

In search for equity and equality in the context of universities through Artistic Methodologies in Teaching

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Abstract—This text presents the co-educational work developed in recent years, from a critical and feminist perspective, the principle of equity and inclusion for effective equality in women and men. The Artistic Methodologies in Teaching (AMTs) are the chosen strategy for the teachers' initial formation in these values.

Keywords—gender, education for equality, teachers' training, artistic methodologies in teaching.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender issues and especially the problem of inequality of opportunities between men and women is a subject with continuous relevance. The numerous actions that are taken to palliate it haven't still reached the objectives of normalizing the situation and every organization reminds the need to keep working on that aspect.

The inclusion of Spanish university in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) means a profound renovation of the teaching-learning process that, amongst other things, requires including the principle of equality between women and men in their academic offerings. This perspective implies, in a mandatory way, that every college student has to get education on gender [1]. However, in the education system, and specifically in the arts universities education we can determine as a discriminatory practice the invisibility of women artists' work in the teaching contents and learning programs. Thereby, we aspire to deal with students' formation from a critical and feminist perspective, from the principles of equity and inclusion in education for effective equality in women and men.

Educative innovation is framed inside a line of work followed by the teaching staff (several colleagues are joining me) in recent years with the intention of shedding light and valuing the cultural contributions of women artists, in the context of artistic university training, where the references used in teaching are for the most part men artists. The different stages of the project, that we have been developing since the course of 2013-2014 until now, have as their objective to normalize the presence of women artists as references in the formative programs in Fine Arts. The state of the matter in the classrooms has been evaluated through surveys, before and after the intervention. Results have not only been a considerable rise in the spontaneous use of women artists as references in the projects of students, but also an awareness raising on the gender problematic in the field of contemporary art.

Continuing the experience of previous years, with this intervention we intend to:

- Normalize the presence of women artists as references in training programs in Fine Arts and teacher training.
- Contribute to reflexion on the gender problematic in contemporary society.
- Introduce gender perspective in the studies of degrees linked to the project (Degrees in Fine Arts, in Design and in Preservation and restoration of cultural property, and Master's Degree in Teacher Education).
- Promote hands on activities through workshops and projects culminating in artistic formalizations on the subject.
- Improve students' knowledge about the artistic contributions done by women.

A. About transversal actions

Menéndez [1] tells us that “*there are three ways to add gender perspective in university education, the first two are very much more developed in Spanish universities. The first way is through specific degrees, like the inclusion of Women, Feminist or Gender Studies in the teaching offering. Secondly, through the inscription of a specific subject inside of a non-specific degree program. Lastly, and assuming the Gender Mainstreaming methodology, introducing the contents in any subject belonging in any study curriculum. As Bosch and Ferrer have shown (2012), in Spanish university you can find examples of the first and second cases, especially in Post-Graduate studies, but it's hard to find experiences with the third of possibilities*”[1]. Our work places itself in this third way of introducing gender perspective in the university, reflectively changing the planning and development of our teaching, getting rid of gender biases in our study guides and methodologies, in the used sources, in the studies curriculum, language and examples, and our discipline foundations. To that purpose, as Menéndez suggests [1], we take into account the leading role of women (to end invisibility), usage of non-sexist language (to name women as active-subjects), the adding of women artists and researchers as sources of information or prominence (to restore their corresponding legitimacy), the inclusion of subjects and spaces traditionally invisible (to break with men/women dichotomies), and involving students to operate in that same way. And we expect to achieve it working on three main fronts, from the following improvement actions in our pedagogic activity:

- Reflective change of various aspects of university teaching to transversally include gender perspective in the curriculum and to promote students' knowledge and usage as references of relevant contributions by women artists. In subjects in which their methodology allows it, mainly –or even exclusively- women artists references will be used, with the double goal of actively pointing out the invisibility situation they are in and promoting reflection on the subject.
- Layout of a reflective common framework, discussion and debate on gender issues and, more specifically, on women artists' invisibility to allow students to know about the life and work of some of them through various transversal actions, complementary to teaching and programmed through these years:
 - Specific lecture cycle in both four-month periods of the 14-15 academic year;
 - “Arts and Feminism: current situation of women in the arts system” seminary, in both four-month periods of the 15-16 academic year;
 - Film cycle “Women artists’ mise-en-scene”, with the projection of three films and subsequent roundtables in both four-month periods of the 16-17 academic year.
- Improvement of the “About women artists” database (it already includes 1000 references) with the intention of supplying students a useful tool for their learning process. The creation of this resource was approached together with my students, at the time public and free to use, that centralizes audiovisual resources scattered through the Internet referring to women artists.

