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Chapter 5

Where Are We Today? The State of the Art in Artistic Research

Künstlerische Grundlagen-
forschung jenseits markt-
orientierter Kunstproduktion
ist die Basis für die Zukunft
der “Kulturnation Österreich”.*

* From ‘Money (f)or the Arts’, an initiative by the rectors of the Austrian universities of the arts (see MONEY 2007). ‘Fundamental artistic research, beyond market-oriented art production, is the basis for Austria’s future as a “cultural nation”’ (my translation).

Context

It is now time for a brief stopover. I began my explorations in 2004 and will finish them in 2012 (for the time being). In 2008-2009, I was asked to summarise the current situation in artistic research in Reykjavík (October 2008), Vienna (December 2008), Copenhagen (February 2009), Saltsjöbaden near Stockholm (March 2009), and Berlin (June 2009). This chapter can hence be regarded as a further elaboration of chapter 2, in which I broadly outlined the debate on research in the arts. Many topics discussed in previous chapters are summarised, reformulated or expanded on here. The present chapter is also a snapshot in time. But since some time had elapsed between my presentations and their eventual publication in Sweden (2010) and Austria (2011), I have chosen the Austrian publication for inclusion here. This is not only because it contains the most recent information, but also because it describes an interesting initiative by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). I saw less need for annotations in the present text.

Artistic research is a challenging but controversial subject. There are different views on what this type of research encompasses. Some people even doubt whether any such thing as ‘artistic research’ exists at all. Some people, both in academia and in the art world, oppose the very phenomenon of artistic research. Yet at the same time, artistic research is gaining recognition and support – in the academic world, in the art world, and also from government bodies that are supporting this new field of research with legislation and funding.

The controversies surrounding artistic research often turn on the problem of demarcation. What exactly distinguishes artistic research from art practice? And what distinguishes it from scientific or academic

The emergence of artistic research could be an excellent subject for a case study that would analyse, from a Habermasian point of view, how the political and economic subsystems penetrate into this still vulnerable field of research with their power and money mechanisms, and thus threaten to corrupt it. ▶

research? Underlying such demarcation problems is a question of legitimacy. Do practice-based research degrees, and especially a PhD in the arts, have a place? Who needs them? Which institutions should be vested with degree awarding power? And does artistic research, like all other research, deserve long-term funding? When it comes down to it, it all appears a question of power and money, as so often is the case. This constantly threatens to corrupt the debate on the substance of artistic research.

Some people think the battle is already over, that victories have been won, and that the time has now come to leave the debate on foundations behind us and get back to business. After all, there is still much work to be done to further establish the new field of research – infrastructural and institutional work, but also other work like building a corpus of best practices. Yet the debate on artistic research is still not over. Many people, both inside and outside academia, are still asking what artistic research really is, what place it deserves, and what significance it has. In fact, the subtitle of this essay might just as well have been ‘The Issue of Artistic Research’.

In the pages below, I shall (1) describe artistic research as an emerging paradigm, against a backdrop of trends (2) in higher education and (3) in artistic practice. I will (4) say something about the place of artistic research in the science system and (5) pose the question of

whether artistic research can indeed be considered academic research. I will then discuss some (6) epistemological and (7) methodological issues, and will (8) identify three aspects of artistic research that I view as characteristic. I will conclude with (9) some comments on the place of artistic research in the training of artists. I must limit myself here to a schematic description of artistic research. All these topics deserve to be treated in far more detail. My sketch of where we now stand in artistic research should provide a broad overall view, but not a comprehensive one.

Here and there in the text I shall refer to the situation in Austria, and in particular to the new Programme for Arts-Based Research (Programm zur Entwicklung und Erschließung der Künste, or PEEK) recently launched by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF).¹ In creating this programme, Austria has taken a step that deserves to be followed in continental Europe.

Before beginning my sketch, I would like to comment on the term *artistic research*. A variety of expressions exist to denote this form of research, but artistic research is now the most widely used. German speakers increasingly refer to *künstlerische Forschung*. In francophone Canada, the term *recherche-cr ation* is in frequent use. In the world of architecture and product design, the expression *research by design* is common. Brad Haseman in Australia has proposed using *performative research* to distinguish the new paradigm from other qualitative research paradigms. In the United Kingdom, the terms *practice-based research*, and increasingly *practice-led research*, are often used, in particular by funding agencies like the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Sometimes the term *practice as research* is used to indicate the central place that artistic practice occupies in the research. The expression *research in and through art practice* is also used by some in order to distinguish this type of research from research *into* or *for* art practice.

