



Visual Culture-Based Workshop: Visual Diaries

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Abstract

Images have become popular via advertisements, video games, fine arts, television, series, movies and other types of images. These images that we see around us our for whole life comprise a great proportion of visual culture. With a visual culture-based workshop, the students would acquire skills to make sense of and interpret what they see with artistic and aesthetic concerns in the workshop studies. In this respect, the students created visual diaries, in which they could reflect/question the experiences they acquire about their daily lives, and with which they could express themselves. The study adopted an art-based qualitative research approach. The study had been conducted in the fall and spring semesters of 2016-2017 academic year in the art drawing workshop course. The participants of the study were comprised of 7 students. The data of this study were collected using semi-structured interviews, document review (on visual diaries) and the art works of the student1s. The data of the study were analyzed using descriptive analysis. When the findings of the study are considered, it is seen that questionings about daily life, course notes, visual and textual interpretations, sense-making processes, and expression styles (sketch, drawing etc.) about their artistic work were included in students' visual diary experiences in the workshop course. They visually reflected many things they notice around themselves and supported this with texts.

Görsel Kültür Temelli Atölye Uygulaması: Görsel Günlükler

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Öz

İmgeler reklam, video oyunları, güzel sanatlar, televizyon, dizi, filmler ve diğer görüntü türleri aracılığıyla giderek yaygınlaşmaktadır. Yaşamımız boyunca etrafımızda gördüğümüz bu görüntüler görsel kültürün çoğunu oluşturmaktadır. Görsel kültür temelli bir atölye uygulaması ile öğrenciler atölye çalışmalarında sanat ve estetik kaygısı ile gördüklerini anlamlandırma, yorumlama becerileri de kazanmış olacaklardır. Bu bağlamda araştırmada, öğrenciler günlük hayatlarına ilişkin edindikleri deneyimleri yansıtabilecekleri/sorgulayabilecekleri ve kendilerini ifade edebilecekleri görsel günlükler oluşturmuşlardır. Araştırmada sanat temelli nitel araştırma yaklaşımı benimsenmiştir. Araştırma süreci, 2016-2017 güz ve bahar döneminde resim anasanat atölye dersinde uygulanmıştır. Araştırma katılımcılarını 7 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak, yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme, doküman inceleme (Görsel Günlükler) ve öğrencilerin sanatsal çalışmaları kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada veriler betimsel analiz ile çözümlenmiştir. Araştırma bulgularına bakıldığında, öğrencilerin atölye uygulaması dersinde görsel günlük deneyimlerinde günlük hayata dair sorgulamaları, ders notları, görsel ve metinsel yorumlamaları, anlam yaratım süreçleri, sanatsal çalışmaları ile ilgili ifade biçimleri (eskizler, desenler, çizimler vb.) yer almıştır. Öğrenciler, çevrelerinde fark ettikleri birçok şeyi görsel olarak yansıtmışlar ve bunu ise metinlerle desteklemişlerdir.

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Introduction

In today's world, where rapid changes take place, developments in science and technology are so rapid that the existing body of knowledge are in a constant change and transformation. This necessitates change in numerous areas. These changes and developments increased individual's need for information and uncovered the importance of education. It became prominent that enabling students with synthesis skills while instructing them is more important than memorized knowledge. In this respect, visual arts training has an important place in education, which aims at raising generations that are creative, who could think, question, synthesize, transform the acquired information to skills. Performing different applications with teaching methods and techniques, and diversifying educational environment are required to keep learning experience vivid in fine arts training (Genç & Buyurgan, 2018, p. 691). In this context, visual culture applications become prominent in fine arts education workshops. Many studies show the necessity and importance to include visual culture practices in visual arts education (Anderson, 2004; Helser, 2004; Barker, 2010; Burger, 2011; Türkcan and Yaşar, 2011; Yükselgün and Türkcan, 2012; Mamur, 2015; Çığır, 2016; Shin, 2016; Gil-Glazer, 2017; Güler and Bedir Erişti, 2019; Yılmaz, Yılmaz and Demir Yılmaz, 2019). These studies reveal that visual art practices allow for a conscious and critical perspective on the visual perception of students, teach them how to analyse images, urge them to reflect on social and current issues, enable them to acquire visual communication skills and discrimination skills, improve their thinking skills and have a significant impact on their beliefs and identity perceptions.

Visual culture covers a vast area that includes television, sculpture, photographs, movies, oil paintings, gardens, buildings, artisan works, toys, advertisements, jewelry, maps, graphics, web sites, cityscapes and such. Thus, visual culture is a human experience that is increasingly visual and visualized than ever before and it is extremely comprehensive (Mirzoeff, 2002). According to Duncum (2002), meaning is produced, in today's world, in interaction with facts such as visual spaces, visual and popular objects, music, sound effects, pictures, etc. The active power of visual images has increased with the development of technology in addition to words and subsidiary elements (other pictures). While content, color, light, script and spatial elements are important in static images, scene, montage and sound elements are used in reinforcing the meaning of the image. In order to make sense of the image, it has to be given meaning culturally via certain codes. Post-modernism evaluates art and art education as one of the important instruments in development and diffusion of culture. Visual arts education, in which visual images are used greatly, is more advantageous than other disciplines for visual culture studies (Bolin & Blandy, 2003, p. 247; as cited in Mamur, 2012, 2152). Approaches have been proposed for especially arts lessons to take part in creating, spreading and adopting visual culture. Therefore, it becomes significant that arts education processes be structured as to include cultural context (Duncum, 2000). According to Freedman (2003), visual culture studies are required for the students to understand the world they live in. The students should be ensured to analyze visual culture and the media it presents via criticism.

