

Negotiating the Professional and Artistic Identity of Art Teachers: Teacher Training, Academic Environment, and Artistic Interaction

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Abstract: The present research aims at the construction and negotiation of the professional and artistic identity of an artist, the balance or conflict between their artistic identity with that of the art teacher, as it is constructed through the discourse of students of the School of Fine Arts, Florina, Greece. The methodological approach of Discourse Analysis is used for the analysis of the research data. The issues involved in the construction of the artistic and professional identity of the art teachers are discussed, as they are formed within an academic framework, oriented not only toward the development of artistic creativity, but also toward the artists' professional development as teachers. Artist teachers of art classes seem to constantly negotiate their artistic and professional identity. According to research, the identity of artist teachers is presented as multiple and conflicted, since it is defined by various cultural elements such as art studies at university level, or lack thereof, self-taught art practice, relation to the profession of school teacher and relations to the market in general. Many artists, while initially choosing academic studies, move on to teacher training as well, in order to work in education — dealing with the profession as a means of livelihood. However, a conflict later emerges between their artistic and professional identity. The study presents the opportunity for an investigation of these issues, while formulating questions for further research.

Key words: higher education, professional identity, fine arts, artist teacher

1. The Professional Identity of Artist Teachers

Professional identity is constructed through discourse. All institutions, through their organization and the value system they promote, provide the opportunity for such constructions of identity through discourse, enabling subjects to access different repertoires and, thus, constructing this identity and subjectivity. The various subject positions give access to images, expectations, practices, opinions and values and, therefore, play a seminal role in the creation of different ways of comprehending the world and the social environment of each individual subject (Ball, 1990). The approach considering discursive practices studies identity as a social construct which is, as such, a constantly variable process.

Curricula and the kind of work done play a role in the formation of the professional identity of students, male and female alike. Barrow (2006) claims that the role the University plays in the formation of professional identity

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lies on the provision of those opportunities that will promote the development of the social, critical, cultural and personal aspects of professional identity. Central role of the University is the provision of professional training, at the same time, however, the institution must provide transformative learning and training, including processes that involve students in the learning process as active subjects. The University's contribution to the formation of the professional identity of students ceases to have a powerful effect from the moment that students are involved in professional fields as working individuals. Indeed, the students' professional identity is reinforced during their involvement in professional environments. Consequently, according to studies in the relevant literature, it seems that the professional identity of students is dynamic, involves the inclusion of the individual in multiple groups and communities, relates to self-knowledge and the student's active participation in the processes of learning (Trede Fr., Macklin R. & Bridges D., 2011). This multi-faceted construction of the professional identity of artist teachers is supported by Hatfield, Montana & Deffenabaugh, Reid, Dahlgren, Petocz & Dahlgren (2006), who claim that the factors formulating the professional identity of artist teachers is their preparation as teachers in workshops, in specialized study programs and through the co-operation with teacher-mentors. Additionally, other important factors are the working environment, the presence of an artistic identity before training — or lack thereof, and the negotiation of professional identity from the part of the students.

The identity of art teachers, as a constantly variable process, is constructed through discourse as a dynamic, conflicted and constantly renewed identity. This could be characterized as a paradox since the reality of teaching art is similar to that of creating art. Both practices require hard work, provide pleasure, yet even tedium, and could change at any given moment. It is a "never-ending internal conflict, a paradoxical experience" (Ball, 1990). Many artist teachers quit their professional careers as public school teachers claiming that they lack the time and devotion needed for artistic creation. Some remain at school due to financial and family reasons, giving up personal engagement with art, while others manage to combine personal artistic creation in their workshop with their work as teachers. Artist teachers speak of their identity without delimiting specific characteristics, while they oscillate between their need to be identified as artists and to function as effective teachers in the school environment. Research findings are rather various to conflicting (Zwirn, 2005).

The art teacher is an individual who either creates works of art and teaches art, and is thus committed to both occupations, or who is an individual devoted to students' artistic development, without necessarily being a practicing artist. Art teachers are not merely, or always, either art teachers or artist teachers. Throughout their career these two identities alternate. However, there are institutional conditions that delimitate the identity of a teacher, through relevant academic education, so that the identity of the artist teacher could be defined.

Artist teachers, when talking about their experiences, bring issues of negotiating identities in their discourse. Many artists who aspire to work in education as art teachers believe that it is possible to continue their artistic activity outside the classroom. However, even when artistic activity exists beyond school hours, it is often overlooked. Occupying oneself with artistic activity requires time and commitment while teaching involves attention to the school's schedule and curricula and the students' material and academic needs.

Artistic activity from the part of the teachers can greatly affect the complicated relations among the object of art, teachers and students. More specifically, artistic activity contributes to the establishment of a framework for artistic pursuits that involves familiarization with contemporary art, the creation of a workshop-like artistic environment in the school classroom, the guidance of the students and the process of artistic creation. The effect of teacher training on artist teachers can be identified in practice with the creation of workshop-like conditions or artistic studios in the classroom where students can discuss, experiment and develop ideas, collect objects and

images and be inspired.

