

Becoming researcher in-Between: Formation of an Integrated Identity in A/R/Tographic Research

Dr. Yael Guilat

Sigal Arie, M.Ed.

Oranim Academic College of Education

The Faculty of Advances Studies

Graduate program in Interdisciplinary studies in Humanities and Arts

Abstract

How does an artist-researcher-teacher identity form when an integrative model of ABR methodology is applied to the art practices? What role do "in-between" spaces—making /researching art—play in the "becoming" process? Assuming that the spaces in-between the simultaneous use of language, images, materials, situations, space and time in the A/R/Tographic process is where meanings reside (Irwin & Springgay, 2008), I ask how such spaces influence the researcher identity-formation and invite female artists to examine the relations between their artistic artefact and the conceptualization research processes (Candy, 2011) from a perspective that underline the contingency of social relations and contribute to a greater awareness of the artist's relation to their diverse communication frameworks.

As a teaching assistant at a studio- based seminar in the multidisciplinary M.Ed. program at Oranim College in Israel, I used Participatory Qualitative Research to see how A/R/Tographic attitudes of artist-teachers, who investigated personal creative processes within a practice-based research framework, developed and to what extent the "in between" space through the use of an integrative model of ABR, affected their artistic images and their research.. This approach yielded a rethinking of art practices and teaching as drivers of research processes that promote co-learning based on real situations, relations, and contextualization as elicited by multidisciplinary and integrative methods.

Keywords: Art based research, A/R/Tography, in-between, integrative research, artistic practice, social engagement

Introduction

As we progress through ABR and A/R/Tographic Research practices, more and more Artists, as they become researchers, actively participate not only in the artefact making/artefact display but also in a movement and reaction that is expanding them into various fields of knowledge. ABR and A/R/Tographic Research practices call the artists attention to an inter-disciplinary dimension, a space where they are invited to develop affective affiliations towards social and educational aspects. Social A/r/tography is an example of methodology that inspire the social aspects through practice based research and was developed by combining the characteristics of artistic-social practices, social pedagogy and social education, along with participatory research methodologies and community-based action studies (Marín Viadel & Roldán, 2017). Under these circumstances, artist's personal aesthetic practice in art based research seeks to collaborate in various ways with inter-personal and collective modes of observation.

How do female artists challenge the autonomy of self-involved practice by highlighting the social and educational character of the image context? In what ways does the "in-between" spaces in A/R/Tographic Research supports the becoming of the researcher identity and involves cultivating inter-personal awareness in female artists? To what extent can the integrative model of ABR methodology help them reconsider their position in social systems?

In this research, i seek to connect these key questions about ABR and A/R/Tographic Research practices and suggest that the research of female artists with the integrative model of ABR methodology enable them to perceive themselves as researcher intertwined in a social space that alerts them to the critical need to reconsider who they are and what consequences their artistic practices can have on others.

Becoming researcher

The identity of a researcher always interested me. As a researcher who started her academic journey in the field of environmental studies, I've first studied issues according to the fact that the knowledge I represent on my research reflects an "objective" reality defined in terms of quantitative products, allowing little room for moral judgment or critical reflection. Furthermore, the new knowledge of the

research was, in most cases, imposed on the scientific discourse and was usually derived from economic and technological interests.

Though this experience influenced me in many good ways and helped me grow as a researcher, It was only through my later practice in ABR and A/R/Tographic methodologies, in my Master degree in education, that I were able to define a new and more personal role of my researcher identity.

In-Between

ABR is based on creation: the creation of practices and images that are the basis for meaningful new knowledge of the individual (the researcher) and that are also culturally relevant (Sullivan, 2010). ABR epistemology seeks to balance cognitive and intuitive processes and creates a unique synthesis between the studio practice and qualitative analysis, developing a rich interface between personal creative practices and qualitative forms of research emphasized by writing and reflective processes. In A/R/Tographic methodology the creative practice integrate with research methodology, and performative pedagogy (Irwin, 2004). The creative frame in which the artist-researcher works is perpetually in a state of formation, moving towards something new. This is due to the interaction within the inquiry process between diverse sources of knowledge and the production of new wisdom (Irwin & O'Donoghue, 2012). On Both methodology the new knowledge creation "exists between theory and practice and beyond assumed discipline boundaries" and it is where "artist pursue issues and ideas that have personal and public relevance" (Sullivan, 2004, pp.152).

