



Example of Shostakovich for the Conversion of Music to Photography

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Abstract

Art is a form of expression. This expression process can be realized with different materials. In this research, two branches of art with different materials are emphasized; music and photography. One is from the phonetic arts group and the other is from the plastic arts group. In this research, it is aimed to examine the conversion of music to photography. For this purpose, the famous Russian composer Shostakovich's String Quartet No: 8 was played by 5 different young artists who received photography training. Young artists were asked to take a photo shoot for each part of the work, which consists of 5 movements: largo, allegro molto, allegretto, largo and largo, in which the political events of the period are handled. It has emerged as a result that young artists, who shoot independently of each other, produce conflict and depressed works with the theme of war in accordance with the subject of music. Dark stain dominates in their composition. The dominant use of the color black, one of the effects of mourning on psychology, while using this dark stain is an important result.

Keywords: Art, Interdisciplinary Art, Photography, Music, Shostakovich

INTRODUCTION

Art is an important form of expression that has existed in human life from the cave periods to today's contemporary life. Different materials can be used in this expression process. Examples of these materials are sounds, colors, three-dimensional materials, photography, movements or words. Each of them has led to the formation of a different branch of art. These branches of art include painting, sculpture, music, photography, dance, architect, etc. With the development of technology from the primitive people to the present, the quality of materials and the skills of using materials have developed in direct proportion and have developed the boundaries of the related art branch. Political, social, scientific and especially technological developments, especially after the middle ages, have deeply affected humanity, and humanity has been oriented to different forms of expression and content with the related art branch whose borders have developed. These orientations have enabled the formation of different periods and movements in art. Even if all branches of art showed slight differences in the relevant periods, they showed their existence with parallel structures. According to Krausse (2005), if we refer to the periods and movements of art history from the middle ages to the present, especially by referring to the art of painting, which forms the basis of visual arts, Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque, Rococo, Neo-Classicism, Romanticism, Realism, Impressionism, Fauvism, Expressionism, Dadaism, Futurism, Cubism, Surrealism, Abstract Painting, Pop Art, Hyperrealism etc. it is possible to count. The ones stated here are the most commonly expressed. As we get closer to the present, we can encounter a lot of current especially after 1960. Many of these movements are music, literature, etc. It has also been influential in the arts. Parallel structuring has been observed in the art of photography, which has emerged with the development of technology, since the day it emerged. In fact, according to Smith (2004), according to many photographers in the early 20th century, they had to adapt to the art practices that painters and sculptors have been practicing for a while. Of course, they had to realize this process by using new technical skills shaped by the technological developments of the new age and developing a unique language.

Photography is a branch of art that emerged with the invention of the camera. Although there is no clear information about who invented the camera, it is known that Ibn Haytham, Leonardo Da Vinci, Daniello Barbaro and Johann Zahn made the first technical experiments. These essays are for the discovery of the "Camera Obscura". However, the first photograph suitable for today's definition of photography was taken by the French inventor Joseph Nicéphore Niépce in 1814. The photo shoot, which lasted for about eight hours, is known as the first successful photograph in history (Bodur, 2005). Technological developments in later times have made the camera much more qualified. Developing both in terms of quality and accessibility, cameras have attracted the attention of individuals who approach for documentary and artistic purposes. If we look at it in an artistic sense, after the first attempts were made, the subject that photography could be a material of art emerged. According to Shiner (2017), it is known that he has opinions that photography cannot be a branch of art. These views are related to the discourse that photography is a reproducible commercial object and that the photographer is a slave to the camera. However, these views have disappeared after the artistic stance developed with conceptual art. Photograph, used as a means of expression, is no different from painting or sculpture. Thus, the number of artists who have shaped photography with their own aesthetic perception and used it as a means of intellectual expression has increased (Bellone, 2010).

The increase in the number of photographers has led to the formation of new structures rich in form and content. Because each artist interprets his own unique expression in his work of art. These differences in form and content have led to the categorization of photography. In general terms, the art of photography is considered in two categories as documentary and artistic. Based on his knowledge in art criticism and contemporary art theories, Barrett (2012) deals with the art of photography in six different categories. These are descriptive, explanatory, interpretive, ethically evaluated, aesthetically evaluative and theoretical photographs. The richness of this category shows that the art of photography now has an important place in human life.