Nevertheless, it is not true that art teachers who do not practice their art outside the school classroom are not capable of creating similar educational conditions with those mentioned above. In a relevant research, art teachers were not limited by the school's curriculum, but, as they knew how to relate meanings, forms, means and materials to create a work of art, based on their experience as artists, they included creativity, uncertainty and students' personal stories and interests in their teaching, thus encouraging, testing and taking risks, and finally constructing concepts through artistic creation (Zwirn, 2005).

Teachers talk about their identity and work as artists by defining it as a synthesis of renewal, life-long learning, professional development and self-valuation. The role of the artist as teacher requires a subtle balance as it is easy for the passion of the artist to prevail against students' voices. It is true, however, that artistic occupation by art teachers outside the school classroom can reconstruct educational conditions in the way teachers and students interact, and through the formulation of the learning environment, the interpretation of the produced artistic knowledge and the production of creative and not representational or mimetic artworks by students (Thornton, 2011).

2. Myths

It could be said that the identity of the artist is formulated, among other things, through the spectrum of many myths relating to the definition of the individual as an artist. The power of myth does not involve merely the interpretation of reality, but also its reconstruction and reproduction. According to Barthes (1979, p. 245) the naturalization of practices and ideologies is effected through myth, as the constructed dimension of reality becomes naturalized.

Myth does not hide anything, it simply deforms. It does not negate things, but also does not explain them in their natural disguise, it simply discovers them. During the Christian Medieval times, God was considered the creator of the world and artists were almost seen as conduits of divine inspiration. Within this religious framework, artists worked anonymously and collectively as craftsmen in guild workshops. Their social status was, thus, quite low. However, during the Renaissance, and under the auspices of humanitarianism, the status of the artist was redefined, and artists were highly valued, since they were considered capable of creating original works of art and were promoted to the "class" of the intelligentsia of the time. A new myth emerged then, that of the secluded artist who would create works of art, undistracted from every-day routine.

Thus, by the end of the 18th century the model of the "single" artist revealed his or her essential quality. This model of the artist was reinforced by the emphasis placed on the imagination, sentiment, intelligence and the search for abstract beauty during the Romantic period. In the spirit of Romanticism the stereotype of the "starved" artist had prevailed, an image that created a new definition, that of the "bohemian" rebel artist of the time who, disregarding material goods, social status and social convention, enjoyed a certain degree of freedom that led to individual creative expression. At that time, any artist true to his vision was obliged to remain behind the scenes. The true artist was secluded. Even though this bohemian representation of the artist is still powerful today, it must be noted that modern market demands require a different approach of the identity of the artist, as, nowadays, art is seen as an industry (Bain, 2005, pp. 25–39).

What is more, many artists today choose to work in education as art teachers, since in this way they are given the opportunity to have better economic and social security, to be released from the tyranny of the market, and to

have some communication with other artists. The definition of the artist, as given by UNESCO, includes: “any person who creates or provides an artistic expression, creates or recreates works of art; who considers his or her artistic creation to be a vital part of his or her life; and who seeks to be defined as an artist regardless of any involvement in working or business relations”.

This definition focuses on artistic creation and not on any other occupation that the artist might be involved in. The connection between artistic production and the economic remuneration that the artist might enjoy, by making his or her art an employment, is also interesting. This trend, however, for artists to identify themselves with rebels who disregard social convention is seminal for the creation of the dominant stereotype of the artist today, even if it serves Romantic models. It is important to remember John Dewey’s philosophical study on art titled “Art as Experience” (1934).

Dewey claims that art functions as an experience and that anyone who can live an artistic life in the frame of social interaction, by bringing beauty to the world, is potentially an artist. Research, observation, the search for interpretations and their reconfigurations are involved in the artistic experience and make way for understanding and action. Art connects to ethics and education as it conveys messages that reflect a meaningful life. Art deepens understanding as it enters symbolic worlds beyond a personal framework. Art, according to Dewey, is the most complex expression of society’s desires and expectations. Through art, people search for inspiration and a reason to contribute to the evolution of society. Artists represent the model, since they actively internalize and then artistically externalize landscapes, events, relationships and ideas. Art reveals the various faces of democracy and the encroachment or reservation of rights (Goldplatt, 2006, pp. 17–20). The artist, thus, acquires a social role, and is committed to serve rights and democracy.

3. Higher Education

Nowadays studies in Higher Education play an important role in the construction of the professional identity of artist teachers of Fine Arts. The contribution of the University in the construction of the students’ professional identity ceases to be as powerful from the moment these students become involved in labor as employees. University admission is considered the way to professional development, involving the provision of the relevant knowledge, history, social practices and discourses relating to a recognized scientific field or profession. The construction of professional identity can be seen as the construction of identity within communities of practice of Higher Education in Universities and professional life (Reid et al., 2008, pp. 730–740). Students tend to view all educational experience provided in Higher Education as an example of professional experience and, thus, formulate pre-professional identities. Research done in the USA and Australia, on how painters define their professional identity (Jeffri & Throsby, 2009, p. 105), showed that in their majority these artists consider the level of education they have received –either at public or private institutions- as a factor involved in the definition of their professional identity. It must be noted that the research concerned painters who were not necessarily teachers. Additionally, another research in the USA (Saraniero, 2009) showed that many artist teachers of art classes question the necessity for certification in education, since art courses at schools are not highly regarded; on the other hand, quite a few art teachers claimed they would pursue such certification. The latter are of the opinion that lack of teacher training from the part of some art teachers is responsible for the equal depreciation of those that have been trained. The research showed that artist teachers do not usually receive adequate teacher training in order to develop professionally, so that each artist teacher follows a personal route, such as internships next to

