern types. She depicted the baby alone in its bed with a modern approach instead of depicting the mother with her baby in her arms (2009, p. 67).

MihriHanım came back to the country from Europe in 1913 when she was appointed as a painting teacher to Istanbul Teaching School for Girls and took her place in the staff of education in InasSanayi-iNefiseMektebi. MihriHanım became both the teacher of the school of fine arts and the first woman administrator, contributing to the training of many woman painters.

Another pioneer woman painter of ours is MüfideKadriHanım. Born in Istanbul, MüfideKadri was adopted by KadriBey known as a respectful person. The artist, attracting the attention of the masters in that period in her early ages, completed her art education with private tutors and did courses with Osman HamdiBey and Prof.Valeri. She won a gold medal with her paintings sent for a competition in Munich by Osman HamdiBey. She was the first woman artist representing the Ottoman abroad with her paintings and winning an award.

The success of her life of art in 22 years is being carried on with the exhibitions opened on her behalf today. One of these exhibitions is the exhibition of “MüfideKadriHanım in her 95th Anniversary of Death (1890/1912)” that is possible to visit on the Internet address of <http://www.sanalmuze.orgby> EczacıbaşıSanalMüzesi (Eczacıbaşı Virtual Museum). HaşimNurGüre, the curator of the website, mentions about her works in the early period at the same Internet address as follows: “The works of art of the artist in her early years exhibited at SanalMüze are the masterpieces having some inspirations from 19th century French painting, Barbizon painters, Corot that are likely to base on the images of works in the same period, photographs and postcards. These works of the artist are likely to be considered as the works of her childhood period carried out with a significant tutor contribution by an experienced volunteer on the way to improve her painting technique and material skills (2007). MüfideKadri is mostly known with her still-life, landscape and figure works.



Visual 4. MüfideKadri, Still Life, 53 x 72 cm

Accession: 05.01.2016. <http://www.meleklermekani.com/threads/mufide-kadri->



Visual 5. MufideKadriHanım, Self Portrait Paper / Pastel Drawing 12 x 9 cm

Accession: 04.01.2016. https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%BCfide_Kadri

CelileHikmetHanım, one of the first woman painters, became the student of FaustoZonaro, the painter of the Palace, thanks to her father having worked for the Palace as a military assistant. In the following years, she carried out her works in Rome and Paris. She also painted woman portraits of the time like other painters. She frequently depicted relative and friends in her portraits. She focused on nude works, particularly on “nude in the bath” ones.

The most beautiful portraits of CelileHanım are mostly the ones regarding her family circles. The portrait of her mother, Leyla Hanım, is in the museum. Her own portrait, the portraits of her son, grandson, nephew are among the successful ones. She dominantly used pastel colours. The artist, who was the mother of NazımHikmet, went to Berlin after World War I to work. Losing her visual ability before her death, the artist passed away in Istanbul (Toros, 1988, p. 30).



Visual 6. CelileHikmetHanım, Portrait of her Son

Accession: 04.02.2016. http://forum.alternatifim.com/b204/t26390_nazim-hikmet/



Visual 7. VildanGizer, Self Portrait

Accession: 10.02.2016. <http://www.kozanbilgi.net/vildan-gizer.html>

As for VildanGizer, she was a daughter of a family interested in fine arts. Her grandfather was Osman Bey. She also made private courses like her contemporaries and went to Eurome. She was a student of Salvatore Valeri, an Italian professor of the Academy. Having a modest life, Gizer mostly exhibited her works. Besides

the portraits of Nazıma, her elder sister, she also designed a great many house plans thanks to her aptitude for architecture. The works of Gizer, who studied with pastel and oil paint techniques, are in the collection of her daughters (Toros, 1988, p. 31).

First World War required that all the women participate in political and economic life as a mass. However, “War of Independence” was a period when the courage and self-sacrifice of Turkish woman hit the top and she realized a political involvement. For that reason, the image of woman was reflected to the canvas in various fields from protest activities to Associations of Defence of Rights, from conferences to fight at the front and shipping behind the front (Demiröz, 1984: 11). Nevertheless, this reflection was not experienced on the canvas of woman artist. It is likely to say that none of them participated in the groups set up by Turkish male artists except for Hale Asaf and ErenEyüboğlu, the woman artists completing their training even before 1923 and starting to be in various activities.

