

AN ATTEMPT TO READ THE CHANGE IN AESTHETICS BY READING  
DELEUZE:  
THE IAA AND SANART CONFERENCES ON AESTHETICS

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**Abstract**

As a result of processes such as social-political and environmental crises, globalization and innovative technological developments, which are evaluated on the basis of speed and urgency, we are faced with a result-oriented, reductionist, ethical and aesthetic world. This work reveals the relationship between aesthetics and the changing world. In this context, this study, which focuses on the themes of the International Aesthetics Association (IAA) and Aesthetics and Visual Culture Association (SANART) congresses, reads the relationship of aesthetics with our changing world through Gilles Deleuze's 'philosophy of difference'.

In this framework, the study chronologically analyzes the relationship between themes and the call for congress papers with Deleuze's terms. The study evaluates the conceptual framework of the congresses of SANART and IAA associations, corresponding to Deleuze's concept of 'system'. The events organized by each association at regular intervals are the 'series' that make up the systems. In this context, the study reads the concepts both in the series they belong to and in their verbal identities in other series. In other words, the study, which analyzes the dynamic and static repetitions of the concepts in congress themes and call texts, questions the fields of external and conceptual difference. The data obtained in this study were categorized and interpreted as series, horizontal series and vertical series.

**Keywords:** iaa, sanart, aesthetic congresses, deleuze, difference and repetitive.

The results of social, political and environmental crises, and the consequences of all-encompassing processes like globalization and innovations in technology, both overlap with respect to the way they are evaluated: All is sacrificed to speed and urgency, and we are left with a world that is result-oriented, reductionist and devoid of both ethics and aesthetics. The images that circulate and have invaded the world today are viewed as seductive and lacking

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imagination. Today, more than ever, it is critical for us to re-discover the aesthetics of difference, diversity and multiplicity, in order to counter reductionist processes of beautification. The question what is beauty, is formulated first 2500 years ago, and it is in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that the philosophy of aesthetics truly appears. As contemplation on the question increases, the field of aesthetics has grown to encompass the non-aesthetic in its field of study, thereby expanding its boundaries to cover plurality in thought and discourse. It is this period that Gilles Deleuze chooses to demarcate his challenging the conventional conceptual framework of the field. He argues that the definition of philosophy as a creative activity requires difference rather than identity, multiplicity of relations as opposed to limitation<sup>1</sup>. In this framework, aesthetic philosophy is shaped by interdisciplinary and intercultural work rather than issuing from a singular center and identity, and should, once again, unveil connections and differences stemming from multiplicities.

For a long time, the origins of literature on aesthetics focused on the dichotomy of the West and the non-West. However, ever since the 1980s and with the influence of postmodern thought, the understanding of aesthetics broke out of its narrow confines of western thought, and the philosophical discourse has found roots and ground in more diverse geographies. After the 2000s, this expansion has become even more apparent and relevant. Today, alternative interpretations welcome holistic approaches, and the same can be articulated for the field of aesthetics. The literature on aesthetics is disseminated through tools like publications, translations, doctoral theses, conferences and seminars, uniting new horizons with their target audiences. Each of these tools can be considered as possessing different temporal structures. Particularly in today's world where speed triggers constant change, considering the relationship between literature and time becomes paramount. In this respect according to German historian Reinhart Koselleck, newspapers are intended for a short duration of time, and encyclopaedias offer more permanent and long-lasting information, while classical texts, for instance, have the potential to be repeatedly consumed, infinitely<sup>2</sup>. Academic platforms such as congresses, conferences and seminars unite researchers from various disciplines and provide a productive scientific environment of discussion that is lively and up-to-date, issuing from current multiplicities. These discursive discussion events organised at regular intervals offer a sense of continuity amidst the plurality of sources and are important intermediaries for the careful reading and study of rapid change among and above all disciplines.

When an analysis of the history of such conferences or congresses is to be undertaken in the field, Max Dessoir's attempts to unite studies in aesthetics and art at the beginning of the 20th century rise to the occasion. These initiatives, which include the publishing of the first journal in the field of aesthetics and the founding of an association, form the foundations of today's International Aesthetic Association (IAA). Over time this establishment of associations working on aesthetics also spread to various other geographies. One such example in Turkey, is the Society for Aesthetics and Visual Culture (SANART), which was founded in 1991. SANART focuses on contemporary problems of the field in order to evaluate art and aesthetics from different disciplines and perspectives using theory and practice. Both platforms approach aesthetics as an interdisciplinary field of study.

This study focuses on exploring the work on aesthetics of international and national associations of aesthetics of different scales and their respective manner of convergence and divergence within a conceptual framework. In this sense, the work of the IAA and SANART associations are areas where difference and change are in constant recurrence. Today, far beyond the sharp distinctions such as East-West or the West and Non-West, SANART as a national association cannot be located in opposition to the IAA. Similarly in Deleuze, the concept of becoming also moves from difference to difference, not from opposite to opposite. Today, any reading of aesthetics that is located in different geographies and situations, have to be based in interactions, networks and relationships. In this framework, this study focuses on the themes of the congresses of the *International Association for Aesthetic* (IAA) and the *Society for Aesthetic and Visual Culture* (SANART), where relationship of aesthetics with our changing world can be seen through Gilles Deleuze's 'philosophy of difference.' In his indigenous philosophical outlook, Deleuze interrogates the totalizing unity of western thought and its suppression of difference in its act of interpretation. This is why Deleuze's philosophy becomes a useful tool for reading the SANART and IAA aesthetic congresses and their way of handling the theme of 'change'. According to Deleuze, philosophy is not an activity of justification but an activity of creation and creativity. Deleuze's philosophy of difference aims to create new encounters rather than seeking solid foundations for these two congress events of different scales. Focusing on the last 30 years of SANART and IAA aesthetic congresses, this study reveals the relationship between aesthetics and the changing world.

The 21st century is a period in which drastic change in the structure of philosophical thought becomes essentially apparent. Situations that cause this intellectual change such as the critical questioning of ideas and paradigms, along with new media and technological developments, the excess of images can all be traced in processes that take place prior to the 21st century. In this framework, the study starts with some questions that focus on the last 30 years; What is the relationship of congresses on aesthetics with the changing world? Which are the concepts that help to grasp it? What are the concepts and situations based on differences in congresses in the West and in Turkey? What are the areas of difference of aesthetics in congresses when evaluated through Deleuze philosophy? How can we elucidate the concepts of 'differentiation' and 'differenciación' in aesthetics through his philosophy of difference?

According to Deleuze, difference is not a comparative nor contradictory term. Despite the Western/non-Western conceptual dichotomy of the past, the aesthetic approaches of IAA and SANART are not in opposing positions either. This is another reason for my selection of Deleuze's discourse, which opposes a dialectical reading of any cultural phenomenon that seems to lie in opposition to one another. In this study, difference is considered as the complementary quality of perceiving the world and an anthropocentric understanding, rather than a concept that indicates two opposite extremes. In this framework, I study the themes and the call for papers of the congress chronologically, whose relationality is analyzed in Deleuzian terms. Thus the process reveals concepts based on difference in aesthetics (differentiation) and also reviews the zones of difference through repetitive themes (differenciación). This study is a new way of looking at geographical discourse differences in the field of aesthetics. It opens new windows

of thought by reading Turkey's aesthetic approach, which has potential for aesthetics, with the aesthetic understanding of the whole.

