



## NEW GENERATION CHAOTIC SCENES: THE CHAPMANS AND YELLIN

YENI NESİL KAOTİK SAHNELER: THE CHAPMANS VE YELLIN

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### Abstract

Regardless of the art discipline to which it belongs or the material used, the artwork always hosts the presentation of a scene. These scenes may include figures, the serenity of nature, or the imaginary structure of dreams. The images and colors used can be elements that make the viewer feel happier or more depressed. But the only thing that does not change is the existence of a scene that the artist presents to the audience. In this context, it is not surprising that the understanding of consumption and motion, which dates back to the twenty-first century, takes place in chaotic scenes with positive or negative effects. A new generation of chaotic scenes that try to be defined through the example of Jack & Dinos Chapman brothers and Dustin Yellin, who differentiate themselves from their contemporaries and present their approaches to this chaos in different ways; has gained a solid place in contemporary art and has been diversified by being supported by other artists. The aim of this article is to compare the Chapman brothers and Dustin Yellin in order to reveal the scenes fed from the chaos of the same period; one side has dystopic and the other side has utopian approach. The Chapmans design a dystopic scene while presenting their chaos with dark and smudged colors, death, violence and destruction. Dustin Yellin, on the other hand, depicts the same chaos environment in a utopian way, using more relaxing colors, solution suggestions and individual examples of unity, as if creating a joy of life from all this chaos. By comparing the selected works of the sample artists, it will be shown how chaotic scenes exist in both ways.

**Keywords:** The Chapmans, Dustin Yellin, chaos, contemporary art, scenes

### Öz

Ait olduğu sanat disiplini ya da kullanılan malzeme her ne olursa olsun, sanat eseri her daim bir sahnenin sunumuna ev sahipliği yapmaktadır. Bu sahneler figürler, doğanın dinginliği ya da rüyaların hayalsi yapısını içerebilir. Kullanılan imgeler ve renkler izleyiciyi daha mutlu ya da daha depresif bir mekâna taşıyan unsurlar olabilir. Ancak değişmeyen tek şey, sanatçının izleyiciye sunduğu bir sahnenin varlığıdır. Bu bağlamda yirmi birinci yüzyıla gelen tüketim ve devinin anlayışının, sanat eserlerinde pozitif ya da negatif etkiler içeren kaotik sahnelerle yer alması şaşırtıcı değildir. Çağdaşları arasından sıyrılarak bu kaosa dair yaklaşımlarını farklı şekillerde izleyiciyle buluşturan Jack&Dinos Chapman kardeşler ile Dustin Yellin örneği üzerinden tanımlanmaya çalışan yeni nesil kaotik sahneler; çağdaş sanat içinde kendine sağlam bir yer edinmiş ve diğer sanatçılar tarafından da desteklenerek çeşitlenmeye başlamıştır. Bu makalede Chapman kardeşler ve Dustin Yellin'in karşılaştırılma amacı; aynı dönemin kaosundan beslenen sahnelerin ortaya çıkarılmasında, bir tarafın distopik diğer tarafın ütöpik yaklaşıma sahip olmasıdır. The Chapmans yaşadıkları kaos ortamını karanlık ver kirli renkler, ölüm, şiddet, yıkım gibi öğeler ile ortaya koyarken distopik bir sahne tasarlamaktadırlar. Dustin Yellin ise aynı kaos ortamını daha dinlendirici renkler, çözüm önerileri, birlik oluşturan birey örnekleri kullanarak, tüm bu kaostan bir yaşam sevinci çıkarırcasına ütöpik bir şekilde betimler. Örnek sanatçıların seçili eserlerinin karşılaştırılması yöntemi ile, kaotik sahnelerin her iki şekilde de nasıl var olduğu gösterilecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** The Chapmans, Dustin Yellin, kaos, çağdaş sanat, sahne

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## Introduction

Canvases, which are the scenes of painting, and walls brought together many scenes with the audience throughout the history of art. These scenes, which are changed and renewed with every art movement, are sometimes in motion figures, sometimes static nature and sometimes flying objects, as well as sculptures. The proliferation of mediums used in the creation of works of art brought along the colors, textures, effects and scenes that were not seen in classical art works. By the twenty-first century; “The form of visual arts is built on the principle of raising awareness and incorporating today's digital possibilities, video performances and similar technological applications. And art has evolved from the singularity of the plastic arts to a different plurality leading to their common use” (Göksay, 2013). This plurality effect has brought with it the fact that everything imaginable could be part of a scene, both in terms of material and the images that make up the scene.

