

Art-Teaching-Life Balance for Women Professors at FAD in Timișoara

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Abstract: *The Faculty of Arts and Design from Timișoara is the youngest Romanian academic art education institution and the least affected by employment gender inequality. This situation could be explained by the fact that the faculty from Timișoara was established in 1990, after the fall of the Communist regime, and the teaching staff gradually increased in the last 30 years, integrating more and more women professors. This article traces how female artist professors contributed with alternative teaching methods at the Faculty of Arts and Design from Timișoara by developing strategies adapted to the needs of students and getting involved in the management structures. We also looked at aspects such as emotional involvement in the relationship with students, empathy, and a motherly kind of care, beyond the strict professional requirement. Furthermore, in the case of women artists who are also mothers, we analyzed how maternity influenced their academic careers and artistic creations. The starting premise has been that it is not very easy to maintain a balance between private life, household duties, teaching and managerial careers, and that of an artist. We compared the results that motherhood brought to both academic and artistic careers. Each case presents its particularities and contributes to an in-depth understanding of the specific social context of a country in Eastern Europe, where aspects related to work, career, liberal professions, and motherhood are not the most favorable.*

Keywords: *Women artists; women academicians; motherhood; employment gender inequality; academic visual education; alternative art pedagogy; Romanian contemporary art;*

Introduction

This paper represents an investigation of gender equality and equity in artistic academic education in Romania. An emphasis is placed on the Faculty of Arts and Design from Timișoara, the youngest institution of this kind in the country, founded in 1990, after the 1989 Anti-Communist Revolution.

To structure the study, the first chapter looks into statistics following the dynamics of gender employment in higher education in general and in four of the major Art Faculties in Romania in 2023-2024. To collect data not only from the National Institute of Statistics from Romania but also from direct sources, the analysis is paired with a series of interviews and a survey conducted with the female art professors at the Faculty of Arts and Design in Timișoara.

The next chapters consist of an investigation into the influence exercised by the interviewed professors. On one hand, we check how having a career at the Faculty of Art –a teaching career, in some cases, paired with a managerial function– influences the artistic practice of the respondents. On the other hand, we check how the feminine identity –a female artist’s path, and, where applicable, the quality of being a mother– influences the FAD career. The investigation is carried out by comparing the results of the survey and interview confessions with examples from the art world that can confirm or infirm the mutual influences of the positive aspects of women art professors. Cases such as Judie Chicago, Dóra Maurer, and Mike Kelly are used as reference points.

The main premise is to find out if women artists face increased bureaucratic, and lifestyle difficulties when trying to balance an artistic practice, a professor’s, and an administrative career. To do so, we use statistics, surveys, interviews, and case studies.

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Through this study, we verify if women possess certain qualities that would make them suitable for an academic career in the faculties of arts and design. We analyze if the condition of being a mother brings particular abilities suitable for higher art education.

1. Women and Men Professors in Romanian Academic Art Education: Statistical Analysis

The main visual arts higher education institutions from Romania are The National University of Arts in Bucharest (UNARTE), The University of Art and Design in Cluj-Napoca (UAD), The Faculty of Visual Arts and Design part of The "George Enescu" National University of Arts from Iași (UAGE) and The Faculty of Arts and Design part of The West University of Timișoara (FAD). The data displayed in February 2024 on the websites from each institution shows the distribution of teaching staff by gender: at FAD 52.54% are women and 47.6% men, UAGE 44.74% women and 55.26% men, UNARTE 47.01% women and 52.99% men, and at UAD 41.11% women and 58.89% men.

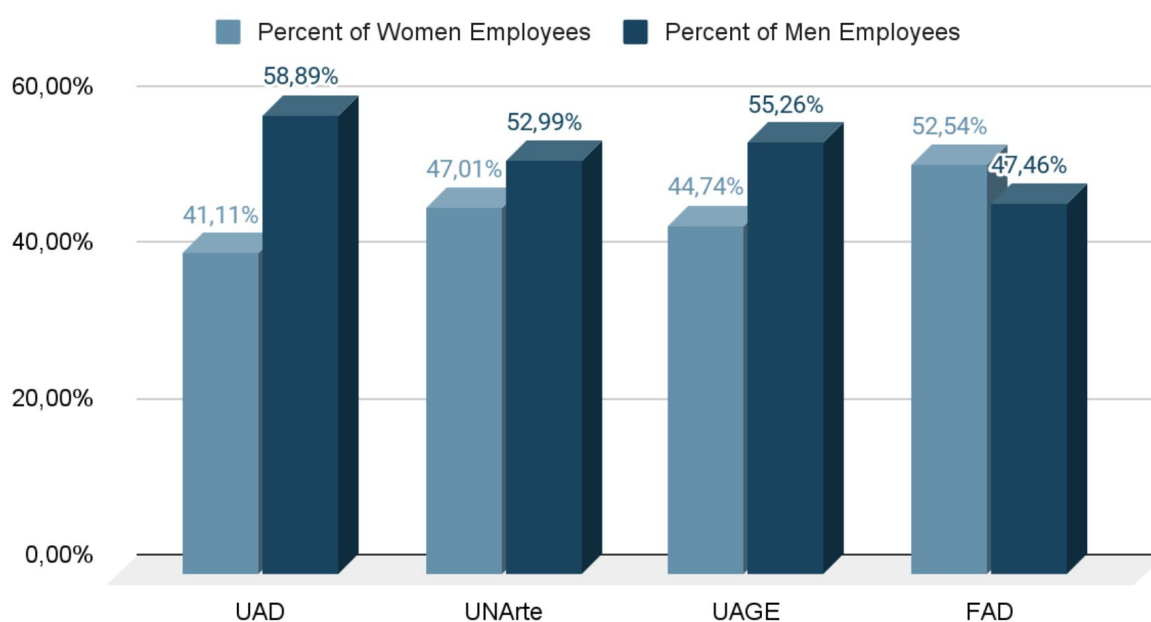


Fig. 1. Percentage of women and men employees in art institutions of higher education in Romania

If the average gaps between female and male employees are not extreme, some particular cases are worrying. For example, the Department of Painting at UNARTE has never had and does not have as of 2024 any female professors. This situation triggered a feminist action entitled *Ex Cathedra Masculum*, presented on November 14th, 2019 at *Alter Space* in Bucharest.

The action led by Nona Șerbănescu, a young artist and cultural manager, consisted of a photographic reenactment. The original photo from 2015 presented exclusively male teaching staff at the Painting department at UNARTE. In the 2019 photo remake, all 12 men were replaced by female artists interested in feminist strategies². The exhibition was part of an event organized at Art Hub and Alert Studio in Bucharest, under the title *Perspectives and Feminine*

² The artist involved in this action were: Elena Andrei, Angela Bontaș, Ana Constantinescu, Ioana Ciocan, Cristina Toma – Cuzina, Raluca Ilaria Demetrescu, Cristina Iacob, Veda Popovici, Anamaria Pravencu, Gabriela Mateescu, Nona Șerbănescu și Mirela Trăistaru.

