

# The Transformative Role of Music in Visual Arts Education: Rediscovering Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Possibilities through A/r/tographic Inquiry\*

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**Abstract:** A/r/tographic inquiry is an art-based research method widely used abroad; this method has not yet become widespread in our country's undergraduate and graduate arts education. To reinvent the results of my a/r/tographic work, which I conducted by visualising the electroacoustic work "Symbolic Gestures" by Malaysian composer and academician Valerie Ross in 2017, with this study I invite my students to an a/r/tographic investigation (understanding/interpretation with artist identity). I aim to reveal intercultural and interdisciplinary creative learning experiences for my students with the methods and techniques (theorising/theory with researcher identity) that I discovered while questioning the transformative role of music in my creative process, and re-question my teaching and learning identities (practice with a teacher identity) through artistic practices. This study reveals a 6-week intercultural and interdisciplinary a/r/tographic inquiry in 2018-2019 with 12 undergraduate and 4 graduate students studying research and art. The research data consists of video and audio recordings, photographs, artistic products, student views, observation notes, diaries, and the work named Symbolic Gestures. The data were interpreted with an a/r/tographic inquiry approach. At the end of the research, the transformative role of music in visual arts education has produced significant results in the experiences of knowing, creating, metaphorical thinking, intuitive listening, and seeing in depth in undergraduate and graduate art students. The provocative, transformative, and convertible role of music can be used in learning, creating, and teaching experiences in visual arts education.

**Keywords:** A/r/tography, a/r/tographer, metaphorical thinking, visualising sounds, intuition.

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## Introduction

In today's art education research, different research approaches have emerged based on new, creative, and original investigations, in which art practices can be transformed into a research process. Some of these are art-based research, a/r/tography, c/a/r/ography, poetic inquiry, art informed research, practice-based research, or art informed practice which intertwines educational research and art practices and investigates the process based on art. The rapid spreading art-based research approaches as a new methodology emerging within qualitative research models inevitably raise the question of what kind of an association can exist between art practice-based research applications and qualitative applications. The primary purpose of the researcher in qualitative research approaches is to describe the process in detail while discovering information and constructing new information with a deep understanding of different dimensions of social life while doing this description. In this process, while discovering, it is emphasised to produce new meanings by stratified inquiries within the lives of individuals in different professions and fields to deepening intellectual. In art-based research practices, researchers, who come across many disciplines, cultures, and professional identities, use various methodological tools throughout the process that allow them to create their data, analyse and interpret creative outcomes, and originally present data. These tools, which the researcher mainly develops, link the creative teachings of all different art-based branches on theory and practice and analyse them in social research questions in a transformable and permeable structure. The concepts of "a/r/tographic inquiry" and "a/r/tographer", which we have heard frequently in recent years, have started to be applied as an art-based research method with the first studies conducted in our country (See Bedir Eristi 2016a; Guler 2014). A/r/tographic inquiry, widely used abroad, has not yet become widespread in art education at undergraduate and graduate levels in our country. Besides contributing to the literature in our country with this a/ r/tographic study, the a/r/tographer aimed to re-question the transformative role of music with undergraduate and graduate students in the field of visual arts through artist identity (*understanding/meaning*), researcher (*theorising/theory*), and teacher (*practice*).

As in qualitative research, it is important to create meaning, discover meaning, and investigate the strong meanings of different situations, events, and artistic products of creative activities humans are involved in, in art-based studies that have turned into research. "Whilst many qualitative approaches use methods to explore phenomena and reveal meanings, arts-related research is more interested in 'acts of theorising as complication'" (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. 109). Meaning-making is seen as plotting out a course of action as critical, reflective and investigative praxis" (Stewart, 2008, p. 124 as cited in Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014, p. 64). The structure of art gives human beings a deep understanding and the power of intuition; therefore, learning from subjective experiences and finding new meanings shows us the importance of such research approaches. For Leavy, "Over the years, as qualitative practices and then later

arts-based and community-based research practices developed, as well as interpretive and critical approaches to research, the focus on reflexivity increased” (2017b, p. 48). There are many synergies between artistic and qualitative practice. In both instances, the practitioner may aim to illuminate, build understanding, or challenge our assumptions. For instance, artists and qualitative researchers alike may aim to illuminate something about the social world, sensitively portray people and their circumstances, develop new insights about the relationships between our sociohistorical environments and our lives, or disrupt dominant narratives and challenge biases (Leavy, 2015, p. 17).

Irwin ve Springgay suggested that “...the disciplinary-based science traditions perceive research and theory as a means of explaining phenomena or revealing meaning, practitioner-based research perceives research as a disposition for knowledge creation and understanding through acts of theorising as a complication. In the earlier instance, theory and research are used to find answers to questions. In the practitioner-based research, theorising through inquiry seeks understanding by way of an evolution of questions within the living inquiry processes of the practitioner” (2008, p. xxiii). ABR is grounded in a philosophy of arts-based research, which Gerber et al. (2012, p. 41) suggest:

- Recognises that art has been able to convey truth(s) or bring about awareness (both knowledge of the self and knowledge of others).
- Recognises that the use of the arts is critical in achieving self/other knowledge.
- Values preverbal ways of knowing.
- Includes multiple ways of knowing, such as sensory, kinesthetic, and imaginary (as cited in Leavy, 2017b, p. 195).

A/r/tographic research, a type of art-based practice-based research method, is currently accepted as a research method that attracts significant attention, and its use continues to spread rapidly (See. Barone & Eisner, 2012; Cole & Knowles, 2008; Finley, 2008; Irwin, 2004; Irwin vd., 2006; Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2005; Irwin & Springgay, 2008; Leggo vd., 2011; Leavy, 2015; Rolling, 2013; Sullivan, 2010, Wiebe vd., 2007). In the analysis of the word a/r/tography, Pinar (2004, p. 9) states, “a/r/t is a metaphor for artist-researcher-teacher. In a/r/tography, these three roles are integrated to create a third space”. “A/r/tography merges “knowing, doing, and making” (Pinar, 2004, p. 9). Referring to a/r/tographical research as a localised and evolving methodology, Anita Sinner and colleagues posit, this is a “hybrid, practice-based form of methodology” (2006, p. 1224) that is necessarily about both the self and the social” (2006, p. 1224 as cited in Leavy, 2015, p. 55). This scope of a/r/tographic inquiry prepares us to use self-knowledge, see, question, reinterpret oneself in other identities (artist/researcher/teacher), and change the areas of making and producing art practices into research. Thus, while a/r/tographic inquiry enables artists, researchers, and teachers to rediscover their lives together, it also offers ways to re-create deep meanings

and understandings by intertwining the different identities that have turned into a living research process.

To question the transformative role of music, the electroacoustic work 'Symbolic Gestures', composed by Malaysian composer and academician Valerie Ross, premiered at the international conference titled Building Interdisciplinary Bridges Across Cultures & Creativities (BIBACC) at Cambridge University in 2016 was taken as the basis of this study (Ross, V. Composer, 2016). In this context, as an a/r/tographer in the study, the researcher invites students to a new a/r/tographic inquiry (*understanding/interpretation with the artist identity*) to re-question his previously performed investigation of painting music by visualising the sounds and the results of that research (Table 1).

**Table 1.**

*The A/r/tographic Research Process for the work named Symbolic Gestures composed by Valerie Ross, "A Journey with Music into the Depths of Infinity" (unpublished book contents section). Guler, 2017, 204 pages.*