Formal and affective effects of different branches of art on each other were added to these influences, especially towards the beginning of the 20th century, and interdisciplinary interactions in art emerged. Interdisciplinary interactions in art, painting-music, painting-literature, music-literature etc. relationships are examples. Among these interactions, the relationship between painting and music was the most emphasized and the interaction that led to the emergence of the most artistic work. Especially the synchronicity and harmony of music influenced the painters a lot, and as time passed, the number of painters who shaped their paintings by being influenced by music increased.

These painters are Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, Henri Matisse, Gustav Klimt, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Lyonel Feninger, Frank Kupka, Heinrich Neugeboren, Luigi Veronesi et al. (İpşiroğlu, 2017). Klee even argued that polyphonic painting was superior to music. Because the concept of time gains space in polyphonic painting (Farago, 2017). We can also transfer this information about painting to the art of photography. The reason for this is that colors and lines, which form the basic material of the art of painting, also constitute the main material of the art of photography. While painters use these materials by applying them with paint or brush in the process, photographers edit these materials in objective reality and apply them with a camera. From this point of view, this study was started in order to add the photography-music relationship to the interdisciplinary art examples. The aim of this study, which is shaped by case study from qualitative research patterns, is to examine the photographs taken based on the famous Russian composer Shostakovich's String Quartet No: 8 and to examine the transformation of music into photography.

Shostakovich ve String Quartet No: 8

As it is known, music is one of the branches of phonetic art. It is the art of thinking with sounds and creating a sound-based aesthetic product. The process of revealing this product has always existed in human life, from the cave periods to today's contemporary music art (Kaygısız, 2017). In this process, technology, science, political events and social situations have a great impact. All musicians are influenced by these situations, interpreting music or producing their own original work. One of these musicians is Dmitri Shostakovich.

Shostakovich was born on September 25, 1906 in Saint Petersburg. Although he was born and raised in Russia, he is of Polish descent due to his grandfathers. Raised in a family of many musicians, Shostakovich's acquaintance with music began at a very early age. He received his first music lessons at the age of 9 from his mother, who was a good pianist. Shostakovich, who achieved serious success in a short time, had his mother take private music lessons from other piano teachers. At the age of 13, he managed to enter the Petrograd Conservatory, the best music school of the time. Later, with his conservatory education, he learned music from world-famous Russian composers of the period and developed his own unique musical language (Schonberg, 2020). The pianist and composer Shostakovich, who was brought up as a child prodigy, became one of the most important composers of the 20th century with his structural grandeur and orchestration mastery (Say, 2019).

Throughout his life, he was influenced by the political events in the society and shaped his art accordingly. The restrictive elements of Stalin and his regime at the beginning of the Soviet Union, which was a difficult process especially for artists, greatly affected the creation process of their works. Disputes and violent conflicts in society began to darken the color of Shostakovich's music. As it is already known, he is known for his pessimistic and monumental works (Lord and Snelson, 2018).

One of these works is String Quartet No: 8. It is a piece composed by Shostakovich after he was forced to join the communist party. The piece, which was performed for the first time in 1960, was written under the influence of political events. The work, which deals with the dark side of fascism and war, consists of 5 movements: largo, allegro molto, allegretto, largo and largo (Gushue, 2015).

Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8 and Photo Examples

As it is known, art is the free interpretation of the artist and the art sharer. It is the same in music. Sometimes, even subjectively different points of view can be brought to the same objective reality. This is directly proportional to the fact that the essence of art cannot be expressed as clearly as in science. In particular, it may not be easy for the essence of the branches of art, whose formatting material is different, to be expressed again with the same color and sound in everyone. For example, the essence of the music that emerges with the shaping of the sounds is not as clear as the essence of the painting or the photograph that emerges with the shaping of the colors and lines (Fischer, 2015). From this point of view, in this section, the transformation of the essence of music in Shostakovich's String Quartet No: 8 into photographs with a unique narrative language is presented. 5 different young artists with photography training listened to Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8 in detail and made independent photo shoots for each part of the work. The parallelism of the photographs in terms of form and content, which young artists take unaware of each other's photographs, is striking.

In this section, the movements of Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8 and the photographs taken for these sections are presented one by one.

Movement I

Памяти жертв фашизма и войны
КВАРТЕТ № 8
Соч. 110 (1960)

I

Largo *♩ = 66*

Figure 1. Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8, 1st Movement

The 1st movement of Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8, seen in Figure 1, takes about 5 minutes. The section in C minor is the introduction to the piece. It expresses the social structure of the period that has turned into chaos. After listening to this 1st movement, the photographs of 5 different young artists who took independent photo shoots are presented in Figure 2, respectively.