The students should be trained towards being acquainted with visual culture, and knowing, evaluating and solving its effects on their cultural identities (Kırıçoğlu, 2009, p. 46). Culture that is based on visibility has increased since modernization period and takes hold of all aspects of life, especially the daily life. Humans can communicate in written, spoken and visual ways and all these forms permeate into cultures and art. Thus, humans, who had subsisted in a communicative environment driven by oral culture only, has entered into a widespread visual culture with the invention of writing, and especially with the spread of drawings, pictures and visual expressions. In this way, the visual aspect of the communication process has increased and progressed down the ages (Çakır, 2014, p. 21). According to Rogoff (1998), the analytic and critical approach of visual culture studies could be constructed on the meaning of the thing that is visible, invisible or not permitted to be seen. In other words, the body of investigation could be constructed around the concept of "seeing". Critical, historical, political and reflexive performance of art and thinking of art have gained importance in arts education (Duncum, 1999). Activities are being planned related to visual images that we encounter constantly in daily life. Arts courses, on the other hand, include research and applications, in which daily images produced by today's corporate firms (Duncum, 2003).

Many images today have the power to change the perspective of individuals. An important part of art education is making sense of images and questioning the context they are in. In this way, students should be competent in using their visual images to create their own ideas and in questioning the visual images they see. Visual arts approach is a teaching area in art education offering students the necessary environment to prepare for the world of images. Memory and extensions appear to be significant in a visual cultural environment. As visual culture allows a critical inquiry based on a sociocultural perspective, it leads students through an active learning process

during the teaching process. In this sense, visual culture seeks to analyse interdisciplinary connections and complex processes regarding visibility through personal and cultural extensions (Freedman, 2015; as cited in Bedir Erişti, 2020). Thus, art students can examine visuals, reflect on their cultural or social meanings and analyse complex connections in everyday life thanks to visual diary practices in art education courses based on visual culture. According to Blighe (2008), visual diaries facilitate the management and organisation of images constructed, enable one to acquire the skill to organize numerous images easily, establish new connection between images and improve design skills. Moreover, image analysis is also instrumental for design applications and evaluation. In the relevant literature, Blighe & O'Connor (2008) aimed to design a visual diary that consists of personal image collections taken via a passive capture device. To perform setting detection, they developed an algorithm to visualize human experiences through the images taken at the same location in the real world (e.g. in the dining room, in front of the computer, in the park). Thus, they categorized the visuals of human experiences and offered a prototype of a visual diary scanner. Watson (2012) analysed visual diary as prosthetic practice based on the diary drawings of the performance artist Bobby Baker. In her study titled "My Visual Diary", Chaplin (2004), a visual sociologist, kept a diary to record 15 years of her life to explore different ideas. Chaplin argued that she examined her commitment to art practice, sociological understanding and feminism as a participant and as an outsider to some extent thanks to her visual diary project. She not only drew attention to important issues for social sciences, but also pioneered the theory of art, photography and social sciences. This visual diary gave Chaplin a "sociological perspective" in making sense of plastic arts and performing arts as well as visual art practices. In the context of art education, Noor (2004) investigated the use of visual diaries in secondary school art education and examined the relationship between the perception towards and use of visual diaries among teachers, and the perception towards and experiences on visual diaries among students. It was found that students had the opportunity to reflect many images in their everyday life and created a meaning pattern in their visual diaries. The study also revealed that the perception towards and use of visual diaries among teachers had an impact on the perception towards and experiences on visual diaries among students, but teachers failed to benefit from the full potential of visual diaries. Razif (2015) utilized visual diaries to teach art history and culture about the Mah Meri tribe in arts course and demonstrated that art students understood and experienced art history in more easily thanks to visual diaries. The study used visual diaries as an effective tool for students to understand art history and culture in visual arts education. All these studies show that art education based on visual arts offers a visual space that helps students to reflect and question their everyday experiences and to express themselves. In this respect, the aim of this study is to reveal, with a visual culture-based workshop application, how students were influenced by the daily images they encountered in their daily lives, and what kind of a visual field they created from the images that influenced the students. For this purpose, visual diaries were used to equip the students with meaning making and interpretation skills on what they see with an artistic and aesthetic concern. Answers to the following questions were sought regarding the aim of the study:

1. What are the opinions of the students about their visual diary experiences in the context of visual culture?
2. For what purpose did the students use their visual diaries in the context of visual culture?
3. What did the students reflected in their visual diary experience, regarding visual culture?