experienced artists teachers who function as mentors — a training method effective in the art world. It was also revealed that those who had previously received teacher training eventually set their art aside, as they focused on teaching. Over recent years, focus is placed on the discourse of artists through which they construct their identities, especially in fields outside the University, as happens in workshops where young artists become students of master artists, and where the stories of the latter are produced and function as models of the way in which an individual is supposed to behave as an artist. Today, of course, the responsibility of preparing young artists lies on Universities and Colleges (Zander, 2007, p. 201), whose curricula and practices often aim at the formation of critical thought, and especially in schools of Fine Art, where the development of a critical stance toward norms and social convention is pursued (Adams, 2007, pp. 266-267). Indeed, relevant literature refers to The Teaching Artist Model (Booth, 2003; Huddy & Stevens, 2011), according to which a model of preparing artist teachers, focusing on artistic practice, is promoted. The dual role of the artist — teacher demands that the teacher formulate his or her behavior as an artist, while at the same time utilizing a range of educational practices. It focuses on learning through art and not learning about it. Teaching, thus, extends beyond the limits of art, including language, local histories, experiences and a dialogue with various forms of art, for which life-long learning is required in the frame of today's multicultural classroom environments. Curricula in Schools of Fine Arts in Greece are not very different from the above model, however emphasis on local community and its specificity, language and particular cultural characteristics, is lacking, probably due to the centralized character of the public school system, where unified curricula and a central control of all aspects of education exist.

4. Teacher Training in the School of Fine Arts, University of Western Macedonia, Greece

The University of Western Macedonia was founded by the Presidential Decree 92/2003 (ΠΔ 92/2003). According to the Curricula of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts in the University, the department's mission is to: a) provide and promote knowledge of the scientific fields of painting, sculpture, applied art such as photography –video, digital art forms such as animation, illustration, industrial design and interior design. Special focus is placed on cultural heritage and its influence by the great European art movements b) provide students with the necessary skills to ensure their successful training required for their artistic, scientific and professional career and to enable students to create their own artistic profile on which their artistic and professional development will be based, so that students are capable of working as artists with adequate qualifications and of scientifically managing the practical and theoretical issues relevant to artistic creation as a whole c) provide students with special training on teaching art courses in primary and secondary schools and d) follow the principles of “pluralism, research and innovation, as well as the dominance of digital technology that contributes to the configuration of the field of fine and applied arts”. The curriculum includes the participation of students in fine art activities, that take place either in the city of Florina, Greece, or the greater area, and the collaboration with local and state institutions and foundations for the participation of students in annual festivals and other venues of public display. The School aims at connecting to the local and greater communities and communicating with the city's residents in order to avoid social isolation of the University. For this reason, since 2011 funded programs of Internship exist for students to work in public and private institutions, on work related to their field of study, and through which students obtain some professional experience; these programs aim at connecting education to the labor market.

Regarding the courses on teacher training, it is characteristically mentioned that:

“A basic category of Theoretical Courses are those on Education and Teaching Methodology which, along with the Internship program, prepare students for teaching in Primary and Secondary Education”. These courses focus on:

- 1) Educational Subjects
- 2) Teaching of Art History
- 3) Teaching of Fine Arts
- 4) Teaching Methodology — Internship I
- 5) Teaching Methodology — Internship II

A course on Museum science, Museum Education and Cultural Management is taught, as well, and a course on Teaching Practices in Workshops is also offered. 30 Teaching Credits are required of students to complete their educational and teaching qualification.

5. Research: Aims

Research aims comprise of: a) the study of the views of 15 senior students in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts of the University of Western Macedonia, Greece, regarding the construction of their artistic and professional identity, b) the correlation between the constructed identity with the content of their studies, especially teacher training and the academic interrelation c) the study of the way in which students negotiate their artistic and professional identity as future art teachers. The interest of the researcher occurred through the courses of Teaching Methodology and the discussion that had aroused concerning their identity crisis.

The students formulate an ambivalent and multi-dimensional identity. To serve the needs of the present study the factor of correlation between the students' teacher training and artistic interaction in the formulation of their identity as artist teachers has been chosen. The selection of research data has been affected through semi-constructed interviews and techniques of Discourse Analysis and Social Semiotics, as they are studied and structured by Gunther Kress, Rodger Hodge and Norman Fairclough, have been used as methodological tools for their interpretation (Fairclough, 1992; Hodge & Kress, 1993; Hodge & Kress, 1988).

The social construction of the subject is adopted for this research, and more specifically its construction through Discourse. The subject is a product of modern society. Subjectivity represents the way in which individuals experience the world from certain positions. Educational systems play a vital role in the process of subject construction. Relating subjectivity to identity, it could be said that, by defining social identities, subjects are organized in a framework of cultural institutions, where certain positions are allotted to them, positions that either provide or hinder the opportunity for subjects to gain experiences and represent them (Althusser, 1981; Foucault, 1970; Grossberg, 1996; Kouzelis, 1997; Yudell, 2006).