### On Deleuze's philosophy of difference

Our ever-changing world requires a constant rethinking of concepts, situations and disciplines. As in this study, large number of academic studies aim to comprehend change through the transformation of different structures (language, concept, thought, discourse, etc.). The understanding of change brings with it concepts related to time such as continuity, permanence and temporality. Like other post-structuralists, Deleuze does not organise life as a closed system; he liberates life with the issues of becoming and difference. All aspects of life exhibit constant renewal, change and difference. According to Deleuze, nature contains temporal flux and variation as well as permanence and perseveration<sup>3</sup>. Persistence can be the variable of another state. One of the concepts associated with change is 'transience' (Trans+ire+ence). The 'trans' here, is not to be considered as beyond of something, but as the beyond<sup>4</sup>. According to Julia Hözl, transiences are different and are always associated with difference<sup>5</sup>. These concepts contain variables and dynamic movement. Deleuze approaches these concepts from different perspectives; he argues that the task of modern philosophy is to overcome the binary oppositions, such as temporal/non-temporal, historical/eternal and particular/universal<sup>6</sup>.

"The concept is defined by the inseparability of a finite number of heterogeneous components traversed by a point of absolute survey at infinite speed"<sup>7</sup>. According to Deleuze, philosophy is the creation of concepts and thinking with concepts. The repetition of a concept is a different unfolding of that concept and transforms the context. Based on a periphery that is repeating and differentiating, Deleuze attempts to reconstruct and deconstruct concepts<sup>8</sup>. His understanding of the concepts are decentralized and mobilized by the change of the periphery. In his book entitled "The Practice of Conceptual History; Timing History Spacing Concepts," Reinhart Kosellack examines movement through social history. He argues that movement-related concepts of the new millennium have the potential to influence the direction and speed of the change we experience in the world (crisis, progress, revolution, etc.). According to Kosellack, 'event and language' are inseparable, but there is a different temporality between them<sup>9</sup>. The event can trigger a change in language and language can trigger a change in the event. Deleuze, on the other hand, looks for this potential for change in the concept of 'becoming' that transcends time and place. 'Becoming' allows an analysis of change. Deleuze states that the metamorphosis of the process of becoming is defined as 'differentiation' whereas the actualization of becoming into an event is 'differenciation'.<sup>10</sup> One is the domain of potentiality and the other, of reality. The concept preserves the difference of time within it.

Deleuze and other poststructuralists have tried to conceptualise both difference and becoming. Deleuze shaped his philosophy of difference metadologically and ontologically through different concepts, situations and persons in his discourses. A philosophy of difference is methodologically a matter of determining differences in nature and ontologically the being of things is in their differences in nature<sup>11</sup>. In his book 'difference and repetition', written in 1968

based on his doctoral studies, Deleuze reads time as a continuum that produces difference. He does not define the concept of difference as oppositional and contradictory, and repetition, which means exhibiting a certain behavior, is not generality. "If repetition exists, it expresses at once a singularity opposed to the general, a universality opposed to the particular, a distinctive opposed to the ordinary, an instantaneity opposed to variation and an eternity opposed to permanence"<sup>12</sup>. Despite the repetition represents through similarity and equivalence, "the gradual transition from one thing to another does not prevent the difference"<sup>13</sup>. Deleuze's difference contains within repetition. According to him, the condition of maximum continuity is required for maximum difference.

According to Deleuze, all movement is change. Therefore, change coexists with internal or external, visible or invisible differences. Deleuze reads the philosophy of difference methodologically through various fields. In his 1988 book *Bergsonism*, Deleuze analyses the concepts of virtuality, difference and becoming through Bergson's philosophy<sup>14</sup>. According to Deleuze, Bergson's concept of duration (*durée*) reconciles continuity and heterogeneity. The study of Bergson strengthens the foundations of Deleuze's philosophy of difference and emphasises his metaphysical approach.

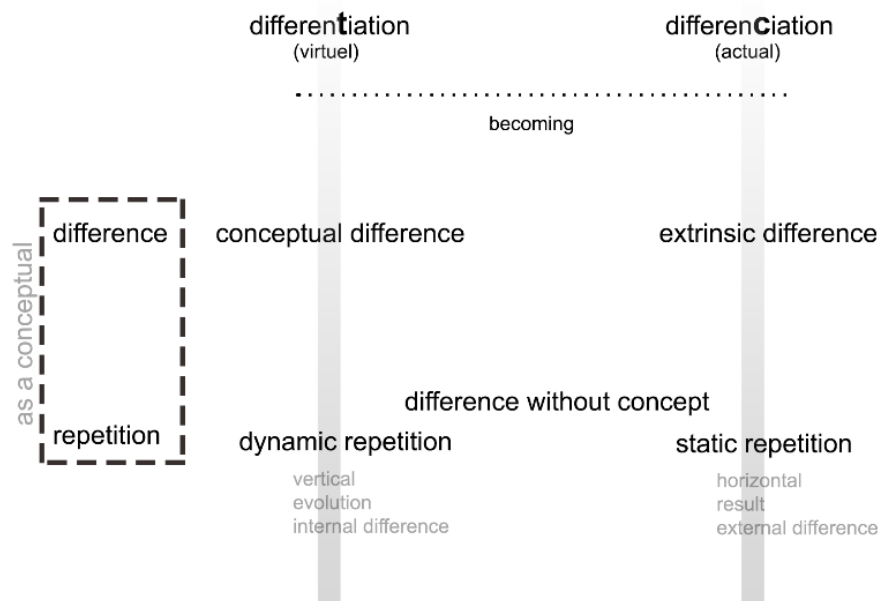


Fig. 1. A diagrammatic mapping of unveiling relations amongst the term in Deleuze philosophy.

Deleuze analyzes repetition and difference also in linguistic terms. Along with the concepts of nominality, nature and freedom, he discusses linguistic expressions such as rhyme, homonymy and doubling through the example of repetition. A concept is the mental image of identical objects or events, a kind of generalization. Deleuze argues that, the reality of the concept determined through identity is repetition<sup>15</sup>. However, repetition is not explained by the form of the concepts' identity. If we reveal repetition by depriving the concept of its intrinsic differentiation, we cannot unearth the cause of change. The repetition within the concept emerges as the difference without the concept and contains a potential. Deleuze divides repetition here into static and dynamic (Fig.1). While static



repetition is the conclusion, dynamic repetition shows change, it is the repetition of an intrinsic difference<sup>16</sup>. One is horizontal, the other vertical. “One is developed and must be explicated; the other is enveloped and must be interpreted”<sup>17</sup>. The vertical repetition reflects the internal and intensive difference of concepts. The difference arising from within the concept is the conceptual difference. The difference between objects represented through the same concept is the external difference. In fact, there is no single meaningful term that we may use to understand who shapes his philosophy of difference through multiplicity. In this regard, Deleuze argues that systems and series are necessary. “A system must be constituted by two or more series defined by the differences between the terms that constitute it”<sup>18</sup>. Every kind of system has special conditions. “The nature of these elements whose value determines at once both by their difference in the series to which they belong, and by the difference of their difference from one series to another, can be determined”<sup>19</sup>.

In the context of this conceptual framework, the study at hand, examines the theme and call for papers of SANART and IAA congresses and interprets them through Gilles Deleuze's 'philosophy of difference', which is organized around multiplicity, decentralization and becoming. In other words, the study evaluates the conceptual framework of the SANART and IAA associations' congresses, which both correspond to Deleuze's concept of 'system'. The events organized by each association at certain intervals are 'series' that constitute systems. These series consist of different concepts, themes and discourses. From this context, the study reads the concepts both within the series they belong to and within their verbal identities in other series. In other words, the study, analyzing the dynamic and static repetitions of the concepts in the congress themes and call for papers, questions the areas of external and conceptual difference. (Fig. 2). Congress themes are the main headings that determine the area to be read together with aesthetics. The themes, which are quite broad in scope, are narrowed and guided by the call for papers. Although these areas, which are more general and open to interpretation, include concepts, themes and words, they contain the traces of the thought of that day. Our main argument is that the series of concepts contain clues to understand the changing world of aesthetics.

