

EXPLORING THE INTERSECTION OF RESEARCH, IDENTITY FORMATION AND ARTMAKING IN AN ARTS-BASED RESEARCH PROJECT

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Abstract

The article presents findings of a collaborative arts-based research project titled “A Journey to Utopia” undertaken by a group of early-career sociologists and artists. By examining qualitative data collected throughout the project, the article aims to illuminate unprecedented outcomes of arts-based research engagement and its impact on emerging artists. The project facilitated professional identity exploration and reflexivity, revealing the intricate and delicate process of becoming an artist. The crucial findings demonstrate the mutually beneficial effects of collaborative arts-based research. The study found that initially none of the research participants self-identified as artists, and it was only through external validation during the project that they subsequently internalised and accepted this label. Artists discovered new approaches to the creative process, lending from researchers the ability to scrutinise every aspect of the issue and engage in perpetual reflexivity. Undertaking arts-based research gave artists the vocabulary to express themselves and the ability to conceive and actualize their ideas in a more grounded manner.

Keywords: *arts-based research, early-career artists, identity formation, reflexivity.*

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Introduction

During the period spanning from May to December 2022, a group of seven emerging artists collaborated with five early-career researchers in the sociology of culture, including the authors of this article, to conduct an arts-based research (ABR) project “The Journey to Utopia”. The main objective of the project was to study what socially relevant issues have a personal significance to the artists and how the incorporation of the research process can facilitate a more thorough representation of these issues in the artworks. The artists, as a result of a focus group discussion, chose the leading theme “struggle” to depict contemporary social issues, such as social injustice, corruption, and competition, as well as different inner conflicts and insecurities. Lectures and workshops were provided to the artists on the theoretical concepts and various aspects of struggle, encouraging reflexivity that informed their art pieces. The artists produced three environmental installations as a result of the project.

However, this scholarly article provides an in-depth analysis of the unprecedented effects induced by the mentioned ABR project, highlighting unforeseen influences on the artists involved. During the follow-up interviews at the end of the project, the artists unanimously emphasised how reflexive practices and collaboration with sociologists helped them to shape their identity as artists and change their approaches to artmaking. Whilst the project had a different focus, we perceive this as an unforeseen but highly advantageous outcome stemming from it. This can be interpreted as one of the numerous advantages provided by the ABR approach. According to Nancy Gerber et al. [2012] the ABR recognizes that the use of arts is critical in achieving self/other knowledge. Therefore, through workshops, focus group discussions and interviews participants were challenged and encouraged to engage in reflexivity, discovering new ways of knowing and creating new modes of action.

This article provides a theoretical foundation for the process of constructing an artist’s identity and delves into the significance of reflexivity in the art-making process. The project’s empirical data, presented below, offer valuable insights into how research methods, artist-researcher collaboration, and reflexive practices can enhance and transform the artmaking process, ultimately contributing to the professional identity formation of emerging artists. The authors of this article underscore the ABR project’s merits, emphasising its potential to promote knowledge acquisition and facilitate change.

The formation of the artist’s identity

This section of the article provides a concise review of previous studies that have investigated the artist’s identity and its constituent elements. Through empirical evidence and data, researchers have sought to systematise, conceptualise, and define

the boundaries of the artist's identity, but the interpretations remain multifaceted and fluid. The data represented later in the article contribute to this literature by focusing on emerging artists and illuminating the process of identity formation at the early stages of their careers.

In the scientific literature, researchers point to the presence of myth as of great importance in defining the profession of an artist. As Ryan Daniel [2016: 15] writes "*the concept of the artist in contemporary society is one that, to a significant extent, continues to be underpinned by myth, perception and assumption*". Alison Bain [2005: 29] speaks of a "*myth-taken*" identity constructed through the historical change of Western society and the artist's status and role in it. She explains that the myth of the artist as marginal, alienated and creatively free with the status of an "*outsider*" has remained to this day. Daniel [2016: 15] also adds descriptive terms such as "*bohemian, madness, fringe, alternative, rebellion, genius*" to the list. Other studies use the concept of "*charismatic myth*", stating that it's "*crucial to the perception of the artist as an occupational category*" [Røyseng et al. 2007: 1]. The myth is based on the idea that artists are "*people with extraordinary talents possessing the ability to create unique and sublime works of art*" that are "*carried out in a disinterested manner with a pure aesthetic vision as the only guiding light*" [Røyseng et al. 2007: 1]. Charles R. Simpson in a similar way points out that artists in Western culture are idealised as members of a "*sacred profession*" thus romanticising the creative abilities of artists [Bain 2005: 30]. Sigrid Røyseng and colleagues [2007], while researching the relevance of the charismatic myth as a discourse among young Norwegian artists towards the end of the 1990s, discover that the artists both reject and accept this myth at the same time. Furthermore, artists are encouraged to exaggerate and exploit their individuality, as well as to fit into popular myths to reinforce professional authenticity [Røyseng et al. 2007: 2].

