

## Mübin Orhon and “Uncertainty” Concept

Barış Yılmaz

Department of Painting, Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University,  
TURKEY.

[baris.yil@hotmail.com.tr](mailto:baris.yil@hotmail.com.tr)

### ABSTRACT

*Mübin Orhon graduated Faculty of Political Sciences in 1947 and went to Paris to make his economy master and he was also influenced the art scene in Paris then he began to engage in painting. After World War II Paris was in a turbulent period in terms of political, economic, military and socially, this situation affected seriously era's understanding of art, philosophy and questioning.*

*In this period everything was questioned, 'uncertainty' concept dominated itself to a period in which definitions became insignificant. The art of this period has also been affected in this concept that questioning true, good-wrong concepts did not lead to a determination.*

*Mübin Orhon came to Paris in such a period that everything was questioned and everything in art, philosophy, literature were reconsidered about man and uncertainty dominated to everything. 'Uncertainty' affected his artistic conception as the nature of this period.*

**Keywords:** Uncertainty, Questioning, Paris, Relativity

### INTRODUCTION

#### Paris after World War II

After World War II in wounded Europe, an undeniable truth was that serious difficulties were experienced in terms of economic, political, military and socially in almost every culture and art cities such as Madrid, Berlin, London, Rome, Madrid including Paris. Although all these adversities, destructions and occupations, only capital city resisting with the intellectual dimension was Paris.

In this context, it is an inevitable trend to make 'restructuring center' of the art world that city takes the lead of literature. In fact, in company with movements we can describe as firstly 'existentialism' including 'New Wave', manifestos; artists from around the world, scientists and students, who flowed to capital city has gained momentum with their meeting. In this cosmopolitan structure, it was also extremely natural to take an active role of Turkish artist residing in Paris as a 'second place' since Ottoman time.

Within the process it has been witnessed to a mental configuration. The living painters of old generation such as Picasso, Matisse, Braque, Derain, Bonnard and Leger were regarded by the eye "their sense of art were exceeded and their time were completed". In other words, on the one hand sense of 'abstract' outstanding with 'revolutionary' identity, it characterized figured painting as 'conservative'. On the other hand, there is also no need to disregard a part of people evaluating 'leading arts' as 'extension of degenerated bourgeois values'.

At this point, it would be serious mistake to miss the effects of 'Bauhaus' revealing the potential of abstract art. Indeed, wave starting from the North Country creates a new corporeality in Paris with artists such as Mondrian, Kupka, Doesburg. It should be noted that as long as the war continued, many artists did not find the exhibition facility, as

reflection of the experienced trauma/projection, they tore 'integrity of classical form' using different methods and they were able to find the opportunity to share this 'expressive' works with the community after the war. The most interesting story of this psychology or the requirement, Jean Dubuffet is not a parting from art leaving the painting with existing reasons many times, returning his main occupation the wine merchant. It is most concrete reflection of these that works, were depicted dramas of crazy and orphaned children, come together.

With this current understanding, surfaces were freed not only from expression based on figures or perfect nature, but also from traditional materials. Pictorial language can be grouped under headings 'Critical figuration', 'geometric abstract', 'lyrical abstract', has been opened to a direction where material has diverged as far as the eye can see different from the traditional canvas painting. Artists coming from different countries such as Russian artist Serge Paliakof, German Hans Hartung, American Sam Francis, and Chinese Zao will put their sign to this approach.

By the idea of maintaining their artistic development with the state scholarship and their individual possibly; Nejat Melih Devrim, Selim Turan, Hakkı Anlı, Avni Arbaş, Abidin Dino and Fahrelnissa Zeid took their breath in Paris. Then Albert Bitran, Cihat Burak, Tiraje Dikmen and Mübin Orhon came to the city to complete their education in 'architecture' and 'economy' field but attended to this train to sign successful businesses in plastic arts especially in painting. Neşet Günel, Adnan Varınca and Adnan Çoker coming to city often and leaving it soon or returning to country at the end of a certain period as well as Fikret Mualla lived and breathed figurative painting for years but then they found enjoying life in Paris in the abstract seeking.

## **MÜBIN ORHON AND PARIS YEARS**

Mübin Orhon, who received Political Science education in Turkey and went to Paris at the end of 1940 to make his doctorate, caught a cruel illness (painting fever) in Paris, and he experienced this illness all of his life and a man died from this disease.

Indeed Paris of after World War 2th was still maintaining as a world capital of art when in art, philosophy were experiencing extraordinary fertile, emotional and turn oil for everything, and they were questioned every day.