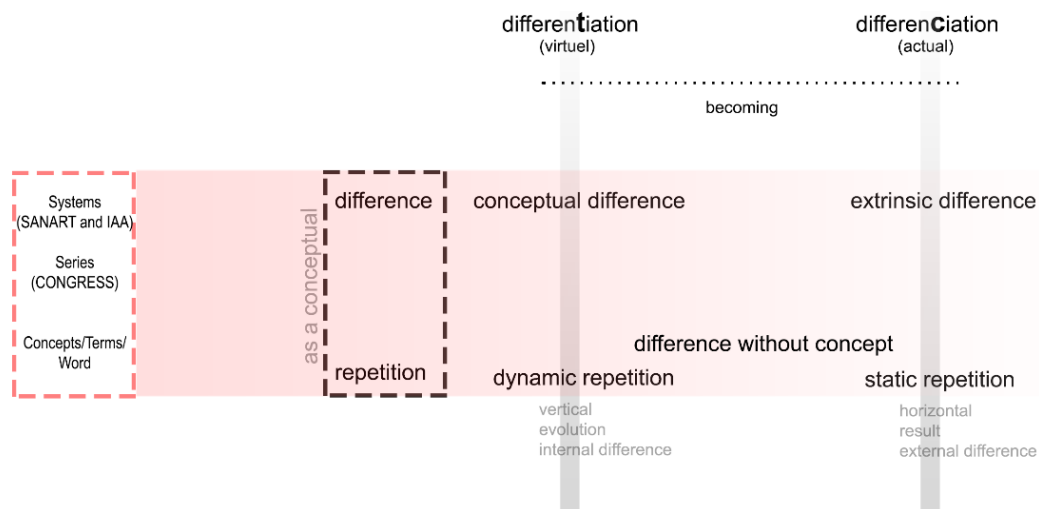


Fig. 2. Congress themes in SANART, IAA congresses and terms in Deleuze's philosophy.

**A brief review of pre-1990 congresses on aesthetics;**

In the recent past, the blurring of boundaries and the intertwining of definitions as well as evaluations have brought along plural and complex values. In this period, evaluations in the field of aesthetics were based on generalizations within the framework of centrality. With the advent of the 20th century, academic studies on aesthetics increased and multiplied, especially in the West. Max Dessoir, a German aesthetician, played an important role in the General Art Studies (*Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*) movement that emerged in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century. Dessoir aimed to publish the first scientific journal on aesthetics and art studies and to organize congresses to elaborate on these themes. Dessoir's idea for the '*Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*' is to unite various studies on art, and to make aesthetics and art studies autonomous, to be handled separately from philosophy and history. In 1913, he organized the first congress in Berlin under his very own chairmanship. Since then, the IAA regularly organizes congresses on aesthetics in different countries on various topics and themes<sup>20</sup>.

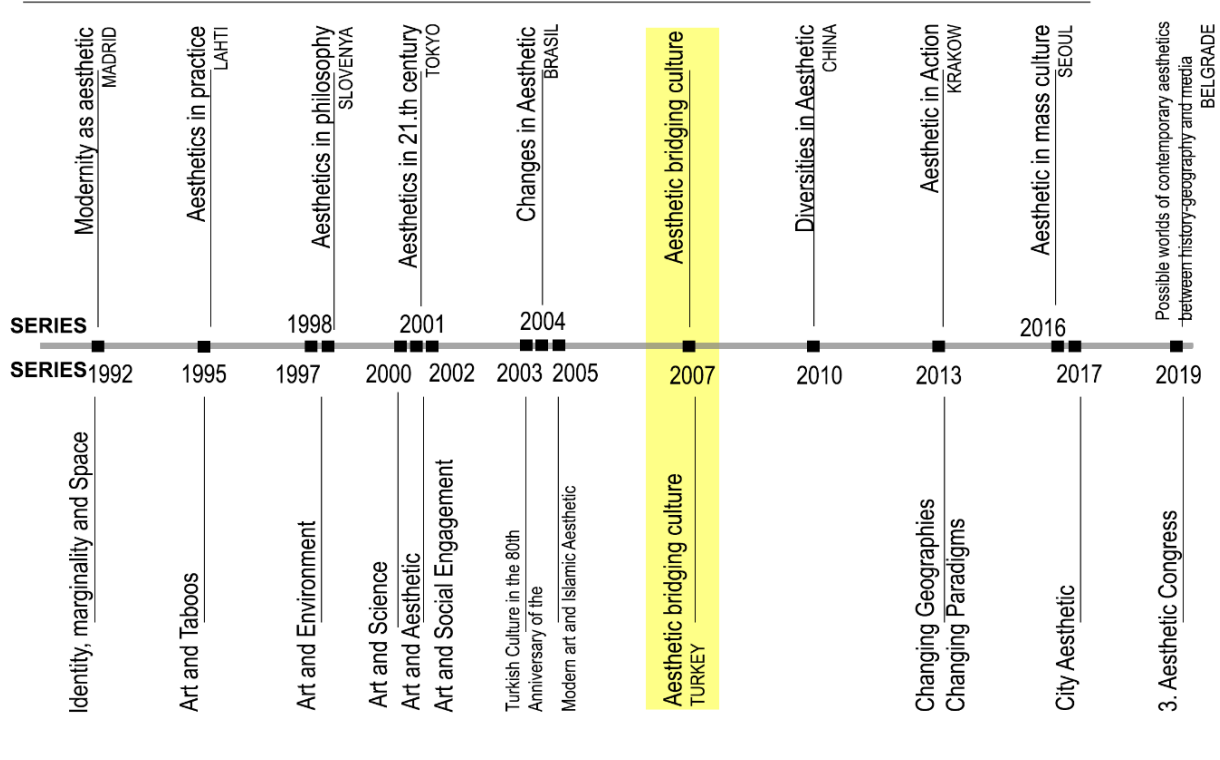
In the first years of the congresses, aesthetic studies reflected an objective evaluation. Looking at the congresses until 1968, the call for papers usually include titles such as 'general art science' and 'general aesthetics'. In this framework, the reading of aesthetic representation through generality erects a boundary between them and the difference and different. By excluding difference and different, they present the values of the western subject within the framework of its generalization.

Although in the past, the self-evaluation of the field of aesthetics is conducted through these limitations and thus, a singular point of view, today it can be reread as being in a state of 'becoming'. The 'becoming' brings out the fields' potential after a certain moment and the different manifests itself on this conceptual field. This process in the becoming began to reflect difference in the 1970s. In 1972, the call for papers of the congress held in Romania included the title '*Asian and African contributions to aesthetics*'. In 1976, in the congress organized under the title of *Aesthetics-Everyday Life and Art*, the sentence, '*the universal spectrum of different civilizations*' was stated in the call for papers. In the following years, diversity has become even more visible in the themes and call for papers of events held by the IAA.

In Turkey, academic studies on aesthetics have been developing in the 20th century primarily with the increase in the number of translated works. The regular aesthetic congresses of the Western-based IAA have influenced the aesthetics circles in Turkey, displaying a rise of its leading actors amongst Turkish scholars. İsmail Tunalı, one of the pioneers of aesthetic studies nationwide, was the first Turkish speaker to attend the an IAA congress. Another scholar who participated in the IAA congress was the art historian Jale Erzen<sup>21</sup>. Erzen, who leads aesthetic studies on national and international platforms, founded the SANART Association for Aesthetics and Culture in 1991. The evaluation of SANART should be undertaken in tandem with the IAA. SANART, a member of the IAA, contributed in kind to aesthetic studies by organizing its own regular congresses and symposiums. Both associations have shaped their themes and call for papers in line with the current issues in aesthetics of this period (Fig. 3).