What all these expressions have in common is the word *research*. Yet that does not go without saying. Research in the emphatic sense is an activity traditionally associated with what people do in universities and industrial laboratories, and not with what people do as they

1. See PEEK 2009.

practise or teach art. In my country, the Dutch Advisory Council for Science and Technology Policy recently recommended using ‘design and development’ (*ontwerp en ontwikkeling*) to denote those research-like activities that take place in professional schools, including the schools of the arts; within higher education, the term ‘research’ (*onderzoek*) was to be restricted to universities. Reality has since overtaken this recommendation, however, and ‘applied research’ is now defined as one of the remits of higher professional education in the Netherlands, and is even recognised as such by law.² This illustration of the reluctance to use the word *research* does not stand alone. In Norway, the Artistic Research Fellowship Programme has been operating since 2003. That is its English name, at least, but in their own language Norwegians avoid the term *forskning* and speak instead of *kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid* (‘artistic development work’). And in Austria, the term *arts-based research* is used in English to denote the new funding programme, whereas the German name is *Entwicklung und Erschließung der Künste* (‘development and promotion of the arts’).

To be sure, differences do exist in what words such as *research*, *recherche*, *Forschung*, or *onderzoek* normally denote and connote in English, French, German, or Dutch. By analogy, there are also considerable differences between what is meant by the English *science* and the German *Wissenschaft*, which also includes the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*). In the foundational struggle that is raging over artistic research, the uses and the meanings of words are of cardinal importance. As paradigms shift, not only do changes occur in the way of looking at things, but also in the meanings of words. And who owns the language, anyway?

One aim of this book is to argue for a broader notion of ‘research’ and an enhanced notion of ‘academia’ (cf. my annotation in chapter 2, page 44).

In the background of this semantic controversy, science policy continues to be informed by a rather obsolete model of what ‘research and development’ is. The classical notion, as laid down in sources such as the

2. This decision recently received support when the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education issued an appeal known as the Leuven Communiqué (see LEUVEN 2009) in April 2009 to further strengthen the knowledge and research functions in European higher professional education.

Frascati Manual, draws a distinction between ‘basic research’, ‘applied research’, and ‘experimental development’. In the eyes of some, artistic research would have more to do with the experimental development of artefacts (works of art) than with research in the emphatic sense. This is a misunderstanding. Although artistic research certainly seeks to enrich our world with new artworks and new artistic practices, it additionally seeks to gain a fundamental understanding of our world and ourselves as embodied in those artworks and practices. Or, as the PEEK formulates it, ‘Arts-based research should be understood as basic aesthetic research, involving knowledge acquisition and method development through artistic and aesthetic processes as opposed to purely scientific ones.’³

Artistic research as emerging paradigm

A portrayal of artistic research from within as a new field of research, as an ascendant paradigm, would need to describe the types of objects or topics at which the research is directed, the sorts of questions asked, the types of methods applied, and the kinds of knowledge it generates. I have chosen here to describe the paradigm from outside. I therefore employ ‘paradigm’ in a loose sense, rather than in the strictly Kuhnian sense as used in the philosophy of science. As I intend to use ‘paradigm’, it denotes a conceptual and institutional framework that embodies its own practices, vocabularies, and theories. Such a framework gains a stable status once it is underpinned by the following elements: (1) institutions and organisations that support the paradigm and afford it legitimacy; (2) publications in books and journals which explicate the paradigm’s basic principles and provide access to the research findings; (3) conferences in which cutting-edge developments within the paradigm are presented and discussed; (4) government bodies and funding agencies that support the paradigm through both formal and material means; (5) institutions of higher education which pass on the paradigm and initiate newcomers into it.

3. PEEK 2009: 3 (my translation). The German: ‘Arts-based Research ist als ästhetische Grundlagenforschung zu verstehen und meint damit den Erkenntnisgewinn und die Methodenentwicklung mittels ästhetischer und künstlerischer im Unterschied zu rein wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisprozessen.’

1. In numerous countries, organisations have been founded (or sections set up within existing organisations) that are dedicated to artistic research. Within higher education, artistic research is now gaining a foothold within schools of the arts as well as in post-academic institutes. Arts institutions and events outside the education system, such as museums, dance companies, and biennales, are also giving increasing attention to artistic research. European network organisations like the European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA) and the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC) have strands and projects devoted to artistic research.

