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LET'S GET OUT OF THE WORKSHOP!

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Introduction

The subject of the report is composed of the method developed together with the students; the study, the critical studies and practices done together with the students and the analysis of the evaluation processes in the "Main Studio-Sculpture" course that I conduct in the department of art education.

The teacher candidates who are expected to give visual and plastic arts education in the elementary or high schools in Turkey take various studio courses such as painting, sculpture, ceramics, graphics, printing arts and photography. The sculpture course is one of the high credit courses, which will be taken during a whole day of a week for 6 semesters in the case that the student chooses this course as the main studio course.

In this paper, the experimental sculpture course studies that I conduct together with my students during a 14-week semester and the results of these studies were examined. In the sample study; written and visual document evaluations, and brain storming studies were carried out in the studio with the students according to their profiles and interest perspectives. The subjects such as current art expressions, technology's place in our lives and the environment prepared by technology for next generations as well as the conventional art of sculpture were opened to discussion in order to lead the young teacher candidates to multi-directional thoughts. After these studies, we decided that the place where students would reflect their expressions would be the school building and schoolyard. The study program was formed on a mutual axis but with completely free individual choices. Regardless of any size or material limitations, every step was recorded and reviewed in regular meetings attended by everyone.

Student readiness

In Turkey, the teacher candidates who will give visual and plastic arts education in the elementary or high schools, after they graduate from high school, apply to the aptitude tests of the departments of art education with the grades they get from the general student selection exam. While the contents and the stages of these aptitude tests differ from university to university, they basically include various applied test stages based on measuring student's level of visual perception and his capacity in basic mental processes. In the first year of the program, the student takes the courses like perspective, drawing, basic design and art history in addition to Introduction to Pedagogy, Turkish Language and Foreign Language.

In the second year, students choose their high credit field courses. These high credit studio courses are painting, sculpture, ceramics, graphics, printing arts and photography and they are taken during a whole day of a week for 14 weeks. In addition to these main studio courses, students also follow elective studio courses, theoretical art courses and pedagogy courses. In their last year in the program, students participate in the art courses in elementary and high schools for a day every week and assist the responsible teacher in order to consolidate their professional proficiency in classroom environment. This course, called teaching practice is the "real world" in which the teacher candidate applies the theoretical knowledge and practical skills, which he acquires during his education in university, together with students in classroom environment.

The personal experience which I took as the subject of this paper is based on the studies which I carried out with the student group who took sculpture as their main studio for two semesters in their second year and which we carried out for 14 weeks in their first semester of the third year. Although the main studio courses chosen by students are followed by the same faculty member for 3 years, courses may be conducted under different faculty members' responsibility depending on the changing conditions. The students who took the sculpture course that I instruct in their third year were a group who took the basic sculpture education with another instructor for the preceding two semesters. In the first meetings with the students, we examined their sculptures and studies prepared in the preceding year in order to understand their readiness levels. On the basis of these, the design orientations and technical skills of students were discussed. Written literature, visual samples and artist examinations were carried out in order to create an environment which will enable the students to review their artistic expression styles in general and their knowledge of the art of sculpture in particular.

I observed that the students took the modeling with clay education with both live and material models during their sculpture education. In addition, we examined the abstract modeling studies with clay of the students. Students explained that they take the form as a problem according to the composition principles and that they did basic problem exercises such as the use of light and shade values depending on the design and deciding on the balance of volume and void. It was observed that the students' ability to perceive the volume and reflecting it according to the design was at the desired level. Students also stated that they carried out plaster molding studies after the modeling. These polyester and cement sculptures cast into moulds were examined.

After this discussion, I observed that students, although rarely, used the expression that "the real sculpture" while answering the questions directed in order to understand students' views and proficiency about the contemporary art expressions or the artworks of contemporary sculpture produced using different materials. When I asked them to explain this expression, I saw that they meant the stone and wooden sculpted or molding figures, or abstract forms with "the real sculpture". I think that the reason why students thought of only conventional materials and forms when I said sculpture is that the fact that the sculptures seen in the cities we live in are realistic sculptures themed about "victory" or "bravery" and the sculptures rarely seen in the exhibitions are interpretation studies exhibited on pedestals limits the idea of sculpture.

Literature and Visual Studies

We spared the next several weeks of the course to the examination of literature and visual samples about the theories, artists, biennials and exhibitions of the contemporary and current art. The visual samples and internet sources that I prepared for the course presented a rich panorama for that end.