Figure 2. Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8 Photo Examples for 1st Movement

When the photographs in Figure 2 are examined, the dark spot value is predominantly used in the photographs arranged in square and rectangular compositions. It is noteworthy that black color was used while creating this stain value.

The name of the photo number I is "Lament". As a visual image, the figure and the light particles in his hand, which are worth a light spot, come to the fore. The comment on the photograph of the young artist number I is as follows: *"I took my photograph by imitating the rhythm of the light in the air to war. I wanted to reflect the lights, which have a slow lament, as if they would move at any moment. I wanted to add gloom with the colors I used."*

Photo number II is called "The Course of the War I". A closed hand stands out as a visual image. The comment on the photograph of the young artist number II is as follows: "A sudden uneasiness and danger manifests itself in the first part. I wanted to reenact the confrontation with danger by photographing the moment of noticing the first dark spot."

The name of the photo number III is "Shadow". As a visual image, the reflection of light from the window comes to the fore. The comment on the photograph of the young artist number III is as follows: "There are some colors in a thousand and one shades of life, they are just like the light floating in the darkness. It's hard to find there."

Photo number IV is called "Fine Lines". As a visual image, the reflection of light from the window comes to the fore. Commenting on the photograph of the young artist number IV is as follows: "While listening to this movement, I felt a very heavy emotionality, deep pain and sadness. I tried to explain the pain and deep sadness I felt. I think that death is the thing that most deeply affects people, and I wanted to emphasize this with soil and stone in my photographs."

The name of the photo number V is "Breeze". An open door stands out as a visual image. Commenting on the photo of the young artist number V, the comment is as follows: "In this photo, I have taken a man counting the days in prison. The reason for this is that while listening to the music, the effect it left on me gave the feeling of a man counting the days in his own world in prison and calculating the step towards his freedom."

Movement II

II



Figure 3. Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8, 2nd Movement

The second movement of Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8, seen in Figure 3, takes about 3 minutes. It is a vicious expression of the conflict in the social structure of the period that turned into chaos. After listening to this 2nd movement, the photographs of 5 different young artists who took independent photo shoots are presented in Figure 4, respectively.



Figure 4. Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8 Photo Examples for 2nd Movement

When the photographs in Figure 4 are examined, the dark spot value is predominantly used in the photographs arranged in square and rectangular compositions. It is noteworthy that black color was used while creating this stain value.

Photo number I is called "Violence". As a visual image, the moving light texture comes to the fore. Commenting on the photograph of the young artist No. I is as follows: *"I felt the sudden heightened emotions of violence, confusion, chaos and screaming in this part. I tried to convey the sense of violence I felt by mixing the lights in the air."*

Photo number II is called "The Course of the War II". An open hand stands out as a visual image. The comment on the photograph of the young artist number II is as follows: *"This uneasiness, which increased with the second part, creates a feeling of rush and struggle. I tried to show it as a struggle between paint and my hand, and I wanted to reflect this horror by creating chaos."*

The name of the photo number III is "Secluded". As a visual image, the night city view comes to the fore. Commenting on the photo of the young artist number III is as follows: *"I felt like there was a painful violence of black and white interconnected in the streets."*

The name of the photo number IV is "The Thorns". As a visual image, thorns come to the fore. Commenting on the photo of the young artist number IV is as follows: *"While listening to this episode, I felt that deep anger and tension increased and there was also a disturbing aspect to them."*

Photo number V is called "Hands". Hands come to the fore as a visual image. The comment on the photo of the young artist number V is as follows: *"With the effect of the music, it seems like someone is trying to touch my life and disturb me without my permission."*

Movement III



Figure 5. Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8, 3rd Movement

The 3rd movement of Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8, seen in Figure 5, takes approximately 4 minutes. After listening to this 3rd movement, the photos of 5 different young artists who took independent photo shoots are presented in Figure 6, respectively.

