



## Interdisciplinary Connections Between Music and Painting: A Study on Maurice Ravel's *Boléro* in Basic Design Education

*Müzik ve Resim Arasındaki Disiplinlerarası Bağlantılar: Temel Tasarım  
Eğitiminde Maurice Ravel'in Boléro'su Üzerine Bir İnceleme*

Sara ÇEBİ\*  
İlkay Canan OKKALI\*\*

### Abstract

This article establishes an interdisciplinary connection between music and visual arts by examining the concepts inspired by Maurice Ravel's *Boléro* and revealing their unique value within the artistic production process. The research was conducted within the scope of the Basic Design course at Trabzon University, Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, Department of Painting, and aimed to enable students to experience and internalize the principles of emphasis, balance, and unity. The study is based on the interaction between music and visual arts, where students were asked to transform their sensory perceptions into visual forms, inspired by *Boléro*. Analyses of ten student works show that each student selected a different concept wind, occult, chaos, wheel, atom, ascension, thought, wave, awakening, and passion and interpreted these ideas in original ways. In the works, dominance was generally achieved through large forms, balance through symmetrical arrangements, and unity through the repetition of contrasting colors and similar shapes. By translating the emotional structure of music into a visual language, students enhanced their abstract thinking, aesthetic perception, and expressive abilities. This process demonstrates that art education, when approached through interdisciplinary methods, fosters creative thinking and strengthens cultural awareness.

**Keywords:** Interdisciplinary art, painting and music, Maurice Ravel, basic design, Bolero.

### Öz

Bu makale, müzik ve resim sanatları arasında disiplinlerarası bir bağ kurarak Maurice Ravel'in *Boléro* eserinden esinlenen kavramları incelemekte ve bu kavramların sanatsal üretim sürecindeki özgün değerini ortaya koymaktadır. Araştırma, Trabzon Üniversitesi Güzel Sanatlar ve Tasarım Fakültesi Resim Bölümü Temel Tasarım dersi kapsamında yürütülmüş ve öğrencilerin egemenlik, denge ve birelilik ilkelerini deneyimleyerek öğrenmeleri hedeflenmiştir. Çalışmada, müzik ile görsel sanatlar arasındaki etkileşim temel alınmış; öğrencilerden *Boléro* bestesinden yola çıkarak kendi duyusal algılarını görsel biçimlere dönüştürmeleri istenmiştir.

\* Doç. Dr., Trabzon Üniversitesi, Güzel Sanatlar ve Tasarım Fakültesi, Resim Bölümü, e-posta: [saracebi@trabzon.edu.tr](mailto:saracebi@trabzon.edu.tr), ORCID: 0000-0002-3566-0717.

\*\* Doç. Dr., Trabzon Üniversitesi, Güzel Sanatlar ve Tasarım Fakültesi, Resim Bölümü, e-posta: [icanikli@trabzon.edu.tr](mailto:icanikli@trabzon.edu.tr), ORCID: 0000-0003-1817-4060.

On öğrenci çalışması üzerinden yapılan analizlerde, her öğrencinin farklı bir kavram seçtiği rüzgâr, okült, kaos, çark, atom, yükseliş, düşünce, dalga, intibah ve tutku ve bu kavramları özgün biçimlerde yorumladığı görülmüştür. Çalışmalarda egemenlik genellikle büyük formlarla, denge simetri anlayışıyla, birlilik ise zıt renkler ve benzer biçimlerin tekrarıyla sağlanmıştır. Öğrenciler müziğin duygusal yapısını görsel dile aktararak soyut düşünme, estetik algı ve ifade becerilerini geliştirmiştir. Bu süreç, sanat eğitiminin disiplinlerarası bir yaklaşımıla yaratıcı düşünmeyi ve kültürel farkındalığı güçlendirdiğini göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Disiplinlerarası sanat, resim ve müzik, Maurice Ravel, temel tasarım, Bolero.