IV. WOMAN PAINTERS OF İNAS SANAYİİ NEFİSE MEKTEBİ

Opened by Osman HamdiBey in 1882, SanayiiNefiseMektebi was the first fine arts school training only boy students. In 1914, İnasSanayiiNefiseMektebi was opened in order to train girl students in art. The word “İnas” means “girls”. This institution was closed in 1926 and girl students were accepted by SanayiiNefiseMektebi. However, both of the schools are not combined yet. Leaving coeducation and making girls and boys equal was realized with the declaration of the Republic. “The Republican era exhibited a determination and consistency with regard to the fact a boy and girl discrimination cannot be made particularly at higher education level in our country. It is inevitable that this determined phenomenon will be realized in every grade of the community” (Tansuğ, 2008, p. 139).

Women attempted such important acts as painting in live model, working in the open air and opening exhibitions for the first time in this institution. All of them were realized thanks to MihriMüşfikHanım, the most beloved teacher and the first woman administrator of the institution.

One of the students of InasSanayiiNefiseMektebi is MüzdanSait (Arel) Hanım. As her father’s wish, she was enrolled in the school in the first day of the school as the student with a number of 1. Following her graduation, MüzdanArel gave private courses to a great many girl students. She produced portraits and nu works with different techniques. There are some hints showing that she belonged to academy and courses in her figures and portraits. The importance of the design in her landscape and figured compositions was lost. In the following works of hers, it was also observed that her academic discipline was lost. We can observe that our painter followed Western artists in an effort to be modern and was influenced from them. As a subject, she approached to impressionism with her landscape preference (Toros, 1988, p. 43).

Another earliest students of InasSanayiiNefiseMektebi, NazlıEcevitHanım is a student doing a course with MihriHanım. “She proved her ability in the field of painting with various types of works she painted; she produced successful paintings in various types such as pencil, design, portrait, landscape, and still-life” (Gürsoy, 1986, p. 52). In addition, she had the tracks of academy in her works she painted in impressionist style.



Visual 8. NazlıEcevit, the Portrait of Kerima

Accession: 12.02.2016. <http://www.resim11.com/Nazli+Ecevit.html>

Güzin Duran was trained in the atelier of MihriHanım and then she did various courses with ÖmerAdilBey, AhmetHaşım, Feyhaman Duran. She produced works of landscape, still-life and nude in an impressionist style, she focused on Karagöz shadow plays in particular. Another artist having an education at İnasSanayiiNefise and went to Germany with state scholarship is Belkis Mustafa. She worked with Lovis Corinth, the impressionist artist, in Berlin Fine Arts Academy. Her subject matter were Istanbul landscape

paintings and nude work, and she generally produced figurative paintings. Some other students having an education with the energy of “InasSanayiiNesifeMektebi are Melek (Ziya) Calal Sofu (1896-1976), Emine (Dürriye) FuatTugay (1897-1975), Fahr El Nissa (Şakir) Zeid (1900-1991), Sabiha Bozcalı (1903-1998), Aliye Berger (1903-1974), Hale (Salih) Asaf (1905-1938), ŞükriyeDikmen (1918-2000), MaideArel (1907-1997), Eren Eyüboğlu (1907-1988), Bedia Güteryüz (1908-1991) veFürumet Tektaş (1912-1961). Their subject matters were mostly landscape, still-life, nude and portraits.

V. CONCLUSION

Even though the entrance of Turkish woman to the world of art started in limited conditions, it became a story of success embroidered with determination, labour and passion. The artistic side of her that was embroidered with knots was certainly one of the very important steps. Their efforts to involve in social life and to take responsibility brought them to a significant point in the eye of community as well at art. Even if the attitude of society towards woman and art have changed throughout the centuries, it bears the same process in itself. Just as works of art are regarded as the values reflecting the civilization of nations in the current time, the value given to woman in a society is regarded as a criterion of civilization as well. In the periods when these two phenomena were not perceived well enough or were not accepted, societies did not develop and improve well. When it comes to the current time Turkish art samples, it is likely to see that the image of ‘woman’ is sometimes reflected as an aesthetic phenomenon, sometimes reflecting the ideologies of the time and sometimes hopeful but delicate way. In addition, woman artist dealt with improving human rights together with herself. As a matter of fact, it is likely to say that the works of woman artists in postmodern process brought about new initiatives in intellectual, artistic and social fields.

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