Visual Culture and Visual Diaries

Most people keep diaries to help them remember the important aspects of their daily lives. Through diaries, people remember how they felt at a certain place and time. A typical diary is made up of a series of images such as visual images, digital photos, correspondence and texts. It offers a visual summary of an individual's life (Blighe & O'Connor, 2008, p. 195). A visual diary usually refers to a collection of visual references created and compiled by an artist or person interested in arts. Visual diaries consist of photographs and works that belong to artists (Chaplin, 1994). Visual diaries are an ensemble of visual references created or compiled by an artist or a person interested in arts. They may be comprised of notes, diagrams, collages, photos, images and drawings. A visual diary comprising of these images could contain any number of materials compiled either in a series of books or in a file. Visual diaries, along with other creative practitioners, could create an impressive form, when visual material is at stake. Physically, it can function as a sketchbook at times, a scratchpad or a blackboard to stick photos, postcards, brochure and other pieces and sticks attracting attention.

"Keeping diaries is an instrument for reminding/remembers many artists, researchers and teachers resort and a rich source for teaching/learning. The diary could help to reveal the organic nature of progress. Most of the research processes could be defined, drawn, reflected, analyzed in the diary and be used in courses" (Hobson,

1996; as cited in Güneş, 2018:46). The purpose of visual diaries is generally finding the inspiring examples of art and design practices, enhancing further the various visual forms, and defining things that attract interest of people as a reflecting instrument. We use visual images/signs in meaning making of and analyzing the thing we experience in our daily lives. We do not give up on looking at things and we comment on them. In this sense making process, we begin to develop many ideas, which we could not notice when we transfer them visually or textually, by collages or a series of images.

Visual diaries include a subjective projection. They can be used in projections about the observations and participations of the medium by the researchers, as they can be used in personal projections; in addition, they can be used to project the cultural understanding about the research and the cultural understanding of people other than the researcher (Mason & Cruickshank, 2017, p. 187). Keeping a visual diary helps to acquire, daily, the instantaneous visual experience via visual material and texts. Extracting something from a journal and pasting it onto the diary is a minor process; however, it can help making the visual knowledge consumption less passive. Creating a daily visual experience from the flow of information, to which we are exposed, and transferring a piece of visual communication speed up our sight and thought. Thus, it helps the decoding of the visual messages and noticing patterns and predispositions.



Image 1. Leonardo da Vinci, Sketchbook

When we consider history of art, we see that famous artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Frida Kahlo, Vincent van Gogh, created detailed visual diaries for their thoughts and progress. Visual diaries are used today as they did in the past. Especially, implementations are being conducted in institutions delivering visual arts education. However, this is limited to drawings only. But, visual diaries have outcomes, from many respects, for students receiving visual arts education. We can list these outcomes as below:

- Visual diaries allow for the sustainability of creativity and the improvement of the creative process.
- Visual diaries elaborate on the thoughts and processes of art students. This is why a personal diary is of importance.
- Students can advance their creative skills by documenting their progress in a diary. Also, visual diaries play a great role in developing students' creative skills and self-expression.
- Ideas in a visual diary offer a catharsis to record personal observations.
- Visual diaries provide individuals with their own personal workplace.
- They enable individuals to talk to themselves regularly.
- The things reflected in the visual diaries by the students bear traces of visual culture era experienced by the students.
- Visual diaries enable students to make sense of every images around them and to make inferences.
- Visual diaries enable the knowledge acquired by the students to be permanent and help them to establish links between different disciplines (Kennedy, 2019).

Method

Research Model

The art-based qualitative research method is adopted in the study. Art-based research in education provide answer to the questions how the researchers would use art in the classroom, how participants would use art and how researchers in an education study would use a poem, a picture or artistic performances. Art-based research mentions many ways art enters into instruction, research and artistic realm (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008, p.12). In this context, in art-based research method, a systematic analysis of expression styles in different disciplines of art is conducted (Mcniff, 2007). In art-based research approach, a qualitative research method, the artistic products of the students are conducted and the perceptions in their internal worlds, life experiences and their opinion on these are revealed. Art-based research is a design that relates research with narratives realized by art or design processes in scientific research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005 as cited in Erişti, 2012).

Participants

The participants of the study were 7 female students, who voluntarily took part in this study out of 29 second-year students attending the course of art workshop in the 2016-2017 fall and spring terms and who continued keeping a visual diary in the 2017-2018 academic year. In this study, each student was identified with a code.

Data collection tools

The data of this study were collected using semi-structured interviews, document review (on visual diaries) and the art works of the students.

Data collection

The semi-structured interview questions were first formed by the researcher and then reviewed by a field expert. The students were asked about their experiences of keeping a diary in the course of art workshop in the interviews. Each student was interviewed twice a week apart. The semi-structured interview questions were asked by the researcher. Each student was individually and face-to-face interviewed, with the average interview duration being 15 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded.

The visual diaries kept by the students across the fall and spring terms were textually and visually analysed as part of the document review.

The projects performed by the students in the course of art workshop in the 2017-2018 academic year based on the visuals and texts in their visual diaries as well as the artistic works they created were also used as data source.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis is a qualitative analysis method that include the summarization of data, obtained via various data collection techniques according to previously determined themes. In this analysis method, the researcher uses direct quotations to reflect the opinions of the individuals dramatically, who participated in the interviews or were observed by the researchers. The main objective in this analysis type is the presentation of the findings in a summarized and interpreted fashion. Descriptive analysis is realized in four stages (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008, s.224). In the first stage, the participant code list was created with regard to the theoretical framework. The researcher and an expert in the discipline (art instructor) read and encoded the data independently. Later, these codes were compared and common codes were determined. The findings were interpreted by including direct quotations about the themes found. For the reliability of the study the Reliability = unanimity / unanimity + dissensus x 100 formula was used (Miles & Huberman, 2015, p.64). Accordingly, the interrater consistency was found 80%.