New generation lifestyles and ways of thinking play a great role in the image choices of these scenes. Many situations have affected the way many artists think, question and produce; to illustrate; the rapid increase in consumption, the awareness of the replacement of a new one, and the fact that it becomes part of the autonomous system of the individual to the repeated and ordinary violence and the desperate polluting of the living space. As a result of this, the artist who tries to raise awareness, who wants change, offers alternative solutions and rebels while doing all of this, even assuming a threatening style; sometimes utopian and sometimes dystopian fictions.

The images that make up the scenes are chosen from the elements that will characterize the concepts, norms and approaches created by the twenty-first century, precisely to serve this questioning and creation process. By giving new meanings to the contradictions such as right, wrong, good, bad, useful, harmful, individual, communal, positive, negative, active, passive; a real duality is being created. The image representing each concept, taking place where it should not be, describes the path to the result / end. How this end will be, depends entirely on the artist's approach.

Likewise, the material selection made while creating scenes changes and develops simultaneously with the advances in technology. Artists sometimes use a combination of classic and modern, sometimes they use only the materials of the new age.

## Jack and Dinos Chapman

Jake and Dinos Chapman brothers are one of the best examples of these absurd scenes, which have a significant majority in twenty-first century works of art; “Their tableaux of twentieth-century ruin take on everything from the fast-food industry to our culture’s preoccupation with war and violence. Deft in a range of media, which includes printmaking, painting and sculpture, the Chapmans often contaminate or remake an existing artwork to challenge our most valued beliefs (Southern, 2017).



Figure 1. 'We are Artists', 1991 (Chapman & Chapman, 2008)

While the scenes produced by the Chapmans are harshly criticizing the implications of the age, they use the implications of the age as images, but present these images with the sub textual destruction of the conventional image. In the *Fucking Hell* (see Figure 2), the Chapmans revealed the exorcism of Western civilization in the most pathetic way. The monumentality of the work consisting of thousands of pieces, the rigorous processing of the savagery and details it represents, deserve the shocking effect it has on the audience. The depictions of the scene where the toys representing the Nazi soldiers surreal violence refers to genocide (Angelopoulou, 2018). Presented as an Anti-Manifesto at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, their first personal installations using mud on the wall, *We are Artists* (1991) (see Figure 1), continued with examples of iconoclastic sculptures, prints and installations examining the Chapman brothers' contemporary politics, religion and morality is the first example of their work. Chapmans, who uses the contradictions mentioned in the introduction together to create new meanings and thus create a continuum of chaos, creating a chaos; at the same time they use the poles of beauty and pain, humor and fear, the sublime and heresy, demonic and infantile, giving the viewer the role of a disturbing voyeur (Jake&Dinos Chapman, 2018). Known as *En Les Enfants Terribles* in the art world, the brothers produce unusual and deliberately shocking works of art for nearly thirty years. After becoming part of the *Young British Artists* in the 1990s, they expanded their production size further and became known for their wide range of installations consisting of many different mediums. These gigantic installations are presented to the audience as a mass media, especially with thoughtful analysis of modern subjects, childish and disturbing humorous perspectives, and images of obscene and graphic violence (Zurakhinsky, 2018).

