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A/r/tographic View of Visual Arts Teacher Candidates on The Woman Image¹

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Abstract

This study aims to explore visual arts teacher candidates' perspectives on the female image, their efforts to interpret it, and their forms of expression in the context of body sociology, gender, and culture. Courses based on an art-based research methodology, specifically the a/r/tographic process, were conducted. The practical phase of the research was carried out during the Fall and Spring semesters of the 2020-2021 academic year and involved data collected from 18 senior students enrolled in the Painting-Teaching Program. The research data were gathered through various tools, including course recordings, interviews, reflective journals, self-evaluation forms, and practical activities. In the context of the a/r/tographic process focusing on experiences, an analysis process was conducted to identify themes that reveal the phenomenon. The data were analyzed and interpreted using a descriptive approach. The findings from the analysis were categorized under masculine and feminine perspectives. In this study, the theme of gaze specifically addresses the question: "How did visual arts teacher candidates develop and express their perspectives on the image of women through a/r/tographic processes?". The research revealed that students reflected on their perceptions of the female image within the dynamics of social life, culture, and their social environments, as well as their own identities and personalities, through the lens of memories and stories. Students developed awareness by questioning the role of women in gender roles and expressed these insights through written, verbal, and visual means in the practical processes.

Keywords: Body sociology, culture, female image, gender, visual arts teacher candidates

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Introduction

How we see or perceive the image of a woman in art has remained an important issue throughout history. Women have been part of visual culture for centuries. It is noteworthy that artists have used the images of the female body as aesthetic and private symbols. As Nochlin (2018) points out, the presence of women as an iconographic image in art and the history of art has helped to resolve discourses about gender. The emotions and conditions of the objects or bodies give shape to philosophical discourses and meanings about art. The image of women in art, art history, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, education, psychology, and visual culture can be considered a way to solve an issue structured in various ways. According to Ament (1998), a feminist perspective in contemporary aesthetics allows for the application of certain strategies in art education. These include cultural contexts in the art education process, questioning traditions, and focusing on the fact that art is shaped by individual human experience and differences. To put this into context, the main point of this study is to find out how visual arts teachers who live in a gendered society and want to learn the basics to become art teachers think about women's images in a free association process.

This study is an attempt to examine the female image in the *a/r/tographic* process in the context of the sociology of the body, gender, culture, and *a/r/tographic* experience. In this context, the problem of the study was determined to seek answers to the questions of how individuals receiving art education manage and question their educational processes with feminist pedagogy and *a/r/tography*, and what their awareness of their roles and identities is. Through *a/r/tography*, which is an active inquiry process, and in the context of rhizomatic relationships, the main goal of the study is to look at how people see the female image. We look at and read beyond an image in a wide area. In this manner, this study aims to examine the view of the female image from the perspectives of male and female visual arts teacher candidates in the context of body sociology, gender, culture, and *a/r/tographic* experience.

A/r/tography is an approach that includes an active inquiry process by finding and embodying meaning through artistic and literary expressions as well as artistic and literary interpretations and experiences (Springgay et al., 2008, as cited in Irwin, Barney, & Golparian, 2017). In this context, this study examines the inquiries about women through applied studies in continuity and students' perceptions and experiences in this continuous cycle.

Irwin (2013) states that when they introduced *a/r/tography* as an arts-based research method, they found difficult but innovative ways to do things like learning to question as researchers and artists, rethinking what they do in their teaching and artistic practices, and coming up with a way for teachers to learn across disciplines. They also found that embracing artistic, pedagogical, and inquiry actions enabled teachers to become learners while discovering ways to learn together and create conditions for productive experiences for students. Using this field-based approach, this study tries to explain how teacher candidates think about how they see women in the cycle of school-related and research-related activities.

A/r/tography is a creative practice with rhizomatic percussions and offers a research methodology within an active performance pedagogy. It is a discipline that encompasses openness to criticism, experience and knowledge, a creative mapping process in the mind, and a process of events that are relational and rhizomatic, yet singularly experienced. It is a

cycle that not only asks what an art education practice means but also explores these questions and investigates what can happen in art education practice (Irwin, 2015). Based on this cycle, the study looks at how the female image is shown in social phenomena and how it changes. It does this by looking at how visual arts teacher candidates learn about and make sense of things like gender norms, feminism, the female body, and power dynamics in applied processes.

We see that *a/r/tographic* and process-oriented work offers opportunities for self-awareness, reflection, evolving experience, and learning through this experience. Making *a/r/tography* reveals incidents through the artistic process. Looking into how the self evolves through the changing aspects of art, especially through a sense of place, can be seen as the unfolding and folding of the things or identities being studied (Hannigan, 2012). With *a/r/tography*, readers are invited to co-create, to imagine what is possible, and to create new spaces for connections. *A/r/tography* opens spaces without limiting the creation, research, and learning experiences and requires a constant willingness to enter these spaces (art, research, and education). This process of questioning can reveal ethical issues, educational and theoretical questions and problems, as well as discomfort, resistance, uncertainty, and disagreement across all fields. *A/r/tographic* works also have a strong sense of social justice. It facilitates the merging of differences to build relationships across disciplines and social events (Leavy, 2012). This study uses this art-based research method, which offers new meanings and searches, to reveal how the image of women is shaped in the context of gender and how candidate teachers reflect on their artistic life experiences. Also, showing how their ideas on the portrayal of women in art-based experimental processes have evolved has been the main idea behind the main problematic of this study.