2. A growing number of journals are publishing on artistic research. Some are specifically dedicated to this field of research, especially in visual arts and design. At this writing, a journal on practice-based research in music is being founded, and plans also exist for an international *Journal for Artistic Research*. More and more books (readers, monographs, textbooks) are appearing on the market which deal with methodological and epistemological aspects of the research field. A voluminous collection of articles entitled *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts* will be published in October 2010 (see box for a list of recent books).

This text was written in August 2009, when the preparations to set up *JAR* were in full swing. See chapter 11 for an eyewitness account.

Books on artistic research (2004 – 2011)

- Carole Gray and Julian Malins, *Visualizing Research: A Guide to the Research Process in Art and Design* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004)
- Paul Carter, *Material Thinking* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004)
- Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry into the Visual Arts* (London: Sage, 2005)
- Mika Hannula, Juha Suoranta, and Tere Vadén, *Artistic Research: Theories, Methods, Practices* (Helsinki: Academy of Fine Arts; Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, 2005)
- Katy Macleod and Lin Holdridge (eds), *Thinking through Art: Reflections on Art as Research* (London: Routledge, 2006)
- Pierre Gosselin and Éric le Coguiéc (eds), *La Recherche créa-*

tion: Pour une compréhension de la recherche en pratique artistique (Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2006)

- Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (eds), *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007)
- Sabine Gehm, Pirkko Husemann, and Katharina von Wilcke (eds), *Wissen in Bewegung: Perspektiven der künstlerischen und wissenschaftlichen Forschung im Tanz* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007)
- Dieter Mersch and Michaela Ott (eds), *Kunst und Wissenschaft* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2007)
- Shannon Rose Riley and Lynette Hunter (eds), *Mapping Landscapes for Performance as Research* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)
- Ludivine Allegue and others (eds), *Practice-as-Research in Performance and Screen*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)
- James Elkins (ed.), *Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art* (Washington DC: New Academia, 2009)
- Elke Bippus (ed.), *Kunst des Forschens: Praxis eines ästhetischen Denkens* (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2009)
- Anton Rey und Stefan Schöbi (eds), *Künstlerische Forschung: Positionen und Perspektiven* (Zurich: Institute for the Performing Arts and Film, Zurich University of the Arts, 2009)
- Corina Caduff, Fiona Siegenthaler, and Tan Wälchli (eds), *Kunst und künstlerische Forschung: Musik, Kunst, Design, Literatur, Tanz*, Jahrbuch Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, 6. Also in English within same volume: *Art and Artistic Research: Music, Visual Art, Design, Literature, Dance*, Zurich Yearbook of the Arts, 6 (Zurich: Scheidegger und Spiess, 2009)
- Kathleen Coessens, Anne Douglas, and Darla Crispin, *The Artistic Turn: A Manifesto*, Orpheus Research Centre in Music Series, 1 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009)
- Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts* (London: Routledge, 2011)
- Janet Ritterman, Gerald Bast, and Jürgen Mittelstraß (eds), *Kunst und Forschung: Können Künstler Forscher sein?* (Vienna: Springer, 2011)

- Florian Dombos and others (eds), *Intellectual Birdhouse: Artistic Practice as Research* (London: Koenig Books, 2011)
- Janneke Wesseling (ed.), *See It Again, Say It Again: The Artist as Researcher* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2011)
- Martin Tröndle and Julia Warmers (eds), *Kunstforschung als ästhetische Wissenschaft: Beiträge zur transdisziplinären Hybridisierung von Wissenschaft und Kunst* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2011)

3. Conferences and symposia that focus on artistic research now constitute an international forum for the presentation and discussion of the latest developments and viewpoints. Often such gatherings have unusual formats that do justice to the specific nature of research in the arts. As well as the classical keynote addresses and paper presentations, they offer many workshops and demonstrations with hands-on opportunities to learn from one another. The proceedings of these meetings form a growing corpus of texts that further the debate on artistic research. At the same time, participants seek alternative forms of presentation, documentation, and dissemination that are more compatible with the practice of artistic research. The box below gives an (incomplete) list of such conferences held between October 2008 and June 2009.