## Introduction

One of the most significant interactions established among different art disciplines is the relationship between painting and music. Throughout human history, these two art forms have remained among the most powerful means of expressing emotions. Emerging from the interaction of visual and auditory senses, this relationship creates a unity that enriches and deepens the aesthetic experience (Adorno & Gillespie, 1995). Painting creates a form of visual expression through the elements of design; the artist establishes an emotional narrative on the canvas using these components. Music, on the other hand, creates an auditory language of emotion through notes and rhythms, leaving a spiritual impact on the listener. In this sense, music has become an art form capable of expressing what words cannot convey. Throughout history, painting and music have been two artistic disciplines that have nourished, complemented, and inspired each other (Butler, 1994, p. 24-29). A painter may construct a composition within a rhythmic order influenced by the emotional atmosphere of a musical piece, while a composer may transform the harmony of colors and the formal balance of a painting into a musical structure. Thus, a creative interaction emerges between the two disciplines (Robinson, 1981). The music played in exhibition halls can alter the viewer's perception of a painting, just as the colors in a painting may merge with the emotions of a musical composition both representing reflections of this relationship in everyday life. Historically, there have been numerous examples that strengthened the unity between painting and music. In Ancient Greece, the performance jointly created by the painter Zeuxis and the musician Timotheus is considered one of the earliest examples of this interaction. During the Renaissance, the religious music performed simultaneously with Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel demonstrated how visual and auditory arts could merge in spiritual harmony (Bogue, 2014, p. 40-55).

Design has been a dynamic field that reflects the influences of art and cultural heritage from past to present, while continuously evolving through interdisciplinary interactions. Today, designers build bridges between different disciplines to create original and innovative Works (Bal & Bekar, 2025). The design process is a structured form of action based on a creative, critical, and participatory approach aimed at achieving a specific goal. In this context, design education is grounded in a theoretical framework that seeks to equip students with problem-solving skills and to develop their ability for multidimensional thinking (Çebi, 2024). Art education, on the other hand, distinguishes itself from other fields through its unique methods and pedagogical understanding; especially in studio settings, the interactive communication established between students and instructors enriches the learning experience (Bekar, Lüleci & Çakır, 2023). In this creative process, where uncertainty is inherent, students attempt to transform their conceptual relationships with their surroundings and redefine them within new contexts (Çebi, 2025). Art education takes shape through applied courses that encourage abstract thinking, concept development, and creativity, while also supporting students' problem-solving and critical evaluation skills. Studio practices provide spaces for experimentation,

where design ideas are explored and students participate actively in the creative process (Itten, 1975, p. 26-28). Throughout this process, students not only grasp the technical aspects of design but also strive to build connections with different disciplines and expand their intellectual capacity. Basic design education teaches the fundamental principles, techniques, and conceptual structures of art while encompassing various artistic disciplines such as painting, sculpture, graphic design, ceramics, textiles, and photography; it also integrates with related fields such as music, art history, aesthetics, and philosophy. This education enhances students' creative thinking abilities, self-confidence, and modes of expression, contributing to both their personal and professional development. Thus, basic design education enables students to comprehend the social and cultural value of art, to perceive art as a multifaceted field of thought, and to develop their own unique language of artistic expression (Schön, 1985, p. 61-69).

The aim of this article is to establish a connection between music and visual arts, to identify the concepts inspired by André Rieu's interpretation of *Boléro*, and to reveal the unique values of these concepts. The study seeks to strengthen interdisciplinary relations in the arts by examining how design education enhances individual creativity, how art integrates into social structures, and how it contributes to interactions between different disciplines.