Art Anatomy. While the first part of the event displayed the artworks and a photographic remake, the second part consisted of a debate around the question “Where are the women from the Romanian higher education system?”.

Even if the differences between institutions are not in all cases quite big, in terms of the percentage of female professors – they oscillate between 5.53% (FAD-UNARTE) and 11.43% (FAD-UAD) – the only art institution with more women art-professors than male art-professors is FAD.

As resulting from the graph above, we can see that the least affected by employment gender inequality is FAD, since it has a more favorable number of women employees.

This situation could be explained by the fact that the faculty from Timișoara was the only one reestablished after the fall of the communist regime, in 1990, and the teaching staff has gradually increased in the last 30 years, integrating more and more women professors³.

The other three institutions had continuous activity, from the Communist period, when “gender equality was a myth and not a reality”⁴.

Gender equity in academic careers represents an important topic of debate in the field of gender studies dedicated to Central-Eastern Europe. Mihaela Miroiu, one of the best-known Romanian feminist philosophers, points out the profound causes of the reduced success of women’s academic careers in comparison with those of men⁵.

Comparing our data, which refers exclusively to higher education in the visual arts, with statistics provided by the National Institute of Statistics in Romania regarding higher education in general, we can draw the conclusion that the percentage of women in artistic education – 46,35% which is the average of women employees in the four institutions from this study – is lower than the general one – 52,4% which is the average for the last analyzed year, 2021, mentioned by the INS Romania⁶.

Thus, we notice how it is more difficult for women artists to access jobs in higher education than for women in other fields. This is a partial conclusion, because the percentage of 46,35% does not take into account all higher education institutions of visual arts in Romania, but only the first four most important ones.

In our analysis we also took into account the institutional functions of each respondent, in order to check if feminine qualities proved to be useful in leading functions, or if it was proven that female artists were keen on taking on more responsibilities at work before and after they became mothers. We look at the data from the FAD institution.

From 1990 until the present time, out of the 7 existing faculty deans 2 have been women, namely, Adriana Lucaciu between 2008 and 2012 and Diana Andreescu from 2024 onwards.

In 2023-2024 the university year when the study was carried out, out of 12 Program Directors, 7 were women, namely Adriana Lucaciu for the Graphics Department, Cristina Daju for the Painting Department, Valentina Ștefănescu for the Textile Department, Andreea Palade Flondor for the Fashion Design Department, Silvia Trion for the Conservation and Restoration

³ Maria Orosan-Telea. 2020. “Faculty of Arts and Design between 1990 and 2020. A Fragmented Recovery.” In *The Third Beginning*, ed. by Camil Mihăescu. Timișoara: Editura Universității de Vest, pp. 51–62.

⁴ Georgeta Ghebre. 2015. „Contextul de acțiune a egalității de gen înainte de 1989” [„The action context of gender equality before 1989”]. In *Statutul femeii în România comunistă. Politici publice și viață privată [The status of women in communist Romania. Public policies and private life]*, ed. by Alina Hurubean, 32. Iași: Institutul European, p. 32.

⁵ Mihaela Miroiu. 2003. *Guidelines for promoting gender equity in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe*. Bucharest: UNESCO, pp. 76–81.

⁶ Gabriela A. Deacu, Antoaneta-Tamara Cîrlig, Irina Necșescu, Corina Pătru, and Sultana E. Stan. 2022. „Dimensiunea de gen în educație.” In *Femei și bărbați: parteneriat de viață și muncă*, edit by Tudorel Andrei. Bucharest: INS. Retrieved May 5, 2026, from https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/femeile_si_barbatii_parteneriat_de_munca_si_de_viata_4.pdf, p. 33.

Department, Gloria Grati for the Ceramics Department, and Corina Nani for the Design Department.

2. Pedagogical Influences on Artistic Career Trajectories

This chapter is based on interviewing 19 women artists and professors, who are employees at the Faculty of Arts and Design in Timișoara. Our aim was to understand whether their artistic careers were positively or negatively influenced by their pedagogical activity. We analyzed these aspects starting from the premise of pedagogy having a positive influence on visual practices, using the famous case of American artist Judy Chicago as a starting point. Sally Brown argued in her research on art and education that “teaching has enabled her career as an artist” and “her artistic intentions and practices were also strongly motivated by her desire to educate audiences”⁷.

All in all, throughout her career, Judy Chicago took notice of the feedback she received from her professors, and later on from her students, and the public. The first point of discontent was that she was seeing herself in a way, while others were understanding her differently. Sally Brown argues that the feminist art course held by Judy Chicago at the California State University in Fresno was an opportunity for her to observe her students’ artistic and art-career patterns. She observed – and this piece of information is also included in the interview conducted by Priscilla English in January 1972 – that while more female students enrolled in the class, the great majority of graduates were male. This made Judy Chicago wonder what happened to all the women. According to her hands-on investigation, female students were intimidated by male students and did not participate too well in class. They also found that choosing an artist’s career was not so accomplishable, and they never took it seriously. According to Judy Chicago, this was due to how women were raised in Western societies to view themselves. They were taught to believe that their future would be guided by the men around them. For an artist to produce unique forms of visual representation, one must possess individual will; in its absence, the chances for more female students to graduate from the course and to take up artist careers were slim⁸.

In line with this situation outlined in the USA in the 70s, one of the artists interviewed at the Faculty of Arts and Design in Timișoara noticed a somewhat female-male imbalance at the Painting Department from Bucharest University of Art – the same situation we mentioned in the first section of the research. According to Cristina Daju, the interviewee, art majors with tradition, or even art institutions with a longer history, are more prone to accepting fewer or even no female professors. The reasoning behind this would be a custom that carried on unknowingly, rooted in long-gone times when women had no jobs, and remained housewives. More often than not, newer departments or institutions have fewer biases, and this, she argues, also explains why in Timișoara and Iași we see a more balanced gender distribution in terms of professors, even at traditional departments, such as Painting⁹.

Judy Chicago developed an alternative art teaching model, based on a “circle method”, or, as she called the interactions, “consciousness-raising sessions”¹⁰.

This method started from her desire to know why her female students were more prone to dropping out of her class. The model of conversing with the students, helping them open up, and overcoming social constraints and biases led to a deeper interest in women-oriented topics in visual arts and enhanced Judy’s artistic repertoire. One example of a visual

⁷ Sally Brown. 2021. „Institutional Time: Judy Chicago's Career Through the Lens of Art Education”. *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* 7 (2 Fall): 1–11.

⁸ Priscilla English. 1972. *Womahouse: A Feminist Creative Environment*. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University. Retrieved April 29, 2024, from <https://judychicago.com/gallery/womanhouse/pr-artwork/>.

⁹ Cristina Daju. 2024, February 17th. Unpublished interview by Gabriela Robeci.