In addition, we made general examinations about the place of the art of sculpture in art education practices and about the alternative practices while scanning the research subjects and publications of the national and international art education institutions. Students were especially interested in the installations designed for interior and exterior spaces in the projects examined. In these projects we saw that the collective projects carried out by the children and teachers in the school building, schoolyard or city provided a free study environment for both sides. I observed that the students who examined the performance practices which are directed to change the place, attract the attentions of the passersby and lead them to interact rather than being just for exhibition used statements such as "Actually we could do something like that for the entrance of our department", "How interesting, and what's more, it has been made of a simple material, it looks so different" or "It would be interesting if a study like this took place in our campus".

I received a rich feedback about the "Public Art" subject which I gave as a research assignment in a study field which would attract students' interests, excite them and expand their perspectives. Students came to class having selected the works and artists they liked from the websites, written sources and catalogues I had recommended. When I asked students to inform us about their research subjects, I observed that they emphasized the works' properties such "inside from the life", "natural", "impresses the audience", "interacts with the audience", "remarkable, exciting", "makes the place more special" while they explain the works they liked.

One of the students was interested in the arrangement work which he saw in one of the books and in which the reflections created by mirrors are used in a park. She focused on an exterior space installation which created new spaces in the existing space and invited the audience into a game with its different dimensions and depths.

Considering the fact that mirror or reflection arouses the reflex to look oneself, she illustrated the works he can do with sketches. This student said that after he formed the main construction he designed, she could place the mirrors, which she could use in pieces or as a whole, in particular places in the school. She stated that she thought, from the idea that these places could be used as "message spots", students could use this work as a personal message center if she left a pen which can write on mirror with the work. Later, the messages gathered could be recorded and therefore an anonymous text or a visual composition could be documented.

Another student was impressed by an artist who produces compositions created with shadow images in interior spaces. Shadows which can be created on the walls in a dim environment by limiting a light source according to the desired design could be interesting. The works and techniques of the artists who produce such works were examined. The student who was interested in this subject also made researches for the solution of this technique by building a little mechanism. He discovered that the shadows he could reflect on the walls would attract the attention of the audience and create dramatic effects in the long and high-ceiled corridors of our school. During this study carried out as a group around a table, we listened to every single individual's

suggestions, developed these ideas, criticized them and eliminated some of them. During these discussions, I avoided to assume a directive role and took part as just another member of the group; with the questions I asked, I enabled that the ideas flowed towards different directions and tried to motivate the students who remained passive by drawing their attentions. Sometimes I pointed a deficiency of a student's suggestion, and sometimes another student pointed a deficiency of my comment, and all of these processes were in the form of a brain storming.

I tried to draw attention to the importance of recording these productive processes with sketches or short notes. Being aware of that this process is an additive one and that an idea that we eliminated could be expanded in terms of another concept in the future, we experienced an active process.

Experimental Works: Dressing Trees

Another design which attracted students' attention in their researches was a work in which the artist covered a large and indoor space, together with its ceilings and floors, with upholstery fabric. In the photographs and videos we have examined, the audience was entering into a colorful polka-dotted, flowered world in which butterflies were flying, was walking on that world, nearly flying and passing through the corridors, rooms and halls. It was obvious that this large indoor space was chosen especially for this work and it left an unreal and fairy tale impression in the audience. Or, the artist made the audience walk in a world of fabric which had the quite traditional pattern that could be chosen for classic furniture, and made feel that this gloomy but still intriguing atmosphere was actually an inner world that we were bundled up or we melted and sank into the walls. The idea of dressing a place with the fabrics which created this surreal world and using of absurd was a point that led students to different suggestions.



The experimental model and the photomontage sketch for the project "Dressing Trees"

In order to develop the "where can we do a work and how?" search which came out of the idea of dressing the place, we said "let's get out of the studio!" and after glancing at our school building we went out to the schoolyard. Every single student who looked around himself with a different eye approached to the particular spaces attracting him and practice suggestions by taking photographs and drawing sketches. The comfortable dialogue environment outside of the studio and students' freedom to use the spaces around them as their study environment as they wish enabled students to come up with many different suggestions. I relieved the students and told them to neglect the technical limitations which were sometimes expressed in their questions like "but how can we manage that, how can we find this material, how durable will it be, how can we mount this?" I told them that what was important for us was to come up with designs which were original, aesthetically delightful, and remarkable or which included a message. The project drawings of the students who accepted themselves as designers and saw that the technical limitations were not binding continued in our studio. The large scale print-outs of the photographs were taken, the projects drawn were assembled, criticisms were done, some projects were eliminated in terms of some factors like designs' meaning aspects and relations to the environment and audience, and some of them were added to the portfolios as Future Project.