The French composer, pianist, and conductor Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) is regarded as one of the pioneers of impressionist music. He began his musical education at an early age and continued his studies at the Paris Conservatory, where he worked with prominent teachers such as Fauré, Gedalge, and Bériot. (Shaw, 2008, p. 11-15). Although Ravel's compositional style was influenced by the Impressionist movement, he avoided identifying himself as a representative of it. In his works, he emphasized abstract musical elements such as tone, timbre, and color, combining traditional musical forms with parallel harmonies, whole-tone, and pentatonic scales. He was influenced by Russian composers, particularly by Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestration techniques, and skillfully employed color in his music. One of his most famous compositions, *Boléro* (1928), is an experimental piece written for orchestra. Ravel described this work as "an orchestral fabric without music," emphasizing repetitive themes, rhythm, and a gradual *crescendo* rather than harmonic progression. The mechanical structure of *Boléro* has been interpreted by some scholars as a reflection of Ravel's later mental decline. The repetitive melodic lines and assembly-line-like structure of the piece have been viewed as a metaphor for the modernization, mechanization, and transformation of the human spirit during that period (Yıldız, 2023).

## Methodology

This research is based on the *Basic Design* course conducted during the 2024–2025 academic year at Trabzon University, Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, Department of Painting. The aim of the study is for students to learn and internalize the fundamental design principles of emphasis, balance, and unity through experiential practice. The research consists of three stages. In the first stage, the concepts of emphasis, balance, and unity were theoretically explained to the students, illustrating how these principles function in design in terms of visual organization, composition, and formal integrity. In the second stage, an interdisciplinary approach was adopted to establish a connection between music and visual arts. The students were introduced to the life and the famous composition *Boléro* by the French composer Maurice Ravel. The rhythmic structure of *Boléro*, along with its features of *crescendo* (gradual increase in sound) and *ostinato* (repeated rhythmic pattern), was analyzed, and the piece was played in the classroom environment. In the third stage, students were asked to identify an emotional or

conceptual theme inspired by the *Boléro* composition and, based on the selected concept, to create an original design composition that actively incorporated the principles of emphasis, balance, and unity. This study is a practice-based workshop project, and the analysis includes ten works created by ten volunteer students. The analysis and evaluation process was jointly conducted by Assoc. Prof. İlkay Canan Okkali and Assoc. Prof. Sara Çebi, who also instructed the course. This method aimed to enhance students' abilities in abstract thinking, sensory perception, and interdisciplinary connection, thereby establishing an experimental learning process in which the rhythmic structure of music and visual composition are integrated.

### Examples within the Scope of the Relationship Between Painting and Music

According to Kandinsky, music represents one of the purest forms of abstract art because it reflects the artist's inner world in its most authentic state. The concept of **synesthesia**, defined as the fusion of sight and hearing, holds a central place in his artistic philosophy. Kandinsky believed that all art forms share similar structural and formal elements, explaining this idea by equating the point in painting to the short, sharp beats of a drum in music. The simplified compositions dominated by geometric forms in his works transform into polyphonic structures in which various forms harmoniously coexist within a melodic unity. For this reason, Kandinsky referred to such visual arrangements as "symphonies" (Kandinsky, 1993, p. 95-104).

Kandinsky compared abstract painting to the process of composing music, referring to his large-scale conceptual works as *Compositions* and his smaller, more spontaneous pieces as *Improvisations*. *Composition X* (1939) (Figure 1) is the final work in a series of ten compositions produced over the course of his life, completed when the artist was seventy-three years old. For Kandinsky, who attributed spiritual meaning to color and geometric form, this work stands out for its unusual dominance of black—a color that, for him, symbolized closure and the end of a life cycle. Against the black background, colorful geometric and biomorphic shapes appear, their meanings left open to the viewer's intuition. These forms and colors interact like the elements of a "visual symphony," creating a harmony and balance of contrasts similar to the rhythmic and tonal relationships found in music. The transitions between forms, the vibrations of color, and the overall rhythm of the composition clearly reflect Kandinsky's deep engagement with music. This non-representational approach invites the viewer to interpret the work on a subjective and emotional level, making *Composition X* both a visual and spiritual experience (O'Doherty, 2010, p. 105-107).



**Figure 1:** Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition X*, 1939, oil on canvas, 130 × 195 cm, Abstract Art, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen (K20 Museum), Düsseldorf, Germany (Hahl-Koch, 1993).