A/r/tography deliberately shakes perception and complicates understandings through rhizomatic relations. Thus, the resulting art forms and texts turn into an active inquiry (Irwin et al., 2006). To explain the *a/r/tography*-based research process used in the research, it would be useful to include some research examples and present the application of this art-based research method in pedagogical processes.

In her thesis, Fast (2020) discussed the ways of knowing at the intersection of many ways of being as a mother, artist, researcher, teacher, and student. In art production and art education, she focused on transforming lives and awakening people's will to imagine a society of love. Her research is based on an ongoing exploration of human potential and includes the postpartum period of a woman's life, the birth of a child, and the birth of the female self as a mother in the world. It attempts to document identity negotiation and how metaphors can inform and enrich others.

Blaikie (2020), in her *a/r/tographic* visual essay, explored the methodology of drawing on "terraforming" and the adaptation to existence, becoming, and belonging through ordinary experiences and affections. In the triad of art, pedagogy, and science, she explored multimodal stories framed by theories and practices that offer a reappraisal. As a researcher, Blaikie was able to rethink the politics of visibility in school subcultures by using active inquiry. This included looking at theories from art education and other fields, as well as visual culture, new materialism, embodiment, social theory of gender, sexuality, and the clothed body, and social realities.

Additionally, in her research, Bertling (2020) focused on the work of graduate students in studio art. The development of artistic practices using metaphorical cartography

constituted the context of the students' work. The study highlighted the sense of place of the participating candidate teachers in the art-based research process. The future teachers communicated their findings through symbolic art. They were able to guide the audience to find beauty and connection with their works, and as a result, they started a conversation with the audience about the issues the works raised. The study allowed candidate teachers from non-art disciplines to explore the sensory, subjective, and embodied aspects of art, thereby broadening their research experiences.

Furthermore, Osler (2019) examined through active inquiry the experiences of four art educators who saw themselves as subjects. Using a/r/ tographic method, she presented the literary narratives of four educators with different selves, deriving from narratives, individual perspectives, sociocultural, and historical contexts. The research emphasizes the importance of relationships in the pedagogical process. In this study, the artist, researcher, and teacher talk about theory and practice through a/r/tography. They show how visual or performative relations work by using self-reflection and external observation as ways to find out more about the self.

In her research, Wiley (2018) examined a/r/tography-induced multiple imagination as an art educator in primary school. Bringing forward drawing, photography, and video practices, she used a/r/tography to create a new curriculum by including the roles of artist/researcher/teacher based on personal and public history.

It can be said that art, due to its characteristics, has an interdisciplinary structure. The literature contains a wealth of information regarding women and the image of women from philosophical, sociological, psychological, historical, and other perspectives. Among institutions that provide art education, particularly in the fields of fine arts, doctoral and master's theses have extensively examined the concept of women and the body. However, it is known that in the Department of Art and Work Education, which provides art education, there is a scarcity of theories and practices that reflect the phenomenon of women in art education. This gap was primarily explored through a theoretical approach, examining how this phenomenon, present in many disciplines, is incorporated and perceived in the teaching process. In this respect, the study, conducted within an a/r/tographic process, attempted to be examined and presented through an example in terms of application. Working with these assumptions can be seen as important in expressing perspectives on the image of women through the eyes of prospective visual arts teachers, using the a/r/tographic production process, which is a living and questioning teaching process, and in revealing them through the connections in their life experiences. It is thought that conducting an arts education workshop course, included in undergraduate Art-Craft Education programs, using the a/r/tographic process and providing practical examples, will contribute to the field. Since the research benefits from a/r/tography, an arts-based research method in terms of pattern, it is considered important to focus on openness, living inquiry, association, and meaning-making within a cyclical (action-based) process, to allow teacher candidates to question their perspectives, and to enable them to express these perspectives as products through practical examples. It can be said that the in-depth examination of reflective perspectives on women and the female body, based on the experiences and inquiries of participants, and explaining it as a search for new meaning, is important to provide a foundation for future studies in the art education process.

Method

Research Design

A/r/tography is a form of research integrated with art and education, and is art-based. (Irwin et al., 2011). *A/r/tography* is used as a research and practice method that is not outcome-oriented but rather develops and changes spontaneously within its own dynamics depending on the process. (Springgay and Irwin, 2004). Through the *a/r/tography* method, artists understand the power of an image, a sound, a performance, or a word, and they can establish connections by considering them individually or collectively to create different meanings (Irwin, Barney, and Golparian, 2017, p.194). In the context of establishing connections and reflecting relationships, rhizomatic relationships emerge. *A/r/tography* allows the focus on experiences related to different roles by bringing together the roles of artist, researcher, and teacher. The sub-concept of adjacency indicates questioning the communication and relationship between roles and identities. With the sub-concept of openness, *a/r/tography* offers a work principle focused on the process rather than the outcome, opening new paths influenced by apparent or hidden intersections and the communication they establish (Pourchier, 2010).

This study uses *a/r/tography*, an art-based research discipline, to examine perspectives on women from the aspects of pedagogy. Considering that *a/r/tography* is fed from multiple sources, it is thought to be suitable for the qualitative method used in this study as well. "Learning to do qualitative research is like learning to paint. Study the masters, learn the methods and techniques, apply them correctly, then revisit and adapt your objectives when you have learned enough to identify how they have influenced your work and created your own adaptations that create new possibilities" (Glesne, 2015). Irwin et al. (2005) present *a/r/tography* as a methodology in its own right, rather than an extension of qualitative research, to demonstrate the existence of arts-based forms of research in educational research. They argue that such forms of research strengthen and change the way research is conducted, created, and understood. While taking *a/r/tography* as a set of research methodologies that include arts and education, they present it with the metaphor of a tangential thread, a thread that is not sewn, a thread that unravels its existence towards new beginnings. Emphasis is placed on its embodiment and constant interaction with the world. In this study, the flexibility of *a/r/tography* was utilized to overcome gender boundaries to allow visual arts teacher candidates who will practice the teaching profession to include their life experiences as subjects and to reflect their perceptions in their educational processes while thinking and questioning them.