<b>THE TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESS OF PAINTING MUSIC</b> <b>"A Journey with Music into The Depths of Infinity"</b>	
<b>A. Choosing Valerie Ross's composition, Symbolic Gestures</b>	
<b>1- Being deeply affected by the composition</b> An inner voice says, "I must paint this music." "Asking yourself, "I wonder what kind of a journey I am embarking on this time?"	
<b>Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How I can express this sound on a surface?</li> <li>• How can I carry this rhythm or these instruments onto a two-dimensional surface?</li> <li>• How can I depict and bring to life this music inside a colour, line or point?</li> <li>• Which technique should I use while painting which has relation between the music's own structure of painting is relevant to the structure of the music?</li> <li>• How can I feel and make you feel this infinite cycle and my journey into the depths of infinity that comes out with the music on paper?</li> <li>• How can I present to the viewer these abstract sounds?</li> <li>• Which colour can express the spirituality of the composer thus?</li> <li>• Which line can make me feel the infinity and the absence of boundaries?</li> <li>• How can these eyes see and hear it?</li> <li>• Which shape, colour and texture can give me the real meaning of the sound of water that I heard in the music in my paintings?</li> </ul>	
<b>2- Listening to the composition with full concentration repetitively</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full concentration on listening to the composition</li> <li>• Discovering the ability to adapt the composer's /music's own discipline into my own</li> <li>• Understanding the attitude of each instrument in their communication and being able to hear their individual languages.</li> <li>• Questioning different concepts concerning music through different listening experiences which lasted long hours and days.</li> </ul>	
<b>3- The importance of the body position when listening to the composition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of a relation can there be between trying to paint a musical composition and the position in which one listens to it?</li> <li>• Learning that each work of art brings forth its own creating discipline, through my experience.</li> <li>• Listening in different ways and taking notes (with earphones, while sleeping, walking, sitting, lying, amongst people, in dark, and sitting etc.)</li> <li>• Go by own intuition while exploring concepts and metaphors in different ways of listening to music</li> </ul>	
<b>4- Analyzing the composition in a spiritual dimension and its intuitive interpretation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fearlessly taking note of the feelings awakened by the sounds, and thus entering the spirituality of the music.</li> <li>• Being able to shape my creation process (colours of the music, the shape of the sounds.)</li> </ul>	
<b>5- Research and analysis of the instruments in the composition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research on the relationship between music and empathy</li> <li>• Research on all the instruments that were used in the composition (muyu/mokugyo, budisht bell, erhu, flute, drum)</li> </ul>	
<b>6- Research on the concepts discovered through the music</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel, think of, question and be curious about concepts, live the music.</li> </ul>	
<b>7- Being ready to paint the composition (The relationship of technique-size-concept-shape-form)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is it possible to hear with the eye and see with the ear at this point? What kind of composition will I design for this music?</li> <li>• Should there be colours or lines, stains or points? Or should all of them be included? Which colours? Which techniques?</li> <li>• Watercolour Technique (sound of water drops, transparency of water, layers of sounds,</li> <li>• Ink (Inspiring, Zen philosophy, Chinese and Japanese Art, variety of tones, varied by the amount of water)</li> <li>• Sea Water (dive into knowledge, depths, water, source of life, paint with sea water)</li> <li>• Brushes (different thickness and properties, same-)</li> <li>• Paper of different thickness and texture (reflecting the vibration of the sounds, bringing out the colours' transparency, texture, water flowing).</li> </ul>	
<b>8- The analysis of the paintings inspired by the composition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the tinkling of the bell used in the composition be expressed on the surface?</li> <li>• Which visual elements (point-line-shape-stain-texture-colour-form) can be used in the compositions of the paintings?</li> <li>• How can the sound of dripping that reminds me of water drops be expressed on paper in the watercolour technique?</li> <li>• With what form and transparency should the water appear on the paper?</li> <li>• Does the technique I am using, that is, watercolour, not already represent water?</li> <li>• How can I express the points of tension in the music, that is, the contrasts, while maintaining tranquility within and as a unity in the painting?</li> <li>• Shall I be able to express the unity that the composer expresses with the contrasts that she uses in her composition?</li> </ul>	
<b>9- Zen Philosophy and Art</b>	
<b>B) The conceptual analysis of Valerie Ross's Symbolic Gestures</b>	
<b>1. The Journey</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Depth/Degree</li> <li>b. Contrast / Tension</li> <li>c. Darkness (Black) / Light (White)</li> <li>d. The disappearance of tension in the Contrast</li> <li>e. Death/Nonexistence</li> <li>f. Bow/Arrow/Target</li> <li>g. The sound of water and concentration</li> </ul>	<b>2. Infinity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ink and the disappearance of Borderlines</li> <li>b. Nothingness-Emptiness</li> <li>c. Nongravity/Ascent</li> <li>d. Verticality</li> <li>e. Infinity</li> <li>f. The Soul and External Perception</li> </ul>
<b>C. Valerie Ross and Symbolic Gestures</b>	
<b>D. Interdisciplinary and intercultural art practices, art education and music</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It causes you to make new discoveries.</li> <li>• It develops abstract thinking and creativity.</li> <li>• Intercultural and interdisciplinary music listening experiences trigger divergent thinking.</li> <li>• It frees the mind from the bonds of memory-based learning and expands perception.</li> <li>• It offers new methods related to the Zen philosophy in atelier practices.</li> <li>• It lifts boundaries by freeing people.</li> <li>• It generates metaphorical thinking and learning approaches.</li> </ul>	

The researcher discovered methods and techniques (*theorising with researcher identity/theory*) while using the transformative role of music in the creative process; with this investigation, the researcher aims to see the new learning experiences of students in an intercultural and interdisciplinary context. Additionally, the researcher also questions how her artist and researcher identities (practice with a teacher identity) can turn into a teacher identity who teaches and learns by re-meaning and constructing knowledge (See. Guler, 2014; Guler, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2017a, 2017b; Ross & Guler, 2018; Guler & Ross, 2019; Kurtulan & Guler, 2019; Kurtulan & Guler, 2021; Guler, 2021a; Guler, 2021b). A/r/tography as a methodology is conceived of as “an interstitial space” wherein definitions and understandings about art, research, and teaching are “interrogated and ruptured” in “a critical exchange that is reflective, responsive, and relational, which is continuously in a state of reconstruction and becoming something else together” (Irwin and Springgay, 2008, p. 106 as cited in Rolling, 2013, p. 19). In this context, the researcher, on her behalf, will re-question the experience of visualising sounds with her students in the process of a/r/tographic research, while getting students to interpret and discuss their experiences of *metaphorical thinking, knowing, creating, seeing in depth, intuitive listening, and visualising sounds* in art practices. Thus, through a/r/tographic inquiries, researchers and participants gain an intuitive view from an interdisciplinary and intercultural perspective and gain insight by expanding knowledge (Guler, 2017a, p. 159). In this study, while I am trying to discover the lives of myself/others by re-experiencing my experiences of knowing, making, and producing, I am also trying to reveal an investigation process that I created with other identities from understandings and torn meanings that deepen and layer in interstitial spaces. In this investigation process, I am looking to answers the following questions.

1. How can I transform my individual creative experiences into learning experiences for my students?
2. How can I discover re-mean my artist, researcher, and teacher identities by associating them with my students’ experimental practices of knowing and creating?
3. How can my students express their individual learning experiences in creating, knowing, metaphorical thinking, in depth vision, intuitive listening, and visualising sounds in intercultural and interdisciplinary contexts and the three different identities (artist/researcher/teacher)?
4. What is the transformative role of music in visual arts education in an intercultural and interdisciplinary context?
5. How can I develop pedagogical and aesthetic strategies in arts education for me/others through a/r/tographic inquiry?
6. What kinds of new educational ideas can arise from these a/r/tographic research for researcher-artist and participant-artist identities?

## Method

### Research Model

Typically, the ontology of knowledge in ABR is similar to that in many other qualitative research approaches. But ABR methodology is often combined with many other methodologies, such as ethnography, autoethnography, narrative methods, case studies, participatory action research, discourse analysis, or/and interview methods. It is often important for ABR practice not to stand alone as a method in a research project. Research's interdisciplinary nature and methodological pluralism seem to generate more complex and interesting research settings, methods, analysis, and knowledge (Suominen, Kallio-Tavin & Hernandez-Hernandez, 2017, p. 104). "The subjects of art, with different disciplines and techniques such as music, poetry, drama, theatre, dance, painting, photography, video, and performance studies, can be used in conjunction with action research in the context of experience and reflective processes" (Ersoy & Avci, 2016, p. 126). While action research is not an ARB method per se, action researchers often employ ABR techniques in their work with local communities. Action researchers work collaboratively with community members to understand community problems and find possible solutions (Gullion & Ellis, 2014). The ultimate goal of action research is social change (Abraham & Purkayastha, 2012), and art and drama are often utilised as forms of social protest, pedagogy, and/or social engagement (Smartt Gullion & Schäfer, 2017, p. 516).

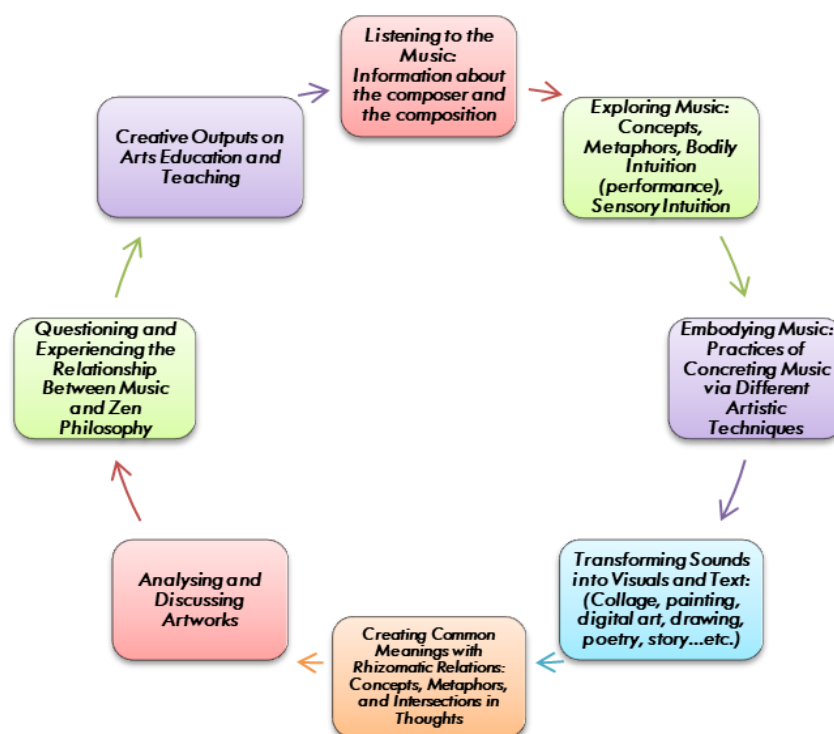
A/r/tography has strong links with action research. Action research has become widespread in education and continued in different forms in qualitative and quantitative traditions in the past years. A/r/tography offers a special perspective that transforms action research into a living application and a utilitarian approach (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Deleuze, 1990), while research-oriented applications provide in-depth answers to the who, why, and how questions of research (Sumara & Carson, 1997, p. xvii as cited in Irwin, Barney & Golparian, 2016). "The a/r/tographic approach is very intrusive like action research, and a/r/tography researchers spend their efforts on developing the application they perform, understanding them from different perspectives, or influencing their practices on the experiences of others" (Irwin, Barney & Golparian, 2016, p. 193). "A/r/tography as living inquiry necessarily opens the way to describing and interpreting the complexity of experience among researchers, artists and educators, as well as the lives of the individuals within the communities they interact with. As a result, it also opens the topics, contexts and conditions of inquiry" (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxv). The name itself exemplifies these features by setting art and graphy, and the identities of artist, researcher, and teacher (a/r/t), in contiguous relations (Irwin et al. 2006, p. 70).