Abidin Dino summarized the years of Paris art scene, for exhibition held in Turkey after the death of Mübin that he write out a text with full of loving and understanding the years of Paris art scene: "In fact 1950's were an area where the Exchange of various movements. On the one hand Picasso had somersault formed; on the other hand, Matisse drove colors to be wild., Chagall let his violinist to the sky, Balthus engaged in undressed little girl. Max Ernst made acrobatics between reality and surreal, Nicolas de Stael was establishing bridges between abstract and concrete, but Hartung was reflecting black spots on white space squarely, Viera da Silva was playing chess with time and space, Tal Coat was diving into puzzle inspired by nature, Wols was getting crazy ... I mean to go sailing to the turbulent sea of art, to select a route, to be captain and save ship, was not easy." (Edgü, 2003, p.151)

While everything was questioned after war, as well as the art of painting was also be questioned once again. Mübin who was not a painter and did not take any painting education, began painting adventure in such a Paris and drew next course of his life.

## **MÜBIN ORHON AND ‘UNCERTAINTY’ CONCEPT**

Mübin Orhon came to Paris in such a period that everything was questioned and everything in art, philosophy, literature were reconsidered about man and uncertainty dominated to everything. It was a period that existential philosophy came to light; definition of stereotypes lost its validity. There was a sense of meaning loss of all things. It was entered into era hat knowledge and the reality was relative, a single reality might not be, reality might vary according to person-watcher.

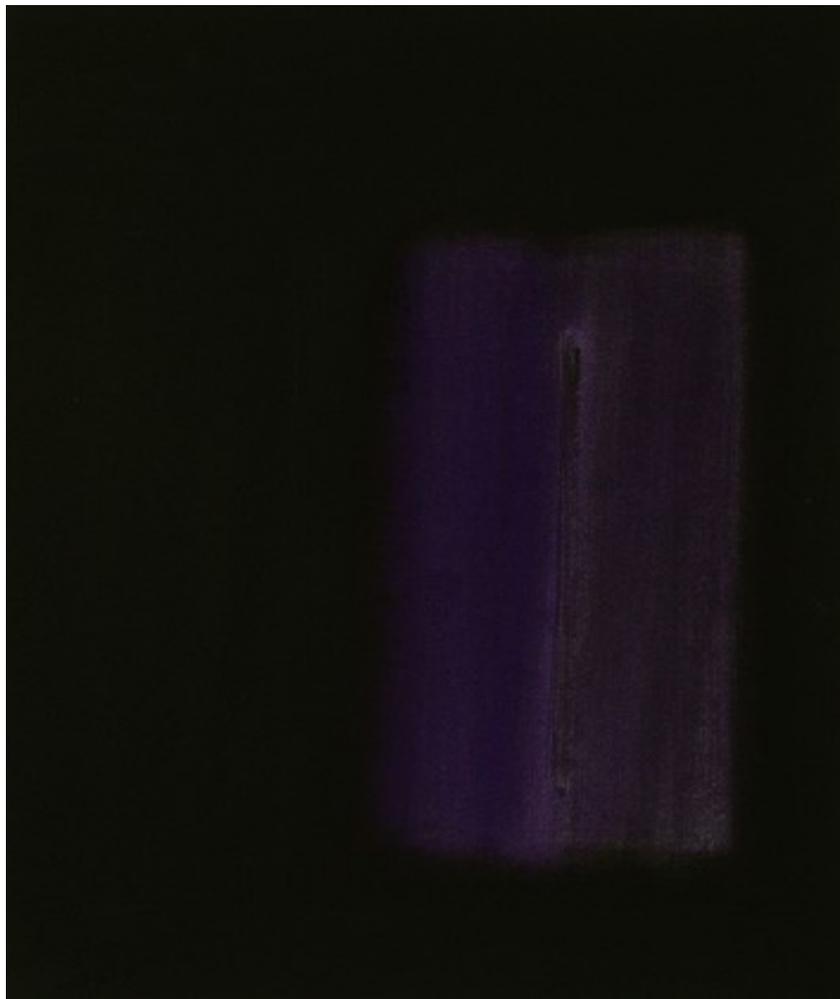
Heisenberg’s indefiniteness and uncertainty principle feature of a particle having the ability to be in two places at the same time, breaking the previous absolutist views on the matter and space relationship of Einstein’s Theory of Relativity and uncertainty created the ambivalence of knowledge and theory.... Derrida explains the uncertainty on reality by saying: “There is no an objective measure to say a behavior is good or bad. There is no such thing as objective reality. There are incomprehensive objects and subject’s illusions thinking of grasping them. We continue to generate comment on things we know not to be the same. Our interpretation already carries subjectivity and locality. Common values (and) purpose are impossible. Our existence is coincidental. Reality is uncertain.”

Rodin said that ‘Art is a thinking effort to understand the world and explain it’ (Erinç, 1998, p.83). In our ideas that mystery and doubt became absolute ruler, grasping concepts under images, art provides us to shape “uncertain” and “undefined” together with intuition. Uncertainty emerging with people awareness of themselves and increasing of knowledge and experience, it gets spreading itself together with seeking resolution for itself and its environment.