Boogie-Woogie is an innovative piano style that emerged in the United States in the late 1920s, evolving from Blues music. Originating in dance halls and shaped by second-generation pianists, it became known for its repetitive bass lines, energetic

rhythms, and lively character. The term “boogie,” once used colloquially to mean “to party,” gained musical prominence through Pinetop Smith’s *Pinetop’s Boogie-Woogie* (1928), which defined the genre’s dynamic spirit (Berlin, 1980). In contrast to Kandinsky’s emotional and spiritual approach, Piet Mondrian developed a more logical and geometric visual system. He regarded both traditional and modern music as outdated and turned to jazz, whose rhythmic freedom and melodic independence he found analogous to his artistic style. This connection is most clearly seen in his late masterpiece *Broadway Boogie-Woogie* (Figure 2). After arriving in New York in 1940 to escape World War II, Mondrian was deeply inspired by the city’s energy and boogie-woogie music, describing his art as “putting a little boogie-woogie into painting.” Through this synthesis, he translated musical rhythm and improvisation into a visual language of color, geometry, and balance (Janssen, 2011). *Broadway Boogie-Woogie* was inspired by the grid layout of Manhattan and the rhythmic structure of boogie-woogie music. In this work, Mondrian transformed his Neo-Plasticist approach traditionally limited to horizontal and vertical lines by omitting black and breaking the color bands into numerous small, multicolored squares and rectangles. These geometric forms collide and vibrate, creating a rhythmic movement that evokes the pulsating energy of New York’s streets and the syncopated beats of jazz. Mondrian viewed the “destruction of melody,” or the departure from the descriptive appearance of nature, as a way to construct dynamic rhythm through the opposition of pure forms. In *Broadway Boogie-Woogie*, he successfully translated this concept into an abstract symphony, uniting music and painting through color, rhythm, and spatial harmony (Yucel, 2012).

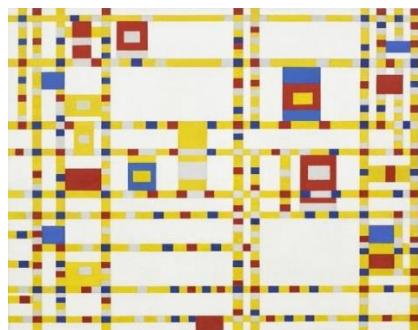


Figure 2: Piet Mondrian, *Broadway Boogie-Woogie*, 1942-43, oil on canvas, 127 × 127 cm, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York (URL 1)

Semih Berksoy was born in 1910 into an artistic and cultured family, the daughter of a painter mother and a poet father. Growing up in such an environment shaped her deep connection to the arts. During the early years of the Turkish Republic, she studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts, drama at the Theatre School, and music at both the Istanbul Municipal Conservatory and the Berlin Music Academy. In addition to being Turkey’s first female opera performer, Berksoy was also a prominent painter, embodying the ideals of the early Republican era. While her early career focused primarily on opera and stage performance, she later established herself as a significant figure in the visual arts. Her multifaceted artistic practice was rooted in the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*<sup>1</sup> the “total work of art” reflecting her belief in the unity of different art forms (Bafra, 2014, p.

<sup>1</sup> Richard Wagner explained the concept and purpose of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (the “total work of art”) which he introduced in the 19th century in his 1849 essay *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft (The Artwork of the Future)*. He described dance, music, and poetry as the “three primitive sister arts,” emphasizing that the art of the future would possess a collective character. Wagner defined *Gesamtkunstwerk* translated into Turkish as “bütünsel sanat eseri” and into English as “the total work of art” as the unification of music, musical theatre, and all the arts into a single harmonious form. (Dastarlı & Okkali, 2024).