Research Ethics

The participants were all informed and signed voluntary participation forms prior to the study. This study was performed with only those who were willing to participate and presented their journals. The researcher conducted this study with the consent of the participants for the use of the images in their journals. In the data collection

process, the interviews were recorded and shared with the participants to ensure transparency. The participants were also identified with codes for confidentiality purposes.

Findings

The opinions on the visual diary experience under visual culture were classified into three categories as “Visual Document Creation in Visual Diary Experience”, “Meaning Creation Process in Visual Diary Experience”, and “Meaning Making in Visual Diary Experience”.

Finding about Visual Document Creation in Visual Diary Experience

In this section findings about the question “What are the opinions of the students about their visual diary experiences in the context of visual culture?”, the first sub-aim of the study, are discussed.

Table 1. Visual Document Creation in Visual Diary Experience

Documenting the image
Retroactive acquisition of knowledge
Creating an archive
Portfolio
Visual experience
Self-evaluation
Self-expression



Image 2. Gülten's Visual D.



Image 3. Burcu's Visual D.

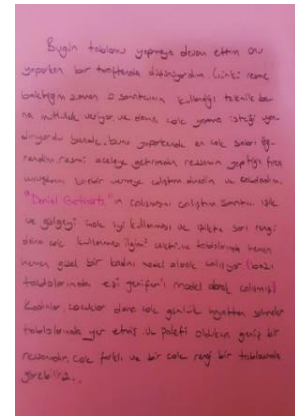


Image 4. Gülten's Visual D.

The students projected all works they created in the art painting workshop as in seen in images in 2 to 7. They wrote texts by adding the reproductions they created, patterns, drawings, the artists they searched for and the image of the subjects.

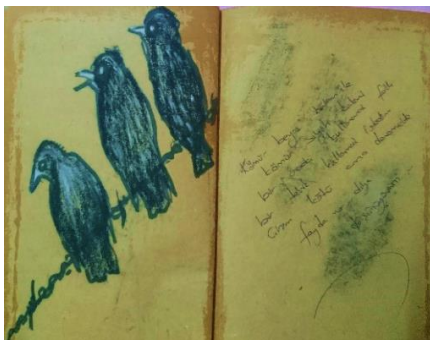


Image 5. Burcu's Visual D.

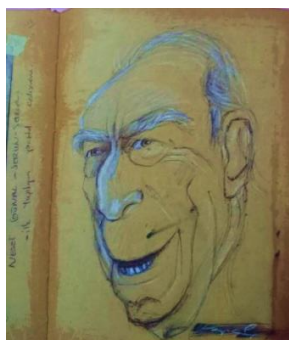


Image 6. Burcu's Visual D.



Image 7. Burcu's Visual D.

In the retroactive acquisition of knowledge theme, Gülten stated that *“I gained experience with visual diary. When I turn to past and look, it would provide knowledge about the pictures I painted and sketches I drew.”*

Gülten also mentioned, what she had learned, in her diary as follows: *“I continued my painting... I made a reproduction of Daniel Gertharz's work. It intrigued me how he used the light and shadow, and he used yellow more in painting the light. He generally prefers female models in his paintings. In some paintings he used his wife Jennifer as a model...”* (See. Image 3).

In the archive building sub-theme, Elif stated that *“Indeed, I have archived my painting studies by keeping visual diary ...”*.

In the portfolio sub-theme, Esra said that *“...In my opinion, visual diaries have the value of portfolios. Now, there is a new aspect that I could show to my students during teaching.”*

In visual experience sub-theme, Nur stated, *“It was a good experience, especially I gained a visual experience. It was not like the diaries we kept in high school”*.

In self-expression sub-theme, Burcu stated *“I could project my thought easily by keeping a visual diary. I had lack of self-confidence. I had problems in making presentations in the class. I could express myself more by writing or drawing a visual diary.”* In addition, Burcu created a voice of conscience by writing the following under a drawing in her diary: *“With the aim of emphasizing and progressing further.”* (See. Image 6).

In self-evaluation sub-theme, Burcu said *“I had the chance to question myself and evaluate my works.”* In addition, she evaluated her works by writing in her diary *“I wished to try a different technique by mixing charcoal and white pen. The drawing is not so good but it is worth trying”* (See. Image 4).

Findings Related to Meaning Creation Process in Visual Diary Experience

Table 2 contains the findings about the second and third sub-aim of the study *“For what purpose did the students use their visual diaries in the context of visual culture?”* and *“What did the students projected in their visual diary experiences regarding visual culture?”*.

Table 2. Meaning Creation Process in Visual Diary Experience

Creating visual field
Monitoring the creation process
Understanding terms and concepts.
Establishing linear and literary links
Establishing links with social life

Elif, in her view about creating visual field, stated *“I gained visual experience... keeping a diary in the visual field enabled me to visually record what I see”*. (See Images 8-9). Nur, on the other hand, said that she could see

the chronologic progress of her work by saying “I saw how my works improved”. Hilal mentioned that she could evaluate workshop practices with the view “I could evaluate the workshop practices”.