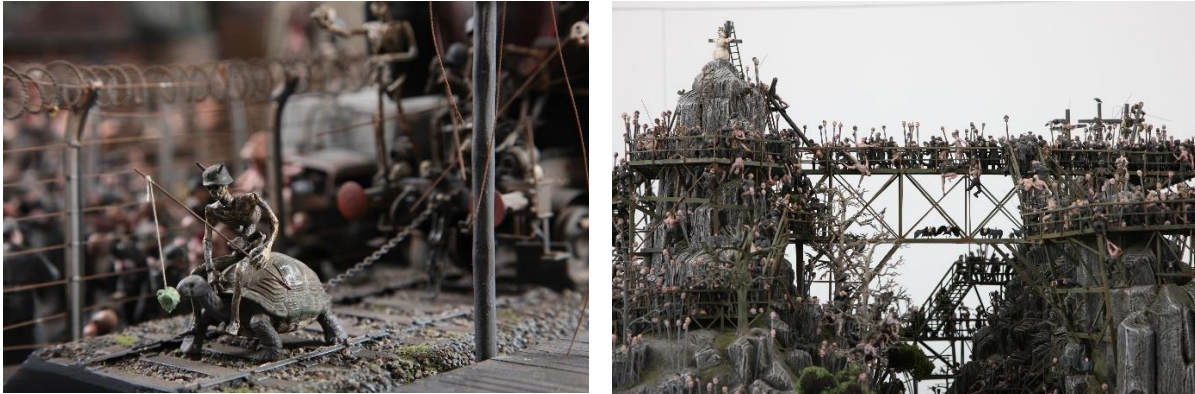


Figure 2. 'Fucking Hell', 2008, Details (Chapman & Chapman, 2008).

Chapmans' works have references to works of great importance in the history of art. In addition, it is clearly seen in their installation *Hell* (2000) and *Fucking Hell* (2008) that they attached great importance to details (See Figure 2 and 3). Although they have a content that bothers the audience deeply, these installations also impress with their detailed craftsmanship. Also interesting are the ways in which the concept of consumption, one of the facts of the twenty-first century, is processed; Like *The Chapman Family Collection* (2002), where *Ronald McDonald* is presented as an ancient god. (see Figure 4). Like other members of the *Young British Artists*, their work was cheerless and unpleasant, but the brothers continued to deal with the crime-provoking issues, which were obviously open to discussion, and consciously began to promote themselves more and more.



Figure 3. 'Hell', 2000, Details (Chapman & Chapman, 2008)

This publicity process led to many accusations, and their works began to be described as immoral and illegal, and they were even told that they should not be exhibited in public places.



Figure 4. 'The Chapman Family Collection', 2002 (Chapman & Chapman, 2008)

All of this could not stop the Chapmans, but they continued to present their arguments in different ways. They developed original artworks by other artists, including Adolf Hitler and a series of unknown portrait painter of the 18th and 19th centuries, by making permanent changes to them. The brothers, who also purchased a series of Goya printings, made many changes on these works. The persistence of these changes for development has been a clear example of artistic vandalism; one of the taboos of the art world. But the aim of all these actions for them was to provide visualization of violence, to draw attention to issues such as the role of art in society, the preservation of historical heritage, and the realization of an artistic action for this purpose (Zurakhinsky, 2018).

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Figure 5. 'Like a Dog Returns to its Vomit', 2005, No.1 (on left), No.5 (on mid), No.7 (on right) (Chapman & Chapman, 2008)

For example, the purpose of their work with Hitler's watercolors was to investigate the idea that a work of art should contain information about the person who made it, and to show the audience that Hitler's prominent evil was not represented in any of these paintings. They added small rainbows and similar motifs on these historical documents and made them their own, made them contemporary and they said that for this study; "The idea of Hitler turning in his grave

because we painted rainbows on his pictures is fantastically pleasurable” (Risley, 2014). On the series called *Like a dog returns to its vomit* (2005) (see Figure 5), which developed and modified from Goya's *Disasters of War* and *Los Caprichos* print editions, they used their own colorful iconography, they manipulated these editions and even made additions to the series. These iconographic evaluations have resulted in the re-creation of higher art while referring to values from religion to capitalism, the Duchampian dialogue of art writing, the destruction of high art, the sacred of art history.

When all these are examined, Jack and Dinos Chapman create scenes using detailed miniature figures, variable iconographic elements, images of actual unrealized war, surreal approaches and violent demonstrations that can be described as nightmares, consumption and consumer descriptions and they record the post-apocalyptic snaps of the twenty-first century, though unusual.



