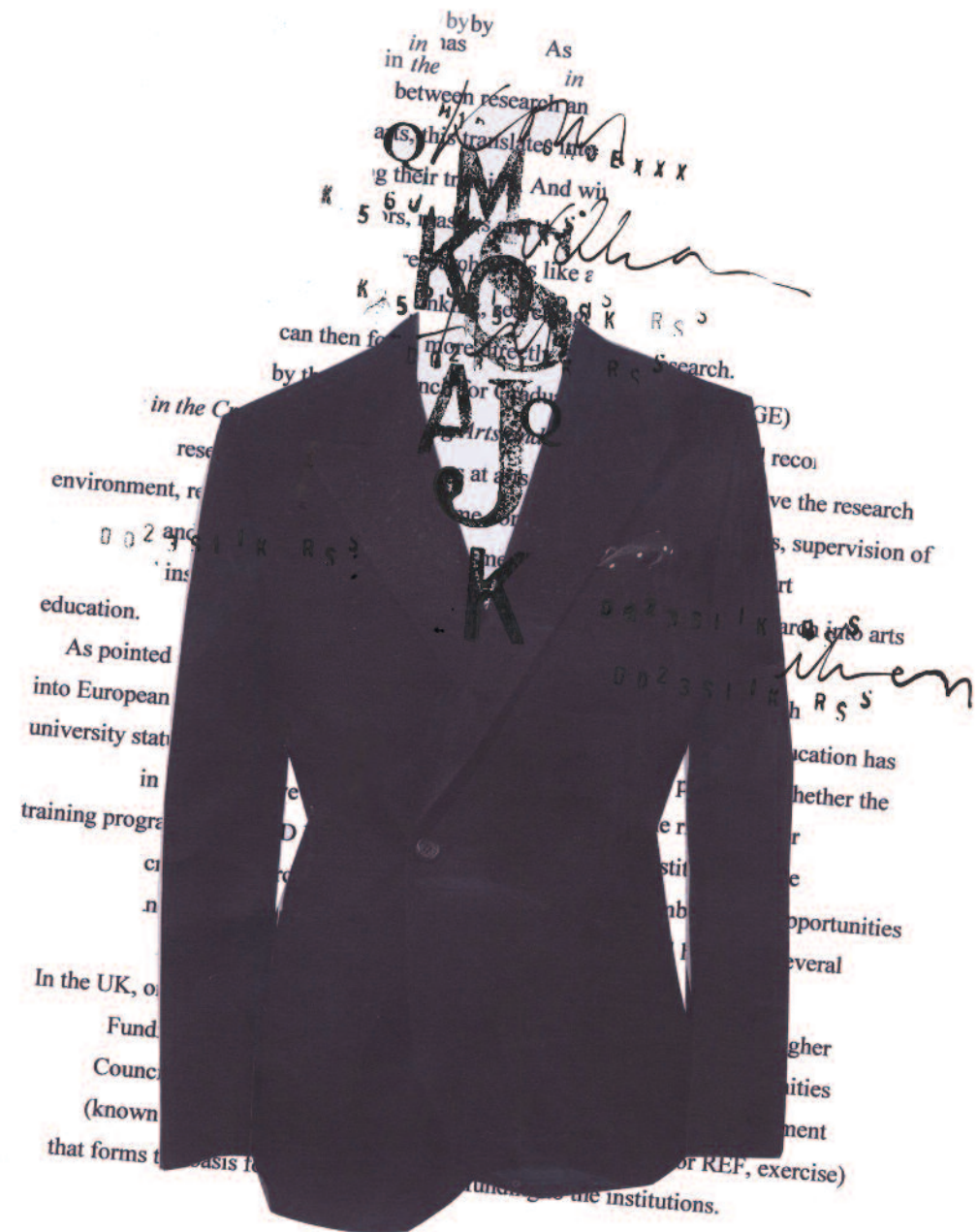


Almänna  
rapporter



# Where are we today?

## *The state of the art in artistic research*

By Henk Borgdorff

**ARTISTIC RESEARCH IS A CHALLENGING** but controversial subject.<sup>1</sup> Different views are held about what this type of research embraces. Some people doubt whether any such thing as ‘artistic research’ exists at all. Others, both in academia and in the art world, oppose the phenomenon of artistic research in their respective domains. Yet, all the while, artistic research is gaining more and more recognition and support — in the academic community, in the art world and from government bodies that now support 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 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? Ultimately, it all comes down to 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, continue to ask 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 regard 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.<sup>2</sup> My sketch of where we now stand in artistic research should provide a broad overall view, but not a comprehensive one.

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. In francophone Canada, the term *recherche-création* 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*. 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 practise or teach art. In my country, the Dutch Advisory Council for Science and Technology Policy recently recommended using 'design and development' (*ontwerpen en ontwikkelen*) 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.<sup>3</sup> This illustration of the reluctance to use the word 'research' does not stand alone. In Norway,

the Artistic Research Fellowships Programme has been operating since 2003. This 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 recently launched by the Austrian Science Fund<sup>4</sup>, whereas the German name is *Programm zur Entwicklung und Erschließung der Künste* ('development and accessibility 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*, the latter of which also includes the humanities. In the foundational struggle that is raging over artistic research, the uses and the meanings of words are of cardinal importance. As paradigms shift, changes occur not only in the way of looking at things, but also in the meanings of words. And who owns the language, anyway?