II. ARTISTIC METHODOLOGIES IN TEACHING AS A LIFE COEDUCATIVE EXPERIENCE

Andrea Rubio [2] defines Artistic Methodologies in Teaching (AMTs) as *“those based on the ways in which art uses ideas, processes and materials. They are those specific to teaching-learning processes own and unique to art”*. These shapes and processes specific to art, meant as conceptual structures, are what the Artistic Methodologies in Teaching can generate. It's not only about *“handling the esthetic experience as part of the educative process, but also conceiving the educative experience as a conceptual esthetic structure”* [2].

In his book “Art as experience”, John Dewey states that a “real experience” needs an esthetic component to be so. For the lasting memory of the experience to happen, the esthetic component necessarily has to be a part of this process [3]. *“This artistic structure may be immediately felt. In so far, it is esthetic. What is ever more important is that [...] no intellectual activity is an integral event (is an experience), unless it is rounded out with this quality. Without it, thinking is inconclusive. In short, esthetic cannot be sharply marked off from intellectual experience since the latter must bear an esthetic stamp to be itself complete.”* [3]. Thus, we can understand as analogous the real experience Dewey refers to, and real learning.

A. Artistic creation is also educative. Putting into question Cultural Heritage through performance

As a teacher of future teachers in and through art, I am placed on a track for social transformation and I propose discovering and working from the “invisible pedagogies” in the classroom, as well as the understanding my instructional practice as a discourse [4]. The erasing of women in the use of language, in curricular contents, in artistic references, in texts we recommend reading, are all part of that hidden curriculum that we replace with our actions in all those aspects of our teaching effort: spotting, analyzing and transforming [4]. Also migrating towards other ways of doing.

I start my incursion in *performance arts*, using it as a strategy to communicate my teaching and researching practice in education, in congressional forums and educative innovation seminars. And as a corollary, I also extend it to the work with my students in and outside the classroom. In context of the IV International Heritage Education Congress, celebrated in Madrid in November 2018, the group “Education and museums”, comprised of Javier Marrero Acosta, Juan Carlos Hernández Marrero, Ruth Azcárate Miguel, Paloma Tudela Caño, Jaime Cabeza Marrero, Ana Vega Navarro and Rosa Cubillo López, introduces communication in form of a micro-capsule titled “Does Heritage have gender?”. It is an artistic video-action in which we address the theme of the congress “Heritage Education and Social Integration”, in which my Fine Arts Degree students –a group of thirteen students participating in the coeducation project- collaborate, as well as the teacher Noemí Peña Sánchez, with whom I share subject. In this performance, they all name in first person (“I am Orlan; I am Berthe Morisot; I am Yayoi Kusama; I am Marina Abramović; I am Camille Claudel; I am Claude Cahun;...”), a total of twenty-eight women artists, from different places and different eras, selected by the students for the occasion.

The brief text from which the performative action is projected and that accompanies it reads as follow:

I am interested in the construction of individual (and collective) identity and I wonder how would it be possible for women to bolster a self-identity through the heritage determined by men. I think that heritage, mostly masculine, cannot do anything outside of providing a construct of “no place” for women, of strangeness, of being “outsiders”; in essence, a misplaced feminine identity that leads to self-inhibition, to assuming a second place... This can only be broken from the awareness of our own absence, an induced absence, the invisibility of a heritage built by women. Heritage is not a static thing. I seize that constant fluidity of its constitution to reclaim and propose the inclusion of my own references.

Its conception extends to the invisibility of LGTB artists.