Conferences on artistic research (October 2008 to June 2009)

- Sensuous Knowledge 5: 'Questioning Qualities'. Bergen, 24-26 October 2008
- Research into Practice 5: 'Interpretation in Research in the Visual and Performing Arts'. London, 31 October 2008
- ELIA Biennial Conference: 'Talkin' Loud and Saying Something? Four Perspectives on Artistic Research'. Gothenburg, 29 October-2 November 2008
- Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO): 'PhD in de kunsten' (PhD in the Arts). The Hague, 21 November 2008
- Austrian Science Board (ÖWR): 'Kunst und Forschung' (Art and Research). Vienna, 4 December 2008
- Association of Nordic Music Academies (ANMA), Annual Meeting 2009: 'Research and Artistic Work'. Copenhagen, 5 February 2009

- Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet): ‘Konstnärlig forskning inför framtiden’ (Artistic Research in the Future). Stockholm, 12-13 March 2009
- Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (Zurich University of the Arts, ZHdK): ‘The Difference of Art and Art Research across the Disciplines’. Zurich, 23-24 April 2009
- Die Junge Akademie (The Young Academy): ‘Salon Kunst und Wissenschaft’. Berlin, 20 June 2009

4. The national science and research councils and funding agencies are increasingly amenable to artistic research, supporting it both substantively (by formulating standards and quality criteria) and materially (by providing funding). The box below lists reports and programmes that give an impression of developments in various European countries. Some of the financial support is ongoing, lump-sum funding to universities of the arts; some is channelled through national programmes that issue grants on a competitive basis. The support may focus on projects initiated inside or outside the schools of the arts, on research by staff members, on PhD studentships in the arts, or on fellowship programmes for artists. In some countries, the accent is on collaboration between the arts and sciences, and in others between the arts and ‘industry’ (particularly the smaller- and middle-scale enterprises in the cultural sector).

Artistic research in international perspective: State of the art 2010

- In the United Kingdom, ongoing funding has been provided since the early 1990s for staff research in arts education institutions. The Arts and Humanities Research Council also provides grants for ‘practice-led’ doctoral research, and there is a special Research Fellowship programme for artists.
- Universities and art schools in Belgium work together in partnerships known as Associations, which give funding and support for research in the arts and for doctoral research by artists. From 2010, the National Fund for Scientific Research (NFWO/FNRS) will have a specialised committee known as Cult2 to assess applications involving artistic research.
- In Austria, the Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen

Forschung (Austrian Science Fund, FWF) has recently launched the Programm zur Entwicklung und Erschließung der Künste (Programme for Arts-Based Research, PEEK) to support artistic research. In May 2009, the Wissenschaftsrat (Austrian Science Board) issued the report *Empfehlung zur Entwicklung der Kunstuniversitäten in Österreich* (Recommendations for the Development of Art Universities in Austria), which included proposals for promoting research in the art universities.

- In March 2009, the Rektorenkonferenz der Fachhochschulen der Schweiz (Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences, KFH) published the report *Forschung an Schweizer Kunsthochschulen* (Research at Swiss Universities of the Arts) which urges the promotion of 'künstlerische Forschung' (artistic research) and the development of third-cycle (doctoral-level) programmes.
- German federal states are working at varying paces to develop doctoral programmes in the arts. One of the first initiatives was the Promotionsstudiengang Kunst und Design (Doctoral Programme in Art and Design) at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar. In November 2008, the Universität der Künste Berlin (Berlin University of the Arts) launched a third-cycle programme in the form of a Graduiertenschule (Graduate School).
- From January 2010, a new law in Sweden permits establishment of doctoral programmes in higher arts education. The Swedish Research Council has decided to fund a national school for artistic research, administered by Lund University. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education will decide which universities and/or university colleges will be entitled to confer doctoral degrees.
- In Norway, an Artistic Research Fellowship Programme has been operating since 2003. It enables artists, in affiliation with one of the higher arts schools, to do full-time research for three years which is recognised as equivalent to doctoral study.
- The Academy of Finland published an

The German Research Foundation (DFG) is to organise a workshop on artistic research on 4-5 May 2012 in the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. One purpose is to consider creating facilities for artistic research.

English report in March 2009 entitled *Research in Art and Design in Finnish Universities*, setting out strategies for the future that might be of interest elsewhere in Europe.

5. Artistic research has made its entry into European higher education in the arts. The pace of the initiatives, as well as the emphases laid, may vary from country to country. One important theme is the introduction of a third cycle in arts education, which sometimes takes the form of a doctoral degree course and sometimes of a fellowship programme. At the end of this essay I will return to the status of artistic research in arts education.