## Review of the post-1990 IAA and SANART Congresses through Deleuze's philosophy of difference

IAA : International Association of Aesthetic-**SYSTEM**



SANART: ASSOCIATION OF AESTHETIC AND VISUAL CULTURE- **SYSTEM**

Fig. 3. A chronologically chart on SANART and IAA congresses.

In 1992, the 12th Congress on Aesthetics of the IAA focused on the relationship between 'Modernity and Aesthetics' and took place in Madrid, Spain. SANART, on the other hand, organized its first event on 'Identity-Marginality and Space' symposium (Table 1). The question of identity brings with it the concepts of centrality-liminality-fragmentation. Moreover, these concepts are inextricably linked to the concept of space. The symposium was framed through these three concepts. Definitions of identity are also associated with concepts such as sameness and similarity. Similarly, a study of aesthetics through identity falls under the scope of generalization. The IAA, on the other hand, questions the relationship between aesthetics and modernity, which articulates the present differently from the past and re-directs it towards the future. According to Octovio Paz, modernity is a purely western concept that is without precedent in other civilizations<sup>22</sup>. Identity is the distinctive characteristic of a particular space. Since the late 19th century, Turkey has been on her own journey toward modernity, and thus has been searching for an identity vis-à-vis westernization and western influences. Erzen positions the aim of this identity (or search for national identity) as the main problematic in the symposium, which would be addressed to an audience consisting of a large number of people coming from non-western cultures. This theme of a search for identity can definitely resonate with the non-western audiences in question<sup>23</sup>. Non-western cultures have also experienced, and continue to experience exchanges and changes in social values vis-à-vis the West. In this



framework, the first symposium has focused on the search for the potential of the off-center, i.e. non-west, with the debates on identity that have developed in response to so-called “cultural degeneration.” It is clear from the content of the congress that the concept ‘WEST’ continues to set the boundary in aesthetic discourses in those years as well. The theme of the marginal is common in both congresses. The marginal was that which was different and did not fit into a homogeneous cluster. Thus, identity and marginality were considered as concepts associated with difference and sameness, respectively. The mutual theme in both activities is the concept of border.

<b>1992-IAA-MODERNITY AS AESTHETIC</b>	Modern aesthetic theory, Historical process of aesthetic, The nature-function and limits of aesthetic, The relationship of a aesthetics with nature, The relationship of aesthetics to identity and marginality
<b>1992-SANART-IDENTITY/ MARGINALITY AND SPACE</b>	Internationalism, Marginality, Fragmentation of aesthetic values, Transversality between different forms of artistic creation, Art, architecture, space and tradition

Table 1: Themes and call text of IAA and SANART in 1992.

In 1995, while the IAA 13th Congress on Aesthetics focused on the theme 'Aesthetics in Practice' in Finland, SANART 1995 presented us with the symposium 'Art and Taboo' (Table 2). The concept of taboo, which can be defined as social prohibitions, was preferred by the organizing body with regards to the period's religious and political polarization causing censorship and prohibition. In the symposium, the concept of taboo is discussed through themes such as prohibitions, freedoms, societies and borders. Oppression and restrictions both affected and shaped the artistic expressions of the time, which in turn, shaped the expression and understanding of the aesthetic. Although taboos are situations that disrupt continuity, and cause a change in direction, they can at times give way to the elements that make differentiation possible. For a more detailed examination, we need to examine the practices of the period. The IAA Congress was shaped by the question on the possibility of aesthetic applications. Concepts such as daily life, culture, environment and nature are all viewed through the lens of aesthetics. While the IAA analyzed the concept of action and practice as the main themes of the congress, SANART examined the prohibition of action.

<b>1995-IAA-AESTHETIC IN PRACTICE</b>	Everyday life, Cultural environment (art-design architecture-media), Natural environment, Practical aesthetic
<b>1995-SANART-ART AND TABOOS</b>	Ethic, Religion, Policy, Aesthetic history and theory

Table 2: Themes and call text of IAA and SANART in 1995.

In 1998, the IAA 14th Congress on Aesthetics was held in Slovenia with the theme 'Aesthetics as Philosophy', while in 1997 SANART employed the theme 'Environment and Art' as a result of the ecological concerns of the era (Table 3). With the concept of art and the environment, the symposium took up focusing on the multiplicity of nature, earth, space and structure and their relationship with human beings. SANART associated solutions to environmental problems with hope for the future. By this positioning, it emphasized that every aspect of existence and life can not only be challenged, but also changed through art. Thus, art is located as a powerful means for change. In the IAA congress, the aim was to question the nature, meaning and importance of aesthetics in general, and to strengthen its connection with philosophy, by thinking critically and theoretically. While the emphasis in the symposium on the environment and art is on change, practice and influence, the aim of that on aesthetics as philosophy was to primarily thinking critically. Critical thinking was one of the most important methods the journey of change employed.

<b>1998-IAA-AESTHETIC IN PHILOSOPHY</b>	Form and content, Theory and practice
<b>1997-SANART-ART AND ENVIRONMENT</b>	Contemporary Art and Environment, City and Art, Politics, Culture, Environment, Landscape, Earth and its Memory

Table 3: Themes and call text of IAA in 1997 and SANART in 1998.

In 2001, the 15th Aesthetics Congress of the IAA was organized in Tokyo with the theme 'Aesthetics in the 21st Century', while SANART held its counterpart congress entitled 'Art and Science' in 2000, followed by 'Retrospective: Aesthetics and Art in the 20th Century' in 2001 and 'Art and Social Engagement' in 2002 (Table 4). In the art and science congress, speakers discussed the lack of connection between scientific and aesthetic values, as well as common points in areas such as technology and nature. In the beginning of the 21th century, the name of the 'SANART' association was changed<sup>24</sup>. For the first time, the theme of 'aesthetics' was directly carried into the name of the symposium. This was crucial sign of emphasis that issues concerning aesthetics had become urgently important for Turkey. With the theme of aesthetics and art in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the symposium on art and social commitment examined subjects such as ecology, homelessness, corruption, and disability; art's orientation towards social realities in the 20th century and the responsibility of the artist in terms of content were also elaborated upon. The congress in Tokyo was the first congress organized by the IAA in a region considered outside of the West. This change in turn, created a visible spatial difference. The internal differentiation visible in the IAA's texts in the 70s laid the groundwork for spatial differentiation in the 2000s. On a more general scale, the differentiation of systems can also affect series and concepts.

<b>2000-IAA-AESTHETIC IN 21.TH CENTURY</b>	Environmental aesthetic, Modern aesthetic, Art anthropology, Aesthetic of Transhumanity, Beauty/Uggliness, Elements-Nature-Universe, Culture-oriented aesthetics, New dimensions of aesthetic experience
<b>2000-SANART-ART AND SCIENCE</b>	New visuals, Architecture, Science in the new art, Art and science in history and cultures, Medicine and art, Artificial intelligence, Art and technology
<b>2001-SANART-ART AND AESTHETIC</b>	Artwork and Aesthetics, Avant-garde, Architecture, Politics and Aesthetics
<b>2002-SANART-ART AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT</b>	

Table 4: Themes and call text of IAA in IAA and themes and call text of SANART in2000, 2001, 2002.