Widely occurring theses in social sciences state that two elements are important in the formation of identity: the individual and the society. The previous paragraph highlights an example that indicates the influence of society in the process of forming an artist's identity through reproducing certain assumptions and myths. But what does the research so far reveal about the artist's self-identity? Adele Flood in her study with ten textile artists observed "*conflict in accepting the reality of the artist title*" [2011: 133]. She explains that adopting this title means to "*accept whatever construct of artist they have created as a representation of self in tandem with, and in comparison to, culturally determined criteria*" and that the title of an artist is an important step in how "*the artistic self can come into being*" [2011: 133]. Flood suggests that the act of self-identification as an artist is a crucial milestone in artistic and personal development, whereas other professions such as lawyers, doctors, and teachers are recognized through the completion of accredited educational programmes and

attainment of degrees [2011: 133]. In contrast, artists must seek a distinct form of public recognition, where “*boundaries can be obscure and judgements of the appointed arbiters of taste can shift and change*” [2011: 133].

In comparison, Jeffri and Greenblatt [1989: 10] suggest there are three ways to define an artist including several categories in each of them: the marketplace definition, the education and affiliation definition, and the self and peer definition. The marketplace definition includes artists who make their living through their art, receive some income as artists or at least intend to make a living by it [Jeffri and Greenblatt 1989: 10]. The education and affiliation definition defines artists who have formal education in “*the fine, creative, performing, or literary arts*” or belong to an artists’ union or association [Jeffri and Greenblatt 1989: 10]. However, the self and peer definition includes artists who think of themselves as artists, are recognized by their peers as such, spend “*substantial amount of time*” creating art, and have a talent or inner drive to make art [Jeffri and Greenblatt 1989: 10]. Their research findings reveal that artists reject the marketplace definition and overwhelmingly favour the self and peer definition [Jeffri and Greenblatt 1989: 10]. In more detail, their research reveals that artists consider the amount of time devoted to one’s work, peer recognition, and having an inner drive to do the work to be much more important than making an income, professional affiliation, and education [Jeffri and Greenblatt 1989: 10].

This section of the article provides some apt examples of previous studies that have explored the identity of artists and their various components by focusing on emerging artists and their identity formation process in the early stages of their careers. While researchers have tried to define and conceptualise the artist’s identity using empirical data, there is still a lot of diversity and fluidity in the interpretations. In defining the artist’s identity, researchers have identified the presence of myth as an essential element. Self-identification as an artist is a crucial milestone in artistic and personal development. Finally, research shows that artists favour the self and peer definition, emphasising the importance of time devoted to one’s work, peer recognition, and inner drive. Within this context, reflexivity has been described as a valuable tool for developing self-awareness and transforming pre-existing knowledge.

The significance of reflection in the artistic process

The notion that art serves as a reflection of society and culture has been well established, but what about the role of reflection within the artistic process and the formation of artistic thought? Reflexivity has been described in various contexts as a deliberate exploration of experience, a process of learning, self-evaluation, and consideration of feedback from peers, as well as an identification of problems [Olmos-Vega et al. 2023: 242]. Additionally, reflection is recognized as a valuable

tool for developing self-awareness and transforming pre-existing knowledge [Bertling 2019]. In the standard form, reflection is formed through language [Bertling 2019: 30], communicating reflexive thoughts, but over the years, various types of reflexive practices have been created, improved and applied in the research field.