B. Educative intervention as an artistic creation project

In the last academic years, the Drawing, Design and Plastic Arts Specialization of the Master's Degree in Teacher Training of Secondary Education, High School, Professional Training and Language Teaching accepts, amongst others, graduates that have benefited from some, if not every action that we have been developing inside the

framework of Art and Gender, as students. This way, every academic year we find a very diverse group regarding their training with gender perspective. Furthermore, in the 20-21 academic year the student distribution by sex is of 7 males and 14 females. The gender presence in the group is diverse: there are women, men and non-binary too. Teachers in early training, that will likewise contribute in other people's training in the future, have to base their reflection and learning on at least two key elements: on one hand, conquering competencies focused on the abolition of androcentrism and symbolic violence; and on the other acquiring basic knowledge about art and its teaching in relation to women [1]. To concretize this last aspect, we at least direct our intervention to propositions that allow to become acquainted with relevant women's names and their artistic contribution; spotting needs and/or challenges on the discipline in hand from gender perspectives and knowing critical work about the subject [1].

At the current academic year, my implication on the Master's degree is extended to four of the five speciality subjects and I propose five inquiry approaches for the final Master's work. Because of the complexity of my teaching assignment in this Master's, I conceive my educative intervention as an artistic creation project in itself: a creation and learning collaborative project with my students and my teaching team. For it, I develop a sequence of projects whose methodology is sustained on Visual Arts Based Educational Research [5] [6] and on A/r/tography [7], playing the roles of artist, researcher and teacher. The main research tool is photography, using visual references as well as own creations in the processes and results. They mainly are projects to do and learn in collaboration, so diverse groups are created (sometimes couples, sometimes in groups of three or four students) the most heterogeneous as possible, so that women, men and non-binary people work jointly and democratically.

Through the different projects we have approached the formal curriculum to transform it, countering the invisibility of women artists in education through specific proposals and also proposing the inclusion of LGTB artistic references; we have unveiled the messages that a educative space sends us, analysing the hidden curriculum it contains from a feminist and gender perspective; and we have planned contemporary artistic creations conceiving them as teaching tools from which to work on equity and equality between men and women.

C. *Acting as arteducators for restaurative action to all women artists*

Within the framework of the annual subject Learning and Teaching of Drawing, Design and Plastic Arts, of the Master's Degree in Teacher Training of Secondary Education, High School, Professional Training and Language Teaching, I have introduced to my students, amongst others, the project *Contemporary artistic creation as educational material: Acting as arteducators*. My proposal was raised as follows:

"We are going to train in the teaching role from arteducation. For this, and without forgetting the necessary

appliance of gender perspective in our educational work, we take as an excuse and starting point the installation work "Islas", by Jaume Plensa, located at the Rambla de Santa Cruz in the capital of Tenerife. With this work, Plensa names and pays tribute to 73 artists.

"Out of those 73 names of artists whom Buderer describes on the artist's website as" the greats in the history of plastic arts, "only one refers to a woman.

"The artistic creation that you are going to project, while conceiving it as an educational tool in itself, will be a critical response to this unequal representation of the human artistic landscape. This way your work must also contain the names of 73 artists, in this case inverting the percentage of the presence of men and women in "Islas". In other words, your creation will name 1 male artist, responding to the only artist in the installation that we take as pretext, and 72 female artists, who will be equivalent to each and every one of the creators included in the installation of the Barcelona artist.

For it:

- "Pick 1 male creator and 72 women creators, each one of them corresponding to their symmetricals in "Islas".

- "Reflect on, explain and justify your choices.

- "Develop the project on your proposal's creative result, that will be conceived for its installation either on the public space or a museum or art room, contemplating every necessary aspect for its materializing.

- "Determine educative objectives to transform people into being better, better people.

- "And suggest at least one collaborative learning activity from our field, artistic education, directed at the achievement of the designated objectives and framed in a curriculum on a real and transforming context to achieve a more fair society. Do not forget to point out those aspects of the hidden curriculum that you look after and accompanies your educative action.

- "Make use of artistic references, creative proposals that might act as precedent, images and bibliographic support."

After the conformation of the work groups, I have obtained 8 solutions to the educative creation project as a result of the excellent research of my students, from which I briefly exemplify two of them.

