Chapter 7
Early Examples of Glitch Art in the Works of Vera Molnár

Melis Sucuoğlu Doğan
http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6183-2941
Ardahan University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Vera Molnár, who discovered computer art at an early stage in the 1960s and was one of the first female artists to work in this field, utilized algorithms and produced digital artworks. She developed a method called the "Molnárt System," which introduced a 1% degree of irregularity into her compositions. This method enabled her to incorporate deliberate distortions into her works, overlapping with the principles of Glitch art. This study will analyze how Molnár's digital works produced in the 1960s and 1970s intersect with Glitch art. Her works will be examined using visual analysis and literature review methods. The findings indicate that Molnár's works, created through deliberate distortion and randomness, can be regarded as early examples of Glitch art. In conclusion, it is observed that Molnár's works expand the boundaries between computer art and traditional painting, developing a new aesthetic approach. Furthermore, her art allows for a reevaluation within the context of Glitch art, thereby more clearly revealing her position within digital art.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the centuries, art has not only been an expression of aesthetic pursuit but also the most powerful means of communication reflecting the culture, values, beliefs, and imagination of societies. In the Middle Ages, iconography served as a representational language; in the Renaissance period, a humanist perspective emerged; and in modernism, abstract forms of expression shaped art both as a way of thinking and a representational tool. Each era and movement changed the function, form, and meaning of art; social events and the position of artists within these events have guided the definition of new social, political, and cultural dynamics of art. Especially after the Industrial Revolution, societies rapidly entered a process of modernization, and as a result, artists began to question traditional understandings of art. During this period, art moved beyond being a tool of individual expression and adopted new forms of representation by embracing political, social, and technological transformations. In this context, Wands (2006) states that the foundations of the computer revolution were also laid in the 19th century, a period marked by intense scientific progress. Charles Babbage, in 1834, designed the Analytical Engine, a mechanical computing machine considered a precursor of modern computers. Noting that inventions such as the telegraph, Morse code, keyboard for typewriters, telephone, Kodak camera, and film reel emerged in the same century, Wands emphasizes that these developments were harbingers of the mechanical and electronic media age (Wands, 2006, p. 20). Especially in the second half of the 19th century, as mechanization gained momentum and social structures changed, the aesthetic understanding in art also shifted, transforming the ways in which art was produced. In this context, in England, the 'Arts and Crafts' movement emerged as a response to mechanization and mass production. The artworks exhibited at the First London World Exhibition in 1851 raised concerns about the disappearance of handcraftsmanship, and this movement subsequently spread from England to North America, Europe, and Japan (Avcı Tuğal, 2018, p. 17).

By the 20th century, avant-garde movements emerged in art, and it began to be perceived not merely as a representational tool but also as an important component in societal transformation. During this period,