Special attention is paid to the reflection process in the field of art education, stating that “*in the process of creating, artists reflect on their work, consider alternative points of view, try out changes, and begin the cycle of revision again*” [Hoffmann Davis 2005: 11]. Jessica Hoffmann Davis in her study of schools that focus on the arts, observed two core artistic priorities – process (*the doing*) and reflection (*the thinking on the doing*), indicating that redoing (*process informed by reflection*) follows and restarts the aforementioned interactions [Hoffmann Davis 2005]. Explaining in more detail “*reflection is intrinsically tied to process and directly imprinted on our next effort – which in turn will become a new source of reflection and revision*” [Hoffmann Davis 2005: 14]. She also states that “*an obvious and frequently cited goal of reflection on process is assessment, whether of individual or collective performance*” [Hoffmann Davis 2005: 14]. In conclusion, the emphasis on the reflection process in art education highlights the significance of artists reflecting on their work, trying out changes, and beginning the cycle of revision again, with the ultimate goal of assessing individual or collective performance.

Also, in the context of this article, it is important to highlight the work of Sidney Walker. She did a 10-week art education studio methods course where graduate and undergraduate students were introduced to the artmaking process in a highly conscious and reflective manner [Walker 2004: 7]. “*The goal was to understand conceptual approaches to artmaking and comprehend how specific artistic practices enabled conceptualization*” [Walker 2004: 7]. Walker emphasises that “*reflective documentation of the process*” played a big role during the project because “*all of the students had prior experience with artmaking, but it is doubtful that their attention had been so directly engaged with the process itself*” [Walker 2004: 8]. As one of the most surprising results of the project, she pointed out the “*strong sentiments about increased confidence as an artist and decidedly new understandings of the role of meaning-making in artmaking*” [Walker 2004: 8]. Many of the participants in Sidney Walker’s project pointed to “*a significant change in understanding about the purposes of artmaking*” [2004: 8]. One participant stated that this course allowed him to gain a vocabulary in which to communicate his ideas to others and allowed him to consciously explore the process of creating his art. Another participant stated that thinking about her idea for a long time created “*a sense of depth in artmaking that cannot be found in projects that are hurried through*”. She also stated that the project made it possible to realise that all her previous works were “*skill-based*” and meaning was attached only afterwards. Sidney Walker has also observed this situation among

contemporary artists in her other study, where “*artists begin artworks without clear end-goals and engage cycles of problem reformulation throughout the process*” [2004: 10]. These findings deeply resonate with the statements and feelings of artists participating in the project “The Journey to Utopia”, which will be discussed in more detail further. In summary, the significance of reflection in the artistic process has been widely discussed in the aforementioned research. Through reflection, artists can explore their experiences, evaluate their work, and develop self-awareness. Reflexivity can lead to a deeper understanding of the art-making process and a greater sense of confidence and purpose among artists. As such, reflection remains an essential aspect of artistic practice and education.

Methodology

The ABR project “The Journey to Utopia” utilised a variety of methods including two focus-group discussions, five workshops and six semi-structured interviews with participating artists. Project “The Journey to Utopia” which took place in Stāmeriena palace, Latvia, in the summer of 2022 combined the ABR approach and the creation of new art pieces – 7 young and emerging artists in their early twenties created artworks about social issues that are relevant to them and from which they would like to escape.

The ABR approach was integral throughout the project. The project began with a focus group discussion aimed at identifying pertinent social issues for artists, focusing on their concerns, thoughts, and common ground. Topics ranged from social injustice and corruption to cultural heritage and societal competition. After deliberation, the artists settled on “struggle” as their central theme, representing the fight against various societal challenges such as dishonesty, violence, and social injustice. This topic also embodies their ongoing battle for resources, opportunities, acceptance, and success in society.

The project continued with lectures and discussions for the artists provided by professionals to ensure a better and broader understanding of theoretical concepts concerning the “struggle” in society and how an individual responds to situations where one must struggle. At the first creative camp in Stāmeriena palace, artists were introduced to the ABR approach and explored various artistic methods that can be employed in the process of research. Additional lectures covered sociological and psychological aspects of struggle, providing a broader perspective. After the lectures artists engaged in reflective workshops and presented small performances, based on shared experiences regarding various struggles observed in one’s life and society. When the first creative camp came to an end artists presented their ideas for art pieces substantiating them with gained insights from lectures and reflective conversations. In the next camp, artists developed their art pieces reflecting contemporary social

issues. During this project artists were introduced to and experienced in practice the ABR approach and the created art pieces leave imprints of reflections of contemporary social problems in art.