This research was carried out with the a/r/tographic inquiry approach, one of the art-based research methods. The stages of the study consist of a unique set of application disciplines that were theorised in the autobiographical a/r/tographic inquiry previously

performed by the researcher (See Guler, 2017b; Ross & Guler, 2018; Guler, & Ross, 2019; Kurtulan & Guler, 2019). "Field studies full of personal experiences, diaries, notes, reflections, and personal experiences are a set of documents in which the researcher describes himself autobiographically. As researchers, we can use autobiographical documents as part of ethnographic research or a/r/tographic research" (Eristi Bedir, 2016b, p. 156). Thus, "a/r/tography, which brings together art and education in detail and is a living practice, makes it possible to question research over and over again with an alternative perspective, not with a traditional scientific point of view" (Garioan 2013, 2014 as cited in Irwin, Barney & Golparian, 2016, p. 192). Guler and students re-applied and re-questioned those stages in this study using the a/r/tographic inquiry method (Figure 1). The stages the researcher questioned in Figure 1 were not separately planned before this study. This flow reflects the researcher's self-discipline in her practice, which was theorised following subjective inquiry practices within the scope of her a/r/tographic investigation. Due to the nature of a/r/tographic studies, the relational, backward, and forward-oriented rhizomatic relationships of each application stage with other stages given in this flow are given in detail in each section. In this study, questioning carried out in the stages of the flow and applications intersecting with each other, sometimes creating leaps backwards and forwards, re-establishing creative connections and stratification were continuously questioned with concepts and metaphors.

Figure 1.

*A/r/tographic Inquiry Flow*



## The Role of the Researcher

An a/r/tographic investigation approach shapes this study. It is thought that the researcher's educational understanding, perspective on life, artistic and professional competencies, communication power, and ability to create creative interactions, observation, and previous experiences in the subject context affect the working process. Savin-Baden ve Wimpenny suggest that "The arts-related researcher's biography, identity, researcher stance, discipline and worldview are all brought to bear on how they think, respond, problem solve and create" (2014, p. 66). The researcher's art-based research practices and studies, her international studies in an intercultural and interdisciplinary context, and her undergraduate and graduate lectures on the subject have directed her to rediscover the transformative role of music in visual arts education through an a/r/tographic inquiry in an intercultural and interdisciplinary context. Additionally, meeting the theorist and practitioner of the a/r/tographic inquiry approach, Prof. Dr. Rita Irwin, discussing and getting feedback on her work, and taking part in a book project on a/r/tography edited by Irwin and Eristi, has influenced the researcher to pick this study (Guler, 2021a; Guler, 2021b).

## Participants

This study reveals an intercultural and interdisciplinary a/r/tographic inquiry with the researcher and 12 undergraduate and 4 graduate students studying in different art classes at Kırıkkale University Faculty of Fine Arts. In this research, accompanied by an electroacoustic composition named "Symbolic Gestures", the researcher and 16 students carried out an application 3 hours a week for a total of 6 weeks in the spring semester of the 2018-2019 academic year. In this study, in which electroacoustic sounds are visualised in an intercultural context, the a/r/tography researcher uses her *artist, researcher, and teacher identities* and the learning outcomes of the autobiographical a/r/tography investigation she previously carried out to;

- re-questioning their teaching and learning approaches by re-experiencing them with their students,
- make students go through their own creative journeys while visualising sounds,
- understand how students reconstruct knowledge in an interdisciplinary and intercultural context during this process,
- In this context, to reveal how students transform and interpret their artistic knowledge and experiences with music, which is a different discipline, creatively.

## Data Collection Methods

Video and audio recordings, photographs, artistic products, student pictures, student views, observation notes, student diaries, performance activities, personal messages, researcher's work and the work *Symbolic Gestures* by Valerie Ross reveal the data of



this a/r/tographic inquiry process. According to Leavy (2015, p.18), narrative forms in art-based research applications are not limited to short stories, novels, experimental writing styles, graphic novels, cartoons, poems, short stories, collages, pictures, drawings, sculpture, 3-D art, sewing, show scripts, theatrical performances, dances, movies, songs and musical notes. Therefore, the researcher and participants' live performance and the emerging art products are also among the data.

## **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

"The task of the arts-related researcher is to analyse, rearrange and interpret the data as it has been experienced, to share the momentary observations, to present new insights and to create space for further questions to develop" (MacKenzie & Wolf, 2012 as cited in Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014, p. 73). Innovation or creativity may come to bear as we develop a unique methodology by employing methods of data collection or analysis in new ways that allow us to examine what might otherwise remain invisible or out of reach (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, 2008; Leavy, 2009, 2011a; Whittemore vd., 2001 as cited in Leavy, 2017b, p. 494).

The participants must question the electroacoustic sounds to create different meanings. The researcher and the participants must share their ideas, concepts, and metaphors to establish connective relationships. Thus, the artistic and educational outputs of this a/r/tographic work, personally and as a whole, are important in analysing the study's data. Irwin, Barney, & Golparian (2016) stated that a/r/tography is an approach that allows the examination of perceptions and that artists can establish connections by being influenced by different images, sounds, performances or a word, that a/r/tography researchers can use artistic and educational inquiries as data, and that researchers can continuously associate ideas and data with artistic processes to create knowledge. In this context, research data were collected, analysed, and interpreted with the a/r/tographic inquiry approach, one of the art-based research methods. The video and sound recordings transcripts, photographs of the application process, images of artistic products, participants' opinions and observation notes, student diaries, personal communications, and the researcher's theoretical and practical studies were interpreted and presented in detail. Detailed participant comments were especially included in the study to share instantaneous observations of the data from which new and creative products emerged. "Using autobiography as a research approach means obtaining more in-depth and powerful data related to the subject of the research" (Boucher & Holian, 2001 as cited in Eristi Bedir, 2016b, p. 156). In her autobiographical a/r/tographic inquiry, the researcher mainly conducted original and reflective investigations to re-organise the data obtained from the participants to create new meanings, create inter-identity spaces, and present new insights to the reader.

## Credibility and Ethics

Credibility, transferability, consistency, and verifiability are used to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative research. "The fact that the researcher is close to the data source, lives the realities in the field, and collects data with methods and processes appropriate to the nature of the data are features that increase the validity of qualitative research results" (Yildirim & Simsek, 2008, p. 274). While conducting art-based research, *ownership* (ethical agreement on who will have the right to the research data), *reflexivity* (biases, opinions, and perspectives; the difficulties that the researcher will struggle with in the research process), *negotiated meaning* (the process of negotiating, discussing, and sharing the findings with the participants), *transparency* (making an effort to understand what the participants mean while simultaneously affirming the meaning they co-create with a clear point of view), *plausibility* (understanding that the knowing and known are combined and truth is negotiated through dialogue), *honesty* (the researchers affirmation of the cyclical nature of facts and people and situations effect on the "truth"), *integrity* (analysing data in a descriptive way, approaching participants and their circumstances fairly), *verisimilitude* (ability to seek and confirm facts through questioning), *criticality* (one's ability to understand a critical perspective on their position, accept biases, and be aware that there may be a need to acquire possible perspectives), *stance* (the way the researcher positions themselves with respect to the method, participants, and methodologies), *authenticity* (understanding that the research should reflect the participants experiences, the researcher should, in any case, be aware that there may be differences in participants opinions), and *peer evaluation* (receiving criticising feedback from friends and colleagues about the integrity of the study) are certain ethical requirements that need to be taken into account (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014, p. 86-95). Through much research conducted on the a/r/tographic inquiry approach since 2010 and teaching undergraduate and graduate courses on this subject, the a/r/tographer needed to have the knowledge, experience, and skills for the credibility and applicability of the study. 12 undergraduate and 4 graduate students voluntarily participated in the research. They gave their consent to voice recordings, photographs, videos, and the publication of their creative outputs (diaries, performance activities, poems, pictures, etc.). In this context, to verify the findings, participants consent to use direct quotations containing their expressions were obtained, and the participants' expressions were directly quoted in the study to increase reliability. The data were used without disclosing the participants' real names and private information following the principle of privacy regulations. During the research conversations, discussions, and practices, participants were not pressured to express their opinions or any other issues. Each application phase is explained in detail to ensure the research's credibility, transferability, and verifiability. The researcher used photographs describing the implementation stages for the verifiability of the process, explained the applications carried out in as much detail as possible, and tried to make it understandable by interpreting the findings. The recording of Symbolic Gestures was only shared with the participants, with the composer's permission.

## Findings

In this part of the study, the researcher will re-examine the stages that constitute the individual creation discipline in the a/r/tographic inquiry flow with the students and reveal the findings by interpreting the process by questioning new meanings in learning, teaching, and practice with others (See Figure 1). In this context, Guler reconnected her identities as a researcher, artist (practitioner), and teacher with the experimental creation practices of her students and re-lived the exploration investigations with them in creating different ways of knowing by experiencing these three identities. Guler experienced her and others artist/researcher/teacher identities individually and holistically in an intercultural and interdisciplinary context; she also researched how the participants displayed the possibilities of creating, stratified knowing, metaphorical thinking, in-depth vision, intuitive listening, and visualisation of sounds.