¹⁰ Sally Brown. 2021. *op. cit.*, p. 3.

result was the collective work called *Womanhouse*. The place was a 75-year-old dilapidated house. This was donated by the owners, for artistic purposes. It was remodeled by Judy Chicago's female students and with the aid of collaborators, such as Miriam Shapiro. The whole house was transformed into an artistic environment, which embodied topics that women related to and which traditional artistic circles considered unimportant. This, we could argue, was the first stage of alternative art pedagogy that influenced Judy Chicago's artistic career. A second turning point was the relationship with the art public. Judy Chicago wanted the audience to understand her art as she intended it¹¹.

Sally Brown pointed out that the 1973 *Great Ladies* series was initially not read by the public as Judy Chicago had hoped it would. Wavy lines and bold colors were used to create visual codes of understanding in an abstract-expressionist manner, typical at the time in the American art world. The topics were women who did something great and who could be models for others, but who were not commonly heard of in the public discourse, such as Christine of Sweden or Virginia Woolf. The inability to grasp the meaning solely from visual cues, made Judy Chicago reconsider the importance of educating audiences through texts that facilitated understanding.

As we can see, art pedagogy, be it one directed at students or at an art public, influenced Judy Chicago's artistic path and sparked a newly-discovered interest in a topic that was not common at the time of the '70s and '80s.

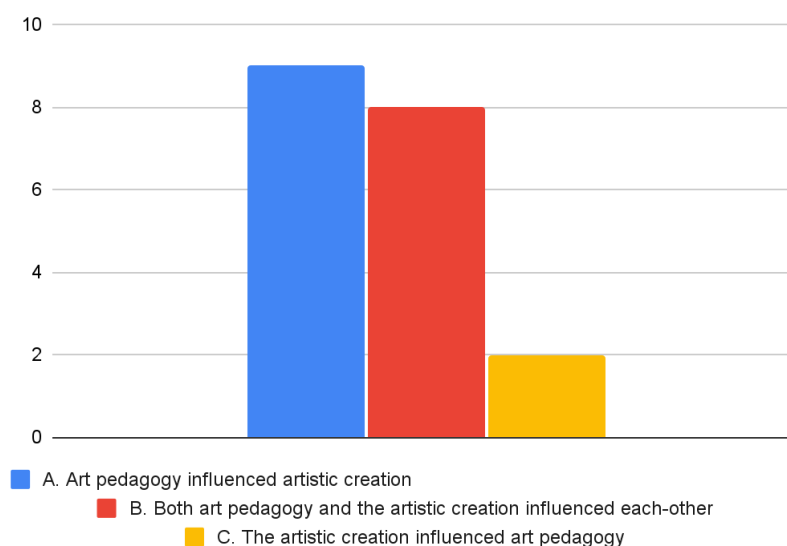


Fig. 2. *The influence of art pedagogy on artistic creation*

A survey among the professors at the Faculty of Arts and Design in Timișoara has shown the degree to which art pedagogy has influenced their artistic practice, and the other way around. This can be seen in the graph below.

9 out of 19 respondents considered that art pedagogy did change their art careers in the better sense of the word. According to Diana Andreescu¹², a fruitful art pedagogy invites artistic researchers to update their knowledge and practice. Staying up to date helps professors

¹¹ Priscilla English. 1972. „Womahouse: A Feminist Creative Environment”. Cambridge: Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University. Retrieved April 29, 2024, from <https://judychicago.com/gallery/womanhouse/pr-artwork/>.

¹² Diana Andreescu is the FAD Dean from 2024 until now, and a University Professor at the Design Department.

focus on relevant topics, and these in turn keep the personal artistic approach up to date and relevant to the dynamics of society¹³.

Respondent Eugenia Riemschneider¹⁴ mentioned that she has been avoiding 'stagnation'¹⁵, and that art pedagogy has helped her stay on track with constant artistic evolution. Bianca Mic¹⁶ emphasized that art pedagogy has helped her "explore creative themes with students, so it has been a positive influence in creative work"¹⁷. Gloria Grati¹⁸ addressed the strong influence art pedagogy had been having on her artistic creation and the way in which the resulting pieces could in turn influence the viewers. "The teaching activity influences my creation, especially in the sense of subject choice [...] I believe that artistic manifestations, as any form of creation, strongly influence the public"¹⁹.

Eight respondents mentioned that both art pedagogy and artistic creation influenced each other, in a process of equal exchange and confluences. According to Adriana Lucaci²⁰ "The work of guiding students has always taken precedence over my own studio, but my experience as an artist has reinforced certain points of view, has built up a practical experience without which, as an art educator, you can only convey theories that risk becoming sterile."

Liliana Mercioiu Popa²¹ points out that "the activity and areas of interest in my own creation have influenced and nurtured my teaching activity, but art pedagogy has also motivated and sustained my own creative activity and research. There are many prejudices about this relationship that have often intrigued me. For example, it is said that a professor consumes some of their creativity as a teacher and cannot be a good enough artist, or, conversely, that true artistic expression is not learned from teachers in school but from artists in their own studios".

Teaching artistic ideas and principles can take a toll on the individual workshop practice of some, as was pointed out above. However, finding new creative sources occurs primarily when professors interact with students. A process of mutual exchange occurs. What can be considered youthful naivety is the tipping point that makes one more courageous, and more willing to try out ideas without overthinking the results.

"I believe that the pedagogical activity has improved the artistic activity, or more correctly formulated, has inspired it. The themes and ideas discussed with the students have always given me ideas for artworks; the most difficult part is the time management, to have the time to create them"²², says Réka Adorjáni²³.

Amalia Gaiță²⁴ pointed out that her teaching career experience and creative work have supported each other in valuable ways. "As an educator, I have a deeper understanding of students' cognitive and emotional processes, which has contributed significantly to my artistic development. My ability to communicate and adapt information for diverse audiences, gained as an educator, strengthened my ability to convey artistic messages clearly and persuasively. Creative work has encouraged me to be open to innovative ideas and approaches in the classroom, thereby enhancing the educational experience for students"²⁵.

¹³ Diana Andreescu. 2024, February 12th. Unpublished interview by Maria Sârbu.

¹⁴ Eugenia Riemschneider is a Professor at the Design and Applied Arts Department, focusing on Textile studies.

¹⁵ Eugenia Riemschneider. 2024, February 13th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

¹⁶ Bianca Mic is a Research Assistant at the Design Department, focusing on Ambient Design.

¹⁷ Bianca Mic. 2024, February 29th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Gabriela Robeci.

¹⁸ Gloria Grati is a Professor at the Design and Applied Arts Department, focusing on Ceramics.

¹⁹ Gloria Grati. 2024, March 2nd. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

²⁰ Former Dean at FAD between 2018 and 2012.

²¹ Liliana Mercioiu Popa is a Professor at the Visual Arts Department, focusing on Painting.