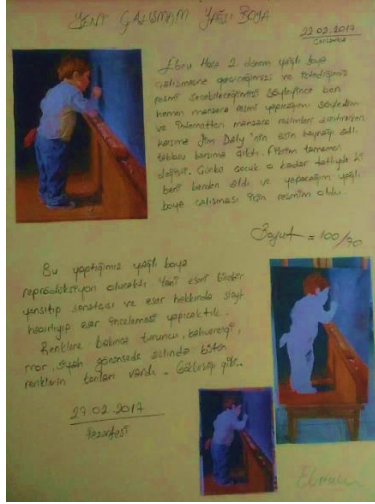


Image 8. Elif's Visual D.



Image 9. Elif's Visual D.

Elif mentioned, in her diary, how she started her work and what she thinks of her work.

“When I was searching for landscape paintings on the internet, I ran into Jim Daly's painting named inspiration. My thoughts completely changed. This would be an oil reproduction. In other words, we would project the work exactly and prepare a presentation about the artist and the work, and we would conduct an investigation. At the first semester of the second year, we were working with acrylic. The painting we would paint would be a photo we have taken. One day, when I was returning home from school, a dried leaf on the lawn attracted my attention. I bent down and took the photo and accidentally found leaf has become my acrylic work. I have drawn 10 sketches of this work in different color, and thus I analyzed my study...”.

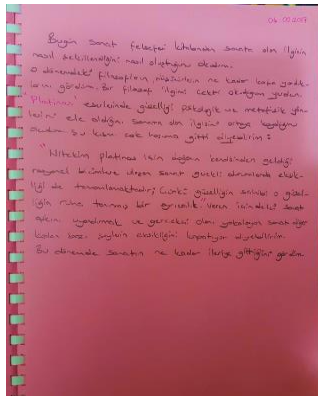


Image 10. Gülten's Visual D.

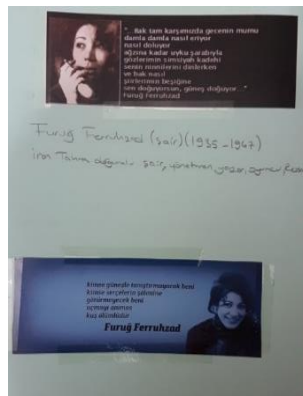


Image 11. Gülten's Visual D.

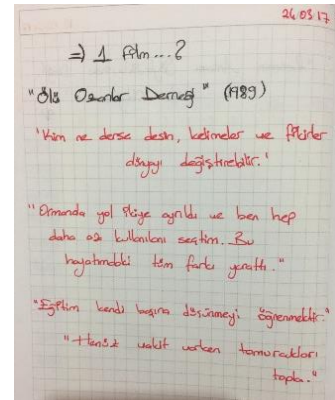


Image 12. Esra's Visual D.

In the creation process sub-theme, Esra transferred the words and images she encountered during the day and supporting the creation process by saying “I could see my creation process... I created a free space for myself, in which I could express everything...”, Gülten, on the other hand, mentioned “I explained my creation process... I projected what I thought that day...”.

Gülten wrote the following in her diary: *“Today, I read how the interest in art is formed, created in the Art Philosophy book... It tells that Plotinos touched upon the psychological and metaphysical aspects of beauty in his works, and revealed the interest in art... I liked the following part very much: Indeed the art, which has access to the rational forms, from which the nature comes, completes the defects of the beauty; because I could say that awakening the love for art inside and art that grasps what is real cover the defects of other things as it is a privileged bestowed upon the owner of the”*(See. Image 10).

In a similar fashion, Esra projected part of a movie she watched as follows: *“1989... Dead Poets’ Society” ... No matter what they say, words and ideas could change the world... The road in the forest splits into two and I have chosen the least used one. This has created all the difference in my life. Education is learning how to think on your own. Pick the buds when there is still time.”* When we read the sentences Elif quoted in her diary we see that she is impressed by the movie and she wrote down sentences about change. Here we see the reflection of a movie recommended in the art painting department workshop in a student’s diary (See. Image 12).

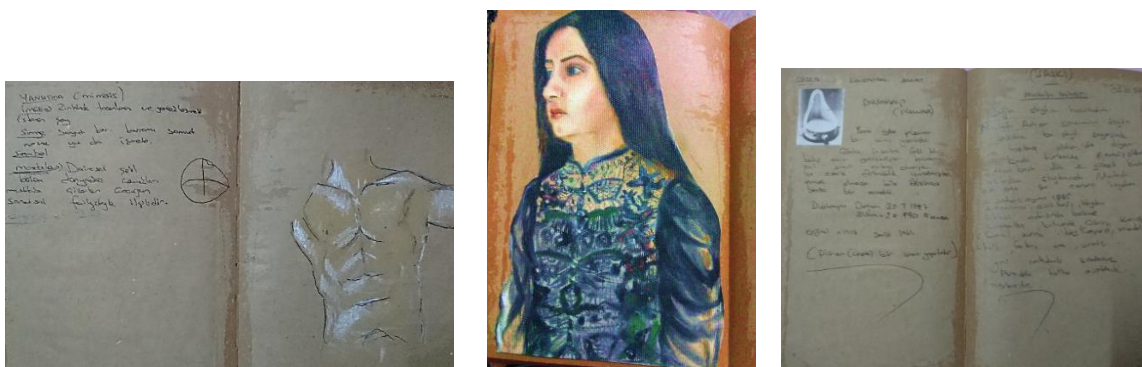


Image 13. Pages from Burcu’s Diary

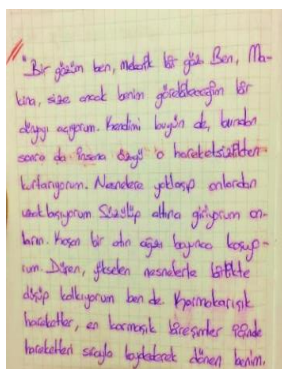


Image 14. Esra’s Visual D.

