

# Art, Research, Empowerment

The artist as researcher



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# ART, RESEARCH, EMPOWERMENT

On the Artist as Researcher

Efva Lilja

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Article number: U14.011

Printed by Elanders Sweden AB  
Stockholm 2015

# ART, RESEARCH, EMPOWERMENT

## On the Artist as Researcher

*“From stages around the world, via art forums, experimental venues, the world of academia and research, I’ve entered the corridors of political power. Along the road I’ve gained insights and experience I wish to share with those of you who take an interest in art, in the role of the artist in cultural and societal progress. It is about art, research and the power you must conquer to make a difference in this world.”*

Efva Lilja



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# Prologue

Every human being contributes, consciously or subconsciously, to the foundation of our culture. Culture encompasses all that leaves an imprint on our intra-human relations, here and now. An element in our culture is what we call art. Every human being takes part in shaping culture, some choose to become artists and produce art. What does it mean to see the world, to see education and research with the eye of an artist?

The assignments I have been charged with within the field of artistic research stem from my experience as an artist and researcher, maybe also from my period as vice-chancellor for an art university. I write this book from the point of view of an artist. It is written for all of us who choose to dedicate ourselves to art and research, for those who see the need to make cause and effect understandable, as well as steering and power in relation to artistic practice and production. I write for artists within academia and for those outside who wish to approach it with curiosity, for all those who work for the development of artistic research. If we artists as researchers know more about what it is that affects conditions that give us scope to create what we want, we can stretch and remove borders, use resistance and limitations constructively and strengthen opportunities for co-operation. We need to identify each other, as well as the system we are a part of and we need to redefine our role within the power hierarchies that run it.

The outside world judges what is produced and presented as art from historical, cultural and political standards. In this book, the word art stands for activities within all artistic fields, from all kinds of cultural standpoints. Anyone can call herself artist or researcher. Those words are for free. But if you want education in the arts, you

can find a programme that offers a chance to gain the knowledge, experience and insights needed for a professional career. After a period in the profession, some artists seek the opportunity for research that is available in the academic world.

Artists who engage in research, investigate and experiment in a way that develops art and widens the ability to perceive each other and the world around us. We do this in many kinds of processes. In this book I use the word research as it is normally used in an academic context with a focus on the kind of research that is facilitated and conducted in research environments at universities. There are also artists who do research outside of the academic world. This is how I started as an independent artist to apply for research funding in co-operation with various research institutes. That was in the 1990s when the situation was much different from what it is today. When art is now accepted as a field of research, those of us who do research in and through our artistic practice get a chance to develop methodologies, theories, forms for organization and presentation, on an equal footing with other fields of knowledge. Or at least we ought to be able to do that. If it works out we can sharpen our senses and get better at what we do in process, in production and as partners in the formation of reality.

In Sweden there are several successful art programmes in an educational system that is open for artists to do research within and through their practice. Still, there is much ignorance and little understanding of what art does and what artistic research can be. We have opportunities for advanced artistic research processes and production of the most varying kind. We have an amazing system that is not being used to its full potential, because of lack of knowledge about its construction. This is partly due to prejudice among artists who don't see the use of the system or abdicate from responsibility, and partly to a lack of infrastructure and too little knowledge about what make cultural policies and bureaucratic systems lag behind. I would argue that culture policy must move away from old-fashioned definitions of the artist as a financial burden to society and instead focus on the values represented by art - as art. More knowledge would help contribute to a wider and more contemporary definition of terms like "audience work",

”sharing”, ”production”, ”market”, ”innovation” and suchlike, letting go of the dichotomy that regards the audience as passive consumers rather than active participants.

The artistic researcher develops art, artistic education and insists also on a redefinition of markets and commercial values. This is how education, research and the profession are woven together. Conventions from a distant past are a well-packaged burden we often carry with us. Art and artistic research create forward movements, which develop in a cultural and political environment where conventions are questioned and new traditions established. Innovative art keeps its focus on the contemporary and shines its strongest light towards the future.

It is important to remember the complexity on which our contemporary Western artistic discourse is based and how closely inter-linked are education, research and culture policies. This is particularly true today, when artistic development runs ahead of sluggish political strategies in many countries. There is a great deal to be said on this score, since we are often imputed with a utilitarian perspective, in which our activities are legitimized merely as inspiring creativity, strengthening innovativeness, raising productivity, creating economies etc. Through research in art we can influence and strengthen the role of art in our multi-cultural and diverse societies.

In this book I write about the Swedish model for artistic research and how it implies a faith in art and the importance of art for progress in society and culture. I write about art, research and power. I write for you, a student, a doctoral candidate, a teacher or researcher and for everybody else who wants to know more about artistic research from an artist’s perspective. I also write about the fact that the situation in Sweden is different from that in many other countries. This has been achieved by artists and other committed people, who have worked strategically for a long period to make way for the acceptance of the artist as a researcher. There has been a development of methodologies, practices and theories that have been shared with colleagues, through presentations as well as dissemination in various forums. Within artistic research

education there have been projects to strengthen this artist-to-artist dialogue.

Questions will inevitably arise about validation and quality assurance within education, research and artistic production. The argument about what is good in art, in education and in research give rise to a quality nomenclature with an inherent danger of getting stuck in old conventions, but also a chance to develop our skills to critically reflect on artistic practices. This in turn strengthens networking among colleagues and improves conditions for work, both on the so-called market and within research. It also has political resonance with an impetus on societal progress.

Our multi-cultural everyday life can be confusing and contradictory. Cultures we can understand and others that we find incomprehensible compete for our space and attention. Art sharpens our senses. As artists we need academia, artist-driven fora, the commercial as well as the non-profit market as long as it creates interaction and meetings with an audience. Through research we can take over the right of interpretation and assume responsibility over questions where art may hold the answer. Contemporary art finds many radical expressions for cultural development and reality formation, but research does more than that if we are prepared to participate.

Art is power. Money is power. Positions, decision-making, large commissions, market demand and networking too. If more of us gain more knowledge we can also make better use of the system and develop it with an eye to the needs for frontline artistic endeavours nationally and internationally.

So let's stop territorial wars, disarm envy and put our stakes on the endless possibilities of artistic creativity. New artistic practices and educational systems develop with the support of research. If we can make use of them, it will enhance our chances to work as artists, strengthen the importance of art in the progress of culture and society and we will all enjoy a stronger intra-human communication through art. First we have to deal with a few questions...

# 1 What is Artistic Research?

Many of us artists as researchers are thoroughly tired of this question. Yet, it must be answered for this book to be meaningful. The Swedish National Encyclopaedia<sup>1</sup> has this definition of scientific research: *"A process by which systematic work can generate new insights and increased knowledge"*. This is the Frascati Manual<sup>2</sup> definition: *"Creative work undertaken on systematic basis"*. These definitions can include also artistic research if you accept artistic methodologies as "systematic work".

Expanding the definition to include both art and science would be useful for many of us. As researchers we have a lot in common, but our fields of knowledge are different as are our methods. Since the science community still dominates the idea of research, we are for some time yet forced to distinguish between our different fields of research.

At this time there are proponents of artistic research, who wish to make art an academic field within the university structures and others who look upon artistic research as a way to develop art. In between those standpoints there is a great variety of attitudes, manifested in different definitions and interpretations to mark a position within this very diversified field of research. This is important from the point of view of research policy, as well as culture and art policy, since artistic research can be of decisive importance for the development of art.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ne.se](http://www.ne.se)

<sup>2</sup> [www.oecd.org/inno/frascaticmanual](http://www.oecd.org/inno/frascaticmanual)

## The Swedish model – Trust in Art

### The Definition

*”Artistic research is research conducted with artistic practice as its base and artistic practice as its object.”* After an animated discussion in a circle of artists and researchers, Lars-Göran Karlsson, a sociologist with a passion for art, made this brilliant statement. It is a condensed version of needless, winding expositions and explanations. I find it a practical and clear introduction.

You can go on to say that artistic research is research conducted by artists, who research within and through the arts. Artistic methodologies are applied and the end result is presented in the way that is best suited for the content and theme of the project. It may be as a performance, a concert or an exhibition, a text or a mixture of different media. The research can take place within groups with cross-disciplinary and/or scientific competences or as a solitary effort. The process and the results are documented and made available for peers.

Peers are colleagues with relevant competences from the same field of study (art form/discipline), who meet in the research environment for an exchange of views, project reviews and critical dialogue. When you experiment, research or produce innovative projects for the market, there are no demands for documentation or publication in the collegial environment.

But when you choose to enter a research environment, this is precisely what you do. You make your research available for others to review critically and discuss, maybe to get inspiration. It can be stated that this is above all what distinguishes artistic research from other exploratory or innovative artistic activity. By doing this you influence the development not only of your own work, but of the art world, of education and the field of research, as well as society’s attitude toward art.

Artistic research is continually developed by artists interested in the methodologies of deepened processes. Many artists who have been active for a long period, feel the need for processes of a kind that is no longer possible on an ever more commercialized market. The artistic process often has a work of art as its end goal, but the need for processes that go beyond production in search of other targets of knowledge is constantly getting stronger.

There are those who find new ways of organizing and producing art within peer networks that seek to deepen knowledge and improve conditions; others turn to art institutions for support; others yet enter the academic world to do research. We artists as researchers can also claim that it is artistic research that adds legitimacy to the artistic process as a method and acceptance to a complimentary definition of knowledge. Research is simply a way to wider knowledge and insights about what we want to know.

The artist who calls in question traditions and established practices, works from the perspective of a researcher. The artist who works within established practices and traditions can be a prominent artist without applying a research perspective. It is the positioning of the individual artist in relation to the purpose of the work that decides how we define it. When we work within academia, we accept requirements such as documentation of processes, uncovering methodologies and taking part in forums where the research is discussed, scrutinized and shared. It doesn't mean that we have to use documentation techniques from the science fields, their methodologies or forums. We can do that, but we can also develop our own requirements on an artistic base, depending on the needs and conditions for the specific artistic practice.

Scientific research is mostly presented as documents, while artistic research is presented as an artwork, which can be materialized or theorized. One could say that the artist establishes a new reality, a reality creation, or something that the artist Magnus Bårtås<sup>3</sup> has dubbed a "*work narrative*" (Rostock seminar, Art Monitor<sup>4</sup> no 10,

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<sup>3</sup> [www.magnusbartas.se](http://www.magnusbartas.se)

<sup>4</sup> [http://konst.gu.se/english/Collaboration/Publications/Art\\_Monitor\\_tidsskrift](http://konst.gu.se/english/Collaboration/Publications/Art_Monitor_tidsskrift)

2013), while the scientific researcher often presents a developed image of the reality we are already familiar with. What we call reality creation means not only new work forms, or organizational and production forms, but also new art formats. What is demanded in and through this research? Are we looking for new realities and visionary hypotheses or are we contented? In philosophy there is theorizing about the creation of reality, in artistic research it is put in practice. At the same time there are practice-based philosophic disciplines and artistic processes that produce theories. The inherent danger in generalization is that it implies simplifications that sometimes are more confusing than helpful.

The role of the researcher is to put creative processes in a context where the goal is not a given, where risk-taking is an important part and where insights and knowledge generated by the process are just as important a goal as the product (the work of art). An artistic research project must be documented and defended by the artist and this can be done within the art form. If you think of artistic research as artist-driven research into art, that is a good conclusion. But the reality is a little more complex.