In 2004, the 16th Aesthetics Congress of the IAA started in Brazil with the theme 'Changes in Aesthetics', while SANART organized meetings on 'Turkish Culture of the Republic' in 2003 and 'Islamic Aesthetics in Modern Art' in 2005 (Table 5). According to Erzen, the 80th year of the Republic begins with change and an upsurge in nationalism, where cultural hegemony and normative values lost their validity<sup>25</sup>. She emphasizes that a historical reconstruction should firstly be initiated on cultural platforms, where it would be possible to look at events from different local perspectives, with an inclusion of dynamics and value judgments other than the discourses in the West. The congress held in 2005 criticizes the understanding of Islamic aesthetics within certain formal patterns -as a direct result of religious, ideological and cultural ideas and prejudices. Having faced this formal framework, the congress called for a positioning beyond stereotypical symbols. The congress organized by the IAA, called for an opening to changes through aesthetics. Thus, the production of alternatives to conventional thinking and their conceptual reflection on aesthetics as a philosophical discipline (ethics, history, criticism, philosophy, education, culture and daily life) was prioritized. Both congress themes explored the impact of the changing world order on aesthetics, culture and art.

<b>2004-IAA-CHANGES IN AESTHETIC</b>	Ethic, History, Criticality, Philosophy
<b>2003-SANART-TURKISH CULTURE IN 80TH REPUBLIC</b>	Art Policies and Culture of the Republic, Urban and architectural culture of the Republic, Social and political culture of the republic
<b>2005-SANART-MODERN ART AND ISLAMIC AESTHETIC</b>	

Table 5: Themes and call text of IAA in 2004 and themes and call text of SANART in 2003, 2005.

In 2007, the IAA organized the 17th International Aesthetics Congress in Turkey with the title 'Aesthetics Between Cultures' (Table 6). As preview to the international congress, SANART organized a national congress themed 'Aesthetics in Turkey; Aesthetic Practices and Aesthetic Discourse' in 2006. In all SANART's publications and productions, emphasis on interdisciplinary and interculturalism has become visible. The emphasis on interculturalism was also carried on in the theme of an international congress organized in Turkey. According to Erzen, today, with globalization, there is a reductionist attempt in perceiving and understanding the world<sup>26</sup>. The term interculturalism in the congress was used keeping in mind the need to figure out that all cultures have their own rationalities and values. At the 1995 symposium, Edward Lucie Smith stated that "we are beginning to see a much greater vitality on the periphery, on the margins, rather than in the so-called center of art"<sup>27</sup>. This challenging new positioning shifted and even decentralized the center of aesthetics.

<p><b>2007-IAA and SANART- AESTHETIC BRIDGING CULTURE</b></p>	<p>Idealism and Pragmatism, Local and Global, Orientalism and Occidentalism, Pluralism and Egalitarianism, Sacred and Profane, Historicism, New Taxonomies of Art, Culture Industry, Aesthetics of Technologies, Aesthetics and the Everyday, High/Low, Real and Virtual, Philosophical Approaches, Interculturalism and the Arts, Territory and Cultures, Art in Transhistorical Perspectives, Violence, Ethics/Aesthetics, Education</p>
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Table 6: Themes and call text of IAA in 2007.

In 2010, the IAA organized the 18th International Congress on Aesthetics in China with the theme 'Diversity in Aesthetics.' (Table 7). The congress questioned the relationship between aesthetics and a series of themes (global and local, art, culture, philosophy, ethics, psychology, form, ecology, economy, society, history, tradition, modernization, information technology and cyberspace). It discussed the uniqueness of the aesthetics of non-Western societies. Another dichotomy for discussion was the tension between the concepts, 'local and global'. Today, it is difficult to talk about pure locality. Locality contains the global within it.

	<p>Global and local, Cultural studies, Aesthetics and philosophy, ethics, psychology or anthropology, The relationship between art forms and</p>
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<b>2010-IAA-DIVERSITIES IN AESTHETIC</b>	aesthetics, Relationship between aesthetics and nature/environment/ecology, The relationship between aesthetics and economy, society and politics, Aesthetic education, Information technology and cyberspace, Historical traditions and modernization
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Table 7: Themes and call text of IAA in 2010.

In 2013, while the IAA held its 19th International Aesthetics Congress in Poland with the call for 'Aesthetic Action', the SANART II. Aesthetics Congress used the theme 'Changing Geographies, Changing Paradigms' (Table 8). The main focus on aesthetics has shifted towards the theme of motion. Speakers of the 2013 congress underlined the crucial importance of focusing on the practical issues of daily life. In other words, aesthetics should enter the practical field like politics and ethics. SANART, on the other hand, analyzes the global changes and rapid developments in the field of technology through the change in the ways societies and individuals exist. Themes such as the information age, new world order, network society, consumer society, consumer culture, global disasters have been discussed with their direct, transformative effect on the practices of art, design and architecture. This new conceptual and practical framework challenged and even determined the new paradigms in these fields. Both academic events emphasized the urgency of changing situations on a global scale, identifying the events and taking appropriate action.

<b>2013-IAA-AESTHETIC IN ACTION</b>	Changes in Art, Aesthetics in practice: religion, ethics, education, politics, law, economy, commerce, fashion, sports, daily life etc. aesthetic factor, Aesthetics and Nature: evolutionism, ecology, posthumanism, Body Aesthetics: soma and senses, Art and Science, Technologies and biotechnologies in aesthetics and art, Architecture and Urban Space, Cultural and Intercultural Studies in Aesthetics
<b>2013-SANART-CHANGING GEOGRAPHY CHANGING PARADIGM</b>	Art and Aesthetics, Culture, Media, Aesthetics, Politics and Aesthetics, Environment and Aesthetics, Art and Aesthetics in Changing Geographies

Table 8: Themes and call text of IAA and SANART in 2013.



In 2016, the IAA 20th International Aesthetics Congress held in Korea with the theme 'Aesthetics and Mass Culture', while SANART organized the 'Urban Aesthetics' symposium in 2017 (Table 9). The academic platforms stated that there were problems in the urban aesthetics symposium due to some international tensions. Erzen underlined that the urban and architectural fields were in urgent and crucial need of aesthetic thinking<sup>28</sup>. An important theme of discussion was focused on the plurality of urban areas. The ethnicity, multilingualism and cultural pluralism of cities have been offering variable and fulfilling aesthetic experiences. The openness as well as hostility towards difference were both critically questioned. The sessions on urban aesthetics welcomed the themes of environmental aesthetics, where the concept of place, memory, art and function were all scrutinized. The IAA, on the other hand, focused on various aesthetic aspects of mass culture and its condition with the rapid development of information technology. Rather than focusing on a specific society and depicting the blurring of boundaries, IAA used the theme of 'mass culture.' As a concept, a mass is a particular group of people and defined by generalization.

<p><b>2016-IAA-AESTHETIC IN MASS CULTURE</b></p>	<p>Problems of Art Theories in the Age of Mass Culture, New Media, Design and Aesthetics, Body and Sports Aesthetics, Reflections on the History of Aesthetics, Values of Art: Cognitive, Moral, and Political, Scientific Perspectives on Aesthetics, Imagination and Emotion, Environment and Ecology Aesthetics, Aesthetics and Theories of Individual Artistic Genres, Aesthetics and Art Theories in Asian Traditions</p>
<p><b>2017-SANART-CITY AESTHETIC</b></p>	<p>Urban and Environmental Aesthetics, Urban Aesthetics and Concept of Place, Aesthetics and Urban Memory, Aesthetic Representations of the City in Art, Aesthetics, Function and Cities</p>

Table 9: themes and call text of IAA in 2016 and of SANART in SANART.