39). Between 1975 and 1987, the artist produced paintings whose titles and inspirations were drawn from music and the masterpieces of opera. Works such as Beethoven's *Fidelio*, Strauss's *Salome* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, and Puccini's *La Tosca* served as sources of inspiration for Berksoy. Her 1971 work *Do Major* presents a synthesis of painting and sound composition. Created in 1981, *Özsoy Opera (Ahmed Adnan Saygun)* (Figure 3) is both a visual representation of the opera commissioned from Ahmet Adnan Saygun for Reza Shah's 1934 visit to Turkey and a tribute to the first opera ever performed in the country. *Özsoy Opera* draws on Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* and offers a historical and lyrical reference to the shared heritage between the Turkish and Iranian peoples. The libretto of this three-act opera was determined by Atatürk himself, and its subject matter was inspired by history. *Özsoy* depicts the historical development of the Turks from their origins in Central Asia to the establishment of a new state in Anatolia, emphasizing the brotherhood between the Turkish and Iranian nations. In 1934, Semiha Berksoy became the first Turkish opera singer to appear on stage with *Özsoy*, and in her *Özsoy Opera* painting she incorporated detailed motifs from the opera onto her own portrait. In the composition, another face appears over Berksoy's body, which is wrapped in a red flag featuring the crescent and star, and one hand is shown playing a musical instrument. The painting also includes striking inscriptions such as *Ve Sanat Baş Kumandan* (And Art, the Chief Commander), *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, The Birth of Turkish Opera, State Opera, Ankara, This is a Revolutionary Movement, and Turkey*. Berksoy's body is also inscribed with the names of the roles she performed in various operas. The premiere of *Özsoy Opera* was attended by Reza Shah Pahlavi and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk at the Ankara People's House. The opera, staged in honor of the Shah's visit, featured Semiha Berksoy alongside baritone Nurullah Taşkiran and soprano Nimet Vahit.



**Figure 3:** Semiha Berksoy, *Özsoy Opera (Ahmed Adnan Saygun)*, 1981, Duralit üzerine yağlıboya, 250x131 cm, Özel koleksiyon, kaynak: (Bafra, 2014, p. 40).

Although Wassily Kandinsky's *Composition X*, Piet Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie-Woogie*, and Semiha Berksoy's *Özsoy Opera* performance were created in different periods and artistic disciplines, they converge on a shared intellectual ground concerning the universal language of art. In *Composition X*, Kandinsky visualized the abstract nature of music through color and form, transforming the vibration of sound into a visual rhythm. Mondrian, on the other hand, conveyed the energy of jazz music in *Broadway Boogie-Woogie* through a geometric order, reconstructing the dynamic rhythm of the modern city with the vibrancy of color. For both artists, music served not merely as emotional expression but as a source of formal structure and spiritual balance. Meanwhile, Semiha

Berksoy's performance in *Özsoy Opera* embodied a holistic artistic vision that merged music and theatre, transforming the cultural ideals of the Turkish Republic into an artistic identity and a symbol of social modernization. Kandinsky's spiritual abstraction, Mondrian's structural rhythm, and Berksoy's dramatic expression together demonstrate that art, in its diverse forms, continually seeks the same essence the unity of emotion, rhythm, and spiritual harmony. Thus, all three works represent an integrated understanding of art that transcends the boundaries between sound and form, music and color, individual expression and collective meaning.

### Analysis of Student Works

The interaction between painting and music has served as a significant foundation guiding students' artistic production processes and providing a framework for evaluation. In this context, ten student works were selected and presented under the titles "Student Work 1" and "Student Work 2." These applications were developed based on an examination of the principles of balance, unity, and emphasis, demonstrating how students internalized and applied these concepts through interdisciplinary artistic exploration.

In *Student Work 1*, the student selected the concept of "wind," inspired by the musical crescendo, which evokes the feeling of wind gradually intensifying as it rises (Figure 4). To visualize this sensation, a black background was chosen, upon which several upward-moving wave forms were placed. The waves were predominantly painted in blue tones, while one central wave colored in shades of red, orange, and yellow established visual emphasis. The composition's axis runs alongside this brightly colored wave, guiding the viewer's eye, while the increased number of waves on the right side maintains visual balance. Through these choices, the student successfully translated the musical crescendo into visual rhythm, expressing both balance and movement. The interaction between diagonal lines and wave forms creates a unified, rhythmic harmony within the composition.