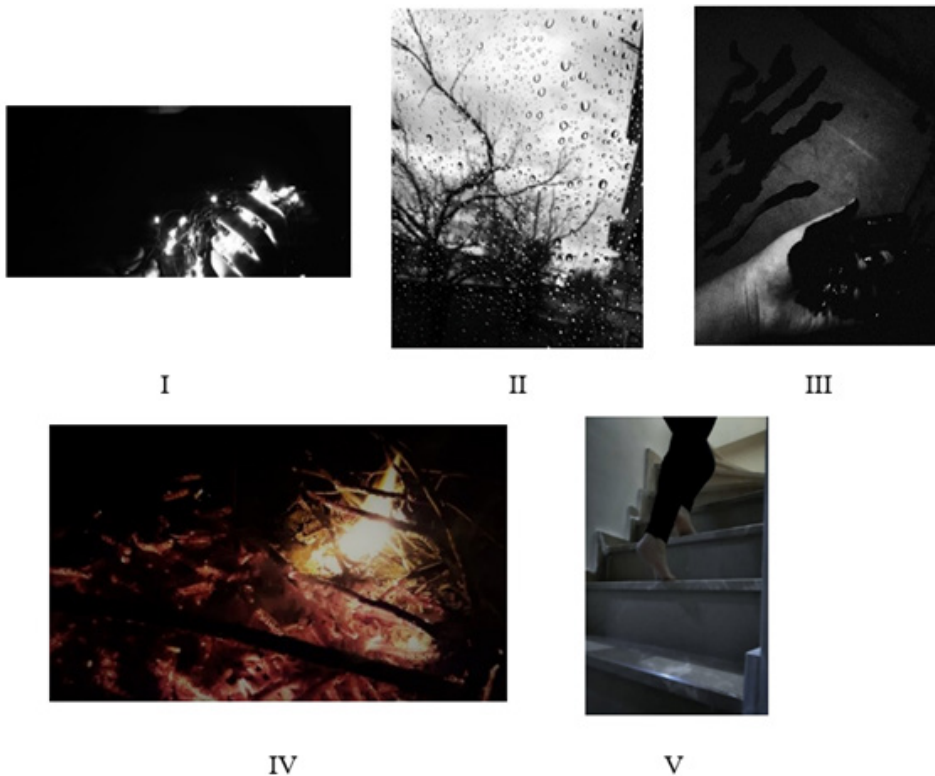


Figure 6. Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8 Photo Examples for 3rd Movement

When the photographs in Figure 6 are examined, the dark spot value is predominantly used in the photographs arranged in square and rectangular compositions. It is noteworthy that black and red colors were used while creating this stain value.

Photo number I is called "Breathing". As a visual image, the static light texture comes to the fore. Commenting on the photo of the young artist No. I is as follows: "Although I calm down, I feel like I'm dying over and over again."

Photo number II is called "The Course of the War III". A half-open hand stands out as a visual image. The comment on the photograph of the young artist number II is as follows: "Finally, the danger that went away seemed to give way to a momentary rest after the run, but this struggle was not over, there was still intense fear, but the strength was decreasing."

The name of the photo number III is "Reflection". As a visual image, water droplets come to the fore. Commenting on the photograph of the young artist number III is as follows: "Everything begins when the sky covers the earth with its dark clouds. Rain smashing windows. Just like the chaos inside a person."

Photo number IV is called "Flare". Fire stands out as a visual image. Commenting on the photo of the young artist number IV is as follows: "While listening to this episode, I felt an excitement and pessimism mixed with anger, trying not to give up."

Photo number V is called "Exit". As a visual image, a person ascending the steps stands out. Commenting on the photo of the young artist with number V, the comment is as follows: "The music pictured in my mind someone who was quietly escaping to the upper east."

Movement IV

IV

The musical score for the 4th movement of Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 8 begins at measure 53. It is marked 'LARGO' and features a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The score is written for four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The music is characterized by a slow, heavy feel, with dynamic markings ranging from pianissimo (pp) to fortissimo (ff). The score includes instructions such as '(senza sord.) pp sempre' and 'ff pesante'.

Figure 7. Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8, 4th Movement

The 4th movement of Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8, seen in Figure 7, takes about 5 and a half minutes. After listening to this 4th movement, the photos of 5 different young artists who took independent photo shoots are presented in Figure 8.