²² Réka Adorjáni. 2024, February 18th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Gabriela Robeci.

²³ Réka Adorjáni is a University Assistant at the Design and Applied Arts Department, focusing on Textile Art studies.

²⁴ Amalia Gaiță is a Research Assistant at the Visual Arts Department, focusing on Photography and Video Art.

²⁵ Amalia Gaiță. 2024, February 23rd. *Unpublished Interview*, by Gabriela Robeci.

Surprisingly, 2 respondents considered that their artistic practice was the one that primarily influenced their art pedagogy. “My teaching career did not influence my creation. Quite the opposite. It was my artistic career, my artistic creation that influenced my pedagogical work. And that's still an understatement because creation and an artistic career are fundamental to pedagogical work. We can only teach what we are, so we have to be very careful who we are”, stated Anamaria Șerban²⁶.

The second respondent, Smaranda Moldovan²⁷ mentioned that while the use of new technologies by students has stirred her interest and helped her expand her artistic experimentation, the overall art pedagogy has been the one shaped by her artistic individuality. “But more than that, the artistic side influences the teaching side. Personal concepts influence the teachings. Student research was not so deep to influence me. But there are exceptions. For example, from a technical point of view, AI is used by students and that influenced me”.

With the help of the survey, three directions were analyzed: art pedagogy influenced by the professor's artistic career, both art pedagogy and an art career influencing each other, and the art career influencing art pedagogy. Judy Chicago's feminist art practice was rooted in her alternative pedagogy. The latter was a result of her observations in the classroom. In Timișoara, we have also seen how art pedagogy has overwhelmingly influenced the artistic career of the questioned female art professors.

Another essential concept that we tried to analyze concerning the pedagogical activity of the interviewed professors is that of alternative art pedagogies in an emancipatory way. In the 1970s and 1980s European artistic pedagogies were innovated through the new findings and publications on creativity and learning. Workshops and exercises were meant to spark artistic thinking and to disable inhibitions. Similar innovative art pedagogies and concepts were noticed in the USA, by Watzlawick and his collaborators, and in Europe by Erika Landau, Joseph Beuys, and Robert Filliou. The *Creativity Exercises* developed in Hungary's capital involved practices that seem basic nowadays, such as “brain-storming and group therapy”²⁸.

The *Creativity Exercises* were started in 1975 in Budapest at the Cultural Center Ganz-Mávag. Artist and art professor Miklós Erdély was the one initially invited by Tamás Papp to coordinate the sculpture group after the previous manager had commenced his activity. Miklós Erdély, in turn, invited Dóra Maurer to co-host the course and the intended exercises, and György Galántai was chosen to be the assistant – information confirmed by the written and video documents, made available by György Galántai on the Art Pool Archive portal²⁹.

Dóra Maurer spoke about how she and Miklós Erdély got to collaborate on creativity-inducing exercises as a form of alternative art practice. They both took part in Maurizio Kagel's course on creativity held in 1971 in Munich at the Art Zone Fair. The exercises created by Maurizio Kagel meant that the participants were asked to invent movements, based on the previous person's gestures. The purpose was to spark continuous actions and a constant creative flow. Wanting to break all norms and limitations, Miklós Erdély invented movements that could not be continued, breaking the course's norms, and displeasing the professor. The freedom to contest norms, even those meant to spark alternative art pedagogies, were the core notions of the exercises created in Budapest in 1975. Apart from the Munich course, what influenced Miklós Erdély was the “Psychology of Creativity” essay by Erika Landau, translated into Hungarian in 1974³⁰.

²⁶ Anamaria Șerban is a University Professor at the Visual Arts Department, focusing on Sculpture.

²⁷ Smaranda Moldovan is a University Professor at the Visual Arts Department, focusing on Painting.

²⁸ János Sugár. 2006. „Schrödinger's Cat in the Art World”. In *East Art Map: Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe*, ed. by Irwin, 208–221. N.p.: MIT Press, pp. 208–221.

²⁹ György Galántai. n.d. „Creativity – Visuality”. *Art Pool*. Retrieved April 29, 2024, from <https://artpool.hu/Erdely/kreativitas/exercises.html>.

³⁰ Hornyik, Sándor. 2001. „A kreativitás elmélete és gyakorlata erdély miklós munkásságában”. *Ars Hungarica* 1: 111–142.

The first workshops created through the collaboration between Miklós Erdély and Dóra Maurer prompted creativity through designated movements. Later, they developed two separate courses that influenced and completed each other. The alternative drawing practices coordinated by Dóra Maurer were transformed through the movements and alternations suggested by Miklós Erdély.

One example of an alternative art pedagogy was coaching the students to work together through exercises such as drawing for 30 seconds on a canvas and then changing places while continuing the drawing started by someone else for the next 30 seconds, and so on.

Another unique exercise involved the students sitting in line, and using their hands to draw on two different canvases. They guided the hand gestures of the person sitting to their left with their left hand. In the meantime, their right hand was controlled by the person sitting to their right. One of the students in this class mentioned that “this simultaneously active and passive relationship made it possible to experience initiative and influence internally”³¹.

Dóra Hegyi and Zsuzsa László from Tranzit Gallery described the creativity exercises as being forms of “emancipatory pedagogies” since these experimental and alternative pedagogies gave students courage and confidence, and positively influenced their development³².

The in-person interviews and the survey with the art professors in Timișoara have shown that all the participants were interested in alternative art pedagogies. 10 out of 19 respondents gave examples of pedagogical practices that had an emancipatory effect on the students. The methodologies can be grouped into two distinct patterns: discussion-based learning and project-based learning.

The discussion-based learning methodologies involve mutual dialogues that establish a common starting ground and act as ice-breakers. Daniela Catona³³ explained how stimulating interaction and dialogue leads to innovative methods and results.

Most respondents agreed that establishing the students’ needs is a necessary primary step in art education. Liliana Mercioiu Popa points out that adapting to students’ needs is necessary both for the conceptual and the practical means of expression. Based on the group’s main direction, level, and interests, the professor and assistant need to practice skills such as flexibility and adaptability. Adjustments were seen as vital steps in fruitful art pedagogies.

When commenting on discussion-based learning and pedagogical adaptability, Cristina Daju pointed out that she has seen “that there is a certain inflexibility in the male approach to art pedagogy”³⁴.

As opposed to female art professors, male colleagues reject ideas more frequently and give more categorical responses. It is more often for them to say that a proposal cannot be implemented. “Refusal is more possible, with a greater lack of empathy. Individualism is stronger than the sacrifice for the common good”. In comparison, the feminine approach in art pedagogy is geared towards finding solutions.

As female professors are more prone to mediation through discussion, a correlation is formed between a feminine art pedagogical approach and discussion-based learning. When talking about emancipatory pedagogies, Smaranda Moldovan explains that “the themes are contemporary, and then they are innovative, making the teaching act innovative too. Teaching

³¹ Zoltán Lábas. 1978. „Kollektív rajzolás az Erdély-Maurer csoportban”. *Művészet*, 9, 14–15. Retrieved April 29, 2024, from <https://artpool.hu/Erdely/kreativitas/labas.html>.