The integrative model

The analysis of the creative practice in the integrative model of ABR methodology, discussed in this research, was designed to expand the in-between spaces of the research assuming that in the A/R/Tographic process it is there, in between the simultaneous use of language, images, materials, situations, space and time, where meanings reside (Irwin & Springgay, 2008).

The creative practice in the model (figure 1) incorporating into the field of art research tools from the social sciences, such as phenomenological-interpretive analysis, coding and mapping and therefore

enhanced the potential of the artistic practice as a forms of social engagement, where the researcher identity is becoming by raising significant questions about social identity and contribution. The model was developed at Oranim Academic College, as part of my ABR thesis research, in the Graduate program of Interdisciplinary studies in Humanities and Arts. it was practiced with first year students in the "Artist-Teacher" program at a studio- based seminar where I was working as a teaching assistant. The students, who identify the field of art as their field of research, are committed to addressing their research hypotheses in other fields as well, frequently education and the humanities.

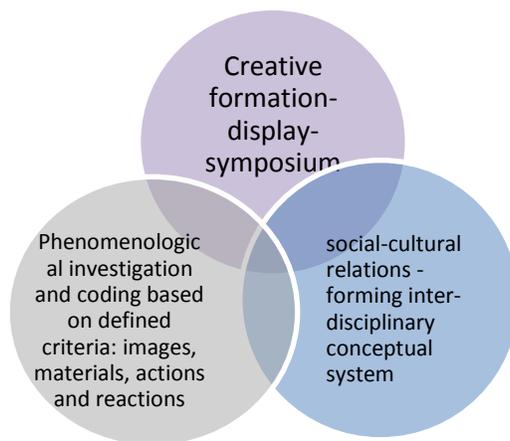


Figure 1- the integrative model of ABR methodology

Methodology

A qualitative analysis based on participatory observation was used to research the work of students in the integrative model of ABR methodology and their progression through their first year of studying. Experimenting with the methodology of creative research is a significant stage for the artist-teacher, who for the most parts, first meet the methodology of self-research and the academic skills of writing a seminar paper. This introduces new challenges in the inclusion of research skills in a way that is integrated into the processes of creation and work in the studio as a whole and in understanding and implementing the research procedures that include interpretation and conceptualization processes in particular.

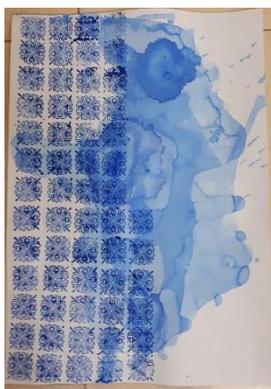
Participants

First-year students in the M.Ed. ABR "artist-teacher" Programme. The Participants are all women between the ages of 25 and 60, Israeli citizens, working in the media of video, painting, and installation. They all had gained teaching diplomas in art and had professional experience. They came from varied family backgrounds and geographical locations.

Case studies

1. *The incarnation of a stain*

Michal Na'aman started her research as she is, on her first steps, letting the materials initially dictated the direction of the artefacts. Her main technique is painting as it first appeared as an expressive abstract, and in the course of time, it changed and created different images, Combined with ready-made stamps. through the use of the integrative model of ABR methodology the elements in the artefacts were identified and were intertwined in a wider social space where different fields of knowledge are present and the consequences of the artistic practice on others can be consider. "The stains and stamps helped me through my search as I was asking questions about boundaries, about my place as an artist who came from a Jewish traditional background".



Michal Na'aman, untitled, 2017, Acrylic on paper



"Examine religious identity as an artist. Expand the way to relate to the **body** and the **female body** in general"