In the understanding terms and concepts sub-theme, Esra wrote *“I wrote down the words and concepts I learned...”*. She also included in her diary a section of John Berger’s *“Ways of Seeing”* book, which affected her in her own words. She projected the following in her diary: *“I am an eye, a mechanical eye. I, the machine, open to you only the world I could see. From now on, I free myself from the immobility specific to humans. I glide under those. I run along the mouth of a running horse. I fall and get up with the object falling down and rising. I am the one that turns losing the moves in the most complex moves, the most complex combinations, I, the machine.”*.

Similarly, Burcu mentioned that she wrote the words and concepts she learned by saying *“I noted the words and concepts that are important for me...”*. She wrote in her diary *“Conceptual Art... In my opinion a urinal is a*

work of art, because it has brought a different perspective to humans. It revealed the conceptual art.” She also wrote the words related to art she learned in the courses with their definitions. “*Projection (Mimesis), Image, Sign, Symbol, Mandala...*” (See Image 13). It is seen that students’ use of visual diaries was not limited to the art painting workshop, and they used their diaries in other courses such as art philosophy, special teaching methods, and sculpture.

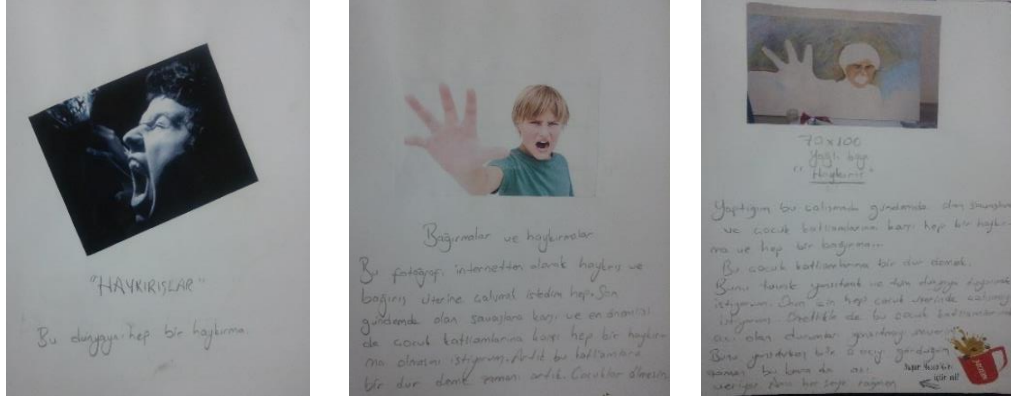


Image 15. Pages from Hilal’s Visual Diary

In the establishing linear and literary links sub-theme Hilal wrote “*I established a link between what I drew and what I wrote... I combined visual with my poem notebook. I used words such as stop, scream in my drawings.*” She frequently included the poems she quoted and the books she read in her visual diary. She also projected how she started a new work by getting affected by the images she encountered in daily life. The following expressions in Hilal’s diary shows how visual diaries shape and support the creation processes of the students: “*This work I have completed is all a scream and shouting against the wars and child massacres that remained on the agenda... saying stop to these child massacres... I want to project this on the canvas and proclaim it to all the world. Thus, I think to work about children, all the time...*”.

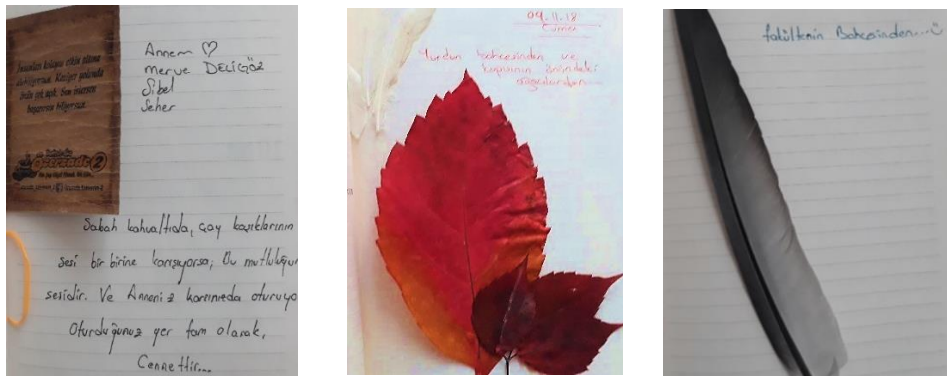


Image 16 (a, b, c). Pages from Nur’s Visual Diary

In the establishing links with social life sub-theme Nur’s views are as follows: “*I added the things I encountered in my daily life.*” Similarly, Ayşe wrote “*I could write my instant feelings during the day.*” The students reflected their experiences and moments in their daily lives and they made their moments and instant emotions permanent. Elif wrote the following in her diary:

“*My mother...Merve Deligöz, Sibel, Sugar...If the sound of the teaspoons jumbles into one at the breakfast, then it is the sound of happiness. And if your mother sits across you, it is exactly heaven where you sit...*” (Image 16a), “*From the garden of the dormitory and from the trees in front of the gate*” (Image 16b), “*From the Garden of the*

Faculty...” (Image 16c). When we look at the objects Nur stuck in her diary, we see that these bear great meanings for her. A dry leaf, feather of a bird, a coffee reading from a fortune-teller café, all of these tells about the events she lived in a day and gives clues about her.

Findings about Meaning Making in Visual Diary Experience

Table 3 presents the findings about the question “What did the students reflected in their visual diary experience, regarding visual culture?”, which is the third sub-aim of the study.

Table 3. Meaning Making in Visual Diary Experience

Intersemiosis

- Image-text relation

Reading images

- Interpreting images

Student views about the intersemiosis sub-theme are as follows:

Elif wrote: “*I established links between the books I read and the images I saw and I combined them.*” Gülten commented “*I projected what I learned from the workshop in my drawings by writing notes from the movies I watched and book I read.*”. Esra, on the other hand, wrote “*In the process, I did not confine myself to taking photos, but I wrote my opinions about these...*”.



Image 17 (a, b). Pages from Esra's Visual Diary



Image 18 (a, b). Pages from Esra's Visual Diary

In the four diary pages above by Esra, it is seen how she established links between images and texts. In image 17a, she wrote “*Why does the ideal woman image disrupt?*” below the woman figure she drew. In the second page (17b) she covered her drawing with a blank page and wrote “*Like loneliness originating from an alienation or like a man’s figure becoming isolated in the eyes of the woman figure... a figure in the place of that eye... a loneliness that is noticed when paid attention... -Window.*” In the third picture, the following is written on top of the image “*Let’s look carefully...*” And finally in the fourth page (18b) she drew a window in the eye and she told about loneliness. Esra created her own construct in the art painting workshop, setting off from these sketches and thoughts, and created new meanings.



Image 19. Burcu’s Visual Diary



Image 20. A page from Burcu’s Visual Diary and an Art Painting Workshop Study

Burcu mentions the artist she was influenced from by saying “... *I am impressed by Neşet Günal’s paintings. I transferred the aspects I am impressed to my works, in color and in form.*”. The effect of the artists she was influenced from is seen in the work she completed in the last year of her education.



Image 21 (a, b). Pages from Nur's Visual Diary



Image 22(c, d, e). Pages from Nur's Visual Diary

In the Reading images sub-theme students' views are as follows: Elif mentioned *"I tried to project my own works. For meaning making... I projected the difference between to look and to see in my diary."* Hilal wrote *"I was affected by the news, and I projected this."* It is seen in the drawings and collages by the students that they were influenced by the images they saw around and they were not indifferent to these. Nur stated that she attributed meanings to images and created a story when she built the construct her painting by saying *"I transferred what I learned through the day. I did not look from the visual perspective only, I thought about the things I drew, I felt them."*

When we look at the quotations in five pages of Nur's diary, we see that in 21a there is a collage she made from newspaper sheets. In the following page in 21b she added the news titled *"40 years of an artist"* into her diary. In image 22c, she explained how she interpreted a strand of hair that randomly fell on a sheet of paper during the course. *"I suppose art requires this or a person with an artistic soul is stuck to thing like this. I saw a stand of hair that fell on my notes, while I was studying for the art philosophy exam, as an abstract human figure and I drew it instantly page."* In other pages, there are sketches explaining how she created one of her constructs. Each of these sketches has explanations. In Image 22d, she wrote *"I have done the original of the sketch symbolizing fertility when I was in high school, but I couldn't find it. I wanted to work on this in the abstract human figure. It could be an oil painting; in which I would use opposite colors."* And in Image 22e, she wrote *"Let it be a gate to eternity..."* When we look at the visual diary of the student, it is seen how she created meanings from a tiny line, how she interpreted images and how she ended up in an artistic work starting from her thoughts (See Image 23).



Image 23. Nur's Art Painting Workshop Study

The student, starting from the sketch she wrote, noted and drew in the second year, arrived the above artistic work in the fourth year of the university. The student improved the woman and man image in her visual diary and combined these with the woman and man motifs used in the Anatolian Seljuks era after doing research. She created her work using contrasting colors as she had planned in her diary. The visual diary she had kept in the second year of her education became an artistic and intellectual area for the student. The student, who had made a questioning over images has found her own story. Nur's views about her work is as follows:

There was something I wanted to do first in my paintings, that is using figures. Of course, I needed images that would support the abstract figures. By combining these pieces, just like a puzzle, I continued, step by step. In addition to these, I wanted to touch upon the past in my paintings, and I received help from my professors. Primarily, the Seljuk rug motifs attracted my attention. Although, it was not easy to find, I started with the motifs representing woman and man that I found in my internet search. I started my first painting on hardboard; the abstract figure of man is on the right of the hardboard, which is divided into two, while the abstract figure of woman is on the left. In addition, I drew a largish roundness on the belly of the woman figure to make it understandable and I wished to explain fertility, and I drew an octagonal star inside this roundness to tell about the values a mother gives to her child. I drew the lines of the man figure more cornered and I used the Ramshorn (representing man) in his socks and waistband. For the colors, I was inspired by the colors used in the rugs of Seljuk era. I used mainly turquoise, the color of the Turks, and its tones in my paintings and I used red transparently to convey the message I want to deliver to the audience (See Image 23).