³² Hegyi, Dóra, and Zsuzso László. 2015. „Creativity Exercises - Spaces of Emancipatory Pedagogies”. Tranzit. Retrieved April 29, 2024, from https://hu.tranzit.org/files/creativity_exercises_budapes.pdf, pp. 12–18.

³³ Daniela Catona is a University Professor at the Design and Applied Arts Department, focusing on Ceramics.

³⁴ Cristina Daju. 2024, February 17th. *Unpublished interview*, by Gabriela Robeci.

through dialogue is innovative because it's one-to-one and they are never the same. Non-standard means being alternative by excellence"³⁵.

Smaranda Moldovan's opinion is backed up by Claudia Feti³⁶. She uses her experience of teaching graphic design to students from other faculties who do not have an artistic background to objectively analyze the pedagogy at the Faculty of Arts and Design. "I can say that the teaching methods at FAD can surely be called alternative. Being alternative is the core of FAD; there is always innovation aided by communication exercises"³⁷.

Andreea Pleșa³⁸ explained how basing her pedagogy on dialogue learning was rooted in the principle of collaborative learning and student-based teaching. Instead of forming a strong divide between professor and student, the pupil is emancipated to the role of teacher for one's peers. Establishing a mutual learning environment for artistic pedagogy frees students and professors of academic constraints, and, as a positive result, this prompts creativity³⁹.

According to Valentina Ștefănescu, interaction with the public or other students is beneficial,⁴⁰ because it can be "a dis-inhibiting factor, an eye-opening experience or it can be a way of testing the student's abilities"⁴¹.

Project-based learning, the second main direction of the Timișoara female art pedagogy, focuses on collaboration, actions, and movement. Experimental themes spark ideas. Such is the case with the experimental graphic art techniques used in Adriana Lucaciu's classes.

Such learning patterns were noticed by Andreea Palade Flondor⁴². As a former student at the art high school in Timișoara and later a professor at the Faculty of Arts in the same city, she was able to experience a Bauhaus-inspired art pedagogy. The alternative and experimental art-teaching traditions established before the Revolution of 1989 prevailed. Even with new generations of professors, these emancipatory pedagogies were carried on.

Luisa Palade mentioned how an alternative art pedagogy can occur spontaneously, focusing on a case-by-case situation. The conservation and restoration projects that the students are encouraged to take part in are a unique learning style that provides students with practical skills. Luisa Palade⁴³ pointed out that alternative pedagogy was not used consistently "as a strategy based on a concrete pedagogical concept". But pushing the students to get involved in different projects led to a process of "encouraging personal and professional development activities"⁴⁴.

Cristina Daju put into practice a kind of dis-inhibiting exercise, by asking students to experiment with body painting, in the manner practiced by Yves Klein with the Klein-blue female body prints. Though the act of painting with their bodies was an optional task meant to help loosen up creativity, it was misinterpreted and misunderstood.

3. Motherhood, Artistic Creation, and Art Career

This section takes into account the 10 responses from artist mothers. It examines how motherhood has left its mark on the creation and artistic career of each of the interviewed women.

³⁵ Smaranda Moldovan. 2024, February 26th. *Unpublished interview*, by Gabriela Robeci.

³⁶ Claudia Feti is an Assistant at the Design Department, focusing on Graphic Design.

³⁷ Claudia Feti. 2024, February 27th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Gabriela Robeci.

³⁸ Andreea Pleșa is an Assistant at the Design and Applied Arts Department, focusing on Fashion Design.

³⁹ Andreea Pleșa. 2024, February 28th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Gabriela Robeci.

⁴⁰ Valentina Ștefănescu is a Professor at the Design and Applied Arts Department, focusing on Textile Art.

⁴¹ Valentina Ștefănescu. 2024, February 22nd. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

⁴² Andreea Palade Flondor, is a Professor at the Design Department, focusing on Fashion Design, and the Director of the Fashion Study Program.

⁴³ Luisa Palade, University Assistant at the Visual Arts Department, focusing on Conservation and Restoration.

⁴⁴ Luisa Palade. 2024, February 19th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Gabriela Robeci.

We started from the idea that motherhood consumes the greatest amount of time, not just in a quantifiable sense, but in the sense of intellect and psyche. We were interested in how becoming a mother affected the dynamics of the academic career and the creative process. Also, we were looking for information about the transformations of subjective time consumption. We asked them if they worked less and if the evolution of their artistic and pedagogical careers had changed radically after they gave birth.

Unexpectedly, the majority of our respondents 6 out of 10 stated that the period of the first years of their children's lives did not negatively influence their career and work. On the contrary, becoming mothers made them more effective, and more careful with time management, which helped them gain new perspectives on the relationship between life and art, as can be read in some of the answers quoted below.

Silvia Trion⁴⁵ describes that period as “the most energetic and prolific, a moment of progress in all my directions of development”⁴⁶.

Adriana Lucaciu points to the advantage of the maternity leave period which in Romania can reach up to two years, to complete her doctoral research: “In the first year of the child's life, I finalized my doctoral thesis and, although difficult in terms of maternal duties, the maternity leave also gave me the opportunity to better organize my time for doctoral research”⁴⁷. Despite household and motherly duties, not having to go to work every day brought some tranquility and concentration.

Liliana Mercioiu Popa nuances the answer by talking about the solutions she chose to have time to work on, but also about the long-term benefits of motherhood on her creative activity. “I can't say that motherhood made it difficult for me even in the most demanding moments, but I had to make the best of the children's sleep time; I had to wake up very early, or stay up after their bedtime to do what was necessary. My career development was not visibly influenced from the outside, I think. But I felt that I did not have all the time just for this. But I can't say that I regretted anything. Motherhood comes with other benefits, even time management ones, beyond sentimental satisfaction and even professional influences in the sense of creativity, being inspired by children's creativity. Even the long-term orientation of the activity I think has been influenced”⁴⁸.

Valentina Ștefănescu confessed that motherhood changed her perspective and influenced her pedagogical and artistic activity a lot. “I can't say exactly what the trigger was but I felt things differently. Maybe the fact that I was always on alert helped me to be more meticulous in managing time, and ideas, to be more determined in what I want to do, to conceptualize more”⁴⁹.

An important aspect pointed out by Corina Nani⁵⁰ is the deep motivation that comes from the special connection with children. “Despite the increasing maternal responsibilities, I did not feel that my development as an artist and as a teacher was negatively influenced by motherhood. On the contrary, I consider that the experience of being a mother has brought me a deeper and richer perspective in my artistic and pedagogical approach. I learned to manage time and resources effectively, and the special connection with my children inspired and motivated me to be a better artist and educator”⁵¹.