Discourse plays the dominant role in the study of identity. In the fields of Deconstruction and Social Constructionism identity is defined as a social construct, which is constructed through discourse. Discourse is a social practice constructed by social institutions that it simultaneously constructs, also constructing subject positions for those subjects involved in communication in each social context. Identity relates to representations of the Self and to language practices. Identity is also constructed through multiple, differing and, many times, antagonistic discourses, practices and conditions and undergoes a process of constant change. Consequently, identity relates to the representation of our Self, not so much to who we are, but to who we could become. And this representation stems from narratives of our Self, through discourse effected in specific language practices and

institutions within which we identify our Self against who we are not, which is represented by the Other (Hall, 1996; Henriquez J. et al., 1984; Youdell, 2006).

The research material was gathered through semi-structured interviews after the consent of the students, as the researcher was their instructor at the time.

6. Teacher Training and Art

The study and analysis of the discourse of students at the School of Fine Arts, in Western Macedonia, shows that most of them have formed a positive opinion on the teacher training they have received as a qualification for future entry in the educational community. Panagiotis mentions that teacher training “is a good provision, being able to work in education, it is something good the School offers” and he would prefer to work in education. Indeed, as he claims:

I will talk about work, as it is what bothers me more. I am afraid that I will be a mere worker somewhere, at some job or another, and that I will not have time and energy to occupy myself with painting or photography, music or what not [...] I wish I could, at least, be an art teacher in the future. I am moved by children. That's right, I would like to be good at something like that.

The opportunity to work as a teacher is the better choice for Panagiotis, who goes on to express a pessimistic view of his professional future: “I am afraid that I will be a mere worker somewhere, at some job or another, and that I will not have time and energy to occupy myself with painting”. Magda claims through her discourse that teacher training offered at the School of Fine Arts is adequate and necessary, a view that she repeats three times, and that regards all future teachers, who must be aware of teaching practices. Magda contradicts the myth relating to the artist's innate and God-given talent, a myth constructed, as mentioned above, during the Christian Medieval times, and according to which artists were almost seen as conduits of divine inspiration:

I believe that teacher training is also necessary, necessary [...] it is necessary because most of us will find a job if the situation continues being what it is, in economy etc., in Education, so, eh, it is necessary since a teacher, regardless of subject, is a teacher first and foremost [...] In this way, as if getting the message across and being an effective teacher is a gift from God etc. And I do not believe that being an effective teacher is completely innate.

Eleni's opinion of the necessity of the School and all theoretical courses offered is that it plays an absolute role in the formation of the identity of the artist. Artistic creation, as well as being an effective teacher, do not constitute a “divine gift”, but are rather connected to scientific knowledge:

What I mean is that, if you lack education, it is not as if I take a brush and suddenly, with divine inspiration, something comes off, alas, I mean (...) something further will come off when you have researched many things, when you have read stuff, and I always believe, of course, in the connection between art and science and all those things, that is, and the artist and writer and scientist must have variety (...) to reach a certain artistic result you must work very hard.

George, who is among the oldest students at the School, also claims that teacher training is necessary on condition, however, that it does not hinder their artistic education, since internships are done during senior year when students also need to prepare and submit their Thesis. As he speaks, he initially develops a discourse of low modality, and thus, low certainty, which then changes with the use of the modal verb “must”, that is emphatically used twice:

At School (...) eh (...) yes, I consider it necessary (...) I consider it necessary, maybe more ‘subtle’ so that students

are not stressed, to stress over their painting, their sculpture, their engraving and not so much with educational courses. Yes, education courses should exist but not at the final two semesters (...) and a bit more (...) subtle (...) students must study educational courses, they must!

George, even though he is a mature artist and a professional, felt greatly emotional when he entered the classroom for the first time in order to teach, so much so that he considered orienting himself toward artistic activities related to children — as he claimed, albeit ambiguously:

For me, let's say, the experience that I had within art classes was terribly stressful. Adrenaline was high the previous days (...) Eh, yet, when the time came, I felt extremely emotional. I get goosebumps saying it (...) Because I did not expect this, it is (...) a big thing to see, let's say, these children looking at you in the eye and waiting for you to say something (...) to learn something (...) what? What will our teacher tell us today? Yes, I think one does not exclude the other.

Identities vary. Penny emphatically agrees with George regarding the necessity for courses on education on condition, however, that they are elective for those truly wishing to be involved in education, as they are a “waste of time” for the rest of the students:

I believe that, yes, they should exist, but ideally eh (...) they would be elective. Possibly. For me, as this concerns me, it is very good and, yes, I want them to exist. However, I can also understand people who know they do not wish to occupy themselves with it (education) or they cannot, or believe they cannot get the message across or anything (...) so it does not concern them (...) they waste (...) they “waste”, quote –unquote, whatever little time they have, and that could be used at work or knowledge, studying anything on their work, doing that.

Penny's discourse presents ambiguity. While she starts with relevant certainty on the elective character of courses on education, the modality of the syntagma is weakened with the use of the adverb “possibly”. Completing her discourse, she reverts to her initial position with the use of the extreme “absolutely” in the utterance “I consider it absolutely necessary”.