The fields of research within the arts are wide and manifold – just like in science. Attempts to smooth out and streamline, to create simplified models would be a disservice to art. Development and innovation come from the dynamics of dissent, different practices, cultures and expressions – if we are able to illustrate them. If we cannot stand up for our different positions and practices, there will be a filter of timidity that clouds the transparency needed for creative dialogue and co-operation.

Is art/the artwork the real goal or is it just a demonstration of the knowledge/insight gained in relation to the theme of the project? The answer is not obvious. Depending on your approach to research, you get a different answer. In addition there is an ongoing discussion about the term artistic research. There are those who prefer to talk of research on artistic basis and others who think that it is time to talk only about research, within different fields of knowledge. I think it would be wonderful if we could be equal and jointly inhabit the concept of research, but we are not there yet.

For the time being we must still speak about the special needs and opportunities within artistic research.

## Rules and Regulations

The above definitions and the reasoning behind them make up the foundation of the system that has become known in a European context as "The Swedish model". It has been established via our unique Higher Education Act (1992: 1434)<sup>5</sup> and a fully developed educational progression on artistic basis. The second paragraph of the first chapter in this act reads in part as follows:

*As the responsible authority for higher education, the government shall provide*

- 1. education based on scientific or artistic basis and proven experience, and*
  - 2. research and artistic research, as well as development work.*
- (unofficial translation)

The notion of artistic basis entered into the present Higher Education Act in 1992, while artistic education and the equivalent of artistic research, called artistic development work, started with a reform in 1977. In the year 2000, artistic research was first mentioned in a government research bill (Prop. 1999/2000: 81) and the Research Council, VR<sup>6</sup>, was given special funds for this purpose in 2001. The full educational progression was established in 2009, when the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Fine, Applied and Performing Arts<sup>7</sup> was written into the Higher Education Ordinance (1993: 100)<sup>8</sup> 2009 (SFS 2009: 933). This means that Candidate, Masters and Doctoral degrees can now be deferred on artistic basis. The Doctor of Philosophy in the Fine,

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<sup>5</sup> [www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Lagar/Svenskforfattningssamling/Hogskolelag-19921434\\_sfs-1992-1434/](http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Lagar/Svenskforfattningssamling/Hogskolelag-19921434_sfs-1992-1434/)

<sup>6</sup> [www.vr.se/inenglish/shortcuts/artisticresearch.4.5adac704126af4b4be2800011077.html](http://www.vr.se/inenglish/shortcuts/artisticresearch.4.5adac704126af4b4be2800011077.html)

<sup>7</sup> [www.konstnarligaforskarskolan.se/wordpress/wpcontent/uploads/2010/08/Examensforordning.pdf](http://www.konstnarligaforskarskolan.se/wordpress/wpcontent/uploads/2010/08/Examensforordning.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [www.lagboken.se/dokument/andrings-sfs/591561/sfs-2009\\_933-forordning-om-andring-i-hogskoleforordningen-1993\\_100?id=40419](http://www.lagboken.se/dokument/andrings-sfs/591561/sfs-2009_933-forordning-om-andring-i-hogskoleforordningen-1993_100?id=40419)

Applied and Performing Arts is awarded after the candidate has completed an education comprising 240 credit points in a subject at the research level. As a consequence of a government bill on research (Prop 2012/13: 30), artistic research was written into the legal text in 2013 replacing the earlier definition of artistic development work.

### **The Swedish "University Landscape"**

In 2014 there are 34 state funded higher education institutions. There are also about ten private. Fourteen of the state funded schools offer artistic programmes at the Candidate level and eleven at the Master level (according to the Higher Education Authority, UKÄ<sup>9</sup>). The numbers change quickly, since institutions are merged and new institutions open. The general rule is that artistic educations must rest on an artistic basis and be research-related. In 2014 nine of the schools had doctoral candidates in the arts and in senior artistic research programmes: Luleå Technical University (LTU), Umeå University (UmU), the Royal Institute of Art (KKA), the Royal Institute of Music (KMH), Konstfack (KF), Stockholm University of the Arts (SKH), the University of Borås (HiB), the University of Gothenburg (GU) and the University of Lund (LU).

Tuition is free in Sweden, except for non-EU students. Doctoral candidates are salaried and there is separate funding for artistic research. We can admit students by audition. Teachers, professors, examiners and supervisors can be hired by expert peer panels on artistic merit without academic degrees. This offers opportunities that artists in many other countries never get close to. We can today educate and research on artistic basis. We also have doctoral candidates and professors, who engage in artistic research on scientific basis or with double merits using scientific methods in practice-based processes.

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<sup>9</sup> [www.uka.se](http://www.uka.se)

### Three Cycles, Three Levels

The government has decided to divide higher education into three so-called cycles (Candidate/basic education 3 years – first cycle, Master/advanced education 2 years – second cycle, Doctor/research education 4 years - third cycle). This follows the Bologna Agreement<sup>10</sup> from 1999, when 29 European countries agreed to work for a common structure within higher education. The Bologna Agreement rests on the so-called Lisbon Convention<sup>11</sup> about aiding and promoting internationalization, exchange and co-operation.

Research should be regarded as a complementary opportunity for a very limited number of artists. To enter an artistic research programme means to explore strategies for developing methodologies, techniques, forms for presentation and documentation of the artistic process, based on your artistry, experience and skills; in dialogue with other artists, to further research and also contribute to new forms of education at the institutions. In 2010 the national Konstnärliga forskarskolan<sup>12</sup> was started as a collaboration between eleven higher education institutions with LU as the coordinating university. This was achieved through active lobbying from university vice-chancellors, researchers and artists. In the research bill from 2008 (Prop 2008/09: 50), the VR was given funding to finance an artistic research school. Since three art schools have merged to create SKH (2014), nine higher educational institutions are now represented on this national platform.

As of 2014, only three universities are authorized to defer the artistic doctoral degree, GU, LU and HB. To be able to offer artistic research education, other universities collaborate with LU through Konstnärliga forskarskolan and in some cases with universities that offer doctoral degrees under the scientific system. GU, LU and HB can also award a PhD to those artists who prefer a scientific research education. Since 2006, 71 artistic researchers

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<sup>10</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bologna\\_Process](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bologna_Process)

<sup>11</sup> [www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/recognition/lrc\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/recognition/lrc_EN.asp)

<sup>12</sup> [www.konstnarligaforskarskolan.se](http://www.konstnarligaforskarskolan.se)

have received such PhDs and ten now have the arts PhD. GU and LU are the two universities with the longest experience of research education in this field. Sten Sandell<sup>13</sup> and Kim Hedås<sup>14</sup> (both within music) received the first two PhDs in the arts at GU in 2013. Three arts doctors come from HB and five from LU, which now has the greatest number of doctoral candidates for the arts degree. With the establishment of SKH, this university now has a rapidly growing number of doctoral candidates, but it has yet to receive the right to defer doctoral degrees. These candidates are therefore salaried via a co-operation agreement with Konstnärliga forskarskolan, LU.

The choice between a degree on artistic or scientific base must be made from the needs of each artist as researcher. In Sweden, a country with a population of 9,7 million (2014), there are about 5 000 students in higher arts education. In the whole country, about 80 doctoral candidates are studying for an arts PhD (33 of those in Konstnärliga forskarskolan) and about as many for a scientific PhD. The artistic research programmes must offer interesting research environments, in close dialogue with senior researchers. (Figures based on information from the respective universities and the UKÄ).

### Who Has Artistic Competence?

Research conducted by professors, lecturers and doctoral candidates stimulate art, artistic education and respond to society's need – explicit or implied – for artistic knowledge formation. For this to be the case, there must be a common standard for the kind of merits required for different positions and assignments, and how these should be assessed. Artistic competence can be defined differently according to cultural traditions and the criteria can vary greatly. The Higher Education Ordinance, chapter 4, 3§, states the following about the appointment of professors:

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<sup>13</sup> [www.stensandell.com](http://www.stensandell.com)

<sup>14</sup> [www.kimhedas.se](http://www.kimhedas.se)

§ 3 *A professor within fields other than the arts is qualified to be appointed if found to have proven skills in science as well as pedagogy. A professor within the arts is qualified to be appointed if proven to have skills in the arts as well as pedagogy.*

*As a basis for judging the suitability of a professor, the degree of skills must be in accordance with the demands required by the position. The examination of pedagogical skills must be as thorough as the examination of scientific or artistic skills. Beyond this, each higher seat of learning is free to decide which standards should apply for the employment of a professor. (Unofficial translation)*

In some universities there is considerable ignorance about what is meant by artistic skills and artistic merit, which is obvious when artistic merit is used to employ staff simply because they lack scientific merit. One well-known example is when a tennis coach, Carl-Axel Hageskog, was employed as a professor at Växjö University (since 2010 the Linneus University, LnU). According to an interview for a local newspaper (Smålandsposten 2008-06-19) with the assistant prefect Mats Glemne, "Hageskog is appointed professor on artistic merit. This is possible only if you have done something unique that cannot be achieved through studies."<sup>15</sup> Those who examined this highly competent tennis coach, cannot have read the requirements for artistic merit laid down by the Higher Education Ordinance, nor could they have had the artistic merit required for examination. This example is somewhat dated, but I refer to it since it was publicly debated and similar arguments are still current.

When it comes to pedagogical skills, they must not necessarily be judged from teaching experience. Pedagogical skills develop also in other situations, where knowledge and experience is transferred and communicated. This can be the theatre or film director's work with actors, the choreographer's work with dancers, the conductor's work with musicians and so on.

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<sup>15</sup> [www.smp.se/nyheter/vaxjo/synad-tennistranare-blir-professor\(702316\).gm](http://www.smp.se/nyheter/vaxjo/synad-tennistranare-blir-professor(702316).gm)

The art universities in Stockholm conducted a project about gender equality and staff structures a couple of years ago. It was then decided that artistic merit should be weighted higher than academic merit if the position required artistic merit, a regulation that is by no means uncontested and still under debate. There are those who maintain that an applicant with a PhD should have priority, but there are many of us who are assured that artistic merit must be the basis and that complementary, relevant pedagogical and research competence can be acquired through artistic activity and be validated as equal to academic degrees. The lack of academic education and research education within the arts in many other countries also creates a problem. If academic merit is a must, the base for international recruitment of artists as staff becomes very narrow.

The criteria for examining applications for a professorship vary greatly. Besides artistic and pedagogical skills, the other criteria (on a falling scale) read as follows in the regulations of one university: *The applicant's idea description of how the intended field of research can be developed, relevant experience linked to the field of research, documented ability to co-operate, communicative skills, ability to represent the institution in public, ability to analyse the outside world with a future focus, ability to interact with society and experience of gender and norm critical perspectives.* The most controversial questions, the ones that vary most between the schools, are how artistic merit is weighted in relation to academic degrees and what criteria to use for the examination of pedagogical skills.

The field of artistic research needs to make room also for the obstinate and those who do not always combine their artistry with good pedagogy. Sometimes you need to recruit an exceptionally competent artist within a specific area focused on research, who is not necessarily suited to deliver basic education. This can be fully acceptable as long as this person has the ability to communicate and discuss the research process; it can be extremely valuable, just as a professor can be recruited mainly to teach and supervise, as long as the basic criteria for a professorship are fulfilled. The same goes for lecturers. What the field really needs is plurality.