Michal Na'aman, untitled, 2018, Acrylic on fabric,

2. *Present in her absence*

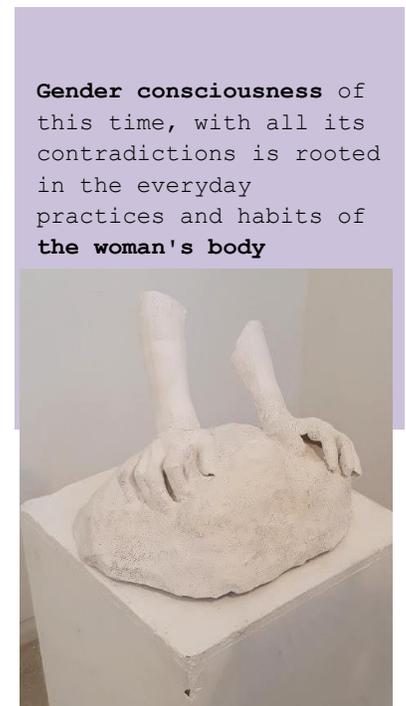
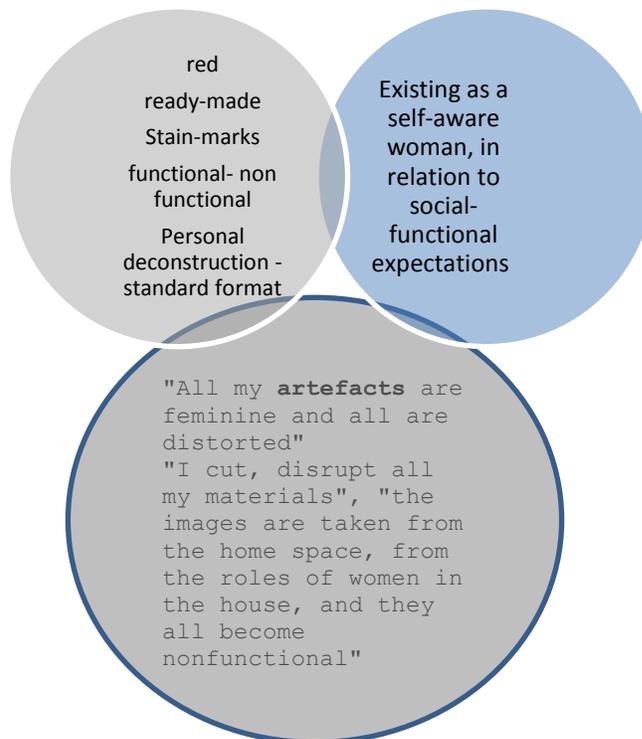
Sophie Avigdor started her research working mainly with Ready-made objects she collect intuitively from her home environment, applying intentional interferences in their structures and mixing them with red color.

With the integrative model of ABR methodology, the act of deconstruction and dis-functioning as a central practice became clearer. The artist came to understand the significance of these practices and the series of actions she applied on the functional sources, with materials, content and iconography addressing questions of woman's functionality.

As she observed the artistic process through the inter-disciplinary and inter- personal modes of observation the Research procedure became "a code for a mental understanding, a wider concept was revealed. If it were not for the research, I would not have reached that point, and it is doubtful whether I would have continued to operate in it with such awareness and continuity".



Sophie Avigdor, corset, 2017, mixed media



*Sophie Avigdor, untitled, 2018,
Gypsum (p.o.p bandage)*

Gender consciousness of
this time, with all its
contradictions is rooted
in the everyday
practices and habits of
the woman's body

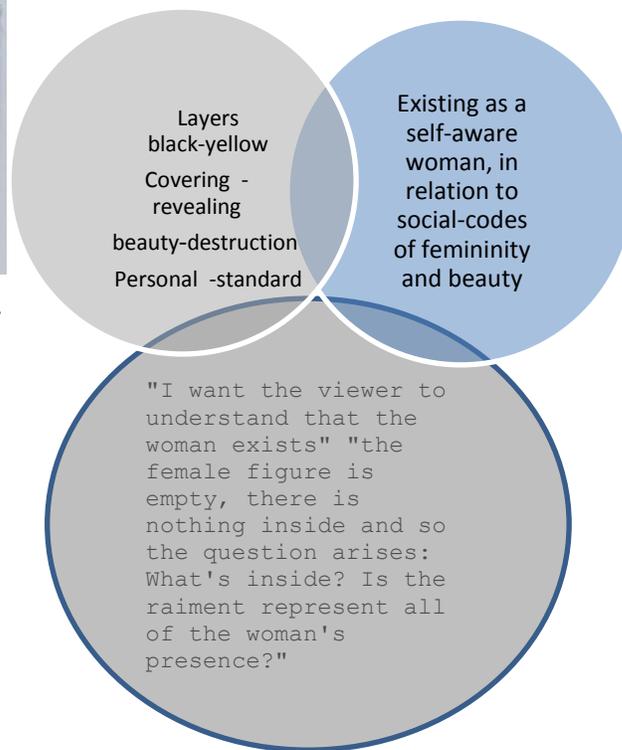
3. A Feminine woman

As an artist who is also an art-therapist, Vered Bar started her research as she is using her creative practice to look inwardly, searching her most personal and authentic "voice". Her first image in the process was stairwells, and well as other multi-layered systems, using acrylic on paper.