### **1- Listening to the Work: Information about the Composer and the composition**

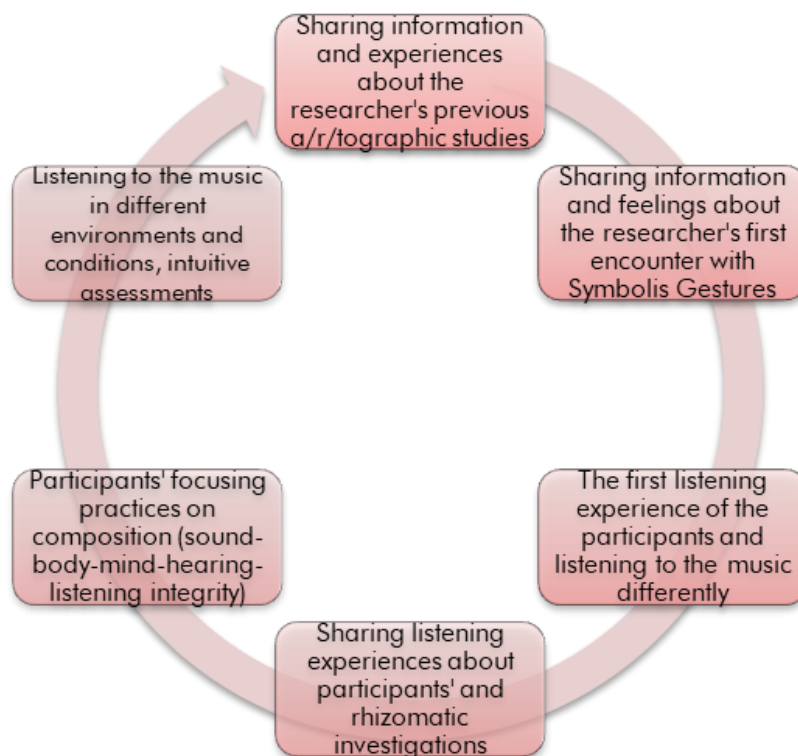
The application discipline that constitutes this stage of the research is given below (Figure 2). In the first phase, Guler talked to the participants about the content of her a/r/tographic studies on visualising sounds in music, which has been ongoing since 2010 and got the participants excited by sharing her experiences in the process of creation. Guler gave information about the a/r/tographic process in which she visualised the sounds of different composers and invited the participants to experience a new investigation; she briefly shared information about her first encounter with the Malaysian composer and academic Valerie Ross and her feelings when she listened to "Symbolic Gestures" at Cambridge University in 2016. In this process, no other information about Symbolic Gestures was provided to avoid preconditioning the participants about the music they will listen to. At this stage, the aim was to observe the effect of music on participants listening to a work belonging to a different culture for the first time. For this reason, the first listening experience took place altogether through loudspeakers. After the first listening experience, the feelings and thoughts of the participating students were listened to.

Later, the participants were asked to listen to the work individually with headphones to internalise the music and note all the feelings, thoughts, and concepts the music made them feel. Participants were guided on how they could be integrated with the music with total concentration while listening to it. These stages were shaped by the practices Guler discovered and realised in her 2-year individual applications of the same work. Participants were asked to exercise their ears while listening to music and integrate their bodies with sounds, feel their movements, and focus on the actions that music made them discover. After this stage, the participants were asked to continue listening to the music differently, for example, by walking, standing, with their eyes closed, and while lying down. They were asked to question whether there was any relationship between

the position they listened to and the way they felt (Photograph 1). Participants were asked to continue their music listening experience regularly at home, in nature, or different environments (crowded, secluded, night, day, public transport, etc.), and they were asked to keep a diary of their feelings and thoughts about all kinds of mental and physical sensations. Guler guided the participants to experience the practices she discovered in different ways but avoided giving too many comments to encouraged them to discover new meanings.

**Figure 2.**

*Stages of Listening to the Composition*



The notes taken by the participants with the current excitement and emotional intensity are given to the reader in the most transparent and natural form below to reflect the discovery process. For the reader to see how interpreting sounds and the emergence of concepts and metaphors change from person to person to gain meaning, their notes were given consecutively, and Guler made no comments. Irwin, Barney & Golparian (2016) stated that "While traditional research approaches generally follow standardised approaches to present research findings, there is no standardised presentation approach for a/r/tography research. There are some ways for them to relate to the work, and these draw attention for the readers or viewers to create new meaning.

Photograph 1.

*Practices of Focusing on the Music and Perceiving the Sounds Mentally and Physically*



It will be seen below how the original thoughts of the participants flow rapidly and reveal many metaphors and concepts in the written notes taken on the semantic analysis of the sounds. The researcher emphasised the metaphors and concepts that she had previously questioned in her autobiographical a/r/tography study in bold so the reader could evaluate the rhizomatic connections between the participants and the researcher. The rhizomatic map, which shows the random and connective rhizomatic relationships among concepts and metaphors the participants questioned in their experiences of listening to music, are given in the following sections (Figure 8).

Deep well, **echo, water sounds**, harmony, **waking up** in screams, the dance of the **black**. Passion, mountain peak, fresh air, wind merging with your skin. Scream pain, **chaos, rise**, excitement. **Dark space**, I slowly come out of that darkness, and we take off to the sky with blue butterflies in front of the **cave**. Cold...fear fills my body. I **lighten** up with the delicacy of butterflies (E. E., Undergraduate, personal communication, March 2019).

**Time ... peace, fear... extinction**, dry leaves flying, **female voice, walking, warning**, "you chose this!", "I have to survive in the wild!". Right now I sat on the ground in nature while listening to this music. I created my own round space with cones in the trees, **anxiety**. I'm in a lonely place, I don't feel **safe**. I feel safe in the classroom. I feel uneasy when I listen to it with people walking by walking, the **eternity** of the music is absorbing here. I get a **wet** and rotten taste, the flute makes me feel like I am floating and **disappearing** in foggy places, I am in high places. It expresses an **adventure, a journey**...An experience close to **death**. Like a cathedral made of mosaic glass with all colours (E. K., Undergraduate, personal communication, March 2019).

It signifies the **beginning** and the **end**. The **water-drop** voice symbolises tears...The **female voice** in music is a lament following **death**, very **deep**. **Darkness**... (E. K., Undergraduate, 8<sup>th</sup> listening, personal communication, March 2019).

...Side flute: **rise**. Drum: news, approach, danger. Woman's voice: lament, **death, extinction**. **Water sound**: cry. Other blowing instruments: belatedness. Violin: bitter, grief. This song is light blue, brown, yellow, **black**. The music makes a difference depending on the **place** I listen to it. This composition has a **secret**...(E. K., Undergraduate, 9<sup>th</sup> listening personal communication, March 2019).

**Fear** after **anxiety**...excitement, I am in a stalactite **cave** with sharp **stones** on the ceiling. Inside is lit by fire, the ground is **wet, water is dripping** from the stalactites...a man and his **sword**. **Animal** and hunting motifs on the walls... (Ö. K., Undergraduate, personal communication, March 2019).

... you have to worship!", "**turn to your own energy, feel, believe!**"..."I must help a wounded gazelle." Selfishness, questioning of conscience... shock, "I am the gazelle", "then who helped me?", "I got into identity confusion (Ö. K., Undergraduate, personal communication, March 2019).

At one point in **time** I saw the living dead. What is the **knowledge**?...it's **dark**, I'm sweating, I have to retreat to my corner, **I don't belong here**... Even if it's sunny, you are moving slowly, **not knowing** where you are going. While walking, melodies seem to **move** according to me, sometimes I wanted to stop. After the rain I felt that I touched the moist leaves and my skin was wet (Ö. K., Undergraduate, personal communication, March 2019).

**Drops of water**, drums, **falling, shiver, ascension, bell**, excitement, **cave**, I'm in **emptiness, darkness**, scream, calmness. Door creak, **bell**, I'm in the **emptiness**. Water drops fall...then as it **rises**, my eyes fill up, my body begins to warm," The sounds disappear and I start to warm up, I reach **peace**. My body temperature changes. The three repetitions of the doorbell give the feeling of salvation. Sadness, depression, **watercolour, blue**, atmosphere, earth, **throne, fear, anxiety, ascension, black**, red, **body**, air, **darkness**, ground, introversion, **sun, light, colour, movement, speed**, closing (U. T., Undergraduate, personal communication, March 2019).

**Drop, darkness, being alone...peace**, hunger and cold, feeling **light from depth to rise, disappearance, silence**...melting state, **tinnitus, feeling transparent, seeing, clearing, landing**, closing. Walking, from blue to green yellow, like a place a ritual is done, look (tulle) listen (woman) three women, **bell**...the **light** turns off, disappearance, **darkness...see**, disturbed, **knowing**, the **desire to hear**, waiting there is no ringing, **white light and numbness. Past tense, future tense, thinking, emptiness, extinction, focus, unity, power, forgetting the concept of time, peace**... (T. G., Undergraduate, personal communication, March 2019).

I walked into a room, it creaked as I opened the door, lonely, **dripping water sounds**, I **walk** slowly and there are two-dimensional busts on the wall, the smell of dampness. Suddenly there was a loud voice as if the voice were coming from that bust. The surroundings had earth tones and green colours...while running away I fell and got wet, it was as if I had a dream when I went out. **Fear**. Music almost drags people (S. A., Undergraduate, personal communication, March 2019).