Above all there is a need for dynamic, strong artistry of the kind that has so far shunned academia. These fields of research need strong artists to contribute to knowledge formation, new didactic work forms and a development of qualitative criteria. These artists are not complacent, they demand improvements of research organization, infrastructure, leadership models and positions.

Many positions within the arts are time-limited. When hiring an artist, the university has the license to choose between permanent employment or a time-limited position. In both cases the work is often part-time, to allow an active, updated contact with the activities on the various arts markets. The Higher Education Ordinance sets the rules for this, but there are variations in the local regulations for the different educational institutions.

Artists active in the profession, who want to share and work within education, are today crucial for the development of our disciplines. Not because they are professionals, but because they possess the knowledge and the experience that we want to educate for and research in. Most researchers are still active in the profession or represent a leading practice, even though there are schools with another recruitment policy within the arts, hiring mainly on pedagogical merit, as mentioned earlier.

### **More Statistics**

After having stated in chapter one, the second paragraph of the Higher Education Act that all education shall be on scientific or artistic base, there is an additional statement to underline that scientific and artistic research are considered equal: *What is further said about research includes also artistic research, unless otherwise stated.* But there are still some formal, fundamental hurdles for the continued development of the field, which educational institutions concerned and UKÄ have to deal with.

One of them concerns statistics. There is no development without statistics. We know this from our professional activities on the market, where funding is based on numbers, one of the steering

instruments for the cultural bureaucracy. This goes also for education and research. To promote an increase in research funding to the universities, funding from the VR, or other research financiers, you must be able to show what goes on in the field, how much is done and what it costs. All other fields of research are listed within their subject areas, defined by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD<sup>16</sup> which among other things is responsible for international statistics and the PISA study<sup>17</sup>, something school politicians are extremely occupied with. In the listing of fields of research, artistic research comes under the humanities, hidden inside art studies. This makes it hard for us to show what we are doing. I suggest that there is a need for a new listing of fields of research that highlights artistic research to the same extent as scientific research, so that we can argue for a better infrastructure and specific funding.

One way would be to develop our national lists and thereby show the strength of the research conducted under the Swedish model, while OECD keeps thinking about what to do with artistic research. Such a proposal came in 2010 from the Higher Education Authority (then HSV, now UKÄ), in the form of an inventory of fields of research. The proposal has been distributed to a number of countries and organizations, who in turn have sent it on to OECD. Among them the European League for Institutes in the Arts, ELIA<sup>18</sup> and the Society for Artistic Research, SAR<sup>19</sup>. In 2010 HSV made no decision to widen the national listing, but the proposal was, jointly with the Swedish Central Bureau for Statistics<sup>20</sup>, sent to OECD.

I was recently reminded by Giuseppe Silvestri, Professor Emeritus of the University of Palermo (President of the Music Conservatory Vincenzo Bellini), that just twelve years ago it was considered impossible to list artistic research. This is a quote from the Frascati Manual 2002 (p. 67):

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<sup>16</sup> [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)

<sup>17</sup> [www.oecd.org/pisa/](http://www.oecd.org/pisa/)

<sup>18</sup> [www.elia-ertschools.org](http://www.elia-ertschools.org)

<sup>19</sup> [www.societyforartisticresearch.org](http://www.societyforartisticresearch.org)

<sup>20</sup> [www.uu.se/digitalAssets/59/59950\\_standardforskningsamne2011.pdf](http://www.uu.se/digitalAssets/59/59950_standardforskningsamne2011.pdf)

6.3. *Other humanities, philosophy (including the history of science and technology), arts, history of art, art criticism, painting, sculpture, musicology, dramatic art excluding artistic “research” of any kind (my underlining) religion, theology, other fields and subjects pertaining to the humanities, methodological, historical and other S&T activities relating to the subjects in this group.*

The Frascati Manual was revised in 2007 and this is what it now says on the same subject:

6.4 *Arts (arts, history of arts, performing arts, music)*

- *Arts, Art history; Architectural design; Performing arts studies (Musicology, Theater science, Dramaturgy); Folklore studies;*
- *Studies on Film, Radio and Television;*

The reservation is gone!

## **What About Quality?**

For us as artists it is crucial that examinations and development of quality criteria are done in a peer environment. On one level, the question of quality assurance is owned by us as researchers, on another level by the universities, but it is also a question for the authorities (such as UKÄ) and financiers, when we compete for funding. Quality criteria are set also by publications and forums for presentation.

When the government invests resources in an area, there must be some feedback to guarantee a value for the funding. It is therefore urgent to act on the lack of national co-operation in the area of quality assurance. The Association of Swedish Higher Education, SUHF<sup>21</sup>, which unites all higher education institutions, plays an important role for the academic world in this respect, as well as the oversight carried out by UKÄ. The work done by the Ministry of Education and Research is also vital, for instance through

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<sup>21</sup> [www.suhf.se](http://www.suhf.se)

guidelines for yearly reports and dialogues with the leaders of the respective institutions. If the subject of artistic education and research is regularly discussed in these dialogues by university directors (vice-chancellors, deans, prefects, heads of administration), this must be communicated into the system, not passed over as something peripheral. A university that conducts artistic research must clearly include this in its overall research strategies. This is not always the case today. It is simpler and more obvious for those art universities that have artistic education and research as their prime objects.

Some of the quality assurance in research concerns archives and accessibility. The artistic research done within academia, both research education and senior research, must be made accessible in the full complexity of its presentation: as exhibitions, performances, concerts, films, objects, text, etc. This situation is not fully in place today. Certain universities invent their own solutions, like GU, where artistic research since 2010 is filed in the university's digital system GUP<sup>22</sup> and GUPEA<sup>23</sup> or HB, which keeps records in its BADA<sup>24</sup> system. In the report "Complex Digital Objects in Open Archives within the Field of Artistic Research" 2011<sup>25</sup> (OpenAccess.se-project no:51-480-2009) there are well-intended ambitions aimed at the needs for artistic research to be included in digital archives, but also a demarcation problem, which is stated as *"a lack of definition of the field of research"*. I consider that this is a conclusion by someone without relevant insights or without access to relevant information. This is where artists as researchers must take more responsibility and stand up for our research and insist on participation in the fora we depend on for the development of our field of knowledge.

There are quite a few digital peer-reviewed publications on artistic research in Europe and the number is growing steadily. One of the earliest and best known is the Journal for Artistic Research, JAR<sup>26</sup>,

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<sup>22</sup> <http://gup.ub.gu.se/about/>

<sup>23</sup> <http://gupea.ub.gu.se/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://bada.hb.se>

<sup>25</sup> [www.kb.se/dokument/open%20access/Komplexa.pdf](http://www.kb.se/dokument/open%20access/Komplexa.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> [www.jar-online.net](http://www.jar-online.net)

published by SAR since 2010. Another forum that is gaining in importance, is the Research Catalogue, RC<sup>27</sup>, also supported by SAR. This is a platform where you can open an account for free, work with your project and make material available for access and dialogue whenever you want. In 2014 there were close to 3 300 accounts in RC. Some thirty universities and other schools are members of SAR and about eighty individuals from Europe, USA, Australia and Asia. In 2014 thirteen institutions were Portal Members, i.e. giving financial support for the development of RC. Sweden plays a role in this, since the Royal Institute of Technology, KTH, provides the server for JAR/RC. Both GU and SKH are Portal Members.

In 2013, I wrote a report on artistic research and quality assurance for SUHF (Final Report by the Group of Experts 2013, appendix 7, "The Artist as Researcher"), where I suggested that educational institutions should set up co-operation agreements with artist-driven and/or commercial forums for peer-reviewed public programming of artistic research (galleries, stages, media platforms, internet based fora, etc.). The agreements would regulate how peer-groups should be appointed. This can be seen as a complement to peer-reviewed publications; it would work for the arts as an equivalent to the bibliometric systems<sup>28</sup> within science, an "art bibliometry" and one of several possible indicator for distribution of funding.

The distribution of resources within science is today highly dependent on bibliometry, i.e. to which extent the research has been published, referenced and quoted. There are ongoing efforts to build up bibliometric systems for artistic research at several Swedish universities, for instance GU and UmU; one example from Finland is the Aalto University.

For the field of artistic research to apply an "art bibliometry" there is a need for us to be able to access artistic representations in a relevant way. This presupposes the evolution of a peer-culture, of

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<sup>27</sup> [www.researchcatalogue.net](http://www.researchcatalogue.net)

<sup>28</sup> [www.kb.se/Dokument/Samverkan/SwePub%20140226.pdf](http://www.kb.se/Dokument/Samverkan/SwePub%20140226.pdf)

peer-reviewed fora, as mentioned above, and an increased ability to reference and quote artistic activities, research findings, methodologies and theories. To simply give each other credit.

From the artist's point of view there is a need to influence more how the current artistic research is made visible, accessible, presented and filed in archives, but also how time for research is allotted within a teaching position. The strategic development of artistic research must be secured through the administrative regulations, regulations for employment and research strategies of the institutions. As a staffer you can influence this by joining collegial boards and other decision-making organs within the institution. In the end it often comes down to funding. How do we get funding for our research and our artistic production processes?

### Research Funding

When you apply for funding, or when you want to make a presentation or publication, you are subject to competition. As peers we must be able to discuss and examine each other's projects from quality criteria set up through intra-artistic fora. Not primarily to decide what is good art, but to take a stand on which projects make our specific fields move forward by adding new insights, knowledge and "tools".

For professional artistic activities in Sweden there is the Arts Council<sup>29</sup>, which distributes state funding to the regions, to institutions and independent groups and there is the Arts Grants Committee<sup>30</sup>, which distributes state funding to individual artists. Since 1976 the Arts Grants Committee also has the oversight of economic and social conditions for artists through analysis and evaluation. It is a unique organ with the task of putting into practice the government's arts policy, which now also includes artistic quality and innovation. Both the Arts Council and the Arts Grants Committee take an interest in artistic research, but no funding designated for this purpose.

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<sup>29</sup> [www.kulturradet.se](http://www.kulturradet.se)

<sup>30</sup> [www.konstnarsnamnden.se](http://www.konstnarsnamnden.se)

Besides these national authorities there is also funding of artistic activities through regions, municipalities, foundations and private institutions, sometimes also for artistic research. To increase the social and economic security for free-lance artists, to avoid using unemployment benefits and to give free-lancers the opportunity of in-service training, there are since 1999 state-run "performing arts alliances", Scenkonstallianser<sup>31</sup>. About 350 professional actors, dancers and musicians are employed there, when they are out of work. The alliances do not provide funding, but by paying for training, skills development and continuous education, they do contribute to artistic research. I also know of a small number of artists, who have been able to finance research and productions via crowd-funding<sup>32</sup>.

All Swedish higher education institutions receive state funding designated for research. These funds are distributed by faculty boards or other board structures. Besides the resources provided by the institution, every researcher is expected to apply for external funding. Many apply to VR, which has a committee for artistic research, but artistic research is the only field without a permanent secretary and without representation on the board. This means that VR does not include artistic research in its overall work for research infrastructure, nor in its international oversight. It would be useful if VR could treat the artistic research fields in the same way as the scientific. That would also promote cross-discipline cooperation. There is considerable interest in collaboration between art and different fields of science, which would be easier, given greater autonomy for the artistic research field. Independent parties always do better work together, compared with a situation when one party is dependent on the other. Another strong wish expressed by different researchers is to develop the application system, so that it is better suited for artistic research, for instance by accepting other media (visual, audio, etc) and not just text.