Many artists who wish to work in Education as art teachers believe it is possible to continue their artistic activity outside the classroom. However, even when there is artistic activity from the part of these teachers beyond school hours, it is often disregarded. On the other hand, many are the art teachers who question the necessity of teacher training certification at a time when the arts are not highly regarded at school, while quite a few would pursue such certification.

As far as the study of the sample is concerned, the above-mentioned research arguments seem to be validated, as both the impossibility of balancing between the two practices and the possibility of connecting educational with artistic practice are mentioned with great certainty in the students' discourse.

John is sure to connect the role of the artist teacher with the possibility that it provides for the artist to communicate with society in the frame of the social role of art, by developing his discourse with relational models and the use of the verbs “there is” and “becomes” which exclude the action of the artist-subject (Hodge & Kress, 1993, pp. 38–47, 116–121).

I will then try to become a teacher, so that I can gain this workshop, what we talked about earlier, the opportunity to have this workshop. But...even if you do not have it, you deal with children, who, there is not artist outside life. Well, there is, yet the artist relates to life, he or she must not be inside a workshop.

At the same time, with the use of his meta-discourse, in the phrase “whoever tries to say that here, eh, mainly does not take into account all influences”, not only does he reinforce his opinion, but he also controls any

opposing views.

By generalizing and using the first person plural and the extreme expression “everyone”, Panagiotis emphatically voices a different view, that of the “militant” dimension of the artist’s subjectivity, “without discounts”, explaining that the artist must fight through his art, representing, thus, an ethical dimension of the artist’s subjectivity, as well.

Like everyone who would like to occupy themselves with painting, we would like to make a living off it, alright, not make any discounts and become conceited, this is ridiculous, to give a fight, to give my fight through painting [...] Honestly, how can I say it, I don’t know, I mean, to give my fight through painting.

Magda, on the other hand, produces a modest discourse referring to this difficult time of economic crisis that society is faced with, so livelihood reasons demand an occupation with education:

[...] in this day and age it is difficult to make plans, truthfully, due to the economic crisis, but, eh, let’s say that the plans in my mind are too many, regardless of crisis. Eh, when I graduate, I plan to try to tread the path of education, either as substitute teacher, if I am selected, as there is also an NSRF (National Strategic Reference Framework –ΕΣΠΑ in Greek) program running, or with a permanent appointment through ASEP exams (High Council for Staff Recruitment –ΑΣΕΠ in Greek).

She considers teacher training and education to be positive in any case. The rhetoric she develops is based on such justification:

No one could know their future, their path, and if at some point they will wish to teach children. Anyone might feel “I have enough inside that I wish to share with others” [...] It is not useless knowledge in any case, whether you make use of it, or not. Not every door is open everywhere.

Eleni expresses the view that the two “roles” can coexist with certainty, and that it is possible for art teachers to combine individual artistic creation in the workshop with their work as art teachers at school, since they anyway perform their vocation:

I mean, I do not believe that one role consumes the other [...] and, in fact, in the end, when you practice art, teach art at school, you remain an artist, that is, (the artist) imparts this perception to the child that art both widens your horizons and cultivates the imagination, art provides much to people.

Anastasis relates inspiration and artistic practice with the possibility for the artist to manage his or her time schedule as he or she pleases. Consequently, the artist’s work at school would limit his or her artistic creation. However, through his discourse he formulates an ambivalent identity with the use of the low-modality adverb “probably” and the following clauses of contrast:

Probably as an artist, even though I believe that I could teach, that’s what I think. It so happened that I provided some lessons, went to some schools, show children some graffiti-design, yet I believe that if I occupy myself with this profession, working as an art teacher, I will not have time to do what I want, to create paintings, sculptures, there will be no time.

As far as academic knowledge acquired at the School of Fine Arts is concerned, he expresses a clear and intensely critical position:

No, I simply learned much more and I learned to look at things from a different angle and perspective, which I did not do before. I cannot say I have not learned much here, it would be a lie, but not to the greatest extend.

He defines himself as an artist:

Because you are not an artist only if you create works of art or do paintings, but being an artist is a way of thinking and acting in general, from your environment, to people, to animals. Of having fine manners, being sensitive, being polite, not existing in the world as if only for yourself.

In their discourse, the characteristics of the artist are enumerated with the use of the second person singular which is the most immediate and commonest way of generalizing, and which reveals a fine, subtle subject, sociable and not introvert.

Mirto adopts a reserved style regarding the evaluation of her studies. She considers them important, the weak modality of her discourse, however, provides it with hesitation:

I am very satisfied with the School of Florina. I have gained much knowledge and experiences. I have met many interesting people (...) I believe it is a good school, a quite good school, and everyone makes an effort.

The influence of studies on the construction of John's professional identity was important, as he answers in complete certainty "yes, yes, yes". What is interesting is that with his justification he attaches the word "love" to his professional identity, making use of emotional discourse: "It (the School) made me love all this". In Magda's discourse the characteristics of a subject who loves knowledge, fine arts and also writing, unfold. These, however, are not presented as necessary characteristics of an artist in Magda's discourse. She, in fact, calls herself a "hybrid":

Eh (...) many times I feel that I am a hybrid, because I am a person who also likes knowledge and fine arts, and most of the time you do not see that in artists. Eh, I feel a bit weird.