Figure 6. ‘in Our Dreams We have Seen Another World’, 2013, Details (Chapman & Chapman, 2008)



Figure 7. ‘Life is Long and Drawn out Death’, 2016, Details (Chapman & Chapman, 2008)

### Dustin Yellin

Yellin, who has never studied art in any discipline, incarcerates the scenes he defines as frozen cinema into glass blocks. The artist, who makes collages with various images obtained from paints and prints, places these images among hundreds of glass layers and produces large-scale installations that give a three-dimensional effect. Sometimes, these installations similar to the natural landscape when viewed from a wide angle; when closely examined, it is home to imaginary scenes containing thousands of different images. Although sometimes working under different themes, working with different organizations, Yellin often provides recipe for escape from the chaos of the twenty-first century through scenes in which many figures come together and build machines. This machine sometimes shows itself as a time machine and sometimes as a submarine rocket. “Regardless of the subject matter, each work explores our destiny in the Anthropocene and the permanent traces we will leave on Earth” (Sierzputowski, 2019).



Figure 8. ‘Ceremony to Build a Rocket on Floating Disc’, 2017 (Details on right) (Yellin, Ceremony to Build a Rocket on Floating Disc, 2017)

The artist, who does not prefer to talk about his works, wrote a mini-essay as follows;

“concerning the difficulty of saying something about what I do:

Is it a copout to say the work speaks for itself?

I feel like it is

But I’m also awful talking about what the work is.

So sometimes I say it speaks for itself

But what does that even mean?

However, he does offer some advice:

First and foremost, they’re massive see-through blocks

And that’s one way to read them, listen to them speaking

As massive see through blocks.

Another is to listen to what's inside them  
 The forms, the clippings, the dead things, the painted things,  
 Frozen between the layers of glass, what I've called  
 The captured and frozen dynamism of culture" (Waldman, 2014).



Figure 9. 'Astronauts Building a Rocket Under the Sea', 2017 (Yellin, *Astronauts Building a Rocket Under the Sea*, 2017)



Figure 10. 'Astronauts Building a Rocket Under the Sea', 2017, Details (*Yellin, Astronauts Building a Rocket Under the Sea*, 2017)

The artist cuts the images he used for collages from many different sources such as art history books, magazines, encyclopedias and creates worlds to be lost in. For these images, which are part of the bond he tries to establish with the audience. In Yellin's words;



“Full boxes of toys, memories and dreams. Free associations of images that reproduce a conscience. But also maps to retrace our era, a micro encyclopedia of our cultural history. The forms, the clippings, the dead things, the painted things, frozen between layers of glass, what I’ve called. The captured and frozen *dynamism* of culture” (Psychogeographies, i collages tridimensionali di Dustin Yellin, 2017).



Figure 11. ‘Psychogeography No:43’, 2014 (on left), ‘Psychogeography No:45’, 2014 (on right) (Yellin, 2014)

Although the scenes Yellin depicts the chaos of the twenty-first century conform to the definition of chaos visually, it is seen that his approach is not to create a panic on the audience, but on the contrary it is seen that he offers utopian but not realistic solutions that might be realistic one day and offers a conscientious action plan. The world in which he reacts and takes the subject is the same as the other artists, but the solution and the way he presents, distinguishes him from other artists. Instead of introducing images into a new chaos environment and creating a dystopic reflection, he uses planned, detailed and reminiscent themes and reveals a romantic approach that shows he still has hope for the world he lives in. The *Psychogeographies* series, which was the result of a project with New York City Ballet, was sold in a very short period of time after meeting with the audience and Yellin reported that almost all of the income from it would go to *Pioneer Works*, where he was the founder. Pioneer Work, a non-profit cultural center in Red Hook, New York, aims to create communities through arts and sciences to create an open-minded and inspiring world (Collins, 2015). The fact that he uses his income in this way shows that he still has hope for change.