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<sup>31</sup> [www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Utredningar/Rapporter-fran-riksdagen/\\_GZ0WRFR10/](http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Utredningar/Rapporter-fran-riksdagen/_GZ0WRFR10/)

<sup>32</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crowdfunding>

Other national financiers are the Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences (Riksbankens jubileumsfond<sup>33</sup>), the Knowledge Foundation (KK-stiftelsen<sup>34</sup>), Vinnova<sup>35</sup>, Kulturbryggan<sup>36</sup>, Postkodlotteriet<sup>37</sup>, Innovativ kultur<sup>38</sup> et al. Internationally there are some opportunities through EU, Horizon 2020<sup>39</sup> and with some research foundations open for international co-operation, such as Cult2 at FWO/FNRS<sup>40</sup> (a Belgian research programme) or PEEK<sup>41</sup> (a programme for international artistic research within the Austrian Research Council). If we as artistic researchers were better represented in the fora where research infrastructure is discussed, progress would be faster. As mentioned earlier, most researches are expected to find external funding for their work. They have to put considerable efforts into applications and reports. Much time is also spent on explaining the aim and purpose of the projects (more on project descriptions in chapter 3).

The international board at PEEK consists of six people, artists and academics from different countries and fields of art. None from the host country. Applications are in English. The whole board has access to all applications, but the responsibility for respective projects is shared out among the members. The responsible member recommends peers. Each project is distributed to two-three peers, anywhere in the world, with relevant knowledge for the specific project. The responsible member will also examine the project. The entire board then discusses the projects based on a presentation and recommendation, their own competence and the different peer reviews. After that a decision is taken on funding. A positive decision means full funding. The peer reviews are anonymized and forwarded to all applicants after the decisions are made. At PEEK there is also a special programme aimed at

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<sup>33</sup> [www.rj.se](http://www.rj.se)

<sup>34</sup> [www.kk-stiftelsen.org](http://www.kk-stiftelsen.org)

<sup>35</sup> [www.vinnova.se](http://www.vinnova.se)

<sup>36</sup> [www.kulturbryggan.se](http://www.kulturbryggan.se)

<sup>37</sup> [www.postkodlotteriet.se](http://www.postkodlotteriet.se)

<sup>38</sup> [www.innovativkultur.se](http://www.innovativkultur.se)

<sup>39</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>

<sup>40</sup> [www.fwo.be/en/the-fwo/organisation/statutes/](http://www.fwo.be/en/the-fwo/organisation/statutes/)

<sup>41</sup> [www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/FWFPProgramme/PEEK/ar\\_PEEK\\_document.pdf](http://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/FWFPProgramme/PEEK/ar_PEEK_document.pdf)

stimulating female researchers to become eligible for future professorships: Richter-PEEK.

In Sweden, VR works somewhat differently. For artistic research it has a committee of seven national members. The VR board appoints these members out of candidates proposed by the universities. A number of members must be active in artistic research and represent different art forms. The committee is delegated for this work by the VR board. The committee treats all applications, but can invite a person with complementary competence if needed. This expert does not take part in decisions. Applications are in Swedish with a summary in English. Projects can be approved with full funding or partial funding.

Sweden is a small, rich country that invests more in the arts, in education and in research than most other EU countries. On the Universitas 21<sup>42</sup> ranking Sweden comes in as no 2 in the world after the USA in terms of quality of studies, research facilities, resources, etc. Rankings are very much based on resources. Whoever is "best" gets the most. Qualitative systems in different countries are now trying to design ranking systems also for educational institutions within the arts. The annual meeting of ELIA in 2012 asked the board to deal with this task. Friends of ranking argue that this also guides students to the best programmes and contributes to raising staff standards. I google the phrase "life is a competition" and get 6 380 000 hits... Who is the best?

Much of my reasoning here concerns questions that are mainly a task for university boards, vice-chancellors, prefects, deans and research coordinators. If all is well within the fields of artistic education and research, these positions are properly staffed by artists on artistic merit or other people with deep insights and a close link to the disciplines they are in charge of. They are bestowed with power over resources, organization and steering. It is important that we as artists and researchers understand the mechanisms that affect our everyday life, that we have knowledge

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<sup>42</sup> [www.universitas21.com](http://www.universitas21.com)

about the system so that we can make relevant demands and take responsibility for decisions, change and development.

There is no such thing as fairness. However much we fight with criteria for decisions, they will always to some extent be subjective. Fairness is sometimes an argument used to explain why artistic researchers cannot compete for production resources with other artists on the market. It is reasonable that those who get paid by academia cannot demand funding for their own participation, but the rest of the production resources for a public presentation should always be able to compete for funding on equal terms. One condition for frontline artistic research in the performative arts is the application of the research in a public production that can be expensive to produce, may involve many participants and often goes beyond the research project itself. This is a discussion we must have with the authorities that decide on funding and financing, such as the Arts Council and the Arts Grants Committee. What also needs to be protected are the democratic and collegial structures that today guarantee decision making and a level of transparency that clearly elucidates both criteria for decisions and motivations for what is decided.

### **The Critics**

The academic world can provide knowledge production and insights about art with the relevant competence in administration, staff and research platforms. How successful this activity will be is dependent on which artists want to participate and how we manage to take responsibility, avoid territorial wars and collaborate with colleagues, also in other fields of knowledge. There are still those who question artistic research, not just among academics and theorists who dismiss artistic methods and processes as unscientific blather, but also among artists who fear an academization of art and the formation of a second-rate caste of artists, i.e. that only artists that do not succeed on the market will pursue an academic career to research and teach. Other misunderstandings include the idea that artistic research is aimed at explaining art or that artistic research is simply humanistic research with artistic elements.

There are also those within the humanities, who are opposed to artistic research on the grounds that they are already engaged in what we say that we want to do, when they work practice-based, do research about art or when artistic forms of presentation are used to popularize or communicate scientific research. Another reason for opposition within the humanities is simply the competition for research funding. I have a sense that the humanities have traditionally been short of funding, both for education and research. And now we come from the arts and demand our own funding...

The fact that we have come this far in Sweden depends on artists, who have stood up for their disciplines, produced qualitative research, made relevant demands and argued for a development. Academics within the humanities have also done a lot of good for artistic research, particularly those who have seen the importance of artists doing research and being engaged. Together we have asked for the opportunity to conduct both advanced research and education, stood up for our disciplines as something more than just skills training.

If you wish to know more about the historical background of the Swedish model, I can recommend an article by Marta Edling, *Artistic Research and Development in Sweden 1977-2008* (Konstnärlig forskning och utveckling i Sverige 1977-2008<sup>43</sup>) published in the VR Yearbook 2009. Marta Edling is a professor of Art History at Södertörn University and her study covers artistic education and research during the 20th century. Her article is interesting and includes other aspects than I have covered. Among other things she notes that already in 1977 artistic research was described as "*a field under development*". The same wording was used in the government research bill of 2008 (Prop 2008/09:50). She poses the question: "*What does it mean, when a field is still considered to be under development after thirty years?*"

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<sup>43</sup> [www.cm.se/webbshop\\_vr/pdf/H\\_0056.pdf](http://www.cm.se/webbshop_vr/pdf/H_0056.pdf)

My interpretation is that it is not artists as researchers who consider that the field is under development. This comes from other people, for instance within the humanities, who do not feel at home in the research structures, methodologies and practices established by artistic researchers. It may also come from critics in the media or other debaters. From my perspective I see qualitatively very prominent artistic research environments and truly awful environments – just like in most other fields of research; good and bad researchers, good and bad research, good and bad environments. A field of research should be under constant development, which is what we are. But there is a difference between developing through research and being described as "immature", under development in the sense that we do not know what we are doing. The question that should be asked instead is this: What does it mean when after almost forty years a field of research is still not owned by its own researchers?

Artists, researchers and decision makers from many countries, look at the Swedish model to find out what impact artistic research has on art. We can also see that many artists come here and contribute to the establishment of stronger international research environments. As artists, we have always been willing to move about, looking for markets and possibilities to conquer what we need to attain our goals. But we must clearly be aware of the development in general. Even I worry about the development.

### **The Situation in Some European Countries**

Working as an artist and artistic researcher demands consciousness of the international context. All countries have different laws, regulations, cultures, traditions and conventions when it comes to artistic activity, as well as the politics of artistic education and research. Artistic research, arts-based research, practice based research, research in the arts, artistic development work... There are a number of labels used in this field that somehow indicate different definitions. In some countries the idea of artistic research is still completely ruled out. In those cases research must be scientific, but can be art-based and presented as a practical work, as

long as it is accompanied by a theoretical presentation (a written thesis). A good overview of the historic development in Europe can be found in Henk Borgdorff's<sup>44</sup> research, published in the book *The Conflict of the Faculties*<sup>45</sup> (Leiden University Press 2012). The reader gets acquainted with the definitions mentioned above and their historical background. Henk is a musicologist, who has dedicated his own research to the field of artistic research. With his work he has contributed among other things to practice based research in music, to research infrastructure and not least to the development of JAR. For this he has earned great respect among artists and researchers in various disciplines.

More and more artists in different countries show an interest in artistic research. The commercialization of the art market makes artists look for alternative ways to deeper insights in their own work, in relation to the work of others, in an international context. Even the market players move into this area. Museums like Tate Modern in London, the Stockholm Museum of Modern Art, MACBA in Barcelona, theatres and galleries host research projects outside of the academic context. The Arts Catalyst<sup>46</sup> in London produces projects that “*experimentally and critically engage with science*”. They place the emphasis on playfulness and the kind of risk-taking that triggers a dynamic discussion about our transforming world. Other fora like Documenta in Kassel exhibit scientific processes and findings as art. Art is presented in scientific forums like the European Organisation for Nuclear Research, CERN<sup>47</sup>. In Stockholm, Bonnier Konsthall and Tensta Konsthall both co-operate with scientists and artistic researchers.

Artist-driven fora appear all over Europe: PAF<sup>48</sup>, BUDA<sup>49</sup>, Pro-Arte<sup>50</sup>, Weld<sup>51</sup>, Dancelab/The Cloud<sup>52</sup>, SAR<sup>53</sup>, ICK<sup>54</sup>, BadCo<sup>55</sup>...

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<sup>44</sup> [www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/?person=7033](http://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/?person=7033)

<sup>45</sup> [www.artandeducation.net/announcement/henk-borgdorff-the-conflict-of-the-faculties-out-now/](http://www.artandeducation.net/announcement/henk-borgdorff-the-conflict-of-the-faculties-out-now/)

<sup>46</sup> [www.artcatalyst.org](http://www.artcatalyst.org)

<sup>47</sup> [www.home.web.cern.ch](http://www.home.web.cern.ch)

<sup>48</sup> [www.pa-f.net](http://www.pa-f.net)

<sup>49</sup> [www.budakortrijk.be](http://www.budakortrijk.be)

<sup>50</sup> [www.proarte.ru](http://www.proarte.ru)

<sup>51</sup> [www.weld.se](http://www.weld.se)

<sup>52</sup> [www.facebook.com/cloud.atdancelab](https://www.facebook.com/cloud.atdancelab)

<sup>53</sup> [www.societyforartisticresearch.org](http://www.societyforartisticresearch.org)

There are also individual artists who exhibit this interest, like choreographers Emio Greco<sup>56</sup>, Jan Fabre<sup>57</sup> and William Forsythe<sup>58</sup>, who have all started their own research labs. Wim Vandekeybus<sup>59</sup> has research activities as well as DV8<sup>60</sup>. Koen Vanmechelen<sup>61</sup> opened his own university, The Open University of Diversity, when the Belgian system did not want to accept his activities as research. They are all men. Many women do research, but they rarely build organisations or structures around their projects. One exception is Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker<sup>62</sup> and P.A.R.T.S.<sup>63</sup>, who will set a new research programme in motion in 2015. The artist Agnes Meyer Brandis<sup>64</sup> is in some way doing the same thing with Forschungsfloss für Unterirdische Riffologie, ffUR. Look at the younger generation of artists, look at the home pages of innovative artists you are interested in. Many of them have a tab that says “Research”. This is a new challenge to the higher artistic education and for artistic research.