Another point of interest in our research was the involvement of mother artists in the artistic scene and their participation in art events. Did they feel excluded in any way? Did they feel left out from the local arts community events? Some answers showed us that for certain

⁴⁵ Silvia Trion, Professor at the Visual Arts Department, focusing on Conservation and Restoration.

⁴⁶ Silvia Trion. 2024, March 4th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

⁴⁷ Adriana Lucaciu. 2024, February 15th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

⁴⁸ Liliana Mercioiu-Popa. 2024, February 16th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

⁴⁹ Valentina Ștefănescu. 2024, February 22n. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

⁵⁰ Corina Nani is a Professor at the Design and Applied Arts Department, focusing on Ceramics.

⁵¹ Corina Nani. 2024, February 12th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

artists the absence from the art scene was a reality, something each of them needed to deal with in their own way.

For Réka Adorjáni not being able to work brought frustration but also helped her discover the joy of using other techniques despite textile art. “In the first year of my child's life, I didn't manage to work as an artist at all. This situation also brought frustration, because I still had ideas, but I couldn't find the time to implement them. My solution was to play with photos, collages, and faster techniques that I hadn't used before. From the age of 2 of my first child, something changed decisively and I worked a lot on the creative side. I participated in as many group exhibitions as ever”⁵².

For Diana Andreescu taking a break was a personal choice without having any regrets in this regard, being aware that it was only a passing moment. “In the first year, everything was different, but dominated by an extraordinary peace of mind. I didn't react to any event, to any email from the faculty, and I didn't even connect with the news in the field... I was totally absent, but it was as if I needed this break. The return was extraordinary”⁵³.

Liliana Mercioiu Popa confessed to us that she felt a little left out, and even if isolation from the artistic context cannot be an advantage, her way of counterbalancing the situation was working in her studio and reading. “Of course, participation in exhibitions also decreased, I felt that I was left aside by some collaborators, although I thought that I could have managed it, that it would have been good for me. Isolation and breaking away from the artistic context is not good. But I continued to work and read for myself; isolation is good in this sense”⁵⁴.

Andreea Palade Flondor spoke about the long transition period in balancing a stable life situation after the birth of her daughter. Thus, her work was affected because of the frequent work interruptions. “For a longer time, I only worked in small formats, drawings based on fragments from nature. I called them plant notes [...] The fragmented time and the long transition period in balancing a stable life situation (housing, jobs) led to the fragmentation of my working time and of my concerns”⁵⁵.

The answers given by Corina Nani, Valentina Ștefănescu, and Anamaria Șerban were completely different. All these artists considered the first years of their motherhood to be extremely satisfactory in terms of their involvement in the art scene.

Corina Nani says she continued to organize personal exhibitions and participate in various prestigious artistic events, both internationally and nationally. “I was also taking part in numerous conferences and meetings in the artistic sphere, which always kept me connected to the art world. Moreover, I am proud to say that all this time my children have always been by my side, accompanying me and participating in these experiences”⁵⁶.

Valentina Ștefănescu has never felt excluded from the art world, and “any idea of this kind was only generated by dissatisfaction with myself. Personal exhibitions were for me very important moments in my career, and that is why I have been very careful with what I have been exhibiting until now. I had only four personal exhibitions during my entire artistic career. But I can say that I have never given up participating in local artistic, and communal events, or beyond. I have always been active and I can say that being a mother has helped me a lot to focus and overcome difficult situations that constantly occur when you want to achieve something”⁵⁷.

⁵² Réka Adorjáni. 2024, February 18th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Gabriela Robeci.

⁵³ Diana Andreescu. 2024, February 12th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

⁵⁴ Liliana Mercioiu-Popa. 2024, February 16th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

⁵⁵ Andreea Palade Flondor. 2024, March 30th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

⁵⁶ Corina Nani. 2024, February 12th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

⁵⁷ Valentina Ștefănescu. 2024, February 22nd. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

Anamaria Șerban thinks her artistic activity was excellent. "I think I worked a little more and not a little less. There were very beautiful years full of energy. The projects and courses with the students were excellent"⁵⁸.

The analysis also studies the relationship with the partner and refers to the theory of Sara Ruddick, who wrote about degendering the ideology of motherhood. "Ruddick (1989, 1996) advanced a theory of maternal thinking that views motherhood as a 'practice grounded in thought'. She argued that although pregnancy and mothering involve acts and feelings that are unique to women, specific activities associated with the work (practice) of mothering can – and should be – shared by men. Doing so only requires us to be willing to demystify and degender mothering ideology long enough to consider the possibilities"⁵⁹.

As Mihaela Miroiu argues, one of the major causes of gender inequity in academic careers for women from Central and Eastern Europe is the "tradition of parental and domestic mono-responsibility"⁶⁰.

We checked if this situation applied to the female artists and professors we interviewed, and if they had to deal with this type of mono-responsibility. However, we did not receive answers that confirmed this situation. None of the respondents declared to have been affected in the first years of the child's life by the lack of support from the partner. What was instead brought into discussion, as a real problem for artist parents, regardless of whether they were mothers or fathers, was the lack of legislation related to the status of the artist that should ensure better social protection⁶¹.

Recent art history shows us interesting cases of women artists who used themes related to childbirth, breastfeeding, the mother-child relationship, and the experience of invisible domestic labor. We took as an example Mary Kelly's approach and asked the interviewed artists if within their creation they reflected on the condition of motherhood from a feminist perspective⁶².

We were also interested to know to what extent their art could be interpreted as resistance to the historical/patriarchal construct of motherhood, especially to "intensive mothering", as Sharon Hays, from a feminist position called the situation in which women continue to be the primary, central caregivers of children. As D. Lynn O'Brian Hallstein mentions, "Intensive mothering has three key tenets. First, it demands that women continue to be the primary, central caregivers of children. As Hays (1996) argues: 'there is an underlying assumption that the child absolutely requires consistent nurture by a single primary caretaker and that the mother is the best person for the job. When the mother is unavailable, it is other women who should serve as temporary substitutes.' Second, intensive mothering requires mothers to lavish copious amounts of time and energy on their children. Indeed, Hays argues, intensive mothering is 'construed as child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive, and financially expensive'. Third, intensive mothering takes a logic that separates mothering from professional paid work, which supports the notion that children and the work of mothering are completely outside the scope of market valuation"⁶³.

We didn't receive any answer that could confirm that. None of the artists provided us with examples of works that could be interpreted in these terms. So we went on and asked artists if any of their art topics changed after they became mothers. Was the condition of the

⁵⁸ Anamaria Șerban. 2024, March 2nd. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

⁵⁹ Emma, Gross. 1998. „Motherhood in Feminist Theory”. *Affilia* 13 (3), p. 271.

⁶⁰ Mihaela Miroiu. 2003. *Guidelines for promoting gender equity in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe*. Bucharest: UNESCO, p. 77.