Artistic research and higher education policy

If you talk about higher education policy in Europe today, you talk about Bologna (or Dublin, Berlin, Lisbon, Leuven). That reflects the goal of forty-six European nations to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. This homogeneity of higher education systems is intended to improve transparency in education. It facilitates comparison of programmes, degrees, and diplomas. It promotes mobility of students and staff, as well as other forms of international exchange and cooperation. The higher education reforms have varying consequences for the countries adopting the Bologna process, and they are also proceeding at different speeds. For some countries, this development signifies a farewell, or at least drastic adaptations, to the binary system that here and there stubbornly divides the world into thinkers and doers.

The Bologna process also entails the full introduction of an education framework common in English-speaking countries, which consists of three cycles: bachelors, masters, and doctorate. In particular for professionally or practically oriented schools of higher education, this is a major shift. It is a step that has long been taken in the UK, where the former polytechnics were promoted to university status in 1992. Arts education has followed this trend in many countries.

With the introduction of the three-cycle structure, research has also made its entry into those realms of higher education that previously had little or no experience with research. These include arts education. The question now arises as to whether Bologna is a dictate and threat

targeted at arts education from outside, or whether it represents an opportunity and challenge for the arts schools. My appraisal is that the entry of research into higher arts education could help create a free space for artistic research, for what Paul Carter has called ‘material thinking’. But first the arts education sector has to articulate what it understands by artistic research.

Artistic research and art practice

Research today seems like a craze. It provokes quite some scepticism here and there in the art world. How can this ‘academisation’ (as some disdainfully call it) be in the interest of artistic practice? Won’t this ‘academic drift’ lead slowly but surely to some new kind of ‘academism’, to an art form and an art discourse that are isolated from the art in the ‘real world’ (even if they mean something within academia)? That danger should not be played down. Especially since the historical avant-garde, there is a justifiable reticence amongst artists, and within the broader art world, towards every form of academism. And indeed, artistic research deserves to be banned forthwith if it heads in that direction, if it is no longer propelled by developments within artistic practice itself.

The artists of today are what Donald Schön has called ‘reflective practitioners’. The current dynamic in the art world demands that artists be able to contextualise their work, and to position themselves vis-à-vis others in the art world, vis-à-vis current trends and developments in artistic practice, vis-à-vis grant providers and the general public. This outside perspective complements the view from inside. A naïve conception of art, of artworks, art production, and art reception, is a thing of the past. We have left behind us any pre-critical conception of art, such as persisted even within modernism. Art (and not just conceptual art) is highly reflexive, even though pre-reflective (tacit) aspects also figure in its production and reception. This reflexivity of art, in conjunction with the reflexive stance of the artist, is one of the most important rationales for research in the arts.

Artistic research is inseparably tied to the artistic development of the artist as well as to the development of the discipline or disciplines in which he or she works. Through artistic research, artists create room for fundamental reflection – a free space to think – in and through their

practice of creating and performing. In the art world, in artistic practice, there is a real need for this free space for material thinking. Both the pressure of the art market and the strains of art production leave artists little room to 'stop and contemplate' what they are doing. Many artists must operate as free enterprisers in the market of the 'creative industry', a market that is not oriented to reflection, but which expects its suppliers to deliver a constant stream of new products and projects. Introducing artistic research into higher arts education would mean creating room, within this haven at least, where artists and trainees can grow and thereby contribute to the development of the arts. Or, as a pamphlet jointly published by the rectors of the Austrian art universities has recently put it: 'Fundamental artistic research, beyond market-oriented art production, is the basis for Austria's future as a "cultural nation".'⁴

A book with a subtitle such as 'Perspectives on Artistic Research and the Art World' could take this impact as its primary focus. Just as academia is not a stable system, but one that is continually evolving, the art world and the things we understand by 'art' are also in a constant state of transformation. The present book focuses on the transformation of academia.

The art world therefore needs artistic research with a certain sense of urgency. But there is also a tension between artistic practice and academia, between the relatively autonomous art world, with its distinctive culture and dynamic, and the world of research, of reflection. That tension need not be unproductive. Interesting things can happen when those two worlds meet. The advent of artistic research will have its impact on academia, on the self-understanding of arts academies and universities, and on our understanding of what academic research is. And there will likewise be an impact on artistic practice, on our conceptions of art creation and of what art is.