Here are some brief examples of the status of artistic research in a few European countries. Sometimes it is difficult to translate descriptions of systems and programmes, since different countries and cultures use one and the same word to describe different things, but this is what I come up with:

### Austria

The six most important art institutions have university status since 1998. Their research programmes are mainly tuned towards philosophy and the humanities. In 2009 the University for Music and Performing arts in Graz<sup>65</sup> started a three-year doctoral

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<sup>54</sup> [www.ickamsterdam.nl](http://www.ickamsterdam.nl)

<sup>55</sup> <http://badco.hr>

<sup>56</sup> [www.ickamsterdam.nl](http://www.ickamsterdam.nl)

<sup>57</sup> <http://janfabre.be>

<sup>58</sup> [www.williamforsyth.de](http://www.williamforsyth.de)

<sup>59</sup> [www.ultimavez.com](http://www.ultimavez.com)

<sup>60</sup> <https://dv8.co.uk>

<sup>61</sup> [www.koenvanmechelen.be](http://www.koenvanmechelen.be)

<sup>62</sup> [www.rosas.be](http://www.rosas.be)

<sup>63</sup> [www.parts.be](http://www.parts.be)

<sup>64</sup> [www.blubblubb.net](http://www.blubblubb.net)

<sup>65</sup> [www.mdw.ac.at](http://www.mdw.ac.at)

programme. It is designed for artists with a well-documented artistic practice and experience of research or investigative, innovative practices. In 2010 the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna<sup>66</sup> and the University of Art & Design Linz<sup>67</sup> opened research programmes along similar lines. One of the main actors on artistic research, the University of Applied Arts Vienna<sup>68</sup> states: "*Some research institutions base their development of internal logics on expertise, drawing on exemplary forms of cutting-edge practices, while others have gone in the direction of designing options for the present while reflecting on the future. Both are rewarding approaches for both art and science. At the University of Applied Arts Vienna work is being done on productively merging both*". In Austria there are no fees for education except for non-EU students.

The national Research Council, FWF, has one of Europe's most radical programmes for artistic research, called Programm zur Entwicklung und Erschließung der Künste, PEEK<sup>69</sup>. Since 2014 there is an additional programme open for female researchers called Richter-PEEK<sup>70</sup>. Professional artists may apply for funding if they can show an infrastructural connection to a higher educational institution. In 2009 FWF published a report (*Empfehlung zur Entwicklung der Kunstuniversitäten in Österreich*<sup>71</sup>), which stated among other things that artistic research is crucial for the maintenance and development of artistic competence.

## Belgium

Higher arts education in Belgium does not have university status, and must co-operate with universities in order to confer doctoral degrees. The Orpheus Institute<sup>72</sup> in Ghent has a unique position within the field of music. It runs an international research programme and post doc activities: the Orpheus Research Center

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<sup>66</sup> [www.acbild.ac.at](http://www.acbild.ac.at)

<sup>67</sup> [www.ufg.ac.at/kunstuniversitaet-linz](http://www.ufg.ac.at/kunstuniversitaet-linz)

<sup>68</sup> [www.dieangewandte.at](http://www.dieangewandte.at)

<sup>69</sup> [www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/FWF-Programme/PEEK/ar\\_PEEK\\_document.pdf](http://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/FWF-Programme/PEEK/ar_PEEK_document.pdf)

<sup>70</sup> [www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/fwf-programmes/richter-programme-incl-richter-peek/](http://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/fwf-programmes/richter-programme-incl-richter-peek/)

<sup>71</sup> [www.wissenschaftsrat.ac.at/news/Endversion\\_Empfehlung\\_Kunstunis\\_mit%20Deckblatt.pdf](http://www.wissenschaftsrat.ac.at/news/Endversion_Empfehlung_Kunstunis_mit%20Deckblatt.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> [www.orpheusinstituut.be](http://www.orpheusinstituut.be)

in Music, ORCIM<sup>73</sup>. Together with the research coordinators within the Flemish conservatories<sup>74</sup> (the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp, the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, the Royal Conservatory of Ghent) and the Lemmens Institute<sup>75</sup>, they have created a platform to share good practices in artistic research and research education. Hogeschool Sint-Lukas<sup>76</sup> in Brussels runs a so-called Master-after-Master programme and a research programme called Transmedia. In the Wallonian Community four universities and academies co-operate in a joint programme for research education: Art et Science d l'Art<sup>77</sup>; the three Francophone higher education institutions within the arts in Brussels, Le Conservatoire, La Cambre and INSAS, have together created the platform ARTes. No degrees are awarded on artistic basis.

As far as senior research is concerned it is fair to say that music leads the way. The Orpheus Institute stands out in this respect. They have a definition of the research field that includes: *"The research process and outcomes produce new knowledge into, and contribute to a better understanding of the arts; this knowledge can only be acquired through artistic research"*.

From 2010 there is a special committee for artistic research called Cult2 at FWO/FNRS<sup>78</sup>, a fund for research financing. The committee screens applications in this field.

## Croatia

Croatia has three types of higher education institutions: universities (sveučilišta), polytechnics (veleučilišta) and colleges of applied sciences (visoke škole). The Croatian system of higher education comprises 10 universities (consisting of 67 faculties, art academies and schools of professional higher education), 14 polytechnics and 23 colleges of applied sciences. Art

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<sup>73</sup> [www.orpheusinstituut.be/en/research](http://www.orpheusinstituut.be/en/research)

<sup>74</sup> <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/511392/Royal-Flemish-Conservatory>

<sup>75</sup> [www.lemmensinstituut.be](http://www.lemmensinstituut.be)

<sup>76</sup> [www.luca-arts.be](http://www.luca-arts.be)

<sup>77</sup> [www.arba-esa.be/fr/site.php?cid=10&pid=92](http://www.arba-esa.be/fr/site.php?cid=10&pid=92)

<sup>78</sup> [www.fwo.be/en/the-fwo/organisation/statutes/](http://www.fwo.be/en/the-fwo/organisation/statutes/)

academies (umjetničke akademije) organize and carry out higher artistic studies and scientific research in the arts; art academies may also establish and carry out professional artistic studies. Tuition fees are determined by each institution of higher education.

One university with prominent art academies is the University of Zagreb<sup>79</sup>, founded in 1669, the oldest continuously operating university in South Eastern Europe. The University of Zagreb Senate adopted new statutes for the university in 2005. They define the mission of the university as *”scientific and artistic research aimed at sustainable development, artistic creativity and professional work as well as organization and performance of university studies on this basis... the university offers undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate education based on scientific, scholarly, developmental and artistic research for the purpose of creating new knowledge and ideas, stimulating creativity and critical thought.”*

In 2008 The University of Zagreb approved a research strategy, which for the first time states specific objectives for artistic research:

- *to establish criteria for defining artistic research as a creative practice and knowledge production*
- *to work on changes to the Science and Higher Education Act with the aim of achieving equal status of the science/research areas and the art area and to advocate the establishment of an efficient system of funding artistic research projects at the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport and the Ministry of Culture*
- *to create an infrastructure for artistic research at the University by establishing a Centre for Artistic Research.*

As a consequence of this policy change, the University of Zagreb has now allotted € 100 000 to support 15 artistic research projects.

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<sup>79</sup> [www.unizg.hr](http://www.unizg.hr)

## England

In England the word science is primarily applied to natural sciences, excluding the category known as humanities, which is often placed alongside or including arts. Artistic research, known as practice as research in England, was initiated in the early 90s and mainly conducted within the fine arts, design and performing arts faculties of universities. While much of this research might be described as about and for art and has been practice based, in the last ten years an increasing number of research projects have been through practice, wherein practice is the site and outcome of the research. A degree always demands some kind of written element and the nature and extent of this varies between universities. The fee for studying full time in a doctoral programme is about GBP 4000 per year for British/EU students and GBP 10 000 – 17 000 per year for others. The programmes are mostly three-year full time, but many students are studying part-time.

Today many art schools have university status. Two examples: University for the Creative Arts<sup>80</sup> and University of the Arts London<sup>81</sup>, with about 200 doctoral candidates (comprising Camberwell College of the Arts, Central Saint Martin, Chelsea College of Arts, London College of Communications, London School of Fashion and Wimbledon College of Arts). The Royal College of Art<sup>82</sup> is known as an independent post-graduate institution. Similarly in the performing arts, the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama<sup>83</sup>, University of London, offers a doctoral provision. Another prominent actor in the field of practice as research is Goldsmiths University of London<sup>84</sup>. At research-level the Art Department's aim is to support the development of original practice in the form of artworks, curatorial production and writing. If you sign up for a practice based PhD, you are expected to present your research in a series of artworks and a written thesis of 40 000 words.

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<sup>80</sup> [www.ucreative.ac.uk](http://www.ucreative.ac.uk)

<sup>81</sup> [www.arts.ac.uk](http://www.arts.ac.uk)

<sup>82</sup> [www.rca.ac.uk](http://www.rca.ac.uk)

<sup>83</sup> [www.cssd.ac.uk](http://www.cssd.ac.uk)

<sup>84</sup> [www.gold.ac.uk](http://www.gold.ac.uk)

A doctoral degree is generally required for a teaching position at the university level and is sometimes needed to apply for research funding. While PhD candidates still look to academic careers, the artist as researcher undertaking doctoral studies is also often looking for self-development and have other career perspectives.

In Practice as Research there are developments across the university sector of a more experimental kind. One example is the Centre for Research into Creation in the Performing Arts<sup>85</sup> (ReScen) under Middlesex University, a cross-discipline artist driven research centre, which has been in existence since 1999. Middlesex also offers an ArtsD (Doctor of Arts), which is designed explicitly to give opportunities for exceptional art makers across disciplines to study at a doctoral level wherein the main focus is the development of practice.

## Finland

In Finland artistic research has a long history. There are mainly two actors within the field of artistic research: The University of the Arts Helsinki<sup>86</sup> and the Aalto University School of Art, Design and Architecture<sup>87</sup>. The Aalto University opened in 2010 as a multi-disciplinary university, comprising the School of Economics, the School of Arts, Design and Architecture (including media, scenography and film) and the four Schools of Engineering that were formerly the University of Technology. Aalto University was the first to offer a postgraduate degree 1981. Today Aalto University offers a Doctor of Arts degree, but doesn't use the term artistic research; the current terminology is art-based research, scientific research alongside with artistic work.

