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Architecture and Ceramics

Olgu SÜMENGİN BERKER^{a*}

^aAsst. Prof. Dr., Çankaya University Faculty of Architecture, Department of Interior Architecture, Z-15 Yüzüncüyıl, Ankara, Türkiye

Abstract

Most of the different art disciplines, meet each other on some intersections during the creation process. The art comes into life from the needs of human beings. Therefore the formation of these intersections are not so surprising for the art era. The aim of this paper is to set forth the association of architecture and ceramic art and interaction between them especially by means of the abstraction of contemporary ceramic artworks. Notions like inner space and outer space are mostly considered basic concepts of ceramic art. This conceptual consideration gains an importance when these concepts are viewed from the architectural perspective. Because these notions are also basic notions of architecture. While architecture transforms these notions into forms, it also creates outer spaces for the ceramic artworks. In this paper some chosen examples of ceramics are referenced from the ancient times until 20th century (when ceramic was accepted as an art discipline to express the ancient association of these two art disciplines. Then the artworks of contemporary ceramic artists are featured in terms of conceptual basis, styles, production methods and processes, and the opportunities that comes from the nature of ceramic materials. Abstracting the expressions of the contemporary ceramic artists in the architectural manner, resulted as the displaying how do these two art disciplines come together on the concept of inner and outer space.

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1. A Brief History of Usage of Ceramic Within the Architecture

Since the prehistoric ages until today, art has been a part of the human beings' life. Mankind created art for being a medium of self-expression or expression of nature and social life. In other words mankind used art as a medium of existence. However art is classified into various disciplines, these disciplines always had interacted, created or enclosed each other. Moreover it can be said that the borders between these disciplines nearly disappeared today. In

* Olgu Sümengin Berker. Tel.: +905363777516.

E-mail address: olgu@cankaya.edu.tr

this context architecture and ceramics are two art disciplines which always had interacted with each other. When this interaction is considered in the ceramic point of view, ceramic art has been participated in the process of change and development process as all other disciplines of fine arts. Ceramic has been accepted as a craft material and ceramists who produced ceramic works accepted as craftsmen for very long ages. Acceptance of ceramics as an art discipline is very recent when compared to the other art disciplines such as painting, sculpture or architecture. Because of cheapness, resistance, easy manipulation, and plastic facilities, usage of ceramic material along with the architecture is prehistoric. Ceramic has interacted with architecture for all times in many ways such as being the structure itself, coverage of the structure, decoration of spaces and surfaces, or as an artwork which takes place in the spaces of architectural structures. Ceramic mosaics from the 4000 B.C. are the earliest examples which existed in architectural buildings. Ceramic mosaics still exist in architecture even as contemporary artworks today.

Historically, the use of ceramic floor tiles goes back to the fourth millennium B.C. in the Near and Far East. The Romans introduced tile-making in Western Europe as they occupied territories. However, that art was eventually forgotten in Europe for centuries until the 12th century when Cistercian monks developed a method of making encaustic floor tiles with inlaid patterns for cathedral and church floors. But, this skill was again lost in the 16th century following the Reformation. Except for finely decorated wall tiles made in Turkey and the Middle East, and Delft tiles made in Holland in the 17th century, ceramic floor tiles were not made again in Europe until almost the mid-19th century. (Grimmer, 1996, p.2).

Other types of ceramics appeared within the architecture trace back nearly to the same ages. Tiles decoration or daily life goods or craft works also existed within the architecture since the prehistoric ages until today.

In 4000 B.C.'s with the development of civilization and establishment of states, firstly in Mesopotamia and Babylon were using the open air firing method for the ceramics which were produced as a ceremonial and everyday life goods which were dried in open air. Then they started to use the same method for firing the mud bricks dried in the sunlight. By the development of this method base overlays, houses, palaces, city walls, monumental buildings, ziggurats were built with these fired mud bricks or dried mud bricks were covered with the fired tiles or bricks (Yeltan, 2001, p.5).

Thereby existence of ceramics in architecture gained an aesthetic value depending on learning and developing new technical methods."Less porosity glazes were discovered in 2000-1000 B.C. simultaneously in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Earthenware panels with high reliefs were produced to be used as wall decoration of the palaces, sanctuaries and the tombs of Pharaohs in ancient Egypt in 1796-1704 B.C." (Yeltan, 2001, p.6). Ishtar Gate which takes place in King Nabukednazar II Palace (built between 500-600 B.C.) is one of the good examples of this kind of ceramic production.



Fig. 1. Ishtar Gate (Tor), lion panel (reconstructed, original was c 575 BC), Pergamon Museum, Berlin Germany.

Bingöl cited the usage of ceramics in architecture:

- ✓ Tiles which are used in interior spaces of the pyramids in the 3rd kingdom period of ancient Egypt and Far East Baajke Period's (1. century) roof tiles and decorations that were made up of little statues

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