D. *@herstory73*

"Islas" is also the title of the proposal conceived by Rosa Rodríguez Talavera, Héctor León León, Samuel Martín Adán and Carla Marzán Gutiérrez. It houses 73 files on a website for visual artists of all eras, of which 72 are women (Fig. 1). Each file contains a brief biographical note on the artist, indicating the artistic discipline in which their work is framed, as well as the artistic movement in which they are situated. It also justifies their presence in this installation-action and equates it to the corresponding artist honored by Plensa. To access the website, a QR code is the conceived strategy. Scanning, printing and distribution of the specific code can take the project anywhere on the planet. The website also allows the collaborative participation of whoever wishes to provide information

about other women artists, so that the project expands as much as the recipient wants.

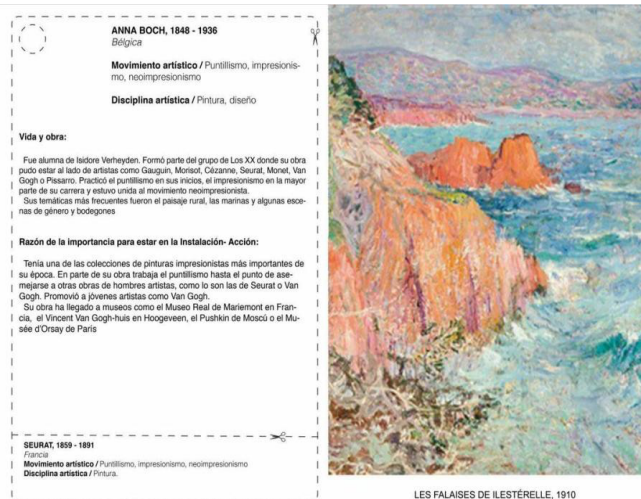


Fig. 1. Example of a file about the artist Anna Boch. Source: <https://www.instagram.com/herstory73/>

240 copies of the QR code were printed, which we distributed to begin to paste some of them in the Faculty of Fine Arts building, coinciding with the protest day of March 8. And we continue to distributing them to this day. To assess the echo that it can achieve, an Instagram profile was created for this project under the name *herstory73*¹ and currently has 95 followers. Incorporating the project in this social network has allowed us to verify the expansion of artistic/educative action to the north coast of the Iberic Peninsula. *herstory73* was tagged in two pictures that demonstrate its arrival at Santander.

E. @artistas_canarias

"Anónimas" is the result of the creation by Miriam González Álvarez, Natalia Moreno Martín and Javier Ventura Hernández. It is an installation set intended for the recognition of 72 Canarian women artists selected for their parallels with the laureates present in the work that serves as a starting point. The only male proposed to complete "Anónimas" is also an islander native.

The Rambla of Santa Cruz, the central artery of the capital of Tenerife, is the showcase for some of the important sculptural works that the city houses, most of them from the two International Sculptures Street Exhibitions, organized in 1973 and 1994 by the Official Architects' School of the Canary Islands (COAC), in collaboration with the Cabildo, the Santa Cruz de Tenerife City Council and CajaCanarias. And this is also the location chosen to carry out the installation. It would be located on both sides of the promenade, 36 pieces on one side and 37 on the other, in its pedestrian section near the Plaza de La Paz, in the direction of the Viera y Clavijo park, being one of its strengths, as well as being a heavily busy area, its breadth both in length and width.

Instagram also hosts part of the content of "Anónimas", under the *artistas_canarias*² profile (Fig. 2). The project is followed, to date, by another 602 accounts.



Fig. 2. Excerpt from the content in *artistas_canarias*. Source: https://www.instagram.com/artistas_canarias/

III. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The theoretical-practical conditions for the production of contemporary artistic productions that approach the problems of discrimination on account of gender or sex have been encouraged, as a method for work and promotion of its visibility, and to promote equity and equality through the democratic and creative use of educative spaces. Ultimately, we can assert that the Artistic Methodologies in Teaching are a method for innovation and that they work towards the expressive search not only of specific objects, but also towards the access to abstraction processes for representing the intangible [8]. Also, the AMTs create a unique space "where arts can be used as scaffolding in the construction of affective and pedagogical structures to favor the conveyance of values" [9].

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¹ <https://www.instagram.com/herstory73/>

² https://www.instagram.com/artistas_canarias/