Study Group

In the study, the criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposive sampling methods, was used. The criterion sampling method involves studying all cases that meet a set of predetermined criteria. The mentioned criterion or criteria can be created by the researcher or an already prepared list of criteria can be used (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In determining the study group of the research, the fact that the students were senior students taking other courses was influential. Additionally, this group, which had not previously participated in any other experimental application or research, was preferred to ensure that no situation occurred before or during the research that could affect the research practices. In this preference, the participants' motivation and willingness to participate in the research

were influential. In this context, the typical case sampling method, one of the purposive sampling methods, was adopted in the research. According to Patton (2014), purposive sampling is a small sample intentionally selected in qualitative research to gain in-depth and as much information as possible.

In the selection of the prospective teachers participating in the study, the main criterion was to be 4th-grade students who took all theoretical and practical courses forming the basis of visual arts teaching in the Department of Art Education. The researcher personally conducted the Elective Art Workshop V course during the 2020-2021 Fall Semester and worked with a group of 18 individuals, including 10 males and 8 females. Thus, the course employed a/r/tographic practices to generate fresh interpretations and provocations within the workshop setting. The 14-week course examined what looking at the female image means in gender, body sociology, and culture, how it can be expressed, and how it can be applied to design.

A/r/tography researchers can use a number of social science forms (interviews, focus groups, observations, etc.) in the data collection and analysis process, as well as their own artistic and educational inquiries as data (Irwin, Barney, & Golparian, 2017). To ensure diversity, we also collected data through interviews, observations, photographs, voice recordings, phone calls, educational development files, self-evaluation essays, student diaries, researcher diaries, and personal stories. The process of archiving was organized around these sources. Additionally, we used interviews with students at the end of a/r/tography practices, observations, and audio recordings to examine the participants' views on these practices.

Data Collection Tools

To obtain in-depth information aligned with the purpose of the research, the following data collection methods were employed during the 14-week practice-based a/r/tographic process:

- *Interviews (Semi-structured)*: Semi-structured interview questions were prepared to evaluate students' experiences and work throughout the process. These questions were reviewed and finalized after being presented to six experts for revisions and subsequently applied.
- *Document Analysis*: As the research involved living inquiry and experiential processes, student journals and personal narratives were used as data collection tools. Additionally, the researcher's journals, who participated fully in the research process, served as a data source.
- *Self-Assessment Forms*: These forms provided information on how students developed perspectives, enhanced awareness, discovered artistic production methods, and formulated ideas about practice-related topics and concepts through a/r/tographic applications by the end of the process.
- *Audio, Visual, and Printed Materials*: Books, photographs, drawings, music, films, text messages, educational portfolios, and student works were used as data sources. At the end of each lesson, weekly journal entries were collected over the 14-week period. Data was also gathered from written documents such as magazines and books the students read. Moreover, during the 14-week implementation process, weekly-designed drawings, sketches,

photographs, analyzed artworks, and final student designs focusing on the woman image were utilized as data.

Data Analysis

In this study, we used a/r/tography to allow the examination of perceptions and experiences and to find “meaning”. In the context of the study, the issues and concepts emerging from the data sets were divided into themes and sub-themes and analyzed through descriptive analysis. Since descriptive analysis requires researchers to show the research's conceptual structure and framework ahead of time, the data are clearly shown with themes to figure out what they mean with the help of the transcripts of teacher candidates' interpretations from various instruments. In descriptive analysis, the data obtained are summarized and interpreted according to previously determined themes. The purpose of descriptive analysis is to present the findings to the reader by summarizing and describing their meanings in an organized and interpreted manner. For this reason, the data are described systematically and clearly. Direct quotes are included to effectively reflect the data in the description. Descriptions are explained, interpreted, relationships between themes and meanings are revealed, and conclusions are reached by examining cause-and-effect relationships. Descriptive analysis consists of four stages: creating a framework for analysis, processing data according to the thematic framework, defining the findings, and interpreting the findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011).

In the study, the following procedure was followed during the descriptive analysis: First, in line with the objectives of the research, the data were read twice continuously at independent times, and draft themes were identified. The draft themes and sub-themes were presented to another coder to ensure reliability. In this way, a third reading was conducted simultaneously with a field expert on the data set, and it was tested whether meaningful data units had been reached.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher aimed to shape the a/r/tographic research process based on four fundamental perspectives, as noted by Erişti (2021, p. 15): "living inquiry, artistic creation, personal involvement and perspective development, and practice-oriented concept development." The study sought to construct a living inquiry into a societal and social structure like the female image using an interdisciplinary approach and designed activities that could reveal this perspective.

These activities were utilized to enable teacher candidates to create artistic meanings, aiming to uncover their exploratory and reflective qualities. The living inquiry process was employed to facilitate the development of perspectives for both the participating teacher candidates and the researcher.

Thus, the study emphasized aspects such as the personal involvement of teacher candidates, their subjective perspectives, and the development of awareness. Finally, through practice-oriented activity plans, the research focused on developing concepts and producing works that provide concrete expressions of the female image, laying the foundation of the a/r/tographic research process on practice and experience.