The interview data gathered at the final stage of the project, is the primary focus of this article, seeking to uncover the transformative experiences that the artists underwent during the project and explore how their perceptions of being an artist and creating art were altered. A thematic analysis was employed to code and structure the collected data into saturated categories. The study identifies two outcomes that emphasise the significance of collaborative ABR projects. The findings are presented in two sections, which delve into the process of identity construction among emerging artists and highlight the crucial role of reflexivity in the artmaking process.

Formation of a young artist's identity

The participants in this study were in the early stages of their artistic careers, a developmental phase marked by introspection and exploration of one's identity, values, and prospects. The findings of the study indicate that young artists are actively engaged in critical reflection on the construction of their personal and artistic identities within the broader social context. Specifically, the participants expressed concerns about their identity as artists, including questions about their legitimacy and the criteria required for them to be recognized as such. These inquiries were rooted not only in considerations of their artistic practice but also in broader societal expectations and norms.

During the project, young artists' perception of themselves and their identity as "artists" changed. Initially, some did not identify with the term and felt uncomfortable using it. They felt that they had not yet achieved enough or lacked formal qualifications in the arts. They also indicated a discrepancy between their self-perception and the societal expectations of what it means to be an artist: "*Sometimes I want to avoid the connotation that comes along with the word "artist", it seems that it doesn't help to understand who I am and what I want to be*" (Tanja). In this case, A. Flood's idea is important that by adopting the title "artist" it means to accept the socially constructed multi-layered meaning of this notion, which, as one of the respondents says, can complicate the process of understanding one's identity. It was also acknowledged by project participants that the label and identity category of "artist" often comes with the perception of greater freedom and societal acceptance of deviation from norms. This empirical observation can be linked to A. Bain's theory about the "*myth-taken*" identity of an artist, confirms that the myth of an artist as a marginal, creatively free "*outsider*" has survived to this day [2005]. It can be implied that young artists at the beginning of the project do not clearly identify

themselves as artists, because there is not yet the inner feeling that something has been done to validate or approve their identity as artists. It can be observed that there is a need for young artists to seek external sources of validation, such as institutional recognition or peer recognition of their work, to bolster their self-perception as an “artist”, which can be linked to Jeffri and Greenblatt’s theory about education, self and peer definitions of an artist.

Throughout the project, the young artists encountered novel situations that provided validation for their identities as “artists”. It is noteworthy, however, that the mere act of participating in the project, as well as the opportunity to be featured in an exhibition open to a wider audience, increased the artists’ self-assurance and affirmed their pursuit of art. One artist during the in-depth interview revealed that there was a conversation among artists before the opening of the exhibition about how to sign their artworks – “*do I count as an artist or not yet, at what point should you start calling yourself an artist?*” (Tanja). One of the project managers used the word “artists” to describe the participants and one of the artists recalling this situation says – “*I immediately thought: “Oh, so this is the moment?” It [being able to identify oneself as an artist] probably depends on the fact that someone else calls you that. And then you think – “O, I can label myself as an artist!”*” (Tanja). The validation from other people can serve as one of the first signals that allows an artist to identify oneself as such. This quote emphasises the power that other people have over an artist’s self-perception. When others give a person approval and describe one as an artist, it gives the artist a sense of validation. This is a pure example of Jeffri and Greenblatt’s offered peer definition of an artist when artists are recognized by their peers as such.

The fact of participation in the project and a chance to include artworks in an exhibition also helped young artists to identify themselves as such, and generated a sense of pride in creating artworks. One artist revealed that until this project “*I always had the feeling that I’m only acting as an artist, that’s a problem. You [researchers] gave us the label that we are artists by giving us (..) a chance to express ourselves*” (Anne). Not only verbal validation by others can encourage one to identify as an artist, but also the given opportunities that allow one to introduce artworks to a broader public. Another artist commented: “*I think it is very nice that we participated somewhere, that our name is there, that other people go there and see that (..). I think it is a huge pride that we did something, that it is for a broader public*” (Marija). Participation in an art project and exhibiting artworks can serve as objective criteria for identifying oneself as an artist, providing young artists with a sense of pride, confidence, and reassurance in their skills and career aspirations. This project helped young artists overcome fears and gain a sense of identity as artists. External validation and approval of their identity are important for young artists, but objective factors such as participation in an art project and exhibiting artworks are equally significant.

These objective facts reinforce young artists' confidence in their ability to create art and their identity as artists.