The University of the Arts Helsinki was formed in January 2013 through a merger of the Theatre Academy, the Academy of Fine Arts and the Sibelius Academy. The Sibelius Academy also started

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<sup>85</sup> [www.rescen.net](http://www.rescen.net)

<sup>86</sup> [www.uniarts.fi](http://www.uniarts.fi)

<sup>87</sup> [www.aalto.fi](http://www.aalto.fi)

research education in 1981, with a three part programme offering a Doctor of Music degree: Art Study Programme (artistic dissertation, with concerts and composition practice), Research Programme (scientific work), Development Study Programme (scientific or artistic focus with a development study project to produce new methods, applications and practices). The Theatre Academy followed in 1989. It offers a Doctor in Dance/Doctor in Theatre degree. Until 2007 the two-fold programme offered either a scientific/research or artistic degree (with practical artistic work). Since then all research including research in art pedagogy belongs under the umbrella term artistic research and includes art practice. The Academy of Fine Arts was committed to artistic research from the start. It offers a Doctor of Fine Arts degree with an emphasis on artistic work of high quality and artistic research in the associated artistic fields. Today all doctoral work is performed on artistic basis at the Theatre Academy and the Academy of Fine Arts.

Artistic research education as a four-year programme was instituted in 2003. Doctoral candidates are accepted without funding and are rarely salaried. 20 of the 240 doctoral candidates (8%) at the University of the Arts are funded by the university. On a national level 7 – 18% of all candidates are funded. All others have to finance their studies from private or other independent funds. From the outset, examinations were predominantly theoretical, but have managed to expand the scope for and faith in artistic practice. This is particularly noticeable in the Academy of Fine Arts, which in 2014 has 37 doctoral candidates. There are also many examples of national networking, for instance a co-operation within music research between seven universities coordinated by the Sibelius Academy; other partners are the Helsinki University and the Åbo Academy. The University of Lapland Faculty of Art and Design<sup>88</sup> has entered the discussion on artistic research and now promotes practical doctorates.

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<sup>88</sup> [www.ulapland.fi](http://www.ulapland.fi)

The Academy of Finland<sup>89</sup> (Finnish Research Council) has no funding designated for artistic research. It does however acknowledge the existence of artistic research and offers some funding, but these projects compete with projects from humanities.

## France

In France, there is a distinction between art schools answerable to the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, and university art faculties answerable to the French Ministry of Higher Education. There are also specialized applied-art schools, some of them answerable to the Ministry of Higher Education and others to the private sector. The Ministry of Culture, together with the Ministry of Higher Education have, as an adaptation to the Bologna system, created centres of excellence in artistic education, through multi-site or multi-disciplinary institutions, in close co-operation with the university system. In July 2014 the French government decided to merge a number of universities and there are now only 25 so-called Communautés d'universités et d'établissements.

Post diploma degrees (3rd cycles) have been implemented since 1989 at different research institutions. A major issue in the new reform is to give the art institutions a greater opportunity to engage in artistic research. Some universities can confer degrees of Doctor of Visual Arts, Doctor of Arts and Arts Sciences and Doctor of Performative Arts (Fr. Arts Plastiques); these degrees are not on artistic basis and demand a written thesis to go with the artistic representation. Art schools can as yet only offer diplomas based on individual art or design projects as an initiation to research.

In 2011, thirteen education and research institutions in Paris, including four major art schools and conservatories (École nationale supérieurs des Beaux-Arts, ENSBA, École nationale supérieurs des Arts Décoratifs, ENSAD, Le Conservatoire de

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<sup>89</sup> [www.aka.fi](http://www.aka.fi)

Paris, CNSMD, Le Conservatoire national supérieur d'Art Dramatique, CNSAD), co-operated to create a joint research school, Paris Sciences et Lettres, PSL<sup>90</sup>. PSL is currently developing a PhD programme: Science Art Création Recherche, SACRe<sup>91</sup>. The 3LA Doctoral School<sup>92</sup> initiated the same year a co-operation within artistic research with Universités Lyon 2, Lyon 3, Jean Monnet - St. Étienne and ENS Lyon. In 2013, the École de Design de Nantes Atlantique<sup>93</sup> had two doctoral candidates in collaboration with a school of engineering. In 2014 the Ecole supérieure d'Art et Design de Saint-Etienne and the Université Jean Monnet - Saint-Etienne co-operated to create a doctorate of industrial arts. IRCAM<sup>94</sup>, a centre for composers, musicians and musicologists in Paris, has some thirty doctoral candidates (on scientific basis) under the auspices of Université Paris VI. There is also a practice based research education in music at Paris Sorbonne and the Conservatoire national supérieur de Musique et Danse de Paris.

What is mostly labelled as artistic research and research training in France, can be considered a part of the humanities and research about art. There is no funding designated for artistic research on artistic basis. The National Agency for Research<sup>95</sup> has some funding for practise-based research. An overview report on this subject was published in 2008 by the Ministry of Higher Education: État de la Recherche 2001-2008: Délégation aux Arts Plastiques<sup>96</sup>.

### Germany

There is no such thing as an artistic degree at the level of research education in Germany. Artists are accepted within the traditional PhD system at several universities. The most radical methodologies

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<sup>90</sup> [www.univ-psl.fr](http://www.univ-psl.fr)

<sup>91</sup> [www.univ-psl.fr/EN/all/sacre](http://www.univ-psl.fr/EN/all/sacre)

<sup>92</sup> <http://3la.univ-lyon2.fr>

<sup>93</sup> [www.ecolededesign.com](http://www.ecolededesign.com)

<sup>94</sup> [www.ircam.fr](http://www.ircam.fr)

<sup>95</sup> [www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr](http://www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr)

<sup>96</sup> [www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr](http://www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr)

and forms of presentation have been developed at HfG Offenbach<sup>97</sup>, HBK Braunschweig<sup>98</sup>, HBK Hamburg<sup>99</sup>, the Academy of Media Arts Cologne<sup>100</sup> and the University of the Arts Berlin<sup>101</sup> (UDK). These institutions offer degrees for practice-based research on scientific basis. In 2008 UDK instituted a research programme called Graduate School. In addition, UDK has a wide-ranging research programme within philosophy and the humanities with a profile on the arts. All these programmes are predominantly theoretical. There is no public funding specifically allocated for artistic research.

There is also artistic research education (practise-based although on a scientific basis with a clearly theoretical content) in Cologne (Artefakten<sup>102</sup>, since 2004) and Hamburg (Offenbach<sup>103</sup>, since 2009). HfG Karlsruhe<sup>104</sup> co-operates with the Centre for Culture and Media<sup>105</sup> (ZKM) in research about media and technology. Merz Academy in Stuttgart<sup>106</sup> has a joint research project with the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, to give a few more examples.

There are also artistic research practices that are not labelled as research. One example is a collaboration between the artist Olafur Eliasson and UDK called Institut für Raumexperimente<sup>107</sup> (The Institute for Spatial Experiments). Several artists are active outside of academia in the Institut für Künstlerische Forschung<sup>108</sup> (Institute for Artistic Research) in Berlin. The composer and director Julian Klein<sup>109</sup> and a group of artists have worked in this institute since 2009 with intra-disciplinary art projects together with scientists from different fields of art and science.

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<sup>97</sup> [www.hfg-offenbach.de](http://www.hfg-offenbach.de)

<sup>98</sup> [www.hbk-bs.de](http://www.hbk-bs.de)

<sup>99</sup> [www.hfbk-hamburg.de](http://www.hfbk-hamburg.de)

<sup>100</sup> [www.khm.de](http://www.khm.de)

<sup>101</sup> [www.udk-berlin.de](http://www.udk-berlin.de)

<sup>102</sup> <http://artefakt-koeln.de>

<sup>103</sup> [www.hfg-offenbach.de](http://www.hfg-offenbach.de)

<sup>104</sup> [www.hfg-karlsruhe.de](http://www.hfg-karlsruhe.de)

<sup>105</sup> [www.zkm.de](http://www.zkm.de)

<sup>106</sup> [www.merz-akademie.de/en/hochschule](http://www.merz-akademie.de/en/hochschule)

<sup>107</sup> [www.raumexperimente.net](http://www.raumexperimente.net)

<sup>108</sup> [www.artistic-research.de](http://www.artistic-research.de)

<sup>109</sup> [www.julianklein.de](http://www.julianklein.de)

The discussion about artistic research is very lively with a strong focus on the lack of art-based academic degrees. Some critics claim that a Doctor of Arts would carry a lower status than a PhD. Others worry that a Doctor of Arts degree would force the arts into old-fashioned academic structures. There are professors appointed on artistic basis, but they are engaged in teaching and have no time for research or tutoring like professors appointed on scientific basis.

### Norway

There are eleven higher education institutions within the arts: Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Norwegian Academy of Music, Bergen Academy of Art and Design, Oslo School of Architecture and Design, Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim (architecture, fine arts and music), Lillehammer University College (film), University of Agder (music), University of Bergen (music), University of Stavanger (dance and music), University of Tromsø (fine arts and music) and Østfold University College (performative arts). They all collaborate in the Norwegian Artistic Research Programme<sup>110</sup> known as the Fellowship in the Arts Programme. It was initiated in 2003 as a national research school on the third-cycle-level on par with the Norwegian PhD programmes. The programme is trans-disciplinary and the fellows are examined as *Første Amanuensis* (senior lecturer).

In its first eleven years of existence, the programme has employed some one hundred fellows, of which 41 have received degrees. In the autumn 2014, there are 53 active research fellows. Research fellows are salaried through their respective institutions under conditions similar to the Swedish Konstnärliga forskarskolan. A significant difference is that the Norwegian programme is for three years (four years in Sweden). In Norway it was also decided to use

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<sup>110</sup> [artistic-research.no/en/organisasjon/](http://artistic-research.no/en/organisasjon/)

a terminology different from the science norm. Hence “fellows” rather than “doctoral candidates”, “artistic development work” rather than “research”. This distinction is rooted in the Norwegian legislation regarding higher education, where *kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid* (artistic development work) is defined as an aim for the educational institutions on par with *forskning* (research). The dissertation is primarily a documented and commented work of art. No demand for a written text. There is a request for critical reflection, with the format open for the fellow to choose.

Since 2010 there is a new funding scheme for artistic development work directed at post doc researchers, senior lecturers and professors (senior research). This funding is distributed by the same committee that runs the fellowship programme.

## Romania

Six art schools have university status: National University of Art<sup>111</sup>, National University of Music<sup>112</sup>, University of Art and Design Cluj-Napoca<sup>113</sup>, Caragiale Academy<sup>114</sup> (theatre and film), Ion Mincu University<sup>115</sup> (architecture) and University of Arts Iasi<sup>116</sup>. Other art education is conducted in faculties of art at the major universities.

More than a hundred PhDs have been deferred within fine arts at the National University of Art since the programme was instituted in 1990. There is also research education at the University of Art and Design Cluj-Napoca and the National University of Music. In music a difference is made between a scientific PhD and a doctoral degree DMA. All programmes demand a Master of Arts (MA). Both the MA and the PhD are mainly theoretical and the degree is awarded based on science. Doctoral candidates get a salary of about € 300 per month.

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<sup>111</sup> [www.unarte.org/national-university-of-arts-bucharest-about-presentation.php](http://www.unarte.org/national-university-of-arts-bucharest-about-presentation.php)

<sup>112</sup> [www.unmb.ro/en](http://www.unmb.ro/en)

<sup>113</sup> [www.uad.ro/web/en](http://www.uad.ro/web/en)

<sup>114</sup> [www.unatc.ro](http://www.unatc.ro)

<sup>115</sup> [www.uauim.ro](http://www.uauim.ro)

<sup>116</sup> [www.arteiasi.ro](http://www.arteiasi.ro)

## Switzerland

Higher arts education in Switzerland does not have university status. As “Hochschulen” they must co-operate with national or international universities in order to offer a PhD or other doctoral degree. Most of the programmes demand a written thesis. There is a total of seven Art and Design Schools in Switzerland with research education. Three of those are “Kunsthochschulen” and define themselves as Art Universities (Zurich, Geneva and Berne), while the other four define themselves as “Fachhochschulen”, with a focus more on design than on art.