Artistic research within the science system

The world of science and technology, of research and development, can be categorised in various ways. As we have seen, the classical subdivision between basic research, applied research, and experimental development is no longer appropriate in the light of the present diversity of academic fields, research strategies, and knowledge forms. Various suggestions have

4. See MONEY 2007.

been made for different ways of looking at science and knowledge production. One proposal highlights the emergence and importance of ‘Mode 2 knowledge production’. In contrast to the more traditional research in university disciplines, Mode 2 production involves interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary research in the context of application (see Gibbons et al. 1994). It also implies the substantive and organisational involvement not just of academics, but of other stakeholders as well, who help plan the research and evaluate its societal relevance.

Because of its close ties with art practice and the central role that that practice plays in the research, it sometimes seems as if artistic research is a type of Mode 2 knowledge production. Indeed, some forms of artistic research, such as research in architecture or product design, can be considered Mode 2 production. But other forms, like research on historical performance practice in music or research in and through choreographic practices, might more readily be seen as intradisciplinary basic research intended to contribute both materially and cognitively to the development of the art form in question.

As noted, much artistic research focuses simultaneously on enriching our world by developing new products (like compositions, images, performances, installations) and on broadening our understanding of reality and of ourselves – an understanding that is embodied in the products generated by the research. This dual research aim likewise transcends the classic dichotomy of applied versus basic research. Stokes’s (1997) quadrant model provides a conceptual framework for understanding this type of research. In Stokes’s analysis, much valuable research, today and in the past, embraces both these aims: achieving a fundamental understanding of what is being studied, as well as developing products and services that benefit society. This multidimensional model of the science system enables us to understand that unique intertwining of ‘development and promotion of the arts’ (*Entwicklung und Erschließung der Künste*) and ‘basic aesthetic research’ (*ästhetische Grundlagenforschung*) that is characteristic of artistic research. The new Austrian Programme for Arts-Based Research (PEEK) allows for both: “Typical artistic “products” such as concerts, performances, exhibitions, or compositions may certainly serve as an aesthetic laboratory or a proof-of-concept within a PEEK

arts-based research project.’⁵ And, as noted above: ‘Arts-based research should be understood as basic aesthetic research, involving knowledge acquisition and method development through artistic and aesthetic processes as opposed to purely scientific ones.’⁶

Artistic research as academic research

Can artistic research be understood as a form of academic research? Such a question presumes that a stable concept exists of what academic research is. By and large, there is rough agreement within academia about what is understood by academic research. But as has more often been the case in history, such understandings are subject to change as new research traditions arrive on the scene that offer an enhancement or adjustment to what has been passed down. It is quite conceivable that the introduction of artistic research into academia will influence our understanding of academic research, and even our understanding of what academia is.

Academic research is characterised by an ‘original investigation in order to gain knowledge and understanding’ (RAE 2005: 34). Thus begins the definition employed by the former Research Assessment Exercise in the UK. Such research is guided by well-articulated questions, problems, or topics which are relevant in the research context – which in our case includes both art practice and the academic discourse on the arts. The research employs methods that are appropriate to the research and which assure the validity and reliability of the research results. The findings are presented, documented, and disseminated in appropriate ways. This is the way that every academic research study answers the questions: What is being studied? Why is it being studied? How is it studied? In what form are the results presented? If artistic research is described in this way, there is not yet any reason to exclude it, even though its object, context, method, and knowledge production may be unconventional.

The emergence of artistic research runs parallel to what might be called the liberalisation of research in academia. One witness to this lib-

5. PEEK 2009: 3 (my translation). The German: ‘Typische Kunst-“Produkte” wie Konzerte, Aufführungen, Ausstellungen oder Kompositionen [können] im Sinne eines ästhetischen Labors oder eines Demonstrators des proof-of-concept sehr wohl Teil eines PEEK-Projekts sein.’

6. See note 3.

eralisation is the definition given in the European Higher Education Area standards known as the Dublin Descriptors (JQI 2004: 3), which set out the intended learning outcomes of the first, second, and third cycles:

The word [*research*] is used in an inclusive way to accommodate the range of activities that support original and innovative work in the whole range of academic, professional and technological fields, including the humanities, and traditional, performing, and other creative arts. It is not used in any limited or restricted sense, or relating solely to a traditional 'scientific method'.