From the concept to the artwork

Further in our analysis we want to focus on the creative process and transformative experiences emerging artists emphasised multiple times during their in-depth interviews. As one of the most significant benefits from this project, the attention to the development of a concept of the artwork was indicated. Artists noted that usually they start creating artwork and more or less just go with the flow, letting materials, shapes and textures lead the way to the final work. Most of the time the conceptual idea behind the artwork is more vague and broad, with details being refined and articulated only subsequently: "*We have a habit of creating something just because it looks cool*" (Marija). So usually the concept follows the artwork, establishing some sort of structure in the creative chaos. When asked to present their artworks in exhibitions or shows, artists adjust and adapt themes and topics so they would suit the artwork: "*Just a question – does this artwork even make sense? A lot of artists would surely answer that there is no meaning in the piece (...). It's trash, but beautiful trash*" (Anne). Another artist also added: "*Because usually you come up with something, don't you? And it just comes out of nowhere, but then you have to explain it, why is your work the way it is? And explaining sometimes is the hardest part because the explanation doesn't come genuinely...*" (Tanja).

For us as sociologists, this seemed quite extraordinary, because in research the concept, plan and structure are everything, and one cannot succeed further without them being set clear, especially, at the beginning of a research. At the same time, it is important to stress that this is an approach taken specifically by the artists in their early career, they are still at the very beginning of their academic and artistic education, assuming that with some level of professionalism comes different approaches to artmaking. This allows us to identify the in-depth analysis of the topic and the development of more elaborated concepts at the very beginning of the creative process as one of the main transformations and gains artists experienced during this project.

During the interviews, artists acknowledged comprehensive and thorough study, examination of the topic and self-reflection as an important discovery they are willing to implement in their further creative endeavours. Although, of course, developing a conceptual idea for their creative works wasn't something completely new, artists admitted they were never pushed so hard or encouraged that much to work on it to such a great extent – during a two-day period they had to participate in lectures and workshops to evolve their ideas. This finding directly resonates with Walker's [2004] discovery of the importance of reflection in artmaking.

“I already mentioned that it’s an idea generation. It was something new, well, it wasn’t new, but I had never imagined that you could think so deeply about what you create. I just somehow learned how to do it. We have, I think, such a characteristic of ours – to create it [an artwork] at the beginning, and then afterwards something will be thought of it. In principle, it is not correct” (Marija).

Following the ABR approach, knowledge and insights artists gained from theoretical lectures and workshops accelerated the thought process. They were encouraged to express their opinion on subjects covered by the lecturers and delve into deep one-on-one conversations with each other. They learned to form questions and seek answers to them – an integral part of both research and creative activity.

“I think that it was also great that we had some kind of reflection... Meetings, where we developed the idea... At least for us [artists], when we create ideas, we come up with them, and then that’s it. We never really think about them” (Marija).

“Before you create something, research that thing more. Because if you research something, it means that you have the opportunity to make the same work deeper, you can weave hidden meanings into it or introduce others to this information. Well, yes. If you learn something new about it, you have a better chance of producing a better-quality work” (Roberts).

Inquiring the topic of interest was recognized as a method to create knowledge-based artworks, therefore artists become a medium and their work – not only an emotional self-expression, but also a platform for disseminating socially, culturally and politically important ideas in an invoking way. Most of them claim that they have developed a more inquiring mind and try to put it into developing their creative ideas more deeply and meticulously.

The importance of reflection

As the ABR emphasises the importance not only of social transformation, but of personal one as well, we allocated a substantial amount of time for participants to emotionally and mentally process insights and impressions from lectures and workshops, and create space for reflection and self-reflection. At the same time data generation, creative concept development and self-reflection weren’t divided into separate stages, but were constantly intertwined, one element informing the other.

The level of artists’ personal transformation turned out to be quite unexpected, but one of the most meaningful outcomes. Reflection was mainly achieved through conversations – both spontaneous and unstructured, and more methodologically planned. Although artists confessed that talking about the “serious stuff” was rather

challenging for them at the beginning and made them step out of their comfort zone, they got used to it eventually. Even more, they learned the importance of a shared experience and openness – either talking about global warming, neoliberalism or personal insecurities, they came to normalise different inner struggles they believed were individual and only theirs.