Zurich University of the Arts, ZhdK<sup>117</sup> is the biggest art school in Switzerland with seven research institutes: Contemporary Arts Research, Art Education, Performing Arts and Film, Music, Design, Cultural Analysis in the Arts, Theory of Aesthetics and two independent research focuses on Transdisciplinarity and Music Interpretation. It has the longest, most varied tradition in doing artistic research and it offers an artistic PhD. In 2014 it feeds into four international PhD programs in co-operation with Kunst Universität Linz, University of Applied Arts Vienna and University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz in the fields of Fine Arts, Cultural und Media Theory/Design/Art Education/Music. An interdisciplinary joint PhD program of ZHdK, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, University of Zurich and other international joint PhD programs are in a planning stage.

The University of Arts and Design Geneva<sup>118</sup> has been running an interdisciplinary research based MA program (Critical Curatorial Cross-cultural Cybermedia Studies, CCCS) for some years, integrating both artistic and MA alumni from the Humanities, which prepares for a doctorate or PhD programme especially in the field of curating. The school in Berne runs a joint doctorate programme with Berne University, which is a more scientific yet art-based PhD. The other four art and design schools in Switzerland (Basel

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<sup>117</sup> [www.zhdk.ch](http://www.zhdk.ch)

<sup>118</sup> [www.hesge.ch](http://www.hesge.ch)

and Lucerne in the German speaking part, Sierre and Lausanne in the French speaking part) have evolved over the last few years and are currently introducing joint doctoral programmes together with international universities. The development of these schools is still at an early stage.

As far as senior research is concerned, Switzerland is not that far. The first generation of PhD or doctoral students will get their degrees in 2016. There are some Swiss and international post docs affiliated, especially with the various research units of ZhdK. The Swiss National Science Foundation<sup>119</sup> provides funding for artistic research as well as some private foundations. There is most often a fee for the doctoral candidates. How much you have to pay varies. One example is the school in Berne where you have to pay 600 Swiss francs per semester regardless of nationality.

## **Political Strategies – How to Make the Impossible Possible**

Many artists are thrown between hopelessness (read: powerlessness) and success (read: empowerment). If we want to take power over our lives and activities, we must take responsibility for what we claim to be and what we wish to do or what we do. In order to do that we must understand the context within which we work and we must express ourselves. We know how to express ourselves and we do it through art, but also in conversation, by text, public discussion, by networking to give voice for many people – and through research.

It is both exciting and important to make art visible as a possible road to the knowledge and the insights we would otherwise not gain. To make you aware that it is fun, frightening and absolutely essential to make art – as art – take a place in our everyday lives and lend a voice to that which would otherwise not be heard. Our communicative skills are honed through art. Artistic representations raise our awareness of the importance of art for the

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<sup>119</sup> [www.snf.ch](http://www.snf.ch)

development of society by demonstrating and making us understand the conditions for creativity, the production of immaterial values and the relevance of the art scene in relation to the evolution of our multi-cultural, complex society. We also put up resistance against the increasing commercialization of art by demonstrating alternative strategies for the creation of realities. The acceptance of art as a field of knowledge is crucial for this process to take place, without the artist being forced to rely on idealistic (unpaid) fringe activities, as is now the tendency in many countries. To be an idealist is not in contradiction to taking a political stand. As an idealist you must always relate to thinking and how your own ideas connect to the perceived reality. Artists and philosophers have always been good at expressing this – artists in action, philosophers in words. Today there is a merger between these expressions.

There are other competences than artistic ones that develop through and within artistic activities, such as leadership, pedagogy and didactics. Many artists work in teams to deal with very complex contexts that often put great demands on the ability to communicate and pedagogically transfer content through didactically relevant methods. Many artists work with projects involving large budgets and logistically complicated sequences, which puts great demands on leadership. Many artists are continually subject to being scrutinized critically and commented on in the media, which sharpens communicative capacities and strategic thinking. Many artists are strong entrepreneurs, with an amazing ability to find solutions for what seems utterly impossible, that is to produce, distribute and sell activities nobody ever thought they wanted; to create a market. Many artists contribute to development, not just of the arts market, but they interact and influence other branches. Art and artistic endeavours have many positive side effects. Some of those side effects are driven and developed by research that has art as its object.

## Strategic Choices

Strategies for political action and for artistic endeavours, must be shaped specifically in relation to the cultural context. From my perspective it seems that in Sweden, as in the rest of Europe, both educational and research policies have been dominated by a utilitarian concept in the first years of the new millennium. The whole idea with the ongoing investment in "creative industries", courses in entrepreneurship and so-called market-oriented training stems from this type of thinking. Oftentimes art is not seen as an asset – as simply art – but rather as an artistic skill to be used for other sectors in need of a creative stimulus and the techniques of creativity.

At the same time, culture policy in Sweden has focused on funding and support from a standpoint of "helping" artists raise their competence to develop a career (read: retraining) so as to become employable. In all this mirrors a possibly commendable wish to illustrate the use of artistic activities, but the end result is that art become less visible as art. Society will lose many of the voices that contribute to a deeper understanding and dialogue about the contemporary by critical reflection and their ability to stimulate creativity and innovative abilities. A society unable to afford artistic freedom will be a poor society, or to quote an anonymous man I met in a bar in Stockholm: *"Naked people wield no power in society."*

## Politics

I contend that our cultural politicians (regardless of political party) still lack the knowledge needed to see art and artistic activity as the potential source of knowledge and visionary power that it can be. Instead, they focus on the politics of subsidies, support systems and old-fashioned institutional, sometimes even industrial, practices. Politicians in education (regardless of party) still think of higher education in the arts as "vocational skills training" and fail to see it as knowledge formation, which in its best form would be a much stronger resource for progress in society. Both these fields of politics act to my mind far too much in a national context, failing

to grasp the possibilities for development offered by a stronger international collaboration. You can often hear artists claim that we "speak through our art". We do, but today it is not enough to produce art. We must also collaborate and act on other platforms.

Within universities and higher educational institutions the tradition for critical examination must be maintained to make way for new thoughts and progress. That is where new insights will be gathered and knowledge developed that will help us move forward. Risk-taking must be rewarded and the goal must be set beyond "employability". The focus should instead be on what the Swedish National Union of Students<sup>120</sup> call the "utility" of education. I claim that strong, radical educational programmes should give the student tools for a professional career as an artist based on individual choices and visions. Developing skills to work on traditional markets or in the creative industries is just a bonus. The goal for higher education and research is not to service existing markets, but to foster vivid discussions and develop future markets.

A good political strategy is therefore to simply produce art, artistic knowledge production, critical reflection and good conditions for communication of all this. For some of us the word itself, the debate, the text or the research can be the way. That is how we have influenced the development of the Swedish model. But there is still need for an aggressive argumentation and strong visions in favour of art, of the opportunities it offers both in relation to our past and what is to come. Sweden is a small, democratic country with a relatively short distance between the general public and the government, which facilitates a dialogue with the powers that be. So what can we learn from our experience of different political standpoints, educational systems and market structures?

We must work with each other – not against. We must work in an international context that facilitates the development of good research environments. The more knowledge we have about regulations and other restrictions, the better we can be at

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<sup>120</sup> [www.sfs.se](http://www.sfs.se)

stretching them and working for progress and more space. Some artists are better at this than others and that is how it must be. We should help each other. Everybody cannot do everything, but we must look at each other with open eyes and pay respect where it is deserved.

If we, from our artistic experience and competence, learn more about the systems, regulations and statutes that organize our society, we can more easily make use of them and strengthen the conditions for good work and research processes. With insights about things we perceive as shortcomings, follows a responsibility to criticize and suggest improvements. We cannot limit ourselves to what we think is possible or impossible. We must gain knowledge. We must be aware.

A good policy for culture, education and research opens vistas to new ways of looking at the world. It widens our definition of knowledge to include also bodily and practical experience as carrying a meaning, it relies on other forms of knowledge and an expanded definition of language. The diversified artistic research collaborates with many other fields of knowledge and players, nationally and internationally, inside and outside of academia. What we lack are strong peer fora and the dialogue between these areas within politics. As I see it, the political system creates demarcations between those who should co-operate, conserves cultural-bureaucratic systems and hinders those who should help each other. A better co-operation between these areas of cultural, education and research politics would create chances for the deepened artistic processes that in a wider perspective would place us not just in Europe, but in the world; they would create understanding and legitimacy for art's specific abilities to contribute to a good society, where we can live creatively, in awareness, in understanding, in empathy, with open eyes. As the former president of the EU Commission, José Manuel Barroso said when he initiated the project *A New Narrative for Europe*<sup>121</sup>: *"Artists, intellectuals and scientists are key-actors for the future of Europe"*.

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<sup>121</sup> [www.ec.europa.eu/debate-future-europe/new-narrative](http://www.ec.europa.eu/debate-future-europe/new-narrative)



## 2 What Does the Artist as Researcher Do?

### **Methodologies – Theories and Practices**

I don't believe in opportunism. I believe in the importance of knowledge, critical thinking and action. Progress is not driven by normalcy or averages. Research and innovative artistic activities challenge conventions and stretch the limitations that fence in our thinking and our activities. As artists we stimulate progress. We hold the empirical experience of art through which we relate to reality, interpret it and reshape it. In this respect it can be argued that our work is hermeneutical. Hermeneutics is a scientific term for interpretation; originally of biblical text, today a way of exploring the basic conditions for human existence.

Research takes time. Dialogue takes time. Inherent in research processes are the academic systems of inertia, which bring forward an attitude of slowness and patience, to me a kind of artistic, tentative exploration.

As artists we are often told that what we want to achieve is impossible. Years of training have helped me acquire methods of constructive rebuttal to such statements. I resist efforts to force movements into conformist boxes with this response: Who are you to say that what I want is impossible? What right have you to judge my world of ideas? Then I turn the perspective around and ask myself: What is it I wish to explore? Why? How?

## Methodologies

In our daily practice we develop methodologies. The method or the methods are the answer to the question: How? Practice makes them gradually more familiar and possible to describe. If you have several different methods in your work process you can combine them to a methodology. What is it I do? How do I do it? If you are pleased with how your work processes and the work develops, you are probably also pleased with the methods used to achieve this. Most artists I know are not pleased. They live with the doubts that are generated by critical scrutiny and a will to develop. That is when that other question arises: How do you do it?

This is the decisive question that announces a readiness to dialogue, to discuss our processes in order to find out what we can learn from each other. Add the question: What do you do and why? And you have the prerequisite for a good research environment. Methods grow out of the process generated by the work and contain the tools needed in work logistics. In regular art production, we normally do not need to define our methods or express ourselves in relation to others. The need arises only in relation to an educational situation or in research, or if we seek dialogue to develop our ways of working. The choice of methods says a lot about our different attitudes toward artistic creativity, toward processes, research, politics and toward the notion of art. In artistic research there are no standard methods. We have a great acceptance for individual or genre specific methods and the evolution of methods over time during the process of work and research. An artistic researcher works mainly through artistic methodology, although some find support also in scientific methodologies.