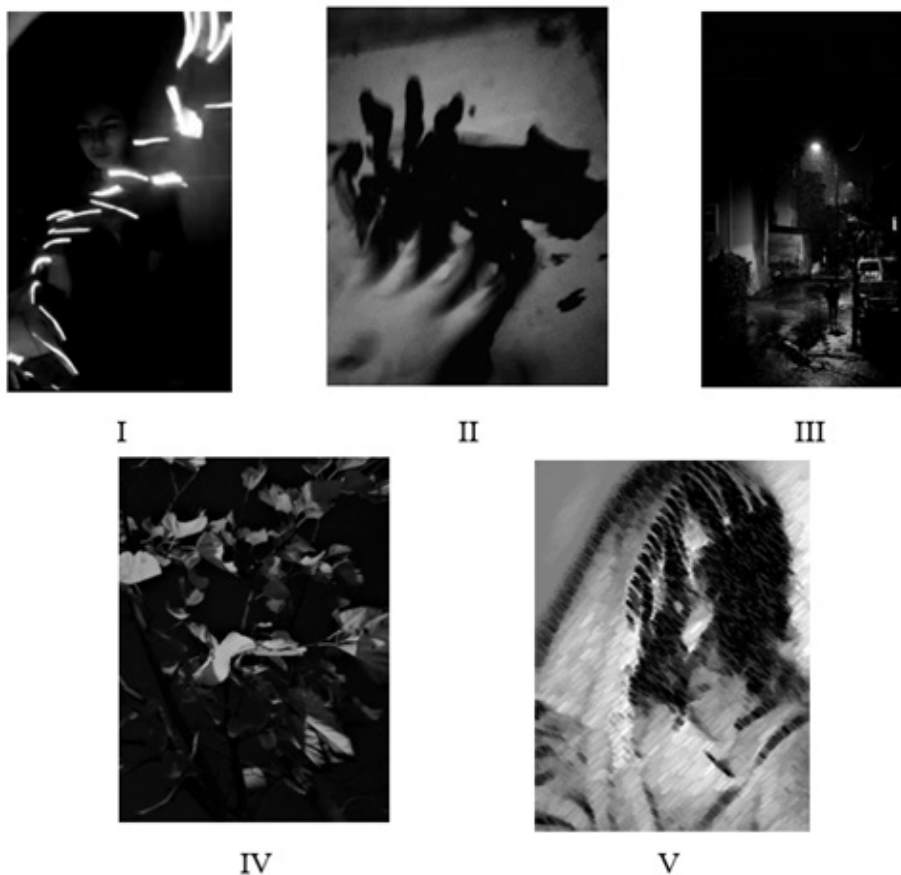


Figure 8. Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8 Photo Examples for 4th Movement

When the photographs in Figure 8 are examined, the dark spot value is predominantly used in the photographs arranged in a rectangular composition. It is noteworthy that black and red colors were used while creating this stain value.

Photo number I is called "Imbalance". As a visual image, the irregular light texture on the woman stands out. The comment on the photograph of the young artist number I is as follows: *"I felt more emotional changes, ups and downs in the fourth episode."*

Photo number II is called "The Course of the War IV". As a visual image, a hand that pollutes the uncertain place comes to the fore. The comment on the photograph of the young artist number II is as follows: *"I seem to see the eyes of the oppressed, who are no longer able to be afraid of exhaustion and are completely blinded."*

The name of the photo number III is "Secluded II". A secluded street stands out as a visual image. The comment on the photograph of the young artist number III is as follows: *"Sometimes walking alone in our saddest moment is good for us."*

The name of the photo number IV is "Breezes". As a visual image, leaves come to the fore. Commentary on the photograph of the young artist number IV is as follows: *"While listening to this episode, I had the feeling of trying to comfort myself with something after the sadness."*

Photo number V is called "Fear". An abstract dark spot stands out as a visual image. Commenting on the photo of the young artist with number V, the comment is as follows: *"The spiritual things that scare us at night were actually alive, I felt like we were at war."*

Movement V

V

Figure 9. Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8, 5th Movement

The 5th movement of Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8, seen in Figure 9, takes about 3 minutes. As at the beginning of the piece, there is a return to the C minor tone. This movement is the last movement of the work. It expresses the effect of the period turned into chaos on psychology. After listening to this 5th movement, the photographs of 5 different young artists who took independent photo shoots are presented in Figure 10, respectively.