...fairy-tale images. The dashed lines on the ladder on which I sit seemed to move...There is always **black**. I could not see any colour. I **travel in time** (K. T., Undergraduate, personal communication, March 2019).

Jamming, **darkness, bell**, fire, **cave...night**, shaman, **spirit**, red (M. D., Graduate, personal communication, March 2019).

While the **sound of water** is resting, the sounds that come in between are frightening. The elevations in between caused **anxiety** like knocking on the door. My heartbeat changed. My was

very focused on the **bell** at one point, and I thought at what **intervals** it was ringing (E. S., Undergraduate, personal communication, March 2019).

I have goosebumps because stimulants nudge my **soul**, I am ready for **absence**. The elasticity of **time**...the **bells** are ringing to keep me **aware**. The **wind**...the time of the leaves falling to the ground, some leaves have their **identity**. Their fall time is different too. Different time flow in the same environment. **How can music make you feel more than one emotion at the same time? Fear, worry, peace**...I run as far as I can from where I am stuck, but there is no exit. When I listened to it while **traveling**, the trees seemed to dance to the rhythm of the music (F. Y., Undergraduate, personal communication, March 2019).

**Drops of water**, the creak of wood. The drum tears everything and then ties it together. The music gave me a headache. The **female voice** makes me feel pain. The upper part of my body started to numb. Now the music is uncomfortable. It's very interesting because I like it. The **discomfort is relaxing**. But the drum sound is awakening. After the 9th minute, I find myself in a monotony. I think this is **eternity**. Music has an involuntary **attraction force**. The colour is **dark blue**. I was able to listen to it 3 times at most (B. E., Undergraduate, personal communication, March 2019).

I'm walking in a big pipe. **Alone** but crowded. Very **light** but very **heavy**. It's like going somewhere step by step...There are trees and a lake around me. The weather is cloudy, the wind is blowing occasionally...Not knowing where I'm going. Coolness, **shiver**, and **peace**. (F. A., Undergraduate, personal communication, 26- 27 March 2019).

...excitement, **heart**, wandering, **bells**, it is raining, **light**. **Cave...depths**...flowing **waters**, changing weather, wild animals, **silence**...**flying birds**. **New discoveries**. **Vibrations, drops, drum, reverberation, emptiness**, fright, excitement, **fear**, flight, **plunge, focus, opening, peace, sharpness, void of space, bell noises, loop, disappearance, inner voices**, escape, **acceleration, calmness**, ladders, **destination** (A. K., Graduate, personal communication, March 2019).

...the **sound of water**, the smell of mould, a lonely woman, seated in sorrow...when the door opens she laments, she stepped on the ground, everywhere is **wet**...her grief is easing, **waking up from sleep**, let the **sunrise**, walking fast outside, searching alone... (E. N. Ö., Graduate, personal communication, March 2019).

... the rocking cradle creaking, the **dark** treehouse, the mother stopped rocking the baby, started to sing lullabies. Fireflies are everywhere, wind **chimes**...every ringing of the **bell** passes the line of singing on to another person. (E. N. Ö., Graduate, personal communication, March 2019).

Just **water** and **me**. **I'm not thinking of anything**. I'm lying on the ground. **Drops of water have started to fall into the water**...it is dripping on my face. I may be **dead** the woman over my head is lamenting. Electricity sounds are coming from the lamp... the sounds of the courtyard represents open doors. They will take me away. The end has come. Leaves are falling with the wind. **The sound of flapping wings. Hidden secrets...A layered effect** (E. N. Ö., Graduate, personal communication, March 2019).

Stairs, **drops, depth, peace, darkness, anxiety**, ethereal, **height**, woman, **eternity, water**, drift, **tension** (N. Ö., Graduate, personal communication, March 2019).

**I shuddered**...and my headache passed. I rested with this music. I'm walking in a cemetery, it is summer. The fear of death surrounds me with the chirps of birds green is greeting us I am **questioning the world**...I am finally getting better... (E. T., Graduate, personal communication, March 2019).

Gestalt-figure-ground relationship, **search, disappearance, identity**, hypnosis, **sadness, darkness**, psychological illusion, **nothingness, directionless, purification, metaphor, seeking spirituality**, uncertainty, shamanism, **no gravity, spiritual dimension**, supernatural, **inter-emotional transition**, ethnic, continuity, pain (E. T., Graduate, personal communication, March 2019).

... While I think that the spiritual feelings with music will comfort me, on the contrary, it makes me feel very **uncomfortable**. **It makes me think** constantly...I think about everything good and bad. **My focus** suddenly changes. **Everything, every object loses its meaning. I become "nothing"**. Such a state of **absence** that there is not even **"nothing"**. If I listen to it more than twice a day it keeps me up at night (E. T., Graduate, personal communication, March 2019).

In addition to the written notes above that reveal the subjective inquiry processes of the participants listening to the work, some of the researchers' notes on the subjective inquiry about the work at the beginning of the study are given below. The following notes are important in showing the relationship between the subjective concepts that the researcher and the participants questioned while listening to music.

I am in **emptiness** with **water drops**, sound **echoes**, an empty **dark** space. Shiver...the **day rises** with the flute and the **light** spreads into the darkness, the sound of the flute almost opens distances, I am going away. **Woman's voice=peace**. **Water is the flow of time** but there is no **end**, the bell is life, the lines travel and retreat with the female voice, **mysticism**, retreat and **disappearance, tensions**, exit from concrete to abstract (A. Guler, personal communication, August 26, 2016, 1<sup>st</sup> listening).

**Water drop, space-emptiness, space**, I still can't make sense of the bell, the flute is the transition to the **day**; elongating, pulling, sustaining voices, ringing may be "self-improvement". Maybe it is the frontmost stain in the picture. The drum is **thunder**, the flute makes me go around, sometimes it can be a cry. The string is naive and sensual, sometimes the flute stretches...In an extraordinary flow, it affects me differently. There is no **time**, no **space**, all **opposing concepts** collide in the work, while you can feel the **space** with the sound of the water and the bell, **spacelessness** can be suddenly perceived. Time and **timelessness, timidity and courage, running** and getting caught, **night but day, light but dark**...etc. (A. Guler, personal communication, August 27, 2016, 5<sup>th</sup> listening).

I **can't listen to this piece over and over** again like in my Gershwin work...It's like it's **changing my metabolism**...3.30 min. a full echo in a **cave** behind...5.28 there is **tension**, and an **event** is approaching...06.50 min. Flute is a call to spirituality, 07.18 **curiosity, unknown**. But what is approaching? 09.13 **thunder rumbles**, 09.43 where am I? There is no **gravity**... (A. Guler, personal communication, August 30, 2016, 9<sup>th</sup> listening).

...This is a **beginning, an event, a ritual**, a female voice makes me **sleepy**... (A. Guler, personal communication, September 3, 2016, 13<sup>th</sup> listening).

The participants' notes who listened to the music regularly by focusing on the same piece at different times and in different places show how different the sounds are perceived and interpreted. *While some participants could taste the sounds, some smelled them, while others were questioning the instruments, others were attracted to focusing on the objects. At the same time, while some experienced a story, others expressed their feelings with single words, while some felt like an instrument, others associated music*



with their environment and questioned themselves. Others have physiologically reacted to the music. The participants re-questioned the concepts and metaphors of the music with the researcher and created deep meanings that are intellectually stratified. Trying to sense the work spiritually and physically has created the foundation for the next stage.

## **2- Exploring Music: Concepts, Metaphors, Bodily Intuition (performance), Sensory Intuition**

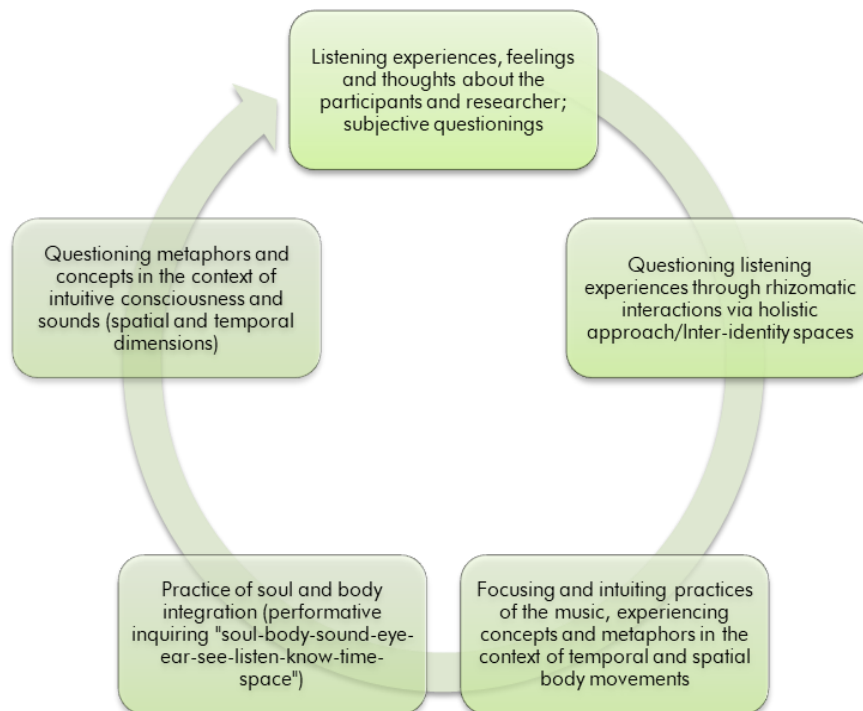
Guler shared the concepts, metaphors, and intuition practices that she questioned while producing with an artist identity with the participants, which aroused great interest in the participants. This invited participants to explore different inquiries with new research questions. While the researcher's metaphors from intuitive listening experiences before visualising the music were questioned altogether, new questions arose in the name of *intuition* (Figure 3). Thus, the participants tried to investigate the new concepts they questioned with their own artist identities and tried to create research questions with other participants. Participants were told that they would have a performance where they would feel the music with their ears and all parts of the body to experience the relationship between the soul and body that can integrate with sounds. Based on her own experiences, Guler guided and encouraged the participants to focus. Most of the participants who stated that they had never had such an experience before were initially anxious and embarrassed.