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 *Frascati Manual*<sup>5</sup>, draws a distinction between 'basic research', 'applied research' and 'experimental development'. In the eyes of

some, artistic research should 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 tries 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.

### 1. Artistic research as an 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 that pass on the paradigm and initiate newcomers into it.

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 an international *Journal for Artistic Research*<sup>6</sup> is in the making. More and more books (readers, monographs, textbooks) are appearing on the market that 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).

#### Books on artistic research

- 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 in the Visual Arts*. Thousand Oaks: Sage 2005.
- Mika Hannula, Juha Suoranta, Tere Vadén. *Artistic Research*. 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 Coguic (eds.). *La Recherche Création: 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/New York: I.B. Tauris 2007.
- Sabine Gehm, Pirkko Husemann, 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.
- James Elkins (ed.). *Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art*. Washington: New Academia 2009.

- Shannon Rose Riley and Lynette Hunter (eds.). *Mapping Landscapes for Performance as Research*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2009.
- Ludivine Allegue, Simon Jones, Baz Kershaw and Angela Piccini (eds.). *Practice-as-Research in Performance and Screen*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2009.
- Elke Bippus (ed.). *Kunst des Forschens: Praxis eines ästhetischen Denkens*. Zurich/Berlin: Diaphanes 2009.
- Anton Rey and Stefan Schöbi (eds.). *Künstlerische Forschung: Positionen und Perspektiven*. Zurich: Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, Institute for the Performing Arts and Film 2009.
- Corina Caduff, Fiona Siegenthaler and Tan Wälchli (eds.). *Kunst und künstlerische Forschung: Musik, Kunst, Design, Literatur, Tanz*. Zürcher Jahrbuch der Künste, 6. Zurich: Scheidegger und Spiess 2009.
- Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson (eds.). *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts* (forthcoming in October 2010).

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 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. '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. 'Artistic Research in the Future'. Stockholm, 12–13 March 2009



- Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK). 'The Difference of Art and Art Research across the Disciplines'. Zurich, 23–24 April 2009
- The Young Academy (*Die Junge Akademie*). 'Salon Kunst + Wissenschaft' (Art and Science Salon). Berlin Academy of the Arts, 20 June 2009.

4. The national science and research councils and the 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 indicate 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 small- and medium-scale enterprises in the cultural sector).

#### Artistic research in international perspective

- 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 Austrian Science Fund (FWF) has recently launched the Program for Arts-Based Research (PEEK) to support artistic research. In May 2009, the Austrian Science Board issued the report *Empfehlung zur Entwicklung der Kunstuniversitäten in Österreich* ('Recommendations for the Development of Arts Universities in Austria'), which included proposals for promoting research in the arts universities.
- In March 2009, the 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 artistic research (*künstlerische Forschung*) 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 Thuringia. In November 2008, the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK) launched a third-cycle programme in the form of a Graduate School (*Graduiertenschule*).

- 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, for five years. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education will decide which universities and/or university colleges will be entitled to confer doctoral degrees.
- In Norway, the Artistic Research Fellowships Programme has been operating since 2003. It enables artists, in affiliation with one of the higher arts schools, to do three years' full-time research that is recognised as equivalent to doctoral studies.
- The Academy of Finland published an 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.

#### 2. 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). This reflects the goal of 46 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 ongoing 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. Arts education is one of these. 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'.