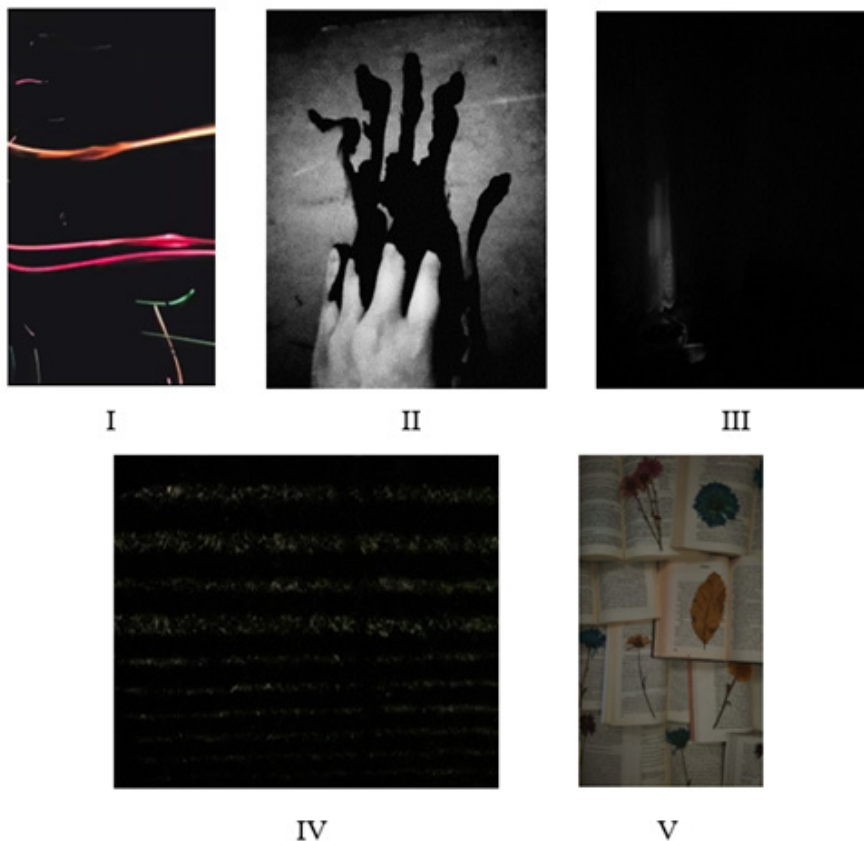


Figure 10. Shostakovich String Quartet No: 8 Photo Examples for 5th Movement

When the photographs in Figure 10 are examined, the dark spot value is predominantly used in the photographs arranged in square and rectangular compositions. It is noteworthy that black and red colors were used while creating this stain value.

Photo number I is called "The End of War". As a visual image, colored light lines come to the fore. The comment on the photograph of the young artist number I is as follows: "*There is a feeling of breathing and calming in the last episode compared to the previous episode. I feel the war is over.*"

Photo number II is called "The Course of the War V". As a visual image, a hand moving away from the dirt comes to the fore. The comment on the photo of the young artist number II is as follows: "*Now we are getting close to the end, either everyone will die or there will be a miracle.*"

The name of the photo number III is "Night". As a visual image, a slightly illuminated screen comes to the fore. The comment on the photograph of the young artist number III is as follows: "*There is a feeling that we are not leaving ourselves to the night to find ourselves in the dark.*"

The name of the photo number IV is "Intense Emotions". As a visual image, the grass seen between the strips comes to the fore. Commentary on the photograph of the young artist number IV is as follows: "*I felt sudden emotional changes in this episode, it was like he was trying to explain his tension, sadness and pain. While you are experiencing all your emotions at the top, you feel like you are being crushed under the emotions.*"

Photo number V is called "Books". Books come to the fore as visual images. The comment on the photo of the young artist number V is as follows: "*The music is very calm now, I imagine that what I experienced while listening to the music is now turned into a book and passed on to future generations.*"

CONCLUSION

Art is an individual's way of expressing itself, it's experiences and expectations in a sincere language. Many different materials can be used in this expression process. Although the difference in the materials used reveals different branches of art, the goal to be achieved is always the same; to create an aesthetic product. In this research, the relationship between music and photography, whose materials are different from each other, has been tried to be revealed. From this point of view, it is aimed to embody the abstract and not easily understood music art with the art of photography. For this purpose, Shostakovich's String Quartet No: 8 was listened by 5 different young artists in photography education and they were asked to take independent photographs of the work. The most important feature of the work, which was performed for the first time in 1960, is to reflect the social depression by being influenced by the political events of the period. The work, which deals with the dark side of fascism and war, consists of 5 movements: largo, allegro molto, allegretto, largo and largo. When the works of young artists, who performed a separate photo shoot for each section, were collected and analyzed, very remarkable results emerged. All of the young artists who do not know musical notes and do not know music have produced conflicted and depressed works with the theme of war. Dark stain dominates in their composition. The dominant use of the color black, one of the effects of mourning on psychology, while using this dark stain is an important result.

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