Participants' hesitation about exhibiting what music makes their body do after their listening practices disturbed their concentration. However, this was shortly resolved when the researcher explained that focus was the backbone of this study. Participants were asked to imagine that they were no gravity and leave themselves to the music by closing their eyes and forgetting everything, and thinking that they are gradually leaving this world. Previously, a 12-meter-long paper was laid on the workshop floor, and participants were asked to wear their most comfortable clothes and were stated that they could participate in the process by taking off their shoes. For the body to relax and achieve the purpose of experiencing the feeling of being free from gravity, they were asked to get rid of anything that could physically give them a sense of weight. This way, the liberated body was able to reach full spiritual concentration. Afterwards, they were asked to feel the rhythm with their bodies while listening to the music and freely reflect it with body movements on the paper laid on the floor (Photograph 2).

Guler was the first to initiate the performance, and others voluntarily participated in the performance one by one. It has been observed that the participants isolated themselves from this world by closing their eyes. The performance continued as the interaction of "I" and "others" with music, with interbody and inter-identity spaces.

Figure 3.

*The Process of Exploring Music with Concepts, Metaphors, Bodily Intuition (performance), and Sensory Intuition*



Before the performance, the participants were asked to think about the concepts and metaphors they had questioned before, especially while performing the stretching movements that music reveals in their bodily movements. Thus, the previously written concepts were questioned differently with body movements in spatial and temporal dimensions. Here, how participants use the stretching movements in the workshop, which they individually discovered in their creative practices, will be explained in the following stages. At this stage, researcher and artist identities intertwined by establishing a relationship with each other, and the meanings could be stratified in the lives and textures of different identities. Participants stated that it is a challenging experience to question a work consisting only of sounds abstractly.

Leavy (2015, p. 133) stated that "In music, voices can speak together without negating one another. In this regard, music as a method may allow researchers to get at and express a multiplicity of meanings, or layered meanings, not communicable in other forms". Participants who stated that they are people who produce products perceived and embodied by the sense of vision in visual arts emphasised that experiencing another discipline and culture with only sounds brings them together with different investigations.

**Photograph 2.**

*Exploring Music: Concepts, Metaphors, Bodily Intuition (performance), Sensory Intuition*



### 3- Practices of Concretising Music with Different Artistic Techniques

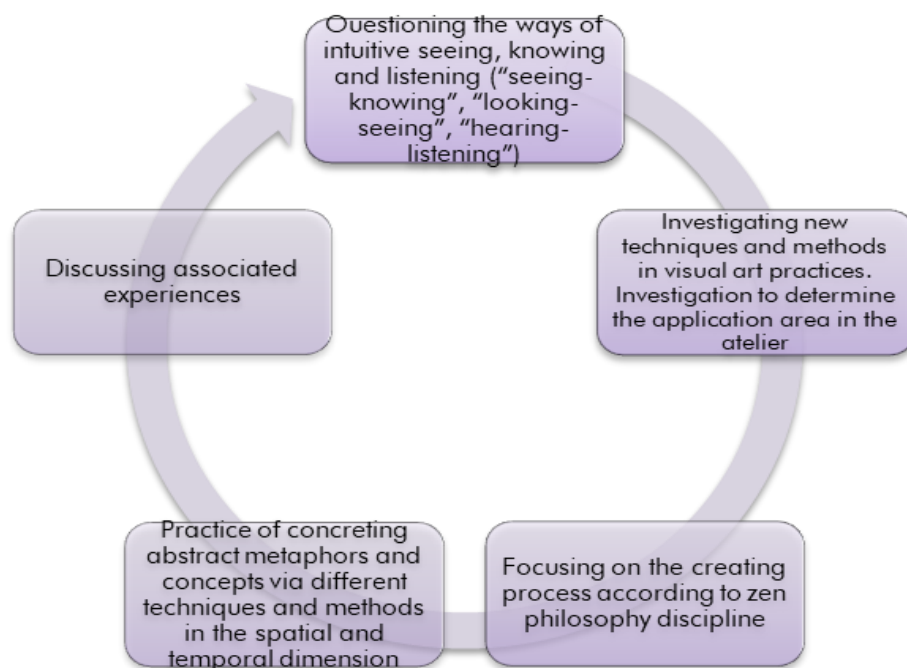
Participants who internalised the work by listening to it revealed their concepts and metaphors and tried to perceive the music in different ways began to search for ways to seeing in depth and intuitively rather than only listening to music (Figure 4). The days passing by focusing on the same work and listening practices with complete concentration have directed the minds to a single point, namely this work. Many participants stated that even if the music is not playing, they could hear this music in their minds. At this stage, the participants first inquired, individually and then with others, how they could translate the abstract feelings they had experienced so far into the concretisation practices. This situation initially frightened and worried the participants who were educated on visual arts. Trying to capture the flow of abstract sounds in music on the plane over time, the participants have started to question how they can capture sounds almost as if they are frozen on the surface and imprison them on the surface with the techniques they have determined. In addition to making their concepts and metaphors visible, in other words, the practice of visualisation, the participants also tried to reveal theoretical ideas among the structure of music and the artistic products they produce with this deep investigation (Photograph 3). First of all, the work was opened at a reasonable loudness from a loudspeaker in the classroom. All participants were asked to walk slowly by listening to the music and feeling the sounds to identify where they will work in the workshop.

With their eyes open, participants tried to focus on achieving spiritual and physical integrity by walking and were asked to decide on the application area by seeing it first. After the participants determined their areas, they were asked to listen to the same music and walk with their eyes closed to define an area again by focusing only on the music. When the participants opened their eyes, they found themselves in a completely different place in the workshop than previously determined.

The expressions of amazement and surprise on the faces of the participants raised another important questioning. When asked why the first and last area they determined were different, they stated that they determined the area much more freely with their eyes closed without seeing the others. They were asked to consider whether many things we make sense of through our eyes constrain us. The issue that music can be perceived in a spiritual dimension without seeing it under the guidance of abstract sounds has been discussed together in the context of the researcher's experiences. This sharing creates awareness in the concepts of intuitive "seeing" and "knowing", "looking and seeing", "hearing" and "listening", and with a different perception, even with the eyes closed, people can see sounds spiritually. In other words, this vision can be equivalent to the act of knowing and it will be explained in the following sections. This awareness will be important in future stages to understand the zen philosophy that forms the basis of the work.

**Figure 4.**

*Process of Visualising Sounds*



### Photograph 3

*Attempts to Construct Sounds with Different Techniques*



Subsequently, the participants freely began to investigate new problems in visual art practices by questioning their own creative experiences. In this process, it was aimed to see what they can do when they encounter different materials by listening to the music in the continuation of the body intuition performance. For this reason, the participants were asked only to experiment with concretising sounds, and they were encouraged not to worry about making sense of the product they created. Through her experiences, Guler guided the participants on focusing on production, isolating themselves from the environment, getting rid of their anxieties and worries, and integrating with materials and sounds simultaneously. Most of the participants voluntarily took off their shoes and continued the application process with bare feet or slippers. Some sat cross-legged on the ground, and some worked standing. Some were lying on the ground, and some were thinking when lying on their back. These are the focus and liberation efforts of students who can forget their anxieties and try to take action. As Herrigel, who has learned from a Zen master for many years, said, "The teacher... tries to save the student from themselves" (1994, p. 41). They were asked to theorise and question a technique by which they could integrate their concepts and metaphors with music.

Guler applied the Zen philosophy teachings, which she had been investigating for a long time and associated with her work but did not yet give information about what Zen philosophy was to the participants at this stage. The purpose of this was for the participants to experience it first. After encountering the zen philosophy at the end of the process, they can look back on their experiences as outsiders and re-layer their discoveries. Participants mentioned that they were very excited about their experiences at this stage and had never felt so liberated before. It has been observed that many have discovered the discipline of focus to practice most productively while creating their

artistic technique and showed incredible respect to their materials (Photograph 3). Participants stated that they are one with the music by only integrating with sounds at that moment; they excitedly expressed that they discovered many common points between music and art. They added that this experience breaks the boundaries known in visual arts theory and practice and makes them question the areas they never thought about before. The participants stated that they used to paint only using their hands, but with this exercise, they felt that their energies flowed onto the canvas with all the movement in their bodies.

#### **4- Transforming Sounds into Visuals and Text: (Collage, painting, digital art, drawing, poetry, story...etc.)**

The music-visual-technical-theory-writing relationship participants experienced and theorised by investigating in the previous stage, and they transformed them into an act of artistic creation at this stage (Figure 5). The technique, size, and composition used by each participant differed. While some created a digital product with electroacoustic sounds, some associated the work with the duration of their work. Others have constructed the story of the music using acrylic or oil painting techniques. Some of them associated their painting, music, and lyrics or only sensed the sounds with their body and made sense of it in the space (Photograph 4 - Photograph 5).