Ethical Issues

The ethical approval for the appropriateness of this research has been obtained from the Anadolu University Board of Scientific Research and Publication Ethics with the approval number 22710 dated 03.06.2020. Participation in the study was based on voluntary principles in accordance with ethical rules. To protect the participants' identities as the primary safeguard against exposure to unwanted situations, different names were used instead of the students' real names in the research.

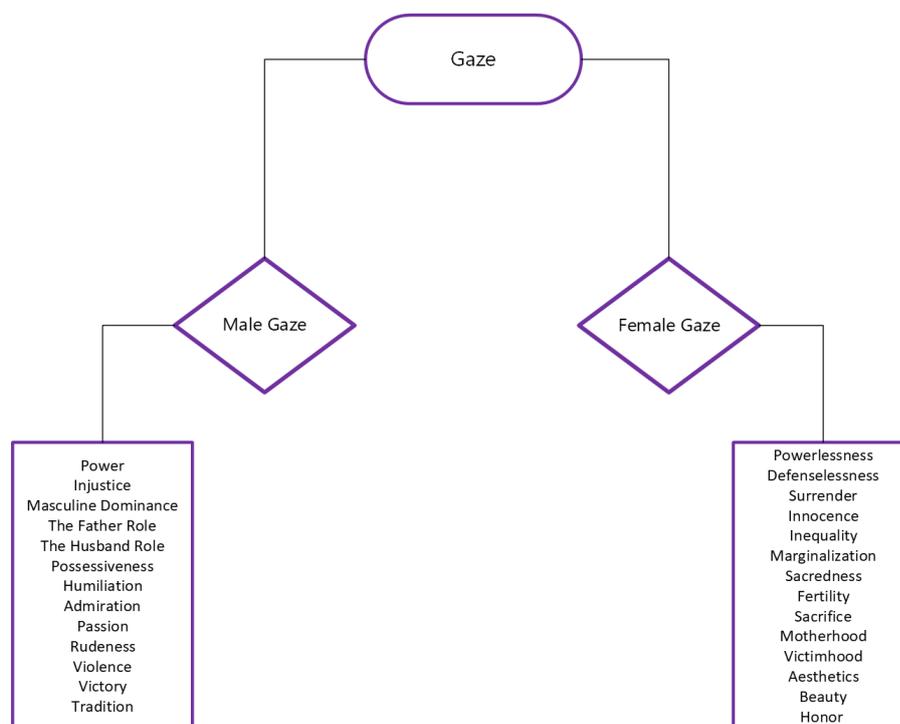
Findings

In this study, the data were collected to answer the question of “How did visual arts teacher candidates develop and express their perspectives on the image of women through a/r/tographic processes?”. As a result of the analysis of the data, it was seen that the candidate teachers revealed their views on the female image in the context of body, society, and culture, and reflected their thoughts with written and visual expressions during their practices. It was clear that they shared their ideas about the female body through questioning, resolving, metaphors, and figuring out the links between the mind and body. When the data are brought together, it is seen that the theme of “gaze” emerged as one of the main lines of thinking.

The theme “Gaze” was analyzed in two categories as “Male Gaze” and “Female Gaze” with a focus on the diaries, interviews, and documents obtained from candidate teachers during the process.

Figure 1

Finding Themes



Male Gaze

Regardless of gender, we categorized and presented the masculine and feminine discourses regarding the perceptions of female and male candidate teachers. In this case, the category of "male gaze" came up as a way to explain power, injustice, masculine dominance, the father role, the husband role, possessiveness, humiliation, admiration, passion, rudeness, violence, victory, and tradition under the category of "male gaze."

When the prospective teachers' perspectives on the image of women are evaluated, it can be said that they engage in self-criticism, become aware of their identity and personality traits while focusing on contexts, and make comments on the image of women. It is possible to say that they benefited from their memories, examples, and observations in their life experiences, found the opportunity to express their ideas better, and became enlightened with many messages and associations.

For example, when commenting on his education process and the memories of his life, Cemal focused on how his environment and lifestyle shaped him and stated the following:

"I thought about myself; the more I thought, the deeper I went. I saw the previous me. I grew up in a bad environment, and I realized that my soul was deteriorating. But art education has brought me many beautiful things and helped me find myself. In this design, I created it in a way that people might think that I have changed. Here, by drawing myself on the canvas, I dealt with my colorful life after graduation. Here, the glasses are a striking detail; people may think of it differently, but I look at my old life through those glasses, I draw myself with the brush in my hand, and the colors on my palette are the colors of my life."

Figure 2

Cemal's Design



Cemal's critical and artistic point of view helps him realize his own identity. He stated that the roles and duties that society tries to impose on him tire him and weigh heavily on his soul. He decided to draw his life and his role in life as he expressed in his design.

When we look at Cemal's design and how he interpreted it through the lens of the male gaze, we can say that the social roles and responsibilities that come with being a man,

social dynamics and responsibilities work well from his point of view. In this way, this category allows candidate teachers to reveal masculine discourses within the social power through their self-reflection process.

Under the "male gaze" category, candidate teachers asserted that a male-dominated society attributes power to men. For example, Funda questioned the meanings of body in the illustrations of a book that she read and criticized the balance of power as follows:

"Actually, men want to show themselves in most pictures. People often say that women are defined by their appearance, while men are defined by their actions, and this is indeed true. Instead of reflecting reality, men reflect their desires, but women do not. A woman is who she is and reflects how she is."

It was observed that the candidate teachers focused on the plain and connotative meanings in the visual images they analyzed and revealed the meanings they found in what was shown.