In 2019, the 21st International Aesthetics Congress organized in IAA Serbia with the theme 'Possible Worlds of Contemporary Aesthetics; Aesthetics between History, Geography and Media', while SANART held its counterpart under the theme 'Multidisciplinary debates on the Aesthetic.' (Table 10). The 21st International Congress on Aesthetics was the first academic platform to address the aesthetic problems of marginalized countries, in particular the regions of East Africa and South America. These countries had not previously taken part in these academic discussions. At the SANART III. Congress on Aesthetics, Erzen emphasized that the cultural environment in Turkey had severely suffered and the

financial powers had become dominant in the decision-making processes in the production and sustaining of space in all senses of the term<sup>29</sup>. She states that the continuity of cultural and artistic environments need to be safeguarded against this urgent threat. The Congress was highly affected by the current local social and political issues.

<p><b>2019-IAA-POSSIBLE WORLDS IN CONTEMPORARY AESTHETIC BETWEEN HISTORY-GEOGRAPHY AND MEDIA</b></p>	<p>Philosophy and Humanity, Geopoliticala aesthetic, Philosophy and culture, Technology, Post-media, Architecture, Cultural practice, Activist practice, Public and private space, Global and local digital networks</p>
<p><b>2019-SANART-MULTIDISCIPLINARY DEBATES ON AESTHETIC (III-Aesthetic Congress)</b></p>	<p>Literature and aesthetics, City, nature and country, Architecture and aesthetics, Body and aesthetics, visual culture, Film and narrative, Museum, memory and archive, New Technologies, Media and Communication, Populism, politics and aesthetics, everyday life, Music and performing arts, Ethics, aesthetics and values</p>

Table 10: Themes and call text of IAA and SANART in 2019.

In 2023, the IAA called for the 22nd International Congress of Aesthetics in Brazil with the theme 'Contemporary Aesthetics; Dialogues through Art, Culture and Media'. The conference aimed to understand and share the experiences of different disciplines. The main intention was that culture and media studies should encompass not only the traditional topics of philosophical aesthetics, but also the activity of everyday life. The congress website visualized a call for an open discussion on 'decolonial aesthetics', and the aesthetics of non-western countries<sup>30</sup>.

### General Remarks and Conclusion

Focusing on the themes of the *Congresses of International Association for Aesthetics* (IAA) and the *Society for Aesthetics and Visual Culture* (SANART), our study analyzed the dynamic and static repetitions of the concepts in the congress themes and call texts. This thematic analysis provides an opportunity to question the areas of external and conceptual difference. At the same time, it grasped the understanding of the world and humanity through Turkey's aesthetic studies. Rethinking Gilles Deleuze's concepts of 'difference and repetition' reveals the dichotomies inherent in the terms of the binary oppositions western/nonwestern, global/local in the field of aesthetics. Convergence and divergence rather than opposition are read through the relationship of IAA and SANART, which complement each other. This study deals with the aesthetic approach of Turkey,

which has the potential for aesthetics, together with the aesthetic understanding of the whole. Instead of conventional categorization of ‘sameness’, the conceptual framework of the congresses have been grasped as a crucial process of ‘being’ - scholarly visualization of the the social, cultural and spatial, local as well as universal contexts. The study covers IAA and SANART associations as part of Deleuze’s concept of system. Each congress has been depicted as a continuous series. And each congress (serie) has been conceptualized and evaluated through the relation between the horizontal and vertical series.

The lectures of scholars provide an opportunity for a detailed analysis of the concepts in the congresses. Presentations by academics at the congresses will be an opportunity for in-depth analysis and interpretation of the concepts. For this reason, after the congress theme and the call texts, the next stage of analysis will be the authors' interpretation of these themes. A more comprehensive discourse analysis is required for the next stage of work. However, this study only covers the conceptual and thematic level. For this reason, its interpretation and evaluation are more limited.

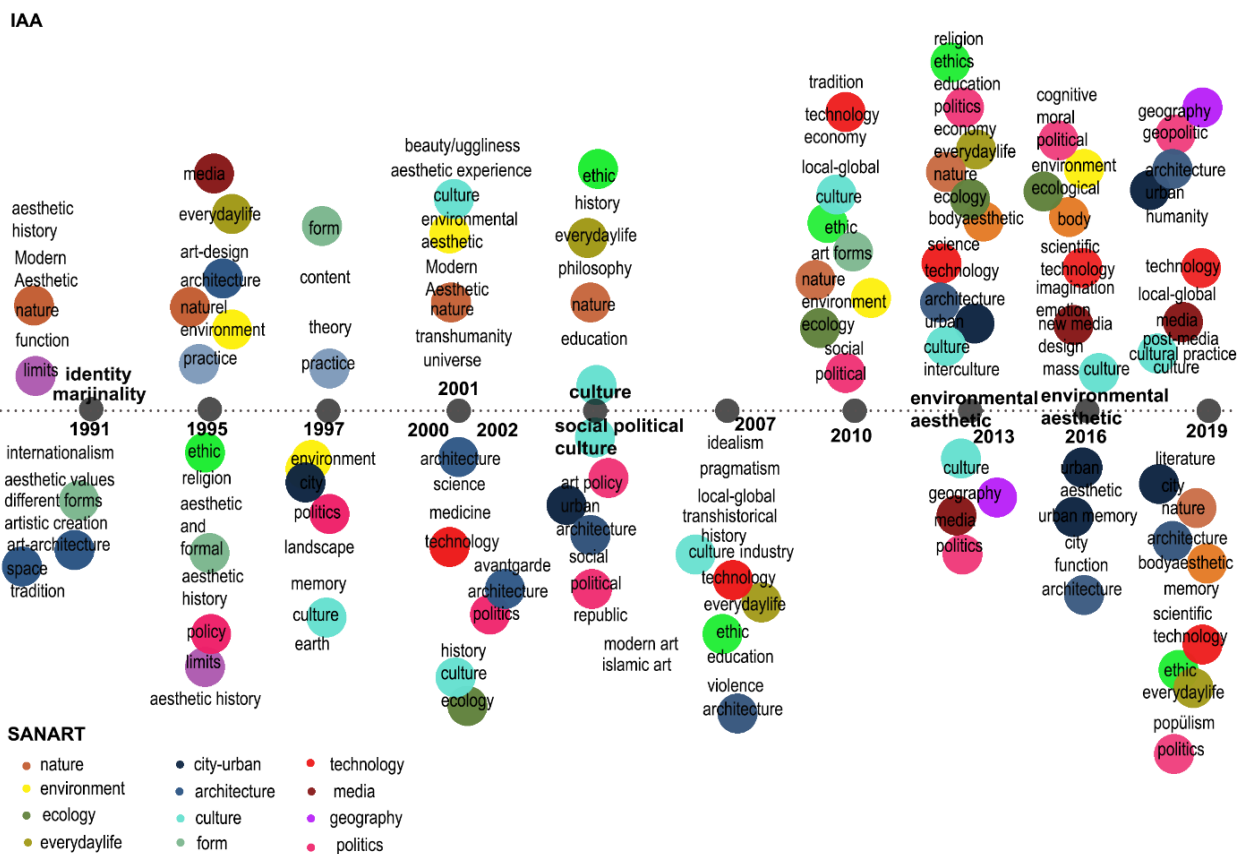


Fig. 4. All concepts in series.

**Series within itself:** Each congress has been especially evaluated within itself on a conceptual and thematic level (Fig. 4). Some of the concepts in the congresses contain difference and repetition at the semantic level (identity, marginality, culture, everyday life, religion, global and local, mass culture, decolonial aesthetic). Identity, culture and locality are similar, while everyday life

and religion are subject to repetition. Marginality is what is different on the semantic field. While mass culture is based on generalising, decolonial aesthetics questions difference. In the 1991 congresses, the relationship between aesthetics and marginality have emerged as decolonial aesthetics in 2022. Both the concepts and the themes are the field of study of the apparently different. According to Deleuze, no concept consists of a single piece or a single element. The multiplicity determines every concept complex. Each system is directly or indirectly related to each other. The series formed by the systems are also affected by this situation. These series are carriers of time and space. Therefore, every concept that emerges in the series is shaped both by the concepts it is associated with, and by the horizontal and vertical occurrences.