And she continues:

What I mean is that you can work as a artist of fine arts. You do not have to be, I don't know, one thousand per cent committed, with an essence of someone "half-crazed", full of paint, in order to perform how you have to perform. Usually this gets you lost in a vortex.

The image of the Romantic artist is reproduced here, for whom art provides the only mission, an image of the "half-crazed" artist — an image which Magda renounces.

7. Artistic Interaction

Students speak emphatically in their discourse of the importance of interaction with fellow students but also with their teachers at the School of Fine Arts, especially in the frame of workshop courses. This importance is often lessened compared to the artistic contact with fellow students and teachers alike.

Mirto's discourse continues to develop with uncertainty that is reinforced by the hypothetical utterance "I don't know, if it (the School) managed to do that (forming her as an artist), while presenting art as "personal work" with certainty:

Because, alright, no one can teach you painting, they provide you with incentives so that you can evolve (...) so I believe the School's influence is rather immediate, that's that.

Another educational dimension that the students express is the educational relationships developing between students and their teachers. This relationship is often claimed as equally important compared to the academic

influence on the construction of artistic identity. John, exaggerating, mentions that he is “changed as a person because of the School”:

Something very important that the workshops here had was the immediacy between us and the teachers, you could, for instance, see Prof. Z. from 6am when we took the train together, be together later at the workshop, then see each other in School, and meet in the evening to chat, let's say, all together [...] I believe we had very good teachers, very good teachers, I mean, my perception has changed a lot, I have changed as a person in School.

The constant choice of the first person plural in the syntagma developed while John speaks of his teachers, with quite flattering words and the repeating use of the superlative “very good, very good teachers”, represent a collective dimension of interpersonal contact.

This is reinforced by the following, neutral and impersonal use of the third person singular that juxtaposes other students.

Panagiotis expresses a similar view, as he separates meaningful communication with teachers from the procedural teaching of theoretical courses:

I realized that with some teachers there was a point and I tried to have as much of a meaningful communication with them, beyond the program, which, for me, was of a procedural character most of the time, I don't know, I think this immediacy with some of the teachers.

In this framework of interpersonal relations in academia, which have an influence on the construction of artistic profile, the artistic interaction among students is also placed. John speaks emphatically of it:

I believe the greatest lesson of this School is that at some point you finish it, that is, you find yourself among artists, four hundred artists, from whom, in the worst case scenario, someone will give you some time or try to appreciate your work, even a little.

George also refers to the importance of interaction and artistic fermentation with teachers and fellow students, and for him this “community/society”, as he characteristically calls it, only aims at knowledge, while he defines himself as a student despite his experience. His discourse seems rather apologetic with the constant use of the justifications:

This is why I entered the School (...) to try and learn something. I did not come to school to play. I came to learn something (...) and I learned a few things, I have simply taken, as I said, (...) something from every teacher, here and there, but I also disagree with some (...) yet agreement and disagreement alike are part of the game.

Mirto also provides this relation with a professional perspective, positing the aspect of “acquaintances” toward artistic promotion:

It's also the acquaintances you make, this also plays a great role (...) The fact that I have socialized with certain people and I have met people, either teachers, or fellow students, whom, I imagine, will find “tomorrow” in the field.

8. Identity in Crisis

Professional identity does not only concern the effect of views and expectations by others, that include the image constructed in society of what a teacher should know and how he or she should act. It is a constant interpretation of the views of the teachers themselves regarding what they deem important in their professional life, views that have been formulated under the influence of their experiences, their personal stories and social contexts (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004; Tredea, Macklinb & Bridges, 2011).

Students, according to relevant literature, tend to relate the whole of the educational experience of higher education with professional experience and, consequently, formulate pre-professional identities through these experiences their studies provide. Since there is no separate institution of obligatory professional teacher training in Greece, this is provided in some departments of «educational» schools, such as the School of Fine Arts in Florina. As a result, this dual focus affects the formulation of the professional identity of the students. Panagiotis clearly distinguishes artistic from professional identity:

“I distinguish it, very much so. I think that artistic identity has to do with something innate, authentic, which has nothing to do with, has nothing to do with roles and social obligations, it only has to do with personal needs”.

According to Panagiotis’ discourse, artistic identity is essentialist and reflects characteristics of the artist as they were formulated in Romanticism. It is inherent, authentic and un-negotiable since it is formed by the “self” and not by external influences. Panagiotis goes on to distinguish his professional occupation from artistic creation: “I am afraid that I will be a mere worker somewhere, at some job or another, and that I will not have time and energy to occupy myself with painting or photography, music or what not”. Mirto also distinguishes artistic identity from that of the art teacher at school, mentioning that they do not “interact” and she involves in her discourse the ability of the artist to artistically inspire his or her audience –or not, as a precondition of his or her value as an artist:

“Eh (...) I believe it is not necessary that they (the two identities) always interact (...) and that many times a teacher eh (...) might be very good but not inspire you so much as an artist (...) or the other way around. So in this case I think that it is not necessary for these two attributes to always coincide (...) I think that one is different from the other”.