After this process, we all agreed upon the first dressing project which as we all believed was applicable with our current conditions. Students thought that they could dress the long and branchless stems of the high and old pine trees which surrounded our school building. They stated that they wanted the colorful, patterned stems which surrounded the school building to be seen as “treated” and “touched by the students” when looked from far. They thought that this design would be a sign which added difference to a school which gave art education. Model and photomontage studies for this work were carried out. Factors such as technical calculations, fabric types which would create an effective visuality, the covering method and the possibilities of being effected by external conditions were also taken into consideration. After all these, it was decided that this work would be applied in the beginning of the spring and be removed in the autumn.

Experimental Works: Birdhouses

I have overheard some conversations during the studies we carried out in the schoolyard. Students realized a few wooden birdhouses hanged on to the trees while they were examining the trees which they would dress. These birdhouses, as something which did not belong to the tree, were camouflaged among the branches and I realized that the students who were talking about the function of the birdhouse were disposed to use their imaginations on this architectural structure. While we were examining the birdhouses hanged on to the trees, we thought that we could also design birdhouses which could serve the same function but which would be designed to have authentic properties with their distinct designs.

After completing the project works of “dressing the trees”, the planning of original birdhouses which would be designed by every student according to his imagination started. We put in order some certain criteria which we had to take into consideration: The birdhouses had to have the technical durability for being exhibited outdoors. They had to have both functional and original designs. While being hanged on to the trees, they also had to attract attention of the passerby audiences and affect them aesthetically. As distinct from the Dressing Trees which was a collective work, an individual design and production process was followed in the Bird Houses. Students made explanations presenting their drawing and models in the group, answered criticisms, and some of them made changes in their designs due to the feedbacks. The projects which developed in this way were completed after a 3-4 weeks of course. Here, I want to exemplify some works of which the photographs of the birdhouses that we decided to hang on to the trees in the beginning of the spring were included in this paper. The birdhouse in the first sample was created based on the structure of a traditional string musical instrument, which is called “saz” in Turkish. The student developed his design on the theme of “sound and music” thinking the birds’ singing. The idea that the “Saz” constitutes a safe shelter for the birds producing music with their singings was found to be original. The student who thought that this instrument, which he would tie from its stem to the tree and he would hang down, would also be found to be interesting by the audience, made some additions to his design. He added hemp fibers to the main body part of the instrument, plaited these fibers and made this part like a woman’s head. Student explained the reason why he wanted to make a such change stating that he wanted to add a surprising and absurd interpretation of his own to the structure of the ready instrument.



Examples of the birdhouses

Another example is the design of the student who focused on the “time” theme. Student hanged the metal plate on which he wrote about the time theme on to the birdhouse’s bottom part. She placed a clock dial he designed into the front part of the birdhouse. She opened an entrance through which the birds can enter to or leave the house under the clock dial. She hanged down the metal plate, on which the text was written, with the help of two thin chains fixed to the two sides of the birdhouse so that the metal plate was at the eye level of a person who has an average height. Therefore, other students also would be able to read this essay. In his explanation student said he expected that the house would have a special meaning since it would be the place in which birds’ lives would start every spring and that he believed that this cycle would be repeated every spring.

Another student based his design on the Turkish expression that “the female bird makes the home”. The student, who used the image of a traditional kitchen cupboard as the symbol she associated with the ideas of “motherhood”, “feeding”, “protection, placed a lace cover, fork and spoons in a wooden box which had covers and a small shelf. She opened an entrance through which the birds can enter to or leave in front of the box. He stated she thought that the birdhouse which she painted with vivid colors would seem salient among the pine branches.

Among the houses developed in this project, very distinct designs such as figurative elements and architectural structure interpretations were also actualized. Students carried out this project with pleasure since the birdhouses would be exhibited with their aesthetical aspects as well as their practical functions.

Project: Flying Acrobats

The last project carried out by the students was a collective design that we exhibited in the school building. While walking in the corridors of the school, students stated that the exhibited art works in the school building were only paintings and graphic designs hanged on to the walls and that on the contrary they wanted to produce a work that took the place, changed it and occupied a place. During this walk, photographs were taken, suggestions were listened and ideas were developed. In order to start the process which would lead us to the design, we decided to choose the space formed by the stairs in the opposite direction of the main entrance of the building while they elevate among the floors as the study site. This space was a place around which one turned while walking down or up through the stairs and which was one of the places having the most intense liveliness. Therefore, the suggestions focused on creating an installation using various objects which can be hanged from up. It was said that the objects could be seen as if flying by using fishing string as the connecting element.