**Horizontal series:** Congresses include more general concepts such as 'nature, environment, ecology, everyday life, city, urban, architecture, culture, form, technology, media geography, politics'. Although the concepts repeated in the congress call for paper are a verbal repetition, they have potential. According to Deleuze, "...change is conceived in relation to fixed terms<sup>31</sup>" and maximum continuity is required for maximum difference. In this framework, themes with continuity between consecutive series are the areas of maximum difference, that is, change. In IAA congresses, the themes of nature, culture and technology provide continuity, while in SANART congresses, the city, architecture and politics are at the forefront (Fig. 5). IAA discusses change through culture, nature and technology, while SANART discusses change through the city, architecture and politics. These emerging themes and concepts are static repetitions. They are therefore considered as a result. For repetition it is necessary to look for internal differences. A more detailed reading can be made by examining the differences, which are caused by the repetition of the concepts, through the texts.

In the context of this study, the concept of culture, which has continuity between successive sequences, is the field of change through Deleuze's philosophy. In the first years of the 21st century, in the IAA congresses, culture is associated with broader themes such as history, modernity and the universe. In subsequent congresses, the concept is associated with specialised themes such as tradition, mass and geography. In the SANART call texts, culture is associated with politics, but more recently it has coexisted with the discourses of the cultural industry and interculturalism. The duality of geography and culture is also visible in this system. More in-depth studies are needed to question the changing relationship between culture and aesthetics.

According to Jale Erzen, aesthetic thought is increasingly concerned with the fields of architecture and the city<sup>32</sup>. The relationship of these fields to aesthetics is quite dominant in SANART's publications. In the IAA, this set of themes has had a continuity over the last 10 years. Politics also coexists with urban and architectural themes with almost the same lines of continuity. This situation contains an indication of the relationship between politics and urban and architectural aesthetics. In the SANART congress themes and call texts, the force of change and modification through the continuity of politics is quite dominant compared to the IAA.

The theory of aesthetics is the branch of philosophy that deals with the understanding of art and the beauty of nature<sup>33</sup>. The theme of nature forms the basis of aesthetics, especially in Western literature. The IAA has regularly

included this concept in its call texts. SANART, on the other hand, has analysed the relationship between aesthetics and nature through the built environment rather than the natural environment. Technology has been visible in aesthetic literature for the last 10 years. Cultural theorist Timothy Luke<sup>34</sup> defines the idea of tertiary nature, based on technology and information, while retaining the concepts of primary and secondary nature. While primary nature describes the characteristics of the natural world within physical geography, secondary nature is the social nature produced by humans. The relationship between tertiary nature and primary and secondary nature needs further study.

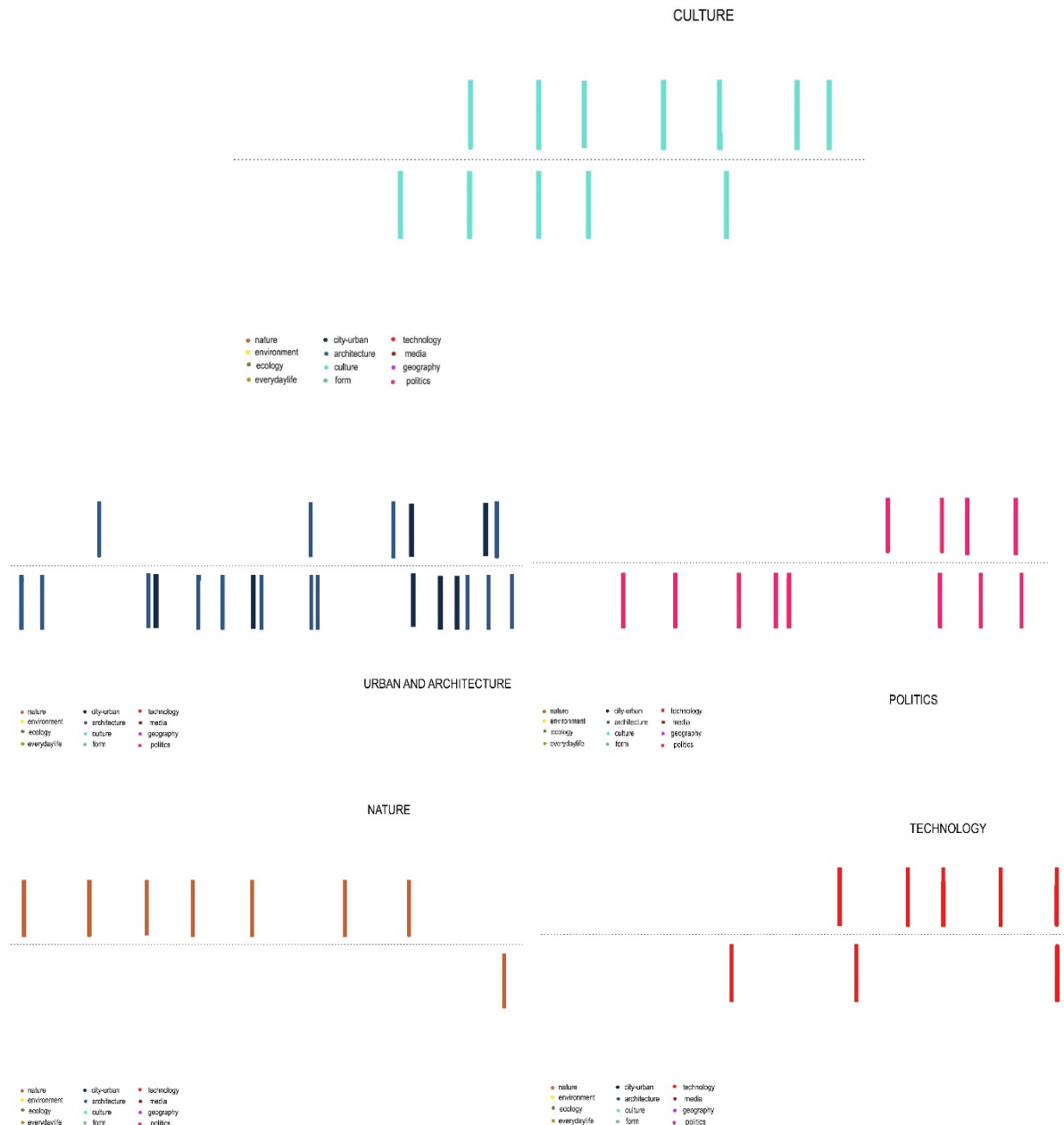


Figure 5 : Concepts with continuity.

**Vertical series:** IAA and SANART create themes and call for paper according to the problems of the time. The vertical series show the areas of difference within the aesthetics of the world. Culture-city and architecture can



read as common problem areas (Fig. 6). These large-scale topics can be considered as common problem areas in the globalizing world.