⁶¹ Anamaria Șerban. 2024, March 2nd. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

⁶² Mary Kelly. n.d. „Post-Partum Document 1973-79”. Mary Kelly. Retrieved April 29, 2024, from <https://www.marykellyartist.com/post-partum-document-1973-79>.

⁶³ Hallstein O'Brien, D. Lynn. 2006. „Conceiving Intensive Mothering”. *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* 8 (1-2 July), p. 96.

mother reflected in one way or another in their artistic creation? Adriana Lucaciu answered that when she became a mother, she started to introduce images of children in some of her drawings. Corina Nani represented the female body emphasizing the characteristics of motherhood, and the mother-baby relationship. Silvia Trion mentioned the increased interest in topics related to protection, embodiment, motherhood indirectly addressed in the series of paintings called *The Burning Bush*.

The third step in trying to discover works of art related to any extent to our topic was to ask them if they had created works that approach feminist themes in a broader sense and to exemplify them. Only 6 out of 19 did send us examples of works, which they consider to have feminist meanings.

Andreea Palade Flondor made in 2012 a short experimental documentary, *Women workers?/Ouvrières?* (12 min), together with other 5 women artists from all over the world, namely Catherine Egloffé (France), Lingjie Wang (China), Jingfang Hao (China), Serge Desire Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso), Bouna Cherif Fofana (Mali). A longer version entitled *Women workers.../Travailleuses...* was released in 2014 (70 min). Both documentaries critically investigated the manual labor of women in mass production. Women workers from three continents were asked the same questions about how they perceived the work they did and about the real freedom of choice in a globalizing world where “goods and money are in circulation, but the frontiers are closed for human migration”.⁶⁴

Liliana Mercioiu-Popa offered us three examples of her works such as an *in situ* installation, and an assemblage of reused objects, which through the references to the domestic space and the essential contribution of women in its organization, have a feminist input. Thus the installation *Temporal Chain - Ante and Post "Me"* from 2017 reproduced a corner of a room in a familiar ambiance in which the artist integrated three elements: a pictorial-conceptual work of hers placed between a hand-made goblin of her grandmother and an illustrated page from the diary of her daughter. The meaning of the work refers to a female genetic chain of inherited creativity.

In the series *Living Quarters* (2017) references were made to the woman's care for the domestic space by recovering some ready-made elements resulting from the demolitions: fragments of decorated plaster, pieces of furniture and frames, broken glass and mirrors, and their integration into the assemblage-reliefs. Reassembling those fragments was the artist's metaphor for the need to appreciate women's major contribution to maintaining order in the private living space.

A more recent work entitled *The Space Between Us* (2023), evokes the relativity of interior-exterior spatial boundaries, in a context where man's actions in the environment reflect his positioning against himself. Natural and vegetal elements integrated into the home-like



Fig. 3. Liliana Mercioiu Popa, *The Space Between Us*, 2023, site-specific installation, courtesy of the artist

⁶⁴ Andreea Palade Flondor, Catherine Egloffé, Lingjie Wang, Jingfang Hao, Serge Desire Ouedraogo, and Bouna Cherif Fofana. n.d. „Women workers?/Ouvrières?”. Retrieved April 29, 2024, from <https://vimeo.com/imagesentransit>.

interior installation are in line with the feminist theories of Stacy Alaimo who claimed that nature is a feminist space. She strongly demonstrates that nature was and continues to be a central concept for the theory and feminist practice.

In the series of female sculptural busts made in an experimental textile technique by Valentina Ștefănescu, fragility, and caregiving are suggested by details such as the bird's nest in the woman's chest. Nesting is a metaphor for the feminine ability to protect. Soft and fragile figures metamorphose their bodies into a shelter for another being.

In the series of black and white digital collages entitled *Hope* (2021) Diana Andreescu uses minimalist language to place her feminist message in a vaguely delimited and deeply symbolic context. The use of an eloquent visual vocabulary, from which unnecessary elements are removed, makes these works successful exercises of visual communication.



Fig. 4. Valentina Ștefănescu, *Take It On the Other Side*, 2022, textile sculpture, courtesy of the artist

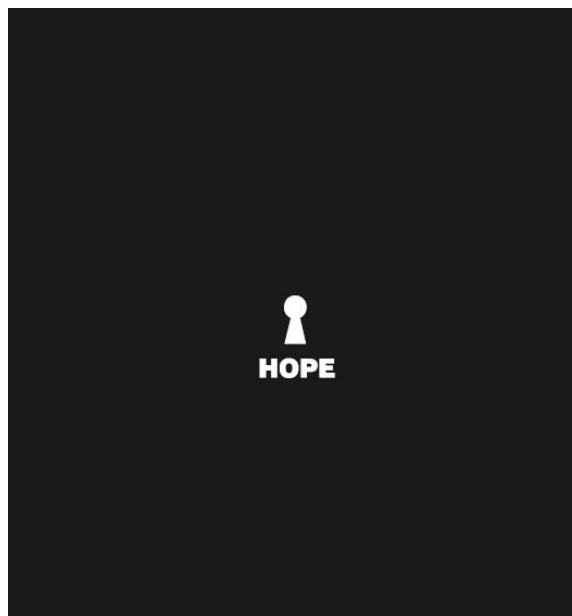


Fig. 5. Diana Andreescu, *Hope*, 2021, digital collage, courtesy of the artist



Fig. 6. Corina Nani, *Hours*, 2008, engraving, courtesy of the artist

Corina Nani's series of engravings entitled *Hours* (2008) combines figurative and abstraction, illustrating universal elements related to the mother-child relationship: nurturing, protection, and intimacy.

For Claudia Feti the self-representation in the digital drawing bearing the title *Me and Myself* (2020-2022) is a personal reading on feminist theory.

Trying to discover if motherhood has changed something in the relationship with students, we asked the interviewees if it happened to them to get involved emotionally, and empathically, to develop a type of maternal care towards students, beyond the usual demands of the profession. Interesting answers were provided to us by Eugenia Riemchneider, Adriana Lucaciu, Valentina Ștefănescu, Réka Adorjáni, Andreea Palade Flondor. "I have always asked them if they have personal problems. I had a student who didn't have money for food and I gave it to her; she didn't have money to buy materials for her degree project and we solved the problem by looking for sponsorships. I'm a mother, I'm not from Timișoara and I know how hard it was for me when I came here and I had no one, only my husband's family. That's why I try to be close to them without caring what, and how much, where, and how I help them"⁶⁵, confessed Eugenia Riemschneider. Similar examples were also pointed out by Adriana Lucaciu. "The most recent situations were during the pandemic (2020-2021) when discussions initiated by students referred to difficult situations they had to face: the relationship with their families, difficulties regarding financial support, discussions on the future professional career, depression or anxieties." Valentina Ștefănescu's answer highlights the therapeutic power of art if made under gentle guidance and understanding. "I have a lot of empathy for students. I didn't develop a maternal feeling, but I have always been there for their problems, but also for their joys. There were times when they managed to get out of certain situations precisely thanks to the artwork they did for my classes. For example, I had a student who missed a semester and decided to drop out due to anxiety issues. We were able to get in touch with her and get her back on track because she felt we were with her both as teachers and fellow students. She later confessed to me that it was a huge encouragement when I told her that she had done very good work and that I would have regretted it if she had given up, as she had great potential. I encouraged her a lot and I saw that she was also appreciated by my colleagues, so this was also a strong point in her return to the faculty"⁶⁶.