It might be possible to say that artists learned the skills of sociological imagination [Mills 1959] without knowing it. They became aware of different perspectives and outlooks stepping into others' shoes and, at the same time building an emotional connection. For them studying other people's experiences, beliefs and feelings was seen as a new way of learning. Deep listening as a skill is an integral stage of this learning process, followed by self-reflection – what am I thinking about this? How do I feel about this? Do I have a similar experience? Through learning about others, artists learned about themselves, positioning themselves in a group and creating a sense of belonging. In the context of the creative process, this enabled the artists to develop their artworks in a more conceptually and emotionally grounded manner. As noted by Hoffman Davis, reflection or thinking-of-the-doing inspires the cycle of revision and leads to re-doing of the concept or the artwork [2005]. Conversations, questioning and listening were recognised as strategies artists will incorporate in their future creative endeavours, because of their ability to illuminate different perspectives and aspects of the same problem.

“And maybe it's good – to entrust something to such a half-stranger, that maybe it inspires that thought, inspires a work of art. It helped so much. Yes, this is an aspect that I could help with my future artwork. It's just some kind of loud talking to someone. You just hear what you say yourself, your own voice. It seems that if you talk about that thing, then you can understand how far you can go” (Vanesa).

At the same time, artists see it as a personal gain – to assess everything more critically, to question everything and learn to form an opinion, in other words, to develop analytical mind and emotional intelligence.

“I think, yes, some of those techniques [will be useful]. Ask yourself many, many questions, try to somehow answer them, somehow solve them, and formulate your thoughts in your works of art. I think that it was all about some kind of learning and growing” (Vanesa).

Aside from emotional growth, the importance of theoretical knowledge and research was also recognised. As the leading theme of the project was “the struggle” and during the first focus-group discussion artists agreed that their interests lay in both – inner and outer, personal and social struggles, theoretical lectures expanded both of these aspects. The lectures allowed to enlighten different layers of issues

that beforehand were perceived more one-dimensionally and narrowly. Above all the importance of reflection and self-reflection can be emphasised again, because to process information and position oneself into the subject, embarking on discussions came to great help.

“I think those lectures were a very good idea. Because our vision of something is very limited, it’s also cool to hear the stories of more experienced people – so that you open up, and think: “oh, you can think like this too, like this can also be done.” Yes, and hear something more than usual. Also that afterwards we had our discussion and we needed to make something out of it, that was cool too” (Aija).

In the context of this project, reflection and self-reflection were employed as methodological tools to facilitate critical thinking and enhance creativity. However, it is important to note that they served a deeper purpose for the participating artists, as they became a catalyst for both artistic and personal growth. Through engaging in reflective practices, artists were able to refine their approaches to the creative process, as well as develop greater confidence and assertiveness in articulating their views on important issues. This reflective process, therefore, played a crucial role in enabling artists to embrace their identities as artists and create more sophisticated and meaningful artworks. Reflexivity allowed the artists to critically examine and question their own assumptions, biases, and perspectives, thereby leading to greater self-awareness and insight.

Conclusion

According to this project’s empirical findings, it can be concluded that an artist’s identity can be constructed through validation from others and objective facts such as participation in an art project and exhibiting artworks. Young artists need validation for their identity as artists from other people, institutions, or through their work. This validation serves as the first signal that allows artists to identify themselves as such. Moreover, participation in an art project and exhibiting their work provide young artists with a sense of pride, increased confidence, and reassurance of their skills and capabilities as artists.

In the context of the creative process, reflexivity plays a crucial role in enabling emerging artists to develop their artworks conceptually and emotionally grounded. By reflecting on their personal experiences, values, and beliefs, artists can create works that are not only visually striking but also carry deeper meanings and emotions. This kind of reflection enables artists to gain a better understanding of their artistic practice and the role it plays in their lives. Furthermore, this reflective practice can lead to a greater sense of self-awareness, allowing artists to better articulate their ideas and perspectives both to themselves and others.

The ABR approach was instrumental in facilitating these results, as it provided a safe and supportive environment for emerging artists to explore their creativity and reflect on their experiences. Through the ABR approach artists were able to articulate their thoughts and emotions and explore their creative processes in a structured and supportive setting. As such, the ABR is a valuable tool for facilitating artistic and personal growth among emerging artists. This project provides empirical evidence that the ABR approach can lead to unexpected outcomes and unforeseen benefits for all stakeholders involved. Thus, it is important to recognize the potential value of the ABR and remain open to exploring new paths of investigation, even if they deviate from the initially envisioned trajectory.

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