Artists who distance themselves from artistic research as too academic often have experience of for instance the British tradition, where the emphasis often has been on systematization both of artistic methods and processes, with ideas of using scientific method terminology as the starting point for exploratory practices. This comes from the tradition of practice based research or practice as research, which I will return to below. One example

from my own discipline, choreography, is research from the University of Kent<sup>122</sup>, which has resulted in a handbook for teaching choreography, where the theory is that there are five types of dance that can be produced in a certain number of ways<sup>123</sup> (methods). The intention may be benevolent, but out-dated and based on a form of pedagogy that most arts programmes have discarded a long time ago. The situation in England is developing and today you can find higher educational institutions working with the focus on artistic knowledge formation.

A useful way of discovering your own methodologies, is to reflect over the work process through text in a wider sense, i.e. the “text format” that is best suited for the occasion (words, images, sketches). This is training to break silence, stimulate critical reflection and it leaves a material to study your practice afterwards, or make available to others, who can help you to new insights. It can also contribute to insights that will motivate you to write and develop an artistic theory. Various fields and directions within the arts often develop different reflective formats, using different media and attitudes. In daily positioning, for instance to the relation between the process and the product, between the performer and the audience, the representativity of the work is reformulated over and over again. If you practice critical reflection it will add argumentation for the development of the work. What validates it? What motivates you to insist on dialogue?

A methodology is a collection of tools in the work and research process that describes how we do what we do. It develops over time, during the work. The methods are revised to stay relevant. The methodology shall not only carry the work forward in practice, it must also provide ways of dealing with doubt, hesitation, shortcomings and other problems. Sometimes it is as important to have good methods to handle success. We know that failure is more formative than success. To be able to handle success as positively formative it is good to develop methods also for this. Methodology also highlights attitudes toward creativity, toward

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<sup>122</sup> [www.kent.ac.uk](http://www.kent.ac.uk)

<sup>123</sup> [www.aylesford.kent.sch.uk/sites/files/Dance%20Composition%20handbook.pdf](http://www.aylesford.kent.sch.uk/sites/files/Dance%20Composition%20handbook.pdf)

process and toward art as such, as well as the hard labour with project financing, time plans, communication and other logistics. Being able to talk to others, to show and in various ways share insights about how we work is a good source for progress.

## Theories

Artists establish theories by theorizing their practice. An artistic theory can be described through text in a wider sense and doesn't need to follow standards for scientific writing. Textual work by artists is an important part of the success of artistic research, since these artists express the formation of meaning and creation of reality through art and thereby make their thinking available, not just in practice or through an object, but also in text.

The choreographer and doctoral candidate Mette Ingvarsten<sup>124</sup> has this to say about her project and the writing: *“The affective as a mode of offering, receiving and exchanging information is to me very connected to the knowledge economy we live in. My interest in movement connects to theories of immateriality. How bodies behave and act inside a certain form of productive system, such as the one defined by communication and flows of information. Technology plays an important role in information reproduction and circulation. What I would like to formulate practically and theoretically throughout the next years is the notion of incorporated technology and how it affect us both physically, emotionally and affectively.”* And she adds about her methodology: *“When it comes to the research on writing I have until now mainly used models of writing like self-interviews, dialogs and essays as part of my research. With this project I would like to look for other formats of writing about work, to get beyond explanation and clarification.”*

It can be said that a theory is a collection of terms for related notions, which together form an image or an explanation model of for instance an artwork or another representation of research. Theories move associatively through various structures and

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<sup>124</sup> [www.metteingvarsten.net](http://www.metteingvarsten.net)

contribute to the evolution of terminology. As researchers we explore our art in context and formulate this by positioning the work. This builds understanding and insight through experience. In artistic research processes there is room for essayistic writing, performative and contextualized expression and the extraction of terms and concepts from the works.

For a theory to be valid it must be explanatory and contribute to the understanding of a subject. It doesn't have to be universally understood, but it must be meaningful to those who have competence within the specific field of knowledge. I contend that many artists present theoretical reasoning in their work and in research that contributes to the evolution of theories within the arts. There are plenty of good examples from research documentation and dissertations, but also in books and web publications presented by artists outside of academia. These contributions can function as support for methodological development, but also for production and communication. The theories are communicated through good research environments to reach a large group of peers. Where practices develop art empirically, theories are an important complement.

In contemporary art education the theories most often referenced are from the humanities, in particular philosophers. We are often unaware of the evolution of artistic theory, or doubt its relevance. We might be in an environment that doesn't respect artistic basis, or we are subject to old conventions, a fear to give credit to our peers. We must simply become better at quoting and referencing each other.

The scientific terminology we use today has its roots in the 18th century. From the 19th century come many methodological terms and an increased reliance on empirical facts. That is when philosophy gets separated from the natural sciences. The social sciences evolve in the 20th century and the humanities become a separate category, including philosophy. Art is often put in the same grouping. This very simplified historical overview offers an explanation to why those of us who are engaged in artistic research, get confused when we meet different practices in Europe; for

instance the British system, called practice as research, which lumps together artistic research and practice-based research within the humanities on a scientific basis. History also explains why artistic research is often administered by the humanities.

An equally schematic overview of the history of art, tells us that the classical concept of "fine arts" includes painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry and music. The list excludes other disciplines, such as dance, circus, theatre, film, design etc. This is one explanation for the hierarchical order that still dominates the arts within our culture, which finds its expression in certain academies (The Swedish Academy, The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, The Royal Academy of Music), institutional structures, staff structures, union agreements, etc. It is also visible in the educational system on the European level, where some performing arts schools may offer a diploma, but are excluded from higher education, at least over the candidate level. At the same time, it is reasonable to say that the current concept of art is much more inclusive and refers to all artistic activities that employ sensual, aesthetic or narrative expressions.

Many theorists from other fields of learning, particularly within the humanities, have dealt (deal) with the existential problem complexes in the creativity of meaning. We can find philosophers, who have discussed (discuss) reflected life, the conditions of creativity, the importance of senses and the will, etc. Many artists find support in Derrida<sup>125</sup>, Deleuze<sup>126</sup>, Kirkegaard<sup>127</sup>, Heidegger<sup>128</sup>, Wittgenstein<sup>129</sup>, Foucault<sup>130</sup>, and others; or Maria Cavalcante Schuback<sup>131</sup> and Sven-Olov Wallenstein<sup>132</sup> to mention two contemporary Swedish philosophers. Historical lists of philosophers include only men. Women appear only recently, but

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<sup>125</sup> [www.iep.utm.edu/derrida](http://www.iep.utm.edu/derrida)

<sup>126</sup> [www.iep.utm.edu/deleuze](http://www.iep.utm.edu/deleuze)

<sup>127</sup> [www.iep.utm.edu/kirkegaard](http://www.iep.utm.edu/kirkegaard)

<sup>128</sup> [www.iep.utm.edu/heidegger](http://www.iep.utm.edu/heidegger)

<sup>129</sup> [www.iep.utm.edu/wittgenstein](http://www.iep.utm.edu/wittgenstein)

<sup>130</sup> [www.iep.utm.edu/faucault](http://www.iep.utm.edu/faucault)

<sup>131</sup> [www.sh.se/p3/ext/content.nsf/aget?openagent&key=sh\\_personal\\_profil\\_en\\_285561](http://www.sh.se/p3/ext/content.nsf/aget?openagent&key=sh_personal_profil_en_285561)

<sup>132</sup> [www.sh.se/p3/ext/content.nsf/aget?openagent&key=sh\\_personal\\_profil\\_sv\\_940305](http://www.sh.se/p3/ext/content.nsf/aget?openagent&key=sh_personal_profil_sv_940305)

they are few and often very much on the periphery of academic hierarchies.

Today there are explanatory definitions of philosophy, like “*formulated spontaneous observations*” (Curt Ducasse<sup>133</sup>, a French philosopher working in the USA until his death 1966) or the subject definition by the Swedish National School Board: “*Philosophy is a subject in the humanities that reaches into all areas of human knowledge and activity, since it treats basic questions about the nature of reality, the realms of knowledge and the existence of values. Philosophic activity is about thinking independently, critically and analytically over these questions as they arise in private life, in society, culture and science. The purpose of philosophical activity is to formulate and elucidate philosophical questions and to find a position in relation to them.*” (unofficial translation) Much of this could be said also about artistic research, if you exchange the word science for art and if you take into consideration that art is mainly represented as art and not primarily as knowledge production. If you try to explain what art is, or what it could be, you end up close to philosophy. Artistic endeavours often take up hermeneutical issues reminiscent of philosophy. As artists we also deal with concepts like meaning, creativity, will, thinking, unverifiable ideas and interpretations of actions, experiences and so forth. Art and philosophy both assume the right to question and define reality.

## The practice

In Sweden, there is a distinction between artistic and scientific areas of education, which affects methodologies and theorizing, namely the progression. While students in scientific educations often move directly from candidate to master and on to the research level in one sequence, most art students enter their professions after the candidate level and come back some time later to deepen their knowledge in a master programme. Artists normally seek a research education only after being firmly established in their profession. This means that the students in

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<sup>133</sup> [www.brown.edu/Administration/News\\_Bureau/Databases/Encyclopedia/search.php?serial=D0160](http://www.brown.edu/Administration/News_Bureau/Databases/Encyclopedia/search.php?serial=D0160)

artistic programmes with preparatory research education at the master level, already have practical experience and candidates for a doctoral degree in the arts are often much older and more experienced than those in scientific fields. This varies also between the arts. Students of fine arts more often go from candidate to master and then into the profession.

Lecturers and professors within the arts are recruited from their artistic activities, where they have established practices, methodologies and, based on this work, often also theories. Some have formal education, others don't. In the long run this will probably change, when there are more artists with an arts PhD, more post doc positions, more artists in research; when more artists have tested their methodology, pedagogy and leadership. Many arts professors choose academia for a time-limited position that offers them resources, time for research, as well as power and a possibility to influence for instance education. I say this based on a great number of discussions with doctoral candidates, professors and leading persons within academia.

We can insist on whatever we may think of. We can keep talking and arguing – but the response comes not to what we say, but what we do.

### **Sharing and Being a Strong Peer – For Whom?**

The establishment of artist-driven fora for research and research activities in art institutions, universities and art academies, has made possible a growth of interesting, international research platforms and collaborative networks for a dialogue between colleagues. These are the fora where we can identify one another as peers. As peers we can develop our abilities to collaborate, criticize and assume the kind of responsibilities that constitute empowerment. We develop peer-reviewed fora for quality assurance and we work for a general acceptance for our kind of research and the art that is produced as a result of it.

Peer-reviewing fora can be anything from exhibitions, performances or concerts programmed by artists, to research publications like JAR where the selection and examination of published materials are mainly done by artists. Through these fora the research is subject to competition and there is a quality assurance when people with relevant knowledge and experience examine the research/the work before it is made public. The distinction between the quality assurance in these fora and the market is the peer input. The market criteria for publication, presentation and/or programming come from commercial or populist sources. Instead of producers, critics, programmers or curators, research is reviewed and selected by peers within the discipline. Providing, of course, that the system works. In this context I wish to underline that there are obviously people with deep knowledge about art and artistic practices, who contribute with their knowledge and enthusiasm without being artists. But there are also many institutions where those who are put forward as peers neither have relevant knowledge of the field, nor artistic experience. That is when we must protest. The peer concept is relevant also in relation to auditions by jury, expert opinions for employment