Relating to the discussion on the necessity, or lack thereof, of teacher training and certification through university programs, Eleni distinguishes her position (she has retired, in fact) by initially expressing a discourse of admonition and subsequently using the third person, distancing herself due to her age and retirement, expressing the view that teacher training is necessary for students who wish to enter education as teachers and referring to yet another dimension of the subjectivity of the art teacher, that of the “militant” artist, committed to the common good. Art is constructed as a tool:

“Look, we were tired by the situation, the way it had become, so to speak, every semester another teaching course. I believe it is absolutely necessary for students who are interested and for students who will probably solve the problem of livelihood — it’s not wrong to work at a school, and art to be taught to children the way art is supposed to be taught, and at the same time to be given the opportunity to create art, which also gives change to solve legal (sic) problems. I am not opposing this (...) students should enter the educational field and hopefully they will enter the field (...) and do things differently from what was done so far and be able to claim what’s theirs (...) and children to love art not merely as play time (...) it is a tool in their hands and they will be able to express themselves in society (...) I believe art is a tool”.

The tendency, however, to identify the artist with a rebel who defies social convention has a strong influence on the formation of a dominant stereotype of the artist even in contemporary times, although it serves Romantic models. The views expressed by John and Panagiotis also derive from this framework.

I will then try to become a teacher, so that I can gain this workshop, what we talked about earlier, the opportunity to have this workshop. But...even if you do not have it, you deal with children, who, there is not artist outside life. Well, there is, yet the artist relates to life, he or she must not be inside a workshop and it cannot be, whoever tries to say that here, eh, mainly does not take into account all influences”.

Panagiotis mostly highlights the noble fight of the artist in society promoting the model of the “militant”

artist, an image of Romanticism that created a new definition of the bohemian artist as the rebel of the time, who disregards material goods and social convention (Bain, 2005, pp. 25–39).

Like everyone who would like to occupy themselves with painting, we would like to make a living off it, alright, not make any discounts and become conceited, this is ridiculous, to give a fight, to give my fight through painting. I believe it is the only thing I can do well. Honestly, how can I say it, I don't know, I mean, to give my fight through painting.

As far as professional prospects are concerned, it seems that professional occupation with painting only moves within the frame of the “desirable” and, in fact, with the use of the extreme “everyone” in combination with the hypothetical past “would like to occupy”, the promotion of a rather un-realizable desire is highlighted. Anastasis’ opinion of the coexistence of artistic production and educational work at school is rather ambiguous:

“Probably as an artist, even though I believe that I could teach, that’s what I think. It so happened that I provided some lessons, went to some schools, show children some graffiti-design, yet I believe that if I occupy myself with this profession, working as an art teacher, I will not have time to do what I want, to create paintings, sculptures, there will be no time. That is, I might want to sit in a room for a month, doing nothing”.

Anastasis’ discourse includes at the beginning of the syntagma the adverb “probably”, which is later contradicted by the clause of concession “even though I believe that I could teach”. The ambiguity of his discourse is reinforced later on with the use of the contrasting linking word “but” which negates what was said before and introduces the questioning of the artist’s ability to combine artistic creation with teaching at school, since “there will be no time”. Magda’s positive stance toward teacher training courses continues in her discourse about the influence, or lack thereof, of teacher training courses that students take on the quality of their artistic work.

There is a great debate concerning what happens in fine arts and why the artist should necessarily follow teaching courses and some (students) do not attend, those who wish to practice only their art et cetera. No one can know in advance. No one could know their future, their path, and if at some point they will wish to teach children. Anyone might feel “I have enough inside that I wish to share with others” whether they are children, adults, or anyone. They might offer courses at a community, I don’t know, wax, hagiography, to some people. To, eh, to learn how to, eh, speak to others and how to help them acquire is so important, even for your own children. So it is not useless knowledge in any case, whether you make use of it, or not. And I don’t think it influences your artistic work. Alas! You will take three lessons, four teaching ones, two internships at schools and that will make you less of an artist. And they should not feel terrified that as soon as they finish school “it is over with fine arts, and we won’t have time, and so teaching is out of the question. Not every door is open everywhere.

With the use of the third person, Magda distances herself from those unfavorable toward teacher training courses at the School of Fine Arts, and especially with the use of intertextual linguistic representations, such as “I have enough inside that I wish to share with others” and “it is over with fine arts, and we won’t have time, and so teaching is out of the question”, the distancing of the subject from his or her discourse and connotations is intensified. What is more, the absence of pauses in Magda’s discourse is characteristic. She utters her opinion pompously and with high modality — thus, with great reliability. George is a special student case, since he has already worked as an artist, “self-taught in the beginning” as he mentions, and he approaches learning, for which he speaks emphatically using the verb “to learn” three times, from his own perspective regarding the construction of his artistic identity:

“I have done everything (...) In the beginning, yes, self-taught, if I may say. Whoever wished to make things happen early on (...) because when self-taught (...) you can become a painter in this world. I believe there will always be

something missing. There are some things you need to be taught. You could try on your own but you might not discover them. That's the difference. You could do them by yourself, to learn them, to do them many times and learn, but you would have to learn some things that, let's say, your mind doesn't even know exist, and that someone has to tell you, show you".