In another analysis, Serkan, a male student, stated the superiority of the male image under all circumstances by analyzing the poster of a TV series:

"We can see almost all of what is shown to us. It has become a norm of society that if a woman is betrayed, she wants to take revenge, and what a man does is considered something forgivable by society. However, when a woman betrays, there is no forgiveness; it is considered a social norm. A man is blamed for it. This statement seems unfair. The same applies to men and women; they were created from soil; bodies should not determine anything."

Candidate teachers critique the prioritization of men in culture and social structures. After a film activity, they mostly commented on how masculine domination exists as a directing element in matters such as belief, culture, and social life. As a candidate teacher, Funda referred to the injustice arising from masculine domination as follows:

"The woman wears open clothes, and the man looks at her, and she is seen as a dishonorable prostitute, and he becomes innocent. She runs, and her hips sway; the woman is guilty again; the man looks at her; he is considered aroused because he looks at her body, and again he is considered as innocent. Now let's take the opposite. The man wears a tight shirt and exposes his chest, which is called a breast. This piques her interest. It can happen. But the woman is still considered unchaste because she is looking, not the man."

It is seen that candidate teachers who express the meanings attributed to being a woman or a man in the society and culture have gained awareness about the concept of gender. Duru also expressed this by stating that gender roles are assigned to people by society and criticized male superiority:

"The meaning that society attributes to women is that they are just like a robot, like a puppet; they should do whatever we say. When we tell her to sit down, she sits down; when we tell her to get up, she gets up, but the man perceives her as free. Society defines the man as free. The man can do whatever he wants, but the woman cannot make a sound."

While presenting their perspectives in applied processes, candidate teachers tried to get to know the society around themselves and developed sensitivity to the societal problems. They realized the importance of their roles in society as prospective teachers and questioned the forms in which they could convey their thoughts to their students. In the

letters that they wrote in the a/r/tography process, they referred to how women are abused in a society dominated by men and showed how they felt about the image of women and how their opinions affected their designs. For example, in her letter, Nur, one of the candidate teachers, focused on violence against women:

"I thought a lot about society and gender during the course. Through applied processes and discussions with friends, I learned to express my reactions through design. Maybe we cannot deal with social problems alone, but when we become teachers, we can make paintings addressing our students. We will raise students who make such paintings".

Figure 3

Nur's Letter Design



"Violence is not only physical. It can also be psychological. Exclusion, contempt, judgment of religion, pressure, restriction, and many more. In my work, I wanted to reflect on women who are subjected to violence in different ways in society."

It can be said that the candidate teachers referred to the issue of violence while making their designs, touched upon the fact that women are in the second place, criticized the fact that men are the ones with power in our society, and revealed the consequences of violence with the image of women in their works. Funda, one of the candidate teachers who developed such a perspective, stated that she saw the process of creating her works as a therapy and that she reflected her feelings in what she does. Starting from herself as a woman, Funda tried to take a stance against the perception of powerlessness and used women as an image representing hope. She made the following statements about her work: *"The red and black tones I use on the woman's body express female violence. Dozens of women are killed every day. This situation makes me think a lot as a woman."*

Figure 4*Funda's Letter Design*

It is seen that the candidate teachers implied the superiority of masculine power over women and generally dealt with the restriction of freedom and violence in their works. Although there appears to be an acceptance of issues such as powerlessness and vulnerability while revealing their perspectives on the image of women, the prospective teachers included their opposing views and criticism by making women's bodies visible or showing resistance to this issue in their projects. For example, Gül, who tried to express her view of the image of women through a message by writing a letter and mail art, gave the following statements about patriarchal values in society:

"First of all, I can say that my perspective on society has changed, and I questioned myself. My perspective on gender in society, particularly women, has broadened. I wrote a letter to my future self in this mail art project. In the patriarchal society structure, there is a lack of value given to women and the normalization of violence against them. I hope that these perceptions will change in the future. In my design, I tried to explain the restriction of women's freedom with intertwined chains. I attempted to touch on innocence and purity by making the female figure white. With the purple and blue colors in the background of the figure, I tried to symbolize the woman who backs her freedom and courage and resists the society. The colored masses on the sides symbolize the societal pressures faced by women. I tried to create the image of a woman trying to stand upright despite the blows and wounds."

Figure 5*Gül's Letter Design*

Another candidate, Keriman, stated that the number of femicides is increasing rapidly in the country, emphasized the issue of violence against women by implying the difficulty of being a woman, and designed a project in the context of mail art with images of women who have been subjected to violence. With her critiques of the fact that men in society see the efforts of superiority as a matter of pride, especially after separation and divorce, Keriman made the following statements and paid reverence to the women who were subjected to violence and murder by their ex-husbands:

Figure 6*Keriman's Design*

"We all see that especially women who leave their husbands are physically and psychologically attacked by their ex-husbands. The most important reasons for this violence are lack of education, poor parenting practices, a bad environment, and family members being bad models for children. Violence against women in our country must end as soon as possible. We should impose severe penalties for this. Criminals who commit murder with the expectation of a short jail sentence often view the slaughter of women as a sign of manhood. Such conduct is not manhood. A good husband should protect and value his wife. A man who shares in humanity should not raise his hand against a woman. Future mothers and

fathers should be good models for their children, and a peaceful and safe environment should be created."