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings from the second research question of this study, which is “For what purposes did the students use their visual diaries regarding visual culture?”, and the third research question, which is “What did the students reflect in their experiences pertaining to visual diaries regarding visual culture?”, indicate that the students expressed their reflections on everyday life, passing grades, visual and textual interpretations, sense-making processes, artistic works in their visual diaries in the workshop. They also incorporate various images in their visual diaries. They visually included many things they noticed in their surroundings and integrated texts into visuals. It is also remarkable that visual diaries had a positive effect on the creativity processes of the students. There is a limited number of research on diary-keeping and the use of visual diaries in the field of visual arts education. Yet, studies on reflective diary writing skills and experiences on diary-keeping among students in faculties of education are abundant. One example is Noor's (2004) study titled “A Study of the Use of the Visual Diary and its Impact on Lower Secondary Art Education in Singapore” where the researcher determined that students reflected an array of images and formed a meaning pattern through visual diaries in secondary art education. Likewise, Güneş (2018) benefited from visual diaries in her PhD dissertation titled “An Alternative Method in Training Art Educators: A/r/tography in Studio Art Class” and concluded that practices of art making and writing in a/r/tography practices enriched one's perspective and inspired creative ideas. Through such

practices, students make art by making sense of their own personal lives, which creates awareness on their life; in other words, they become aware of their own experiences by reflecting them to art and feel a connection with their lives. Moreover, students can come up with unique ideas and subjects by searching for the small details of their lives for life-writing.

The findings from the first research question of the study, which is “What do the students think about their experiences on keeping a visual diary regarding visual culture?”, demonstrate that with different ways of self-expression, the students created a personal space for themselves and freely expressed themselves. It is also remarkable that they kept their diaries not only in the course of workshop but also in other courses such as art philosophy and sculpture. They designed a space where they can realize and assess their artistic creation processes thanks to visual diaries. Similarly, Akkoyunlu et al. (2016), in their article titled “Pre-service Teachers’ Opinions on the Use of Reflective Diaries in Teacher Training”, report that the pre-service teachers had the chance to evaluate themselves in a holistic way, to track their progress, to develop a critical stance and to improve their writing skills. Razıf’s (2015) study titled “The Use of Visual Diary in Understanding Art History and Culture” utilized visual diaries to teach art history and culture and determined that art students understood and experienced art history in more easily thanks to visual diaries. As is evident from Razıf’s (2015) study, visual diaries are an effective tool to teach art history and culture to visual arts students. Also, Can and Altuntaş’s (2016) article titled “Students Views Regarding of Reflective Journal Writing” advocated that visual diaries enhance permanent learning and concluded that reflective journal writing improved the writing skills of the students and increased the amount and permanence of the knowledge they learned.

In this study, the pre-service visual arts teachers stated that they will continue keeping a visual diary and use it in their professional lives. It was found out that visual diaries raised the awareness of the pre-service visual arts teachers on their artistic development and enabled them to evaluate it. Visual diaries appear to be important for all individuals pursuing their education in visual arts, as they offer a visual experience and allow for generation and consumption of visual information. Arslan’s (2017) article titled “Awareness of Candidates on Teaching Practice in Their Reflective Diaries” reported that keeping a reflective diary is a practice that encourages the pre-service teachers to think creatively and critically and supports their self-awareness. Cengiz and Karataş’s (2014) article titled “Developing Reflective Thinking: Effects of Keeping Reflective Journals with Pre-Service Science Teachers” found out that the pre-service teachers included poor-level reflections in their reflective journals considering the development of their reflective thinking skills and the feedbacks written for them. There are a great number of studies on keeping reflective journals in faculties of education in the literature; however, research on experiences pertaining to visual diaries, which assemble images and texts, in the field of visual arts education is rather limited.

The habit of keeping visual diaries would provide writing skills to the individuals, interested in visual arts field, in addition to providing a space to express themselves visually. Visual diaries are important in the development of written expression skills, which surface as a deficiency in students receiving visual arts training. In this respect, the number of workshop studies to be conducted or improved with the visual diary experience could be increased. Visual diary keeping skill could be provided to the students from the primary school to the university level in the fine arts courses and also in other courses.

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Statement of Publication Ethics

The researcher followed the principles of publication ethics whilst conducting this study and submitted it with no ethical issue.

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Appendix 1


**Bartın University Journal of Faculty of Education
The Ethical Issues Declaration Form For Authors**

Article Title	Visual Culture-Based Workshop: Visual Diaries
Discipline	Art Education
Type of Article	Research Article
Year of Data	2016-2017
Collection	

As the author of the article, I declare in this form that scientific and ethical rules are followed in this article and that the article does not require the permission of ethical committee for the reason that students voluntarily participate in the research.

Date 25/05/2020

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