**Figure 4:** Student Artwork 2, "Wind", Acrylik on Paper, 35x50 cm, 2025 (Personal archive)

In *Student Work 2*, the student explored the concept of "occult," inspired by the music's sense of secrecy, concealment, and mystery. This theme was associated with the emotional depth and enigmatic atmosphere perceived in the composition. The artwork (Figure 5) is primarily composed of square forms; some squares are left empty, while their borders are emphasized with yellow tones, symbolizing the "locked" and "hidden" nature of the chosen concept. A large square placed in the foreground, painted in bright

yellow, serves as the dominant element of the work, drawing the viewer's attention to the center. Forms of different colors and shapes positioned on the right and left sides create visual balance in terms of spatial density and arrangement. The repetition of similar forms and colors establishes a sense of unity within the composition, resulting in an orderly, coherent, and harmonious visual structure.



**Figure 5:** Student Artwork 2, "Occult", Mixmedia on Paper, 35x50 cm, 2025 (Personal archive)

In *Student Work 3*, the student selected the concept of "chaos," inspired by the intensifying rhythm of the music (Figure 6). Warm colors were used to create a dynamic and energetic atmosphere, while shades of green and blue were applied in the upper section to establish visual dominance in that area. The harmony between colors supported the overall balance of the composition, allowing the viewer's eye to move fluidly across the surface. The interplay of points, lines, directions, and areas enhanced the sense of movement, and the repetition of these elements in different regions contributed to visual unity and equilibrium. Through this approach, the student successfully translated the dynamic structure of the music into an abstract visual language, effectively expressing the rhythmic essence of chaos.



**Figure 6:** Student Artwork 3, "Chaos", Mixmedia on Paper, 35x50 cm, 2025 (Personal archive)

In *Student Work 4*, (Figure 7) the student created the concept of a "wheel," inspired by the rhythmic motion of the music. The continuous movement and rotational energy reminiscent of a swiftly turning wheel formed the foundation of the composition. The broad area painted in green represents the main rhythm of the music, while red tones symbolize the emphasis of musical notes, and yellow conveys an inner emotional expression. A circular form placed at the center establishes the dominant element of the

composition, directing the viewer's attention to the focal point. The horizontal axis divides the work symmetrically, providing visual balance. Harmony among the colors is achieved through smooth transitions, while the interaction between circular forms and fluid lines creates a cohesive and balanced sense of unity. Through this approach, the student successfully interpreted the rhythmic rotation of music within a dynamic formal structure, skillfully combining movement and balance.



**Figure 7:** Student Artwork 4, "Wheel", Acrylik on Paper, 35x50 cm, 2025 (Personal archive)

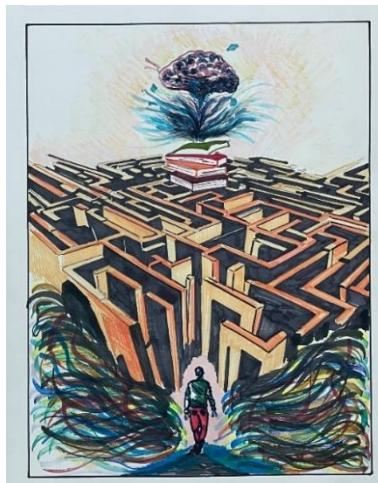
In *Student Work 5*, the student selected the concept of "atom," inspired by the energy and structure of the music. The central form and the colorful fragments radiating outward evoke the explosive power of an atom. Two circles placed at the center symbolize core energy, while the bright yellow and orange tones emphasize authority and vitality. This structure (Figure 8), much like Ravel's *Boléro*, reflects a steady yet intensifying rhythm that conveys dominance at the core. Vertical symmetry was employed to achieve visual balance, creating harmony between opposing forms. The diversity of colors and the bursts of surrounding energy illustrate how differences can coexist within a coherent structure. Although the colors seem to collide, they ultimately produce a unified harmony just as all the instruments in *Boléro* come together in the finale to carry the same theme with collective force. In this way, the student visually expressed unity and energy through rhythm, color, and composition.