Réka Adorjáni also got personally involved in solving some of the students' mental health problems. "A student told me that she had suicidal intentions, and I recommended her to go to the psychological counseling offered free of charge by the university. For a while, it seemed to work, but later she went to the psychiatric clinic. I followed her evolution"⁶⁷.

Andreea Palade Flondor spoke about the need to humanize the relationship with students and offered many examples of situations in which she got involved beyond the strict responsibility of a teacher. "I went with the students to the hospital in case of emergencies, I explained how to get a health card for foreign students, I asked them if they didn't feel well and if they needed water or medicine when I thought they looked sick. I offer my availability to help them in many other cases or to mediate solutions. We also have discussions related to jobs, with professional and life suggestions (to those who do not work with documents, work overtime, are not paid on time, etc.). I don't know if it's really maternal care, but it seems necessary to humanize the relationship and not to have an abstract and cold one"⁶⁸.

⁶⁵ Eugenia Riemschneider. 2024, February 13th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

⁶⁶ Valentina Ștefănescu. 2024, February 22nd. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

⁶⁷ Réka Adorjáni. 2024, February 18th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Gabriela Robeci.

⁶⁸ Andreea Palade Flondor. 2024, March 30th. *Unpublished Interview*, by Maria Sârbu.

4. Conclusions

We can conclude that, overall, the pedagogy of women artists and professors at the Faculty of Arts and Design in Timișoara impacts their artistic careers in a good way. Drawing parallels with Judy Chicago's experiences, the research indicates that teaching can enrich artistic practice, helping artists remain relevant and avoid creative stagnation. Despite social constraints, these interactions between teaching, and artistic creation offer avenues for women to explore and redefine their roles in the art world. The study emphasizes the importance of supportive pedagogical models to counteract traditional biases and promote gender equity in art education. Adopting alternative art pedagogies and being involved in administrative functions brought to light the qualities that women artist professors needed in order to achieve work-life-art-career balance.

Dóra Maurer's alternative pedagogy example showed that there are feminine qualities that enable a better art teaching experience for students. Even if feminist themes and interests were not the focal points of the interviewees, all respondents confirmed that feminine qualities helped them develop better art professor – art student relationships, bringing better results by being more empathetic, more involved, and fostering a kind of motherly care that helped students lose their inhibitions and biases and develop their creativity.

While motherhood is often viewed as a hindrance to professional life, many interviewed mother-artists experienced enhanced productivity and creativity. Contrary to initial assumptions, most respondents (6 out of 10) reported that motherhood did not negatively impact their careers; instead, it fostered improved time management and fresh perspectives on art and life. Some artists, however, did face challenges such as reduced participation in art scenes and feelings of isolation, indicating varied experiences among mother artists. The findings of this research also revealed that while a personal artistic career had to be put on hold or was left in the background a bit, the pedagogical and administrative career at the faculty of art carried on after the maternal leave period with increased productivity and better pedagogical skills. We conclude that motherhood brought qualities that would make women artists valuable educators.

Notably, none of the survey respondents reported gender inequity issues within their partnerships or significant legislative hurdles directly tied to their status as mothers and artists. While we expected to find signs indicating that it would be considerably more difficult for women to pursue an art, and art professor career compared to men, it was nice to observe that it was not the case at FAD.

Starting from the example of Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* series, the study also explored the thematic integration of motherhood in their art, finding that while some artists began to incorporate elements reflecting their maternal experiences, none explicitly engaged with feminist critiques of motherhood as resistance to patriarchal constructs. This research underscores the complex interplay between motherhood and artistic expression, highlighting both the challenges and transformative potentials of mothering for artists.

A last issue that seemed relevant to this study was the analysis of how motherhood influenced the relationship with students. The answers given by our respondents regardless of being mothers or not proved that motherly skills impacted teacher-student relationships, fostering deeper empathy and support. Women professors often extended their care beyond academic guidance, aiding students in personal and emotional challenges.

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generosity, openness, and intellectual engagement of the women artists and professors who agreed to participate in the preliminary research interviews. Their willingness to share personal experiences, professional challenges, and reflections on the relationship between artistic practice, teaching, institutional work, and private life gave depth and authenticity to this research. We would like to express our gratitude to Réka Adorjani, Diana Andreescu, Daniela Catona, Cristina Daju, Claudia Feti, Amalia Gaiță, Gloria Grati, Adriana Lucaciu, Bianca Mic, Smaranda Moldovan, Corina Nani, Luisa Palade, Andreea Palade, Andreea Pleșa, Liliana Popa, Eugenia Riemschneider, Anamaria Șerban, Valentina Ștefănescu, and Silvia Trion for their time, trust, and invaluable contributions. Each interview became more than a source of academic information, expanding into a dialogue shaped by empathy, honesty, and mutual understanding.

The testimonies revealed the complexity of navigating multiple identities simultaneously: that of an artist, educator, colleague, manager, mother, partner, and caregiver. Through their narratives, this study gained a nuanced understanding of what it means to sustain an artistic career while also responding to the demands of academia and family life in a post-socialist Eastern European context. The participants spoke openly about moments of fulfillment and achievement, but also about fatigue, sacrifice, emotional labor, and the constant negotiation between personal aspirations and institutional responsibilities. Special appreciation goes to those who reflected on motherhood and its influence on both their creative practices and academic trajectories. Their insights demonstrated that maternity could be not only an interruption or obstacle within a professional career, but also a transformative experience that could reshape artistic sensibilities, teaching approaches, and interpersonal relationships. The care, patience, and emotional intelligence described in their interactions with students highlighted forms of pedagogical engagement that are frequently overlooked in discussions about the quality of higher education.

We are grateful for the way these professors articulated alternative teaching methods developed within the Faculty of Arts and Design in Timișoara. Their approaches emphasized dialogue, encouragement, emotional support, and adaptability to the individual needs of students. By sharing these experiences, they contributed not only to this research project but also to a broader understanding of the evolving role of women in contemporary art education, in the context of an institution that evolved in the last three decades. Their participation in academic management, curriculum development, and community building has played an essential role in creating a more balanced and inclusive educational environment.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the sincerity with which all participants approached sensitive topics related to gender, professional insecurity, domestic responsibilities, and the challenges of maintaining equilibrium between artistic creation and everyday life. Their voices form the heart of this study.

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