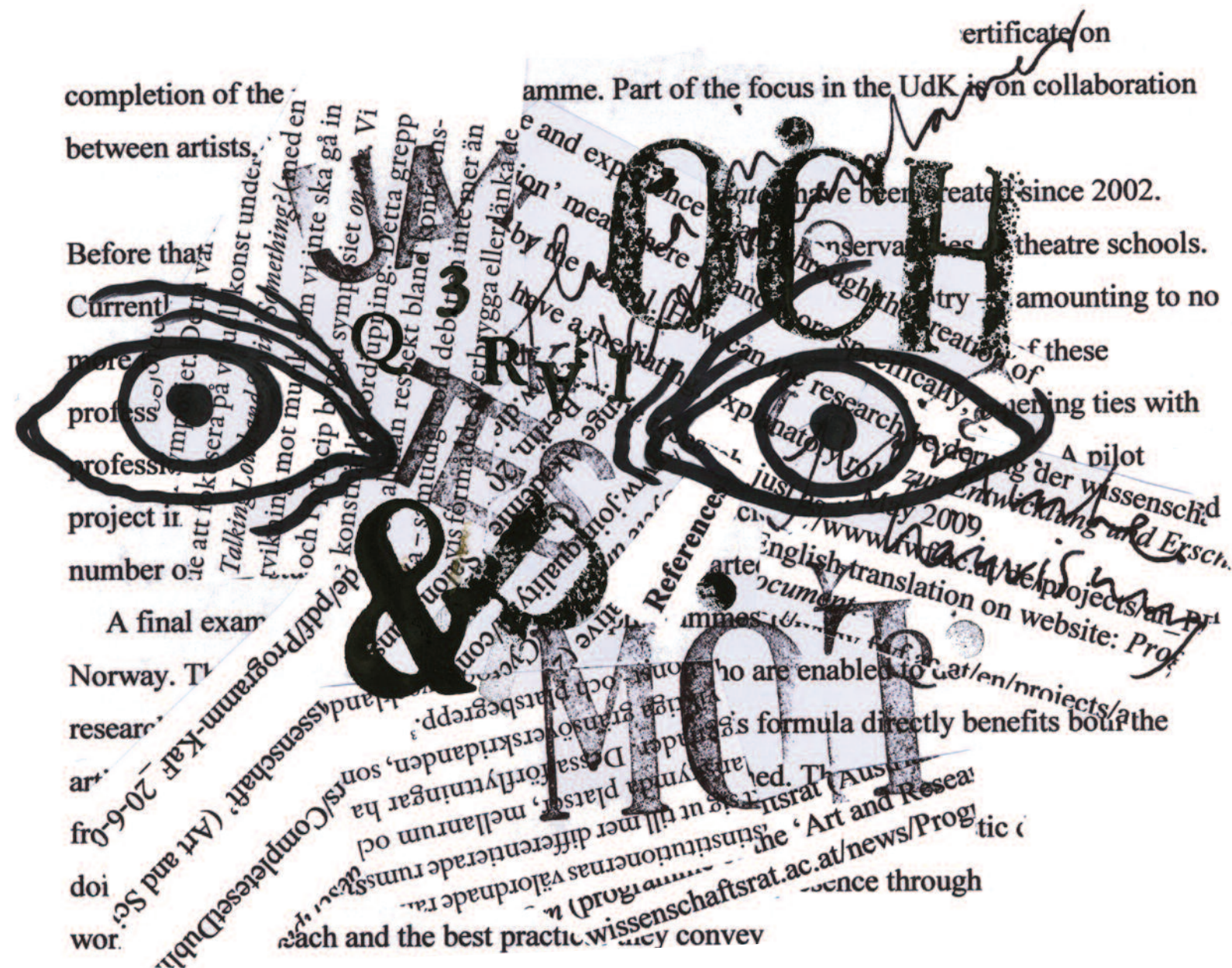
### 3. Artistic research and art practice

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 these do 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 should head 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 grand providers and the general public. This outside perspective complements the view from inside. A naive 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 even persisted 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 individual artists, as well as to the development of the discipline or disciplines in which they work. Through artistic research, artists create scope 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”.’<sup>7</sup>

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.

#### 4. 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 ways of looking at science and knowledge production have been proposed. 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.<sup>8</sup> 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, artistic research sometimes seems to be 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 the world 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 quadrant model provides a conceptual framework for understanding this type of research.<sup>9</sup> 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 might enable us to understand that unique intertwinement of creative practice and aesthetic basic research that is characteristic of artistic research.

#### 5. Artistic research as academic research

Can artistic research be understood as a form of academic research? Such a question presumes that a stable notion 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’.<sup>10</sup> Thus began the definition employed by the former Research Assessment Exercise in the UK. Such research is guided by well articulated questions, problems or topics that 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 that assure the validity and reliability of the research results. The findings are presented, documented and disseminated in appropriate ways. This is how 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 sign of this liberalisation is the definition given in the EHEA standards known as the Dublin Descriptors, 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”.<sup>11</sup>

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. Artistic research thus occupies a place of its own in the world of art research.

## 6. 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*. These would 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 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 ‘articulation’ means here — and more specifically, what role is played by discursivity, by language, by the verbal. How can the research be understood and evaluated if language does not at least have a mediating, explanatory role? One key to this question is intersubjectivity. In the domain of artistic research, just as in other research domains, the last word is spoken in a peer-group assessment process.

## 7. 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 has no single distinct or 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.

## 8. 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 technology.

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.



### 9. 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) entitled *Research Training in the Creative and Performing Arts and Design*. It makes lucid recommendations for building research training programmes at arts schools. Proposals 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 PhD level. Other issues are 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 (known since recently as a Research Excellence Framework, or REF, exercise) takes place that forms the basis for allocating research funding to the institutions. Organisations as the AHRC operate thematic programmes as well, some of which focus on research in the arts, such as the recent Beyond Text programme.

At the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK), a Graduate School was established in November 2008 that offers a third-cycle programme. Award of doctorates is, however, 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 certificate 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 took place at arts academies, conservatories or theatre schools. Currently, 30 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.

A final example involves the fellowship programmes for artists that exist in the UK and in

Norway. These 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 institutions concerned. 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 schools benefit 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 development of arts and culture throughout Europe.