Figure 12. 'Migration in Four Parts' 2017 (Yellin, Migration in Four Parts, 2017)



Figure 13. 'Migration in Four Parts' 2017, Details (Yellin, Migration in Four Parts, 2017)

In an interview with *The Wild Magazine*, Yellin said that he saw hundreds of images as a whole, but first separated them, grouped them and then reunited them. but he makes the distinction that seeing these images as a whole does not mean that they see them as singular, single individuals. Stating that he likes to write, the artist sees this integrity as a brilliant poem of about two tones like a poem he wrote before. However, he adds that it is difficult to talk about his work, so he leaves it to other people. Yellin states that his works are definitely not autobiographical and that is more about the collective unconscious of human species, and he defines his glass masses as a heavy microscope slide that would be the road map of our culture and heritage to the children of the future (Furman, 2016).

### Conclusion

Art has always contained scenes, but as in the case of the Chapman brothers and Yellin, the new generation of scenes reveals the realities of their era with images that make them unreal and abstract. The artists present these scenes, which could be defined as utopian and/or dystopian,

to the audience with an unrealistic approach within their own perceptions and including the realities of their era. Artists; reveals the inevitable realities like consumption, copying, technology-driven individuality, social organizations, identity problems, political processes, the existence of the individual in the virtual environment while abstracting himself, globalization going wrong, environmental pollution, climate changes, oil and the problem of clean water that is likely to emerge in the near future of the twenty-first century by creating their own chaotic environments. They also convey the awareness and solution suggestions about this environment to the audience through these works. While Jack and Dinos Chapman show this awareness they want to put forward by creating critical installations by using the images that are the cause of this chaos, Yellin combines and presents his narratives about the point of this chaos environment with sarcastic solution proposals. In other words, on the one hand Jack and Dinos Chapman describe the modern chaos environment in which they live in the most negative way possible by using smudged colors, elements representing death and destruction, violent mini-scenes, deformed or shattered bodies. The result is a complete dystopia. However, Dustin Yellin uses softer and moderate colors to describe the same modern chaos environment, organizing hopeful group scenes for salvation by bringing together culturally and economically diverse individuals. He brings together a solution-oriented plan from elements that cannot normally come together. He describes the world of modern chaos that is gradually lost in consumption in the most utopian way possible.

Chapmans visualize the elements as part of the apocalypse that they think will cause the apocalypse in their installations by using a painful, disturbing style and a sense of dark humor. This manifests itself in the reinterpretation of each image that is part of the work and its placement in scenarios thought to be the cause. These surreal scenes, which can be described as dystopic, have an attitude that threatens the audience, also the institutions or individuals represented by the image depending on the images used. This often results in brothers being subjected to criticism or even legal processes by certain circles. Despite all this, Chapmans has continued to maintain this heavy critical attitude for a long time and continues to bring the chaos of their dreams to the audience. In addition to the menacing stance of the installations, elements and scenes that can panic and disturb the audience are indispensable to Jack and Dinos Chapman. But what makes them attractive at the same time is precisely the presence of these chaotic and dark scenes.

In the works of Dustin Yellin, the chaotic structure of the scenes revealed by the layers is slightly different from Chapmans. These overlapping scenes with very different images create a complex and chaotic effect with the help of technique but unlike the Chapman brothers, it can be said that he has a more individual-oriented and more relaxing and intriguing effect on the audience. The images used do not belong at any time and appear to be randomly selected. The viewer's focus is more on the blue and soothing effect of the scenes that these images come together. These scenes refer to the utopian solutions and the way people come together and find a way out, in contrast to their isolation at the modern age. The post-apocalyptic effect is different than ever before. Of course, some images placed between the great scene give clues that the situation is disturbing and that something must be done as soon as possible, but this does not prevent the overall effect.

For the new generation of artists, these two examples can be seen as pioneers. Considering both the material they use and the way they use the material, and the way the chaotic scenes are presented to the audience; both of the examples aforementioned, reveal the fact that,

scenes could be both utopic and dystopic. Actually; although all these artists had lived in the same period facing with same realities, each had used scenes according to their artistic approaches; utopic vs. dystopic.

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