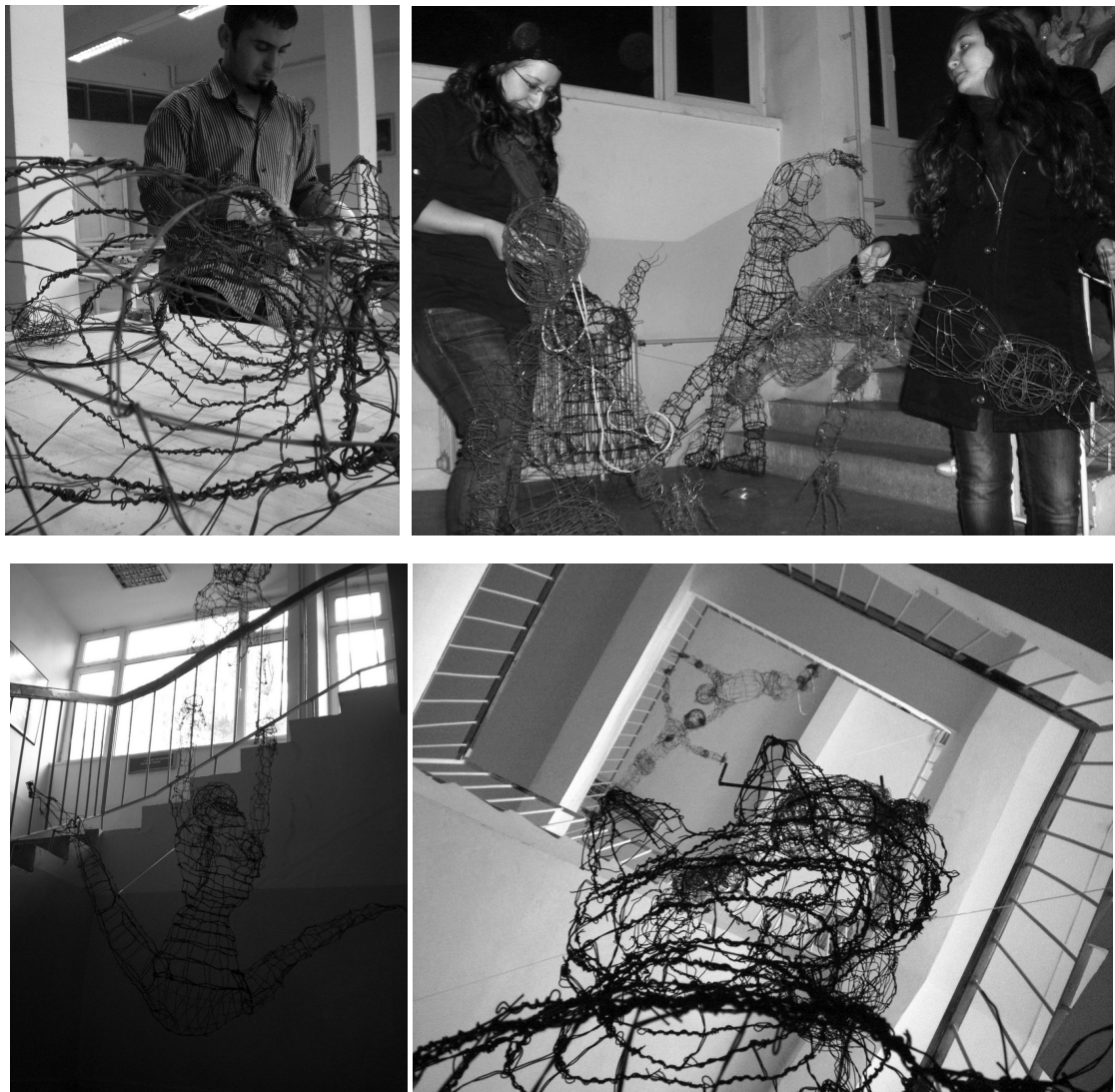


Project Place

Hereupon, students started to develop the “flying” theme. This stairwell was enlightened by large windows and only sky could be seen from the windows. Therefore, a design that would create the flying sensation in the students who entered into and left classrooms as a routine daily activity was developed. Students had to see a

“human figure” which they could identify with themselves when they entered into the building and walked down or up through the stairs. Students thought to model these flying figures, to take moulds and then to cast them with polyester. However, on the montages we did on the photographs, we observed that these figures threw the sensation of void out of focus with their masses. These figures had to be light and ascend to the sky seen in the background. Students wanted the figures to be able to be defined and their movements to be able to be seen but at the same time they wanted them to be transparent. What kind of material should have they used? When looked at the drawings, we saw that these figures were modeled with lines. When we fictionally carried these drawings to our real study site, we saw that we could provide this effect with the help of the constructions formed by thin cables. Therefore, the figures would have permeable volume and while describing the form, they would also be seen as if they were flying. Students wanted to create such an illusion.