In this context, the fact that patriarchal murders take place by taking shelter behind the concepts of culture, tradition, custom, or honor was the most emphasized issue under the category of the male gaze. Serkan, one of the candidate teachers, commented on the envelope inspired by his witness to the murder of a woman with the following statements:

Figure 7

Serkan's Design



"Years ago, I attended a bazaar organized by women. There were stalls of handicrafts. My attention was attracted by the tulip motifs in the art of marbling. Thanks to the lady who helped me, I made a daisy motif with great pleasure. This woman, who separated from her husband and had a difficult life, could not bear what she was going through and committed suicide by hanging herself. I wanted to create my work by making envelopes from the marbling I kept at that time to represent the death of that woman and the memory I had that day. It can be quite burdensome for me to live in a society that marginalizes, pushes away, and kills women. Sometimes it is hard for me to stay helpless and change these situations. However, I hope I can fix things by trying to be a conscious individual. I hope we can create environments where our women are given life security."

Female Gaze

The codes were examined under the category of "female gaze.". Male and female candidate teachers emphasized the feminine subject in the context of the female gaze. This category implied the sacrificial nature of women, who assume the role of fertility as a sacred being in motherhood. Moreover, candidate teachers included marginalization in their discourses to reverse the perspective of the generally accepted social order. In addition, it can be said that they emphasized inequality, women being victims of violence, innocence being a feminine aspect, and the sacredness of fertility, motherhood, and sacrifice. Moreover, it can be said that candidate teachers, who use feminine discourses to appreciate women appearing weak and defenseless, also express their perspective with codes of aesthetics and beauty. The way candidate teachers handle femininity in a more sensitive structure may be directly proportional to the problems in society and individual life experiences. However, the fact that candidate teachers make the problems visible with

feminine discourses is not about making marginalization reasonable; it is related to making women visible in relation to making issues visible.

While developing a perspective on the image of women, the candidate teachers, apart from the statements they included in their reflective diaries, searched for contexts in all situations around them while exploring their own perspectives and questioned them by establishing relations. In doing so, they sometimes made ironic and metaphorical connotations and expressed their criticisms with plastic elements and literary texts.

Making use of the cactus as a metaphorical element in her work, Gül expressed the woman who is considered worthless, a victim of violence and defenseless, with her design as follows:

Figure 8

Gül's Design



"Women are seen as worthless and unappreciated. I tried to express these sentiments with a cactus. While the flowers typically associated with women might be roses and violets, thorny cacti emerge instead when a woman feels undervalued and hurt. Consequently, these thorny flowers represent her emotional defense or self-worth. Maybe her purpose is to protect herself; maybe this is her definition of self-worth. It's a delicate and agonizing blossom in turn. In short, the lack of value given to our women and the violence or psychological violence inflicted on them make them blossom with thorns. These thorns both cause wounds that cannot be closed on her own body and harm those around her."

Stating that women in society go through painful processes to protect themselves, Gül reflected the view of women as an image that is defenseless and feels obliged to protect herself. Furthermore, in another project, Gül tries to visualize and break down inequality and women's devaluation by stating, "I dealt with women who are considered powerless to prove their identities. I used women's identities to break down the unbreakable walls of worthlessness. I tried to react to inequality and worthlessness. For example, I wanted to indicate the value not given to women with barbed wire."

The candidate teachers generally said that their ideas about the female image weren't very deep before the process. But the presentations, activities, and group discussions during

the course helped them look at the image and the female body more deeply and in detail, and they came up with their own unique view. One of the students, Funda, expressed her view *on the female image as follows:*

"When I re-examined the pictures in the book I read in the a/r/tographic process, I realized that they were almost the same as the opinions I had written. I focused on the depictions of women and men. The differences are very obvious in the images. The woman is made naked to draw attention to her. This is done to draw the attention of the audience, particularly men, and present them as a spectacle. To be honest, I had never looked at it from this perspective."

Keriman, on the other hand, said, *"I can liken myself to a matryoshka in society. While the matryoshka looks like a single object from the outside and represents being a woman, the fact that it hides more than one object in the same way depicts that she can be a mother and have children."* It can be said that for Keriman, as a woman, the priority in developing a view of the female image is empathy, emotionality, and revealing the self.

Figure 9

Keriman's Photograph Work



On the other hand, İlknur stated that she brainstormed while trying to find her perspective as a woman and that she faced many questions and problems.

"I feel that I am in a period in which I am going through a transition between my emotions and constantly asking myself the question of what will happen next. The question marks in my mind within these emotions I am experiencing may be the anxiety about the future that I experience as a woman." In these statements, İlknur expressed and visualized her vulnerability and anxiety as a woman.

Figure 10*İlknur's Design*

In the data sets, it was observed that some candidate teachers reflected the image of woman within the framework of individuality by having internalized this feeling due to their life experiences. Sunay, one of the candidate teachers, focused on the effect of environment and culture on her living conditions, opposed the domination of women, which was seen as normal by her environment with her feminine perspective, stated the problems clearly, and tried to make the female victims of violence visible with her photography work with the following statements:

Figure 11*Sunay's Photograph Work*

"Violence against women, violence against children—these problems are everywhere. They are happening in my neighborhood right now. There are also my neighbors near me. My environment inspired me and motivated me to reflect. I can say that doing this study impacted my teaching journey. If I become a teacher, then I will focus on problems like these

rather than teaching where I go. I will not just be a teacher. I will always focus on solving problems from now on."

Focusing on the female body, Filiz handled the woman in a vulnerable and sensitive context and tried to symbolize this under a male-dominated perspective. She expressed this situation visually and literarily as follows:

Figure 12

Filiz's Photograph Work



"A woman is a flower that adds so much to and benefits those around her while sacrificing herself and waiting every morning to be smelled with hope, excitement, beauty, delicacy, and watered with tender hands. The most painful fate for a rare flower that is hidden every night to avoid being plucked, dried, and forgotten is to be pressed between the pages of a book and only remembered occasionally. Just like a woman. A body so beautiful that the benefits it gives, the emotions it makes you feel, are indescribable, but too broken to be rewarded."