With the integrative model of ABR methodology, the paintings of the layers constituted an "entry ticket" to the awareness and understanding that the layers reveal the unique relationship of the artist's authentic "voice" with a wider social voice relating to the idea of beauty and femininity.



Vered Bar, *Stairs*, 2017, Acrylic on paper



Preforming gender identity through dress- The raiment as a link between the private-personal beauty ideas and socially constructed presentation of beauty



Vered Bar, *In a red dress*, 2018, acrylic on chiffon

Conclusion

The integrative model of ABR methodology, applied to the art practices in this research, was supporting the formation of an artist-researcher-teacher identity as it enabled an "in-between" space as part of the artists "becoming" process. For these artists, the process of forming the relations between their artistic practices and artefact with the conceptualization research processes (Candy,

2011) was embroidered through an inter-disciplinary perspectives that underline the contingency of social relations and contribute to a greater awareness of the artist's relation to her diverse communication frameworks.

The integrative model of ABR allowed participants to challenge individualistic boundaries and make the "in-between" space of exchange inseparable from their artistic practice. With their inter-personal lenses they have moved beyond discipline boundaries as they required cognitive and Metacognitive skills. Through the skills they have acquired they define for their research a central concern that belong to the social-cultural field. Their personal studies, as researching artists, include a new set of beliefs that examines the symbolic visibility of women in the personal and public spheres where they form responsibility for a unique and relevant gender statement.

Thus, based on this research, it can be argued that the process of learning the various skills based on the model raises the gender identity of the researchers and constructs the identity of their research as a feminist study that "introduces women both as researchers and as a worthy and necessary subject of research knowledge" (Peretz, 2011). The research of female artists with the integrative model of ABR methodology seeks, by means of an investigative and creative action, to bring about a change in the order of unequal discourse and challenges power relations by visual representation of gender roles in different spheres of life. With this practice the artists wish to form the mutual relationship between the personal story of a woman and the collective story of a society.

As much as the creative practice and the artefacts reflect the artist's subjective experience, they exist as well within a social and cultural context. This approach yielded a rethinking of art practices and teaching as drivers of research processes that promote social engagement based on real-life situations and contextualization. This approach is also associated with theories regarding the place and role of the artistic practice in the art education and its interface with other disciplines.

References

Candy, L. (2011). Research and Creative Practice. In Candy, L. and Edmonds, E.A. (eds.) *Interacting: Art, Research and the Creative Practitioner* (Ch.2, pp. 34-35), Faringdon, UK.

Irwin, R. L., (2004) *A/r/tography: A metonymic métissage*. In e. Rita L. Irwin and Alex de Cosson, *A/r/tography: Rendering Self Through Arts-Based Living Inquiry* (p. 220). Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press.

Irwin, R. L.. & Springgay, S. (2008). *A/r/tography as practice-based research*. In M. Cahnmann-Taylor & R. Siegesmund (eds.), *Arts-based research in education: Foundations for practice* (pp. 103-124). New York: Routledge.

Irwin, R.L.. & O'Donoghue, D. (2012) *Encountering pedagogy through relational art practices*. *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 31(3), 221-236.

Marin Viadel, R. & Roldan J. (ads) (2017) *Ideas visuales. Investigación basada en artes e investigación artística / visual ideas. Arts based research and artistic research*. Granada, Spain: Universidad de Granada.

Peretz, M., (2011) In Peretz, M. (Ed). *In her eyes: Research in Gender perspective*. (pp.15-18) Tel Aviv: Naamat Association.

Sullivan, G. (2004) *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the visual arts*. Thousand Oaks. CA, Sage Publications.

Sullivan, G. (2010) *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts* (2010 edition). Thousand Oaks. CA, Sage Publications.