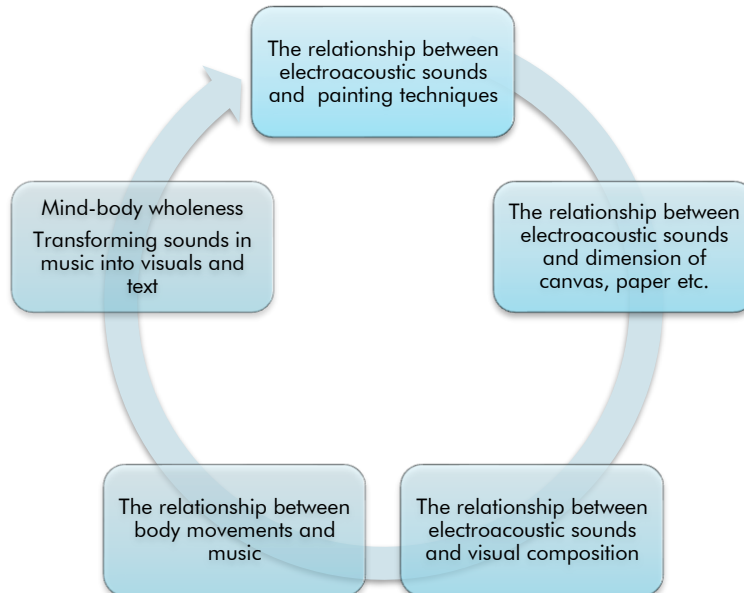
#### **Photograph 4**

*Transforming Sounds to Images*



Figure 5

*Transforming the Process of Visualising Sounds into an Artistic Creation Action*



Photograph 5

*Transforming Sounds to Images*



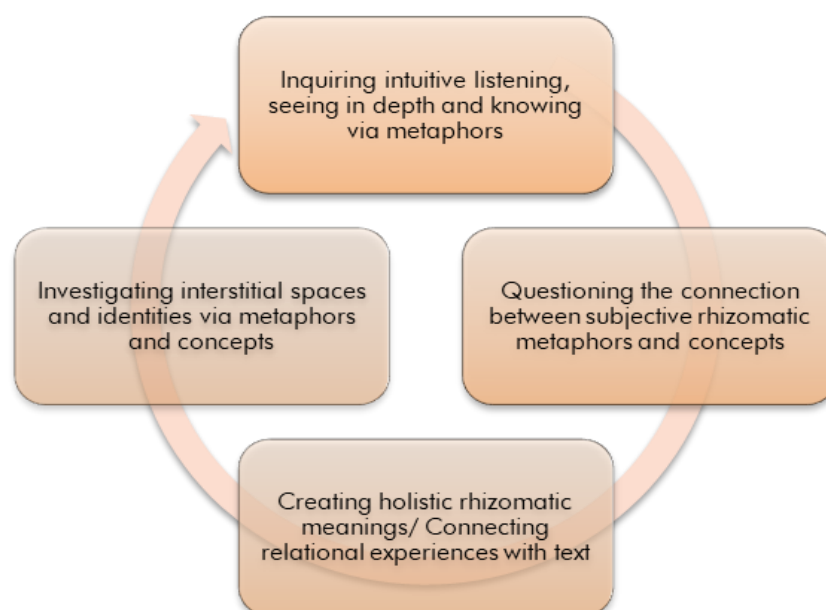
The participants stated that trying to freely portray the work of a composer they did not know, from a culture they did not know, gave them very different emotions. They started to question the sounds they could not see and exercised their different senses. The researcher participated in the process as an audience to not affect the participants and conducted her performance at the end of this process.

## 5- Creating Common Meanings with Rhizomatic Relations: Concepts, Metaphors, and Intersections in Thoughts

The human thinking system is more inclined to grasp and make sense of what is visible. Many people find it difficult to understand, make sense of, or express what is abstract. At this point, metaphors come to our aid. Metaphors are expressions that allow abstract concepts to be understood by comparing them to something else and drawing listeners into our thoughts. Metaphors enrich us in such a way that they add strength to our intuition, mind, emotions, understanding, and creative power. It deepens us in the act of thinking so much that even we may not understand how we get lost in stratified words and sentences. In metaphorical expression, the language almost comes alive and begins to say completely different things. Thus, our perceptions can interpret the familiar world reality differently. Guler invited the participants to metaphorical inquiries with the artist, researcher, and teacher identities through music. It enabled the participants to question while producing and put forward their research questions through art. Thus, an a/r/tographic investigation emerged, in which others taught the researcher and the researcher taught others (Figure 6). This stage aimed to reveal a common, lively, and translucent flow of concepts together, to intertwine concepts with rhizomatic relationships and question and interpret them in an intellectual dimension. For this, a five-meter blank paper and coloured pencils were prepared, and the work named "Symbolic Gestures" continued to play in the background (Photograph 6 - Photograph 7).

Figure 6.

*Process of Creating Rhizomatic Relationships*





**Photograph 6**

*Creating Common Knowledge with Rhizomatic Relationships*



**Photograph 7.**

*Re-creating Common Knowledge with Rhizomatic Relationships*



Participants were first asked to reflect, on paper, the concepts and metaphors they questioned with music and visually question them. This process is for the experiencing writing underlying the a/r/tographic inquiry with different expressions rather than visualising the concepts. The process continued for 3 hours without interruption. The participants who completed the act of writing met, on paper, with the concepts and metaphors investigated by other identities and continued to live the process by associating them with new meanings (Photograph 7).

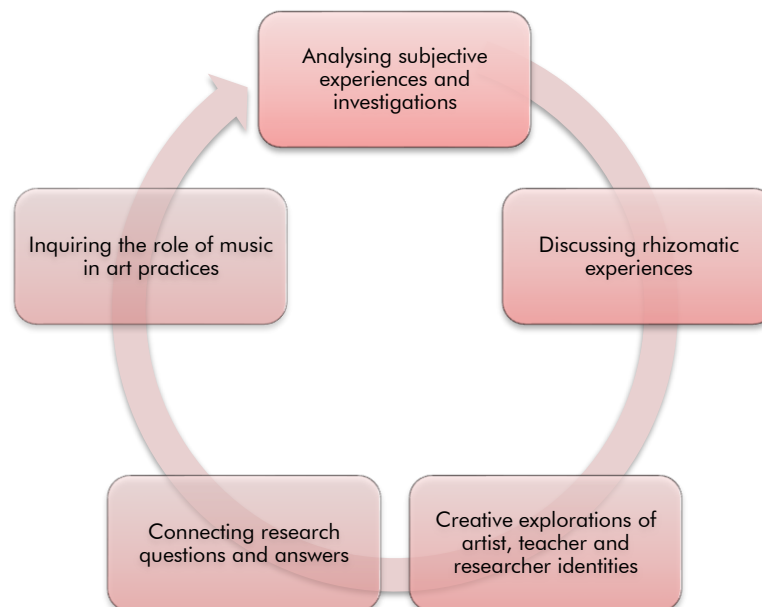
**6- Analysing and Discussing Artworks**

At this stage, a long conversation was held on understanding each other by analysing, questioning and discussing all the written subjective inquiries, experiences, artistic products and research questions that have been made up over and over again (Figure 7). "ABR has the potential to be emotional, evocative, provocative, illuminating,

educational, and transformative” (Leavy, 2017b, p. 213). Undoubtedly, with the transformative role of music, this process caused Guler and the participants to reinterpret knowledge and experiences by listening to the thoughts of others while explaining themselves. As the thoughts, experiences, questioned concepts, and metaphors were shared in this phase, how many intersecting meanings emerged between the participants was observed. Most of the participants discussed the rhythms and sounds they made sense of on the same or similar topics. Sometimes thoughts went back to their subjective inquiries in the written notes from when they first listened to the music, and sometimes they jumped forward with new interpretations at that moment. The rhizomatic relationships based on concepts and metaphors that the participants revealed in their subjective inquiries formed unstable and non-linear communication networks that leapt in continuous motion (Figure 8). Guler shared her research experiences, talked about what this study contributed to her, and deepened the process for the participants in the context of research and teaching.

### Figure 7.

#### *Questioning Artworks*



Guler also directed her research questions to the participants. Participants stated that they understood much better how they could theorise and form new topics in their future studies (Photograph 8). Participants expressed their astonishment about how far they came from a piece of music and stated that they had never internalised music in this way before and emphasised that music opened up many new ways of exploration for them.



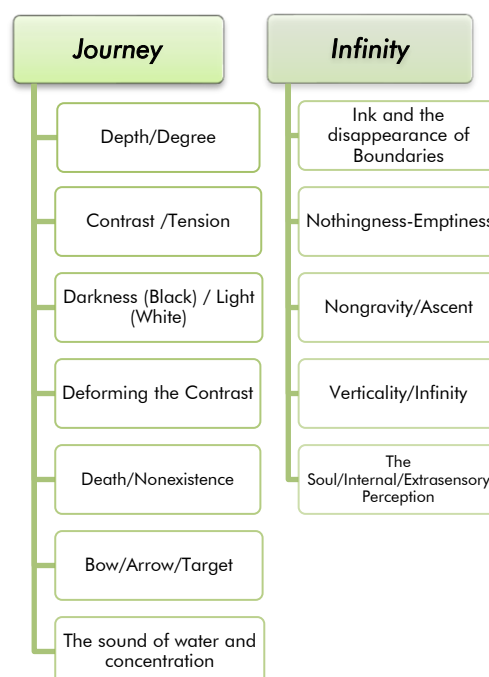
was placed on the concepts and metaphors to see which points the mutual concepts and metaphors come across in practices. Thoughts that do not progress linearly through mutual inquiries but pass through each other almost formed an invisible network and connected the participants and the researcher. Creative attraction within this transparent network provided the opportunity for a reconnective evaluation by allowing everyone to relate their thoughts to their actions in their practice.