**Figure 8:** Student Artwork 5, "Atom", Acrylik on Paper, 35x50 cm, 2025 (Personal archive)

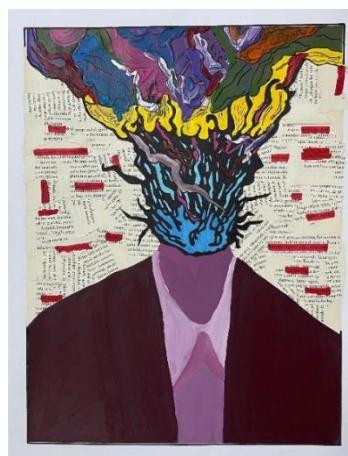
In *Student Work 6*, the student emphasized the concept of "ascension," inspired by the rhythmic rise within the music. A figure placed at the center of the lower section symbolizes the journey toward intellectual enlightenment, depicted through orange and black labyrinths that lead upward to a higher plane (Figure 9). This structure visualizes

the sensation of an intensifying melody and repeated rhythms that build toward a climax. The prominence of labyrinth-like forms in the composition enhances the sense of dominance, while the central vertical axis creates a symmetrical balance. The harmony between colors further reinforces the visual unity of the piece. Transitions achieved through brushstrokes and the interplay of rectangular labyrinth shapes with contrasting tones generate a cohesive sense of wholeness. Through this visual interpretation, the student effectively transformed the rhythmic ascent of the music into a composition that reflects balance, emphasis, and unity.



**Figure 9:** Student Artwork 6, "Ascension", Acrylik on Paper, 35x50 cm, 2025 (Personal archive)

In *Student Work 7*, the student explored the concept of "thought," inspired by the rhythmic repetition and intensifying tempo of the music. The process, beginning with an involuntary idea and gradually gaining strength in the mind, evokes the growing complexity of thoughts, much like the progressive acceleration in Ravel's composition (Figure 10). The use of a large human figure conveys the principle of emphasis, while its central placement establishes visual balance through symmetry. Collage elements and fragmented color fields dominate the composition, with vibrant hues contrasting against a cream-toned background, adding dynamic harmony to the overall structure. Through this approach, the student visually expressed the inner movement and mental intensity of thought, effectively integrating the principles of balance, emphasis, and unity.



**Figure 10:** Student Artwork 7, "Thought", Mixmedia on Paper, 35x50 cm, 2025 (Personal archive)

In *Student Work 8*, the student explored the concept of "wave," inspired by the rhythmic harmony and continuous rise in *Boléro*. A large spiral form placed (Figure 11) at the center creates a strong sense of movement, establishing dominance within the

composition. Balance is achieved through a division along the central axis one side structured with linear order, the other characterized by the rhythmic motion of waves creating visual equilibrium. This arrangement, supported by transitions of color and form, establishes harmony between motion and calmness. The repetition of wave shapes in varying directions reinforces the sense of unity within the composition. Through this approach, the student successfully transformed the rhythmic flow of music into a visual wave movement, effectively expressing the principles of harmony, balance, and wholeness.



**Figure 11:** Student Artwork 8, "Wave", Acrylik on Paper, 35x50 cm, 2025 (Personal archive)

In *Student Work 9* (Figure 12), the student interpreted the concept of "awakening" inspired by the ascending rhythm of *Boléro*. The composition consists of overlapping collage pieces and square cardboard forms arranged in layers. The topmost square, distinctively painted in gold, establishes visual emphasis and dominance within the piece. By employing symmetry, the student achieved vertical balance, while the repetition of blue tones created rhythmic unity. The use of orange as a contrasting color introduced vibrancy and movement to the composition. The repetition of square shapes reinforced visual harmony, and the interplay of color and form established equilibrium. Through this structure, the student transformed the concept of "awakening" a process of awareness and enlightenment into a compelling visual expression.