In the case of artistic research, it is important to stress that the object of research, the context of the research, the method of research, and the way the research results are presented and documented are inextricably bound up with the practice of making and playing. Indeed, artistic practice is central to the research itself. The subject of research is the artist's creative or performative practice. The study is relevant in the context of artistic practice, the art world. The research takes place in and through the artist's creative and performative actions, and the research findings are, in part, artistic products and practices. The PEEK programme description also recognises this quality as an important distinction between artistic research and the more traditional academic research on the arts. 'Arts-based research differs fundamentally from academic disciplines like literary studies, art history, and musicology.'⁷

Artistic research thus occupies a place of its own in the world of academic research. The Austrian Science Fund has an extensive classification scheme listing different types of academic art studies, from *Angewandte Kunst* (applied arts) to *Theaterwissenschaft* (theatre studies) to *Produktgestaltung* (product design) to *Jazzforschung* (jazz research) – a total of twenty-seven disciplines. At the very least, *Künstlerische Forschung* (artistic research) deserves to be added to that list.

7. PEEK 2009: 3 (my translation). The German: 'Entwicklung und Erschließung der Künste unterscheidet sich prinzipiell von Wissenschaftsdisziplinen wie z.B. Literaturwissenschaft, Kunstgeschichte und Musikologie.'

The epistemology of artistic research

If research is an original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge and understanding, then in the case of artistic research we could add the synonyms *insight* and *comprehension*, in order to emphasise that a perceptive, receptive, and *verstehende* engagement with the subject matter is often more important to the research than getting an ‘explanatory grip’. Such an investigation also seeks to enhance our experience – in the rich sense of the word ‘experience’: the knowledge and skills accumulated through action and practice, plus apprehension through the senses.

In the history of epistemology, the distinction is made between knowing *that* something is the case – theoretical knowledge, propositional knowledge, explicit knowledge, focal knowledge – and knowing *how* to do something, to make something – practical knowledge, embodied knowledge, implicit knowledge, tacit knowledge. Artistic research operates mainly in the latter sphere. This is not to say that explicit, propositional knowledge plays no part in artistic research. It generally does. Yet the accent lies on those forms of knowledge and understanding that are embodied in artistic practices and products.

So artistic research could be described as first and foremost an articulation of the non-propositional forms of knowledge and experience in and through the creation of art. The obvious question is what

Another key to it lies possibly in Adorno’s insight that thoughts and concepts assemble around art in such a way that the artworks themselves begin to speak. This will return in chapter 7, pages 154 and 168 (and cf. also my annotation in chapter 3, page 69).

‘articulation’ means here – and more specifically, what the role of discursivity is, of language, of the verbal. How can the research be understood and evaluated if language does not at least play a mediating, explanatory role? One key to this question is intersubjectivity. In the domain of artistic research, as in other research domains, the last word is spoken in a peer-group assessment process. As the PEEK programme description puts it: ‘To qualify as arts-based research, the creative process and its reception have to be intersubjectively assessed, documented, and presented in order to ensure lasting accessibility for discourse and for systematic research.’⁸

The methodology of artistic research

Sometimes artistic research is closely related to humanities research, in particular to that in art studies and cultural studies. These disciplines may provide interpretive frameworks that can also figure in research in and through artistic practice, such as hermeneutics, semiotics, critical theory, or cultural analysis. Sometimes artistic research has much in common with technological, applied research, particularly where the research is aimed at improving materials and techniques or at designing new instruments or applications. And sometimes artistic research has a strong affinity with social science research, and more particularly with ethnographic research or action research – whereby, in both cases, the subject and object of study are intertwined, and the researcher is both a participant and an observer.

All these forms of investigation have their place in the emerging tradition of artistic research, and it would seem logical to therefore argue for methodological pluralism. Artistic research does not have any one distinct, exclusive methodology. But there is one qualifying condition: artistic research centres on the practice of making and playing. Practising the arts (creating, designing, performing) is intrinsic to the research process. And artworks and art practices are partly the material outcomes of the research. That is what ‘material thinking’ means.

Three aspects of artistic research

The contiguities between artistic research and other research domains are manifold. These open many opportunities for productive liaisons, as can be widely observed in practice. Some artist-researchers orient themselves to academic art studies, some to philosophical aesthetics. Others feel affinities with cultural studies or performance studies, and action research and ethnographic field research may also be integrated with artistic research. Some take phenomenology or cognitive sciences as a source of inspiration, and others focus on engineering and tech-

8. PEEK 2009: 3 (my translation). The German: ‘Der kreative Prozess und dessen Rezeption müssen jedoch intersubjektiv reflektiert, dokumentiert und präsentiert werden, um im Sinne der Arts-based Research nachhaltig dem künstlerischen Diskurs und der wissenschaftlichen Forschung zur Verfügung zu stehen.’