9. Discussion

The relevant identities that both male and female students construct through discourse relate to the curriculum which defines a formal educational discourse within the University, that is oriented not only toward cultivating artistic creation but also providing educational proficiency, while at the same time constructing the students' subjectivity. The students define their professional identity by referring to their studies, to their existent or future paid work as artists and to the time they allow, or will allow later, for their art, whether they work as art teachers at school or not. As far as the subjects of this study are concerned, some students construct their identity by producing ambivalent utterances. On the other hand, some utter discourses of certainty regarding their position as artists or art teachers. Identified in their discourse is the fact that the identities they construct through their discourse are not rigid, but dynamic and constantly evolving.

Regarding the necessity and usefulness of teacher training courses at the School of Fine Arts, it can be observed that in their majority the participants evaluate this provision positively. Indeed, they make clear references of the rejection of the myth that an art teacher's effectiveness and communication skills are a "divine gift". Most of them, however, believe that the obligatory status of the courses needs to be waived. It is interesting, nonetheless, that at least the younger students of the sample worked in education, mostly as substitute art teachers, whether they viewed the relation of the School to Primary or Secondary Education positively or not.

A rather important factor in the formation of the students' artistic identity, which is not really discussed at least in the relevant literature, is the benefits deriving from the students' socializing with their professors and fellow students whom they call artists. The students believed that beyond material and infrastructure problems, the programs were effective because of the "personal work" and the willingness of the teachers; "it was a good thing that we had teachers on our side. They fussed the way we did", Tasos characteristically claims. This tendency is in dialogue with the findings of Jeffri & Throsby (2009) according to whom the self-definition of teacher and of inclusion in groups, as well as the recognition by colleagues in the art community, have an impact on the self-definition of the artist as such and on the construction of artistic identity. As a matter of fact, our social interactions, choices, social and communicative practices construct and reconstruct our identity (Hall, 1996; Grossberg, 1996). Most of the students who took part in this study placed special emphasis on these social, educational and artistic influences in their discourse. This artistic fermentation affected within the University, and beyond, is beneficial for the acquisition of knowledge and artistic experiences as much as for the triggering of artistic inspiration and the de-crystallization of a future artistic or professional perspective.

The identity of art teachers, as a constantly evolving process, is produced through the teachers' discourse as dynamic, ambivalent and constantly renewed. This is quite paradoxical since in reality the processes of teaching and making art are similar. Both practices require hard work, they are pleasurable and could be diversified at any moment. They involve a "never-ending internal conflict, a paradoxical experience" (Ball, 1990). Many artist teachers quit their jobs at school, believing they lack the time and commitment required for creating art. Some stay at school, for financial and family reasons, quitting artistic creation, while others manage to find the balance between individual artistic creation in a workshop and teaching art courses at school (Zwirn, 2005). The findings

of relevant studies span from varied to contradictory. Art teachers are individuals who either create works of art and teach art and are committed to both activities, or are devoted to the students' artistic development without necessarily practicing their own art. Art teachers are not merely, nor always, art teachers or artist teachers. Throughout their careers, these two identities are interchangeable. However, there are institutional requirements for the delimitation of the identity of the artist teacher, through academic training, so that this identity can be defined.

When discussing their experiences in relevant studies on the effects of teacher training in the teaching of art courses, artist teachers involve issues of negotiating identity in their discourse. Many artists who wish to work in education as teachers of art courses believe it is possible to continue their artistic activity outside the classroom. However, even when this artistic activity exists beyond school, it is often overlooked. Occupying oneself with artistic activity requires time and commitment while teaching involves attention to the school's schedule and curricula and the students' material and academic needs.

The artistic activity of art teachers can seriously affect the complicated relationship among the artistic object, the teacher and his or her students. More specifically, it contributes to the establishment of a framework of artistic pursuit involving familiarization with contemporary art, the creation of an art-workshop environment in the school classroom, the guidance of students and the process of artistic creation. The influence of teacher training on art teachers is exhibited in practice through the creation of workshop conditions or art studio in the classroom, where students can discuss, experiment, develop new ideas and collect materials and images in order to be inspired. It is not true, however, that art teachers who do not practice their art beyond the classroom are incapable of creating similar educational conditions to those mentioned above. Teachers who took part in studies (Zwirn, 2005) did not confine themselves to material proposed by the school's curriculum but, knowing how to relate meanings, forms, means and materials to create a work of art based on their experience as artists, they included creativity, versatility, uncertainty, students' personal stories and interests in their teaching, thus encouraging, attempting, risking and constructing meanings through artistic practice. Art teachers discuss their identity and their work as artists by defining it as a synthesis of renewal, life-long learning, professional development and self-valuation. The role of the artist teacher involves balance as it is easy for artistic passion to prevail, covering the voices of the students. It is true, however, that artistic practice from the part of art teachers beyond the classroom can reformulate educational conditions that affect the interaction between teacher and student, the formation of a learning environment, the interpretation of produced artistic knowledge and the creative, and not representational or mimetic production of works of art by the students (Zwirn, 2005; Graham & Zwirn 2010; Thornton, 2011, pp. 34–36).

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