IAA

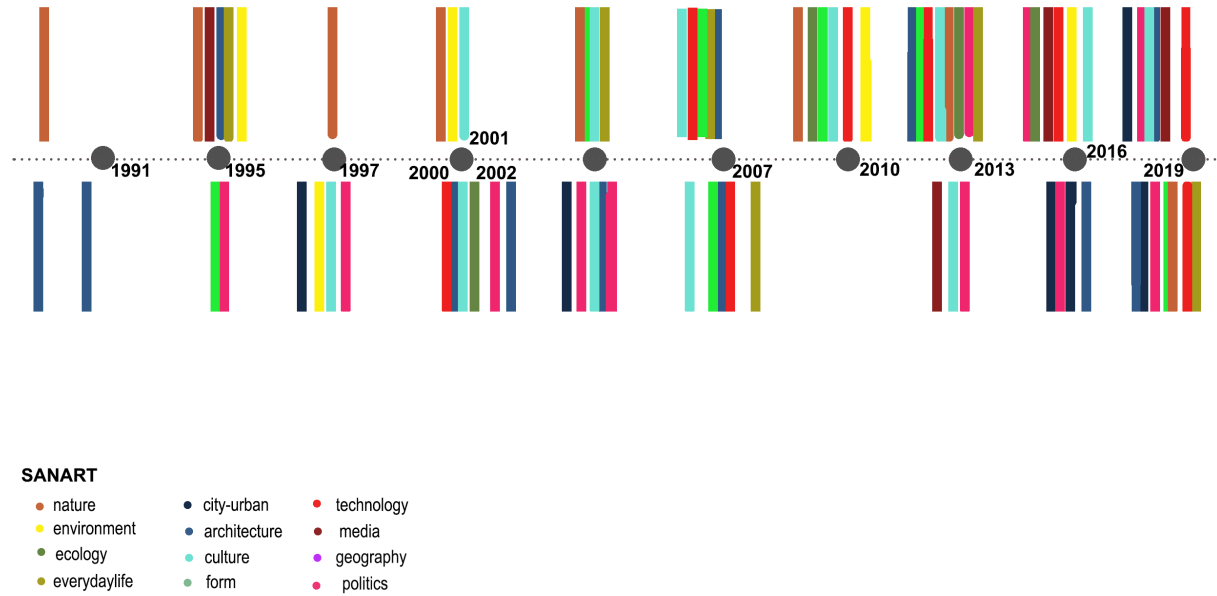


Fig. 6. Movement of concepts horizontally and vertically.

A simple thematic analysis of the congresses with a holistic perspective using Gilles Deleuze's 'philosophy of difference' offers alternative perspectives and approaches to multiplicity. This process supports the understanding of the process of 'becoming' both in the universal geography and in Turkey, and points out the dynamics and potentials as well as the contradictions of the changing world.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze (trans. Burcu Yalın and Emre Koyuncu), *Fark ve Tekrar* (Istanbul: Norgunk press, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Reinhart Kossellack (trans. Atilla Dirim), *Kavramlar Tarihi: Politik ve Sosyal Dilin Semantiği Üzerine Bir İnceleme*, (Istanbul: İletişim Press, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Deleuze, "Fark ve Tekrar" 20.

<sup>4</sup> Julia Hözl, "Temps perdu? On Transience," University of Bucharest Review (2009): 9-1.

<sup>5</sup> Hözl, , "Temps perdu? On Transience," 95-100.

<sup>6</sup> Deleuze, "Fark ve Tekrar."

<sup>7</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is philosophy?* (Newyork: Columbia University press, 1994), 21.

<sup>8</sup> Deleuze, "Fark ve Tekrar."

<sup>9</sup> Reinhart Kossellack (trans. Atilla Dirim), *Kavramlar Tarihi: Politik ve Sosyal Dilin Semantiği Üzerine Bir İnceleme*, (Istanbul: İletişim Press, 2020).

<sup>10</sup> Deleuze, "Fark ve Tekrar" 17.

<sup>11</sup> Gilles Deleuze (trans. Hakan Yücefer), *Bergsonculuk* (Istanbul: Otonom press, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> Deleuze, "Fark ve Tekrar" 21.

<sup>13</sup> Deleuze, "Fark ve Tekrar" 20.

- <sup>14</sup> Deleuze “*Bergsonculuk.*”
- <sup>15</sup> Deleuze, “*Fark ve Tekrar.*”
- <sup>16</sup> Deleuze, “*Fark ve Tekrar*” 43, 373.
- <sup>17</sup> Deleuze, “*Fark ve Tekrar*” 43
- <sup>18</sup> Deleuze, “*Fark ve Tekrar*” 163.
- <sup>19</sup> Deleuze, “*Fark ve Tekrar*” 163.
- <sup>20</sup> 1913 Berlin ‘Aesthetics and General Art Studies-1937 Paris ‘Aesthetics and Art Science’-1956 Venice-1960 Athens ‘Present Situation of Aesthetic Problems’-1964 Amsterdam ‘Inovation and Tradition’-1968 Upsala ‘Art and Society’-1972 Bucharest ‘Aesthetic and art for contemporary man’-1976 Darmstadt “Aesthetic, daily life and art”-1980 Dubrovnik “Physics, Techne, Poiesis”-1984 Montreal “Works of art and transformations of philosophy”-1988 Nottingham “Tradition and Innovation on Aesthetic.”
- <sup>21</sup> Jale Erzen 2016-2019 yılları arasında IAA’nın başkanlığını yapmıştır.
- <sup>22</sup> Hilde Heynen. (trans. Nalan Bahçekapılı and Rahmi Öğdül), *Mimarlık ve Modernite.*( İstanbul: Versun Press, 2011), 22.
- <sup>23</sup> Jale Erzen, “Önsöz,” in Jale Erzen (eds.), *Kimlik, Sınırsallık ve Mekân Sempozyumu 1992 Bildiriler Kitabı.* (Ankara: SANART Press, 1995), 2-3.
- <sup>24</sup> from visual culture association to aesthetics and culture association.
- <sup>25</sup> Jale Erzen, “Önsöz,” in Cana Bilsel (eds.), *80. Yılında Cumhuriyet’in Türkiye Kültürü Sempozyumu Bildiriler Kitabı.* (Ankara: SANART Press, 2007), 2-3.
- <sup>26</sup> Jale Erzen, “Önsöz,” in Jale Erzen (eds.), *17. Congress of Aesthetic.* (Ankara: SANART Press, 2008), 14-17.
- <sup>27</sup> Edward Lucie Smith, “Sempozyum Yorumu” in Jale Erzen (eds.), *Kimlik, Sınırsallık ve Mekân Sempozyumu 1992 Bildiriler Kitabı,* (Ankara: SANART Press, 1995), 37-43.
- <sup>28</sup> Jale Erzen, “Önsöz,” in Jale Erzen (eds.), *Mimarlıkta Estetik Düşünce.* (Ankara: SANART Press, 2010).
- <sup>29</sup> Jale Erzen, “Disiplinlerarası Estetik Tartışmalar,” in Murat Çelik and Özgür Yaren (eds.), *Mimarlıkta Estetik Düşünce.* (Ankara: SANART Press, 2021).
- <sup>30</sup> <http://ica2022.abrestetica.org.br/welcome/about/>, (accessed April 1, 2023).
- <sup>31</sup> Deleuze, “*Fark ve Tekrar*”21.
- <sup>32</sup> Jale Erzen, “Önsöz,” in Jale Erzen (eds.), *Mimarlıkta Estetik Düşünce.* (Ankara: SANART Press, 2010).
- <sup>33</sup> Arnold Berleant, “Çevre Estetiği Kuramı,” in Jale Erzen (eds.), *Sanat ve Çevre.* (Ankara: SANART Press, 2007).
- <sup>34</sup> Timothy W. Luke, “Simulated Sovereignty , Telematic Territoriality: the Political Economy of Cyberspace,” in Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (eds.), *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World.* (Londra: Sage press, 1999).

Reception date: 4th of April, 2023

Review date: 6th of June, 2023

Acceptance date: 13th of June, 2023