What is meant here is 'metaphysics ... after its fall'. I first used this notion in my article 'Solidarität mit Metaphysik nach ihrem Sturz: Einige Bemerkungen anlässlich Albrecht Wellmers Adorno-Lektüre' (Solidarity with Metaphysics after its Fall: Some Remarks with Reference to Albrecht Wellmer's Reading of Adorno) (Borgdorff 1998b). I will say a little more about this in the two chapters to follow. Non-conceptualism, realism, and contingency are discussed at the end of chapter 7.

nology. In my view, research in and through artistic practice has three characteristic attributes, which constitute the 'metaphysics' of artistic research: (1) Artistic research concerns and affects the foundations of our perception, our understanding, and our relationship to the world and other people. I would call this the *realism* of artistic research. (2) Artistic research is 'material thinking': the articulation of non-propositional knowledge and experience, embodied in art works and creative processes. This is the *non-conceptualism* of artistic research. (3) Artistic research is not about

theory, but about thought. It is not primarily directed at 'knowing that ...' or 'knowing how ...'. It is directed more at a not-knowing, or a not-yet-knowing. It creates room for that which is unthought, that which is unexpected – the idea that all things could be different. This is the *contingency* of artistic research.

Artistic research and the schools of the arts

A distinction needs to be made between research and research training. Within the arts academies, the schools of the arts, this translates into the difference between research by staff and research by students during their training. And within the latter it is important to distinguish between the bachelors, masters, and doctoral levels. Clearly the bachelors curriculum will teach elementary research skills like argumentation, information, communication, and presentation (thinking, searching, writing, speaking). The masters and doctoral programmes can then focus more directly on doing research. In 2001, an informative report was published by the UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE 2001) entitled *Research Training in the Creative and Performing Arts and Design*. It makes lucid recommendations for building research training programmes at arts schools. Suggestions involve the research environment, research seminars, programme content, admission procedures, supervision of researchers and research projects, and assessment of the research. This report could provide support and inspiration to those who are currently working to introduce research into arts education.

As pointed out above, there are many variations in the ways artistic research is embedded into European higher education in the arts. One issue involves whether arts education has university status or takes place in professional schools – or more precisely, whether the institutions in question have degree-awarding power, including the right to offer research training programmes at the PhD level. Another issue is whether the institutions have the material capacities to create a research environment, whether their staff members have opportunities for research, and whether there is adequate funding. In closing I shall highlight several examples that illustrate the variations that now exist in Europe.

In the UK, ongoing support is provided for both staff research through the Higher Education Funding Councils and doctoral research through the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and other bodies. Every six years, a Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) takes place that forms the basis for allocating research funding to the institutions. Some organisations operate thematic programmes as well, including programmes which focus on research in the arts, such as the AHRC's recent Beyond Text programme.

At the Universität der Künste Berlin (Berlin University of the Arts, UdK), a Graduiertenschule (Graduate School) was established in November 2008 which offers a third-cycle programme. The awarding of the doctorate, however, is reserved for the more traditional disciplines, such as art history or music education. Creative and performing artists are still not eligible for that degree, but receive a diploma on completion of the postgraduate programme. Part of the focus in the UdK is on collaboration between artists, academics, and scientists.

In the Netherlands, research chairs known as *lectoraten* have been created since 2002. Before that, no research at all occurred at arts academies, conservatories, or theatre schools. Currently, thirty such research chairs in the arts exist throughout the country – amounting to no more than one professor per 650 students. In addition to research, the remits of these professors include special emphases on innovation in arts education, strengthening ties with professional practice, and in-service research training for staff at the academies. A pilot project initiated by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) for a limited number of PhD studentships for visual artists was started in 2009.

Regrettably, the Fellowships in the Creative and Performing Arts scheme, operated by the AHRC in the UK, was closed in September 2009. In Norway, by contrast, the government has announced plans to fund additional projects in the field of artistic research alongside the fellowship programme.

A final example involves the fellowship programmes for artists that exist in the UK and in Norway. They are designed for mid-career artists who are enabled to do full-time artistic research in affiliation with one of the arts schools. This formula directly benefits both the artists' practice and the educational institution. The artists are temporarily freed from the pressure of producing for the market, and can work on their artistic development by doing research. The arts school benefits from the artists' presence through the seminars and workshops they teach and the best practices they convey. In Norway, these programmes have governmental recognition as being on par with PhD programmes.

And now we are back to where we started. 'Fundamental artistic research, beyond market-oriented art production, is the basis for the future', not just for Austria as a cultural nation, but for the development of arts and culture throughout Europe.