While producing their figures, some students suggested that one student’s figure could be connected to the other’s. Therefore, these figures flying in the air could jump to each other, one figure could catch the other and they could hold hands just like the acrobats in the circuses. After that, we started to call these figures as “flying acrobats”. Students structured their acrobats keeping their sizes, ratio and proportions as real. Students who acquired easily pliable cables, shaped these cables as a firm braiding in order to build a durable construction.



Views of production, montage and result

After the figures’ construction was completed, students fictionalized the figures’ movements which they would compose. Then they moved onto the process of binding the figures to the fishing strings and fixing them according to the desired movements. Two figures which would be placed between the ground and the first floors were forming a composition by holding hands and were swinging in the air. Students told that they

planned that these figures would be in an interaction with the audience and that they would be swinging when touched. Another pair wanted to animate two acrobats who jumped to each other in the air. For that, the heads, arms and feet were fixed to the railing with the help of the fishing string. During these fiction works were carried out, I observed that the attention and the questions of the students who participated as audience helped the students who did the works to actualize a pleasant construction. The fact that the students could answer many questions with confident explanations was productive not only in terms of the project's production and result aims but also in terms of the providing various dialogue environments during the all process. During this construction not only the students' but also the teachers' questions and suggestions were taken into consideration. Seeing that the audience was interested in these acrobats and watching their reactions right after the work was completed had an effect which increased students' self-confidence. After a few days and weeks students started to look at their completed composition in a different way. They continued to speak on the emphasis or elements which could be added or changed. Different places and themes for new installations which could be done in the building appeared and were criticized.

General Outcomes

I can summarize the inferences I reached through these experiences in this way:

1. Teacher candidates should always be able to take into consideration that what is important in the creativeness education is the process not the product. They should also experience this while taking teaching education. It should be remembered that what impresses a child, even an adult, is the experience to investigate the ways that lead to the solution rather than the solution itself.
2. One of the duties of a art teacher is to present problems which will improve students' creativity, in a sense, which will break shells, to students.
3. The instruction of mostly material and technical information generally bores the children and leads them to lose their self-confidence.
4. Just the freedom to scribble or paint a wall as he wants can be more helpful for a child than the experience gained in a conventional art course in terms of self-confidence and excitement. The practices which will help to experience this freedom and gaining confidence can be more remarkable.
5. Focusing the teacher candidates to make artistic practice throughout all their education period and limiting them to "making art" leads to that they experience dilemmas after they start to practice their professions. Instead of that, they should gain experience to think more flexible for the multidisciplinary practices through which they can use their art knowledge for the children's creativity education.
6. The teacher candidate who wants his students to gain experience about the art of sculpture will make use of his education while thinking to find out the ways he can use. For this reason, I aimed to create the sensation of "why not?" in my students with the help of this experimental study. I tried to help them to get out of the studio in order to deal with the space and volume, to choose regular and easily found material instead of the conventional material and to live the experience of "building an artwork" instead of "creating an artwork". We remembered during these works and studies we did together that there is always a hidden "pleasure and curiosity of playing" in an artistic act of creation.

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CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

We hereby confirm that

A. Feyza Çakir Özgündođdu

Institute: Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Education, Turkey

participated in the 33rd Word Congress of the International Society for Education Through Art, InSEA, 25-30 June 2011, in Budapest Hungary.

Budapest, 30 June 2011

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ANGELIKA PLANK

SESSION 67:

Issues of practice of art education

11:30 – 13:10 / Room 15

CHAIR: ANGELIKA PLANK

S67-1: Reflecting on practice: Korean cultural practitioners in a transformative educational setting

KYONG-MI PAEK

S67-2: Three cultures of calligraphy

KIM NANYOUNG

S67-3: Let's get out of workshop!

ADILE FEYZA ÖZGÜNDÖGDU

S67-4: Innovation project I AM AN ARTIST! Primary school Jurij Vega Moravče, a Slovenia art project, run by the National Educational Institute of Slovenia

INGE IVARTNIK

S67-5: Contemporary art and teenagers: A collaborative project about responsibility in hospitals

**MARTA GARCÍA CANO, CLARA MEGÍAS, LORENA LÓPEZ, RAÚL DÍAZ,
NOEMÍ ÁVILA, EVA PERANDONES**

LET'S GET OUT OF THE WORKSHOP!

A. Feyza ÖZGÜNDOĞDU, Ondokuz Mayıs University
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Nyomja meg a plátó a
következő slide videó
továbbfejlesztéshez.

Ibn Mulkha