Acting with the instinct of protection and defenselessness, İlknur made sense of the image of a woman shaped in her mind by likening it to a cactus, and in her work, she mentioned the relationship between society and women as follows:

Figure 13*İlknur's Photograph Work*

"In the photograph, there is a cactus, and red threads are wrapped around it. I considered the cactus to be a woman, a woman who is afraid of being broken or hurt, and she is constantly trying to protect herself with her thorns, but the red threads around her tell the story of the pressure on her to protect herself."

Funda, who considers the female body from the context of many areas of daily life, stated that the female body is more aesthetic than the male body and glorified women with the following words: "In the world of art, society, magazines, newspapers, and many other places, women and the female body are always at the forefront; the fact that women have an aesthetic body is presented to men's taste, that they are constantly backbit by the society, and that they are always watched and talked about are among the most studied topics in the world."

Emphasizing the fertility and productivity of women, Naciye expressed and visualized her interpretation of the image of women who assume many roles as follows:

Figure 14*Funda's Design*

"That is a woman who persists in moving forward in spite of all obstacles. She leaves the threads and traces that need to be left in some parts of the road. To be a woman is to spread branches like a tree, to blossom as it branches. She needs to take on many roles and responsibilities. It is in a woman's soul to blossom, to be smelled, to be loved, and to be embroidered. I looked at the black fabric used as a society, and it is women who add color. The metaphor of black fabric is one that I think best reflects the beauties of a woman's life. We have hopes that bloom in the darkness. There is a path, but there is no end. There is an unfinished seam. There are branches that will blossom anew. There are people (threads) left at the end of the road. There is a woman who seems to become more impactful even as her resources or influence lessen. Have we glorified women too much? Yes, we have, but we have done too little. Unimaginable tortures have claimed the lives of women. Sadly, a woman gave birth to them too."

It can be said that candidate teachers were influenced by their lives and cultures in their perspectives on women. In particular, candidate teachers, who were influenced by their mothers' work and labor power, questioned femininity with images carrying cultural meanings and tried to find their meanings in their works. Thus, we can say that some candidate teachers turned to cultural analysis with a feminine perspective.

As a candidate teacher, Emrah tried to develop an interpretation of the elements of our culture within the framework of femininity and decided to photograph a pair of booties. He criticized the restriction of freedom of expression by analyzing the motifs as expressions of women's emotions and made the following statements:

Figure 15

Emrah's Photograph Work



"In this photograph I have taken, you see a knitted sock, but not just a sock. What are those feelings and thoughts while knitting this sock? I wonder if each motif knitted tells us something. Is the aim to keep feet warm while wearing the socks or to provide comfort and shape? Hand knitting has an important place in our culture. Women have expressed themselves by finding various shapes, weaving, embroidering, and knitting their thoughts and

emotions. When women were not given freedom of expression, they wanted to reflect their feelings and thoughts with different patterns and motifs by weaving themselves in this way. In other words, society's way of thinking and understanding aimed to shape the woman by weaving around her."

Similar to Emrah, İlknur focused on the relationship between handicraft and femininity and photographed an embroidered handkerchief. However, unlike the expression of emotions, İlknur focused on women's desire to learn. Thus, she tried to reveal the effort to learn with an embroidered handkerchief despite the restriction of some women's right to education and included the following statements:

Figure 16

İlknur's Photograph Work



"Many years ago, when women's education was limited, women's freedoms were restricted, and there were family pressures on women according to the conditions of that time, women used to receive many different trainings and tried to do their best to improve themselves with their efforts. During those periods, women lacked education and faced constant restrictions. However, some women tried all kinds of ways to improve themselves and sought handicrafts, or handicrafts such as sewing and embroidery; they wanted to receive different training and wanted to develop and learn, and they aimed to make constant efforts for this. The beautiful woman, who aspires to better herself, has received training in this special fabric. Although this photo I took looks like a small piece of cloth, it is not. That piece of cloth has a lot to tell us. That square piece of cloth is the first stage of a woman's education. Every stitch and needle stroke on the cloth represents a step in the learning process. This is an effort to learn. The piece of cloth is actually a woman's desire to learn, her freedom, and her joy in living. In short, it is the hope of that woman."

İlknur, who created a space to represent women with the stitch and labor associated with the feminine image, tried to explain the stitching of life and women's labor to reveal problems of women with a feminine focus.

Conclusion

When the data were analyzed, it was found that the teacher candidates wrote about their thoughts in their diaries after class instead of talking about them. The researcher checked what the candidate teachers wrote in their diaries after each week's activity plans

and presentations and found that they tried to share their thoughts, saw the process as exciting and full of possibilities, and were interested and excited. It can be said that they made gender-oriented discourses and developed views on the image of women by conducting research, especially in book reviews, film analyses, and visual media analysis activities. Through different activities, diversity was provided while developing perspectives. The candidate teachers expressed their thoughts in the written texts they presented in the applied studies. While they empathized and approached the subject emotionally, developing a perspective, candidate teachers conducted research and inquiry in the context of the image of women and developed awareness by focusing on their current life experiences on the subject. While revealing their views on the image of women, candidate teachers were influenced by the geography and culture they lived in and were frequently influenced by the family environment and social environment they lived in.