“Anonym”, oil painting on canvas, 1961

We can see uncertainty that people have effort to analysis related to them and nature in Mübin Orhon's painting. Impossibility in definition of images belonging to everything surrounding nature and people or mystery under these images appears as undefined in Orhan paintings. Undefined is due to the difficulty identifying the true meaning of things falling on our retina belonging to nature's things. Inadequacy of our cognitive and sensory, it has been realized by denying images related to these things in Mübin's paintings. We cannot come across any data that the world can be seen visually or it is objective in his paintings. Uncertainty in search of people's identification universe and doubt in reality of visible things, have been formed together with color in understanding between existence and nonexistence and transparency. William Barrett defined this reality in his work "Irrational Man" "This is a world extremely cramped, opaque and incomprehensible: Starting point of modern art is this realit." (Barrett, 2004, p.83). Shakespeare tried to explain uncertainty and chaos during people's comprehension and naming things "Life is a tale, told by an idiot and full of hurly burly and means nothing" (Web, 2010).



"Anonym", Gouache on paper, 39x30cm.

In Orhon's paintings, image and meaning ambiguity dominate in this layout; we can see his effort to create his own images and layout. In a world every objective existence can deny itself, he has aimed a simple layout freed from objects. Instead of using ready meaning and images, he has aimed to reach a real with his own intuitive effort. He has not been relying on ambiguous sensory data in this objective; he has directed towards a more inner and corrects seeking. Orhon makes us understand that he needs to explain existence except from empirical

knowledge that we have achieved with the five senses. He makes us understand existence of a fog covering uncertainty and reality. He would like us to remind that impossibility of consistency and identification, this world, which is irrational, could only be portrayed with images.



“Red”, 1975. 100x100cm

Nobel Prize winning German physicist Werner Heisenberg put forward in 1927 and with his theory known as ‘Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle’ showed our ability to have serious limits for knowing physical condition of things and estimating them, he perhaps led us toward a horizon that might be irrational and chaotic world. Might a theory that a scientist’s effort to make unknown to known be emerged in Mubin’s paintings with an art and an intuitive effort? If we thought that on one level art and science were going their purpose by seeing behind the mystery, might we think that Mubin was aware of this analysis of Heisenberg? Consequently, Mubin’s paintings that we see the traces of these uncertainties regarding the universe support not to trust a reality consisting of images of nature. His reality is a reality beyond known.

Mubin was looking for a different abstract painting than his predecessor (Nicolas de Stael, Hartung, Bram van Velde, Poliakoff, Tal Coat, Manessier, Ubac...). Some of French origin of these artists proposed that he was in “their own” painting tradition; they were trying to draw a boundary between the said “foreigner” artists in Ecole of Paris.

“Mubin, just as his fellow, American painter Sam Francis was not only French, but also did not want to have any traditions. Neither Cezanne’s nature interpretations, nor Van Gogh’s perception painting as an existence problem, nor Picasso’s and Braque’s Cubism, nor light of the northern (Nolde, Munch), nor Kandinsky’s abstract theories, nor Dubuffet’s Art Brut, directed his painting works. However, he found close to himself some of these painters, at least with their personality. Van Gogh’s loneliness, dramatic element in Munch’s, Nolde’s paintings, Kandinsky’s effort for grounding abstract painting, Dubuffet’s interest in denying Western paintings completely, creation of primitive not for scholar was not stranger to

Mubin. But he neither in his paintings nor in his speech did such a reference. He desired to make a painting not having history.”(Edgü, 2003, p.154)

Mubin’s paintings were undoubtedly abstract. But they were not abstract as a result of an abstraction. They were abstract because they did not include neither any trace from outer world nor any known form. “An object, a painting not having anything except itself, not referring anything.” (Edgü, 2003, p.154)

What could be seen and read in this painting by an eye knowing to read a painting? There was any effort for Mübin to make his canvas turn into a painting. He did not know in advance what to portray while he had canvas, brush and colours in his hands. If you have an apple in front of you and the artist reflects this in the form of a circle, this is no doubt an abstraction. Is it possible to abstract a thing does not exist or space in other words of painter? Yes, it would fill the space, but there was neither a stack nor a line, design, object nor figure in this creation.

Trace of the outside world did not take place in the canvas, there was no visual element might be called as “form”. Canvas was turned into an image being studied on it. Painter’s brush was reaching four corners of the canvas. Because those who facing them, had to dream that they continued in emptiness.

## **REFERENCES**

- [1] Edgü, F. (2003). *Types of Humanity*. İstanbul: Sel Publishing.
- [2] Erinç, S. (1998). *Introduction to Psychology of Art*. İstanbul: Ütopya Publications.
- [3] Barrett, W. (2004). *Irrational People*. Ankara: Hece Publications.
- [4] Dino, A. (1992). *Galeri Nev Exhibition Catalogue*. İstanbul: Galery Nev.
- [5] Retrieved November 30, 2014, from <http://pinkfloydturk.net/2010/06/>