## 7- Questioning and Experiencing the Relationship Between Music and Zen Philosophy

In her investigation of visualising Symbolic Gestures, Guler came across Zen Philosophies through the instruments in the music and related her concepts with this philosophy (Figure 9). Participants' mystical perception of this music led the researcher to explain why and how she associated her work with this philosophy by analysing them through concepts. Guler described the a/r/tographic inquiry process that lasted 2 years, the techniques and methods she discovered, the metaphors she theorised, and 63 watercolour paintings she made solely for this work in her unpublished book "A Journey with Music into the Depths of Infinity" (Guler, 2017b). In the "Journey" and "Infinity" sections, the concepts associated with the Zen philosophy that emerged from creating and analysing the pictures are given below.

Figure 9

Concepts of the Researcher Associated with Zen Philosophy in A/r/tographic Inquiry (Guler, 2017b)



“We also develop knowledge from our personal and sensory experiences” (Leavy, 2017b, p. 37). At this stage, Guler shared the methods and techniques she discovered and theorised by exhibiting her performance with the participants (Photograph 9). After watching this performance, the participants saw the similarities and differences between their subjective questioning and creation experiences and Guler’s performance. This stage is especially important for the researcher and the participants to investigate similarities and differences by linking each other’s inquiries and practices (Figure 10). Seeing the points where the researcher meets with the participants through live performance and then questioning the relationship between the creative practices of the participants and the artistic products of the researcher excited the participants. Thus, the participants had the opportunity to re-examine their performances by looking at them through someone else’s eyes.

**Photograph 9.**

*Guler’s performance in sharing her a/r/tographic inquiry experiences*

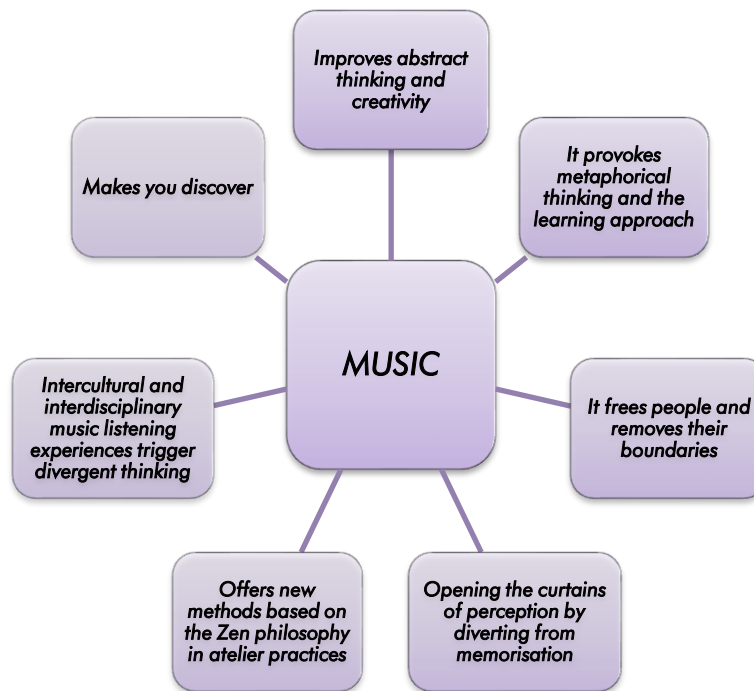


In Figure 10, Guler gives many concepts and metaphors that she reached under the *Journey* and *Infinity* sections in her a/r/tographic work. Each participant, who coincidentally coincided with the concepts in Guler’s study, was expressed with a different coloured line on the figure. This way, where the rhizomatic intersection of the researcher and the participants is revealed, it is seen that many concepts overlap, resemble, give birth to one another, and stratify. This mutual interaction has answered previous questions about deepening knowledge and intuitive seeing and listening. Zen philosophy and Guler’s inquiries aroused a great deal of excitement among the participants. Most of the participants showed a special interest in Zen philosophy and decided to continue the research process individually.



Figure 11.

*Determinations Regarding the Transformative Role of Music in Visual Arts Education After A/r/tographic Inquiry*



### **Improves abstract thinking and creativity**

The unusually progressing rhythms of the work provoked writing abstract concepts by disrupting the routine in the listener's perception. It can be said that with this work, which only reveals abstract concepts with the use of instruments, the researcher and the participants have reached an extraordinarily deep understanding of their thoughts and practices. Thus, it is important to give abstract concepts to students in visual arts education and achieve a theorising stratification in plastic.

### **Intercultural and interdisciplinary music listening experiences trigger divergent thinking**

In addition to the fact that music is integrative for people, I would like to express that sounds connect people's souls from different cultures and get to know each other through music. This bond between the composer and the listener gives practitioners different possibilities to question and interpret the work with different melodies and instruments for those who do not live in that culture. A person who starts looking for

answers through music they do not know is trying to find answers for their field in another discipline by asking things they never thought of before.

### **Opening the curtains of perception by diverting from memorisation**

I must say that this work, which distracts memorisation and creates an impulse to think and do things, develops extraordinary thinking. Contrary to what is known, in addition to the idea that only practical practices should be done in art education, problem-solving and subjective experiences while theoretically producing can only be theorised with a deep perception. Memorised knowledge, repetitive artistic products, vicious circle actions in production close perceptions in art education instead of widening them.

### **Offers new methods based on the Zen philosophy in atelier practices**

Helping participants to practice focusing on talking less, observing more, trust and submission to the instructor, comfortable clothing, good listening, moving away from mobile phones, starting to practice with abundant and various materials, staying alone and inner and outer silence, and breathing exercises made serious contributions in the context of intuitive experiences.

### **It frees people and removes their boundaries**

When we use music as a tool to create different teaching models within the visual arts, we should not be surprised that sounds make us question the visual elements and principles from incredible angles, temporally and spatially. Freedom, fearlessness, the will to try and learn everything is everything. Our experience in artistic practices, what we learn from the characteristics of different fields and the new application models that we create from our inquiries eliminate the boundaries we are not even aware of ourselves, turning each person's experience process into a research laboratory.

### **It provokes metaphorical thinking and the learning approach**

Music has a major effect in metaphorical thinking. The use of metaphors by art students and art educators in art education, the contribution of the invisible but perceptible feature of sounds to the rich literary vitality and abstraction skill should not be overlooked. It is one of the transformative features of music to establish contextual relationships and to deviate from other concepts while investigating.



## Conclusion and Discussion

While this study presents an a/r/tographic study in which the transformative role of music in visual arts education is investigated through intercultural and interdisciplinary creative experiences, it has also enabled us to re-question our fields of knowing, making, and producing. The researcher and the participants took action to create new ways of intuitive listening and seeing in the field of visual arts by making art together, trying to understand concepts and metaphors through music. As an a/r/tographer, Guler presented a living research approach to the reader by questioning her research questions with others. In this context, students' experiences of knowing, creating, metaphorical thinking, intuitive listening, and seeing in depth in workshop practices and theoretical lessons showed that music in visual arts education is very important in an intercultural and interdisciplinary context.

"ABR is a generative approach whose researchers place the inquiry process at the centre and value aesthetic understanding, evocation, and provocation. ABR is generally appropriate when your purpose is to explore, describe, or evoke, provoke, or unsettle" (Leavy, 2017b, p. 9). The materials, methods, and theoretical ideas are thus viewed as the tools from which the research design and artistic process emerge. This 'knowledge nexus' (Bennett et al., 2010), influenced by disciplinary regimes and the artist's experience and practice of experimentation and re-imaginings, will influence cultural reproduction; or the process of reflecting on one's development (with others), and communicating new understandings through intuitive work drawing upon contextual and artistic foundations (As cited in Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014, p. 35). The most important thing that a/r/tography provides us is that it is a method that allows us to re-layer the metaphors we created within other identities (artist/ researcher/teacher). Leavy stated that "Advances in our understanding of how the arts can impact learning, and make deep impressions, have also been pivotal" (2017a, p. 6). Especially in preschools and primary schools, the Reggio Emilia Approach, as an educational philosophy for exploring the interaction of visual arts and music, is a great tool for enriching learning many other contradictory skills that will help the child become an adult and helps open a learning dialogue (Coppi, 2017, p. 1078).

At the end of this research;

- Visual arts education students can explore different senses and use them in every field of art,
- New knowledge can be built from our personal and sensory experiences with a/r/tographic research,
- New outputs can be created in the name of visual arts education from our personal and sensory experiences in artistic applications,

- The transformative role of music in visual arts education, in workshop practices, and theoretical lessons can be used in different ways of *knowing, creating, metaphorical thinking, intuitive listening, and in-depth seeing,*
- The *exploratory, provocative, transformative, and transformable* role of music in intercultural and interdisciplinary contexts in visual arts education can have an important power in artistic learning and teaching approaches of pedagogical and aesthetic strategies,
- It has been observed that the artist/researcher/teacher identities can be transformed into learning experiences with practices of knowing and creating through rhizomatic relationships.

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