**Figure 12:** Student Artwork 9, "Awakening", Mixmedia on Paper, 35x50 cm, 2025.

In *Student Work 10*, the student explored the concept of "passion," inspired by Maurice Ravel's *Boléro*. This emotion, characterized by a gradually growing, suppressed energy that eventually bursts outward, is visually reflected in the composition. A large flame form serves as the central symbol of passion, establishing visual dominance (Figure 13). The composition, arranged with an asymmetrical sense of balance, includes smaller

flame forms placed toward the right side, while a sun-like shape painted in yellow at the upper right corner provides a focal point that completes the visual equilibrium. The warm tones of orange and yellow in the flames express the inner intensity of passion, while the blue background contrasts with these warm hues, enhancing visual harmony. Through this interplay of color, form, and rhythm, the student effectively translated the dynamic crescendo of music into a visual language, expressing passion within both emotional and aesthetic balance.



**Figure 13:** Student Artwork 10, "Passion", Pastel Color on Paper, 35x50 cm.

These ten student works exemplify a successful application of an interdisciplinary approach that bridges music and visual art. Each student derived inspiration from Maurice Ravel's *Boléro*, generating distinct conceptual interpretations such as "wind," "occult," "chaos," "wheel," "atom," "ascension," "thought," "wave," "awakening," and "passion." Across the projects, emphasis was generally achieved through the use of dominant large forms, balance was established primarily through symmetrical compositions, and unity was reinforced through the repetition of contrasting colors and similar shapes. By translating the emotional intensity and rhythmic structure of the music into visual language through color, form, and composition, the students enhanced both their abstract thinking and aesthetic expression skills.

### Conclusion

Interdisciplinary art, while not a new concept, serves as a method that opens pathways to innovative ways of thinking and diverse perspectives. This approach aims to enhance mental processes, encourage critical inquiry, and move beyond conventional frameworks. By establishing comparisons between different disciplines, it enables the reevaluation of concepts that are both contrasting and complementary, forming the foundation of creative production. In this context, the practices conducted within the *Basic Design* workshop at Trabzon University present tangible examples of the interdisciplinary approach in art education. Centered on the relationship between music and painting, this study encouraged students to explore the principles of emphasis, balance, and unity. Drawing inspiration from Maurice Ravel's *Boléro*, students interpreted concepts such as "wind," "occult," "chaos," "wheel," "atom," "ascension," "thought," "wave," "awakening," and "passion" in original ways.

In these works, *emphasis* was achieved through large-scale forms that dominated the composition, reinforcing visual focus and weight. *Balance* was often established through symmetry, as reciprocal placements and structural arrangements created visual stability. To support the principle of *unity*, contrasting colors and similar shapes were used together, producing harmony and movement through relationships of opposition

and repetition. By consciously applying these basic design principles, students enhanced the overall impact of their compositions.

While translating the rhythmic structure of music into visual language, students created aesthetic balance through varying forms, colors, and compositional arrangements thus experiencing the interdisciplinary essence of art. The resulting diversity demonstrated their growth in conceptual thinking and aesthetic expression. This process enabled students to develop a deeper understanding of both the formal and semantic layers of an artwork, to cultivate sensitivity toward cultural values, and to express originality through the universal language of art. The *Basic Design* course, through its art-based learning model, expanded students' imagination, strengthened their ability to connect seemingly unrelated concepts, and fostered their creative thinking capacity.

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Figure 4: Personal archive

Figure 5: Personal archive

Figure 6: Personal archive

Figure 7: Personal archive

Figure 8: Personal archive

Figure 9: Personal archive

Figure 10: Personal archive

Figure 11: Personal archive

Figure 12: Personal archive

Figure 13: Personal archive