Candidate teachers, who expressed their perspectives verbally, in writing, and through design works, made statements by focusing on their identities, roles, and characters. They focused on the process of developing a perspective, the detail between looking and seeing, gained awareness of the messages and associations in the images that they encountered, discovered analytical ways of thinking, questioned the images with an empathic attitude, and then developed an original perspective. Within the scope of the research, it can be said that candidate teachers discovered ways of developing a perspective and gaining awareness about an image in their life experiences.

As candidate teachers look for answers to the "Male Gaze" category, they look at the codes of power, injustice, masculine dominance, father role, husband role, possessiveness, humiliation, admiration, being admirers, passion, rudeness, violence, victory, and custom under the male gaze. This helps them think critically about this issue by putting masculine power first. It was clear that the category of "female gaze" included codes of powerlessness, defenselessness, surrender, innocence, inequality, marginalization, sacredness, fertility, sacrifice, motherhood, victimization, aesthetics, beauty, and honor. It was clear that candidate teachers did research and studies to keep the image of women in the spotlight while showing their points of view.

Discussion

In a study on the visual culture conducted by Lai (2009), she examined several students' representations of women within a pedagogical framework and analyzed the relationships that the students established while creating their collage works from a perspective that criticizes sexist approaches in visual culture. She implied the principle that visual culture is an important teaching to create new meanings, and that gender, race, and class are the main problems in this field. At the end of this study, it was seen that the candidate teachers who made collages using female images realized the power of politics as they began to understand the visuals and entered the process of reshaping their mentality about the visual culture.

As Freedman (2003) states, the individual adopts images as a definition of himself in accordance with the characteristics of visual representation. From this perspective, images that contradict their individual nature often manipulate people. This result confirms the criticisms of the candidate teachers about the secondary view of the female image obtained in the study.

The students' perceptions about the female body and their struggles with it are clearly seen in the results of the students' discussions about the pictures in popular women's magazines and using them in their designs. As Chadwick (2002) points out, "thin" depictions or "sexy" female body types do not help to emphasize a woman's intelligence and status. The students' opposition to stereotypes in the study is in line with this result.

Meskimmon (2003) argues that male-centered individualism creates a space for women's vigilance and a stance against the objectified image of women. She argued that this, in reality, creates a lot of pressure and alienation because it imprisons the female. Women see themselves as surrounded by family, friends, or coworkers and that their lives involve various roles, such as being a mother, daughter, wife, or professional (Meskimmon 2003). Based on this, it was observed that the participants of this study questioned roles a lot in the way they made sense of their perspectives and the forms they chose.

The majority of candidate teachers emphasized their identities as researchers and teachers/learners, as revealed by the rhizomatic connections offered by a/r/tography. In line with the opinions and evaluations of candidate teachers about the process, it was concluded that a/r/tography creates appropriate environments for establishing profound meanings, finding intersecting connections, focusing on the process, thinking beyond the boundaries, and including pedagogical processes. Considering the relationship of these environments with feminist educational pedagogy, it can be concluded that the participants engaged in artistic inquiries within the context of feminism. For example; Alhumaid (2019) mentioned in her study how feminist education theorists influenced the field of education and she concluded that feminists not only provided more opportunities for women in schools, but also succeeded in enabling women to gain expertise in fields long dominated by men, including science and technology. Looking at the results obtained in her study, it clearly demonstrates that feminism still has the opportunity to make more constructive contributions to educational reform, just as it always contributes to social, political, and economic changes while maintaining an open outlook on civil and human rights.

Femininity being handled in a more sensitive manner by candidate teachers may directly relate to societal problems and personal life experiences. However, candidate teachers handling the problems with the perspective of femininity make the problems visible by making women visible, rather than making their marginalization reasonable. All these questions point to feminist pedagogy. "The main problem of feminist pedagogy is gender, and the most liberating subject is 'woman.' Another common point is that it critiques traditional concepts of learning and knowing and begins with an alternative epistemological framework that does not accept the given work between power and knowledge." (Sayılan, 2017, s.19).

The research results highlight students' inclusive and community-focused discourses and free expression. This finding is consistent with Tuna's (2023) study, which concluded that the freedoms afforded to students through feminist pedagogy in arts education contribute to their ability to express themselves freely, have a say in the educational environment, and think freely. Furthermore, based on the participant experiences obtained in the study, feminist pedagogy was associated with certain methods and activities. These methods include an egalitarian approach, creating a democratic learning environment, providing a free educational environment, creating a social learning environment, encouraging critical thinking, providing diverse perspectives, focusing on experience, an interdisciplinary approach, the teacher acting as a guide, and creating an environment of

trust within the classroom (Tuna, 2023). All of these processes, while developing a perspective on the female image, are similar to those explored in the experience-based artographic study.

Suggestions

When the results of this study, which was conducted regardless of the gender of prospective teachers, are examined, comparative studies can be conducted by including the perspectives of male and female teacher candidates on the image of women with students from different universities.

Since artography is related to one's own life experiences, researchers can conduct integrated research involving the participants and themselves. Thus, pedagogical and social problem-based studies can be done in different contexts for candidate teachers since the arts may be limitedly used to question meaning in art-based studies only.

When we look at the works of the students, which involve a continuous process, it is seen that artography has positive results in terms of providing interdisciplinary opportunities in design education. We can carry out interdisciplinary studies on social problems that question the identities of artists, researchers, and teachers.

It was observed that students, who focused on visual culture and social issues in the process, gained awareness about the image of women in this study. Considering that faculties of education educate individuals based on the values of consciousness, justice, and equality, it is recommended that similar studies be conducted in areas apart from the field of art education.

Contribution Rate of the Researchers

This study is a part of the doctoral thesis completed by the first author. It was conducted under the supervision of the second author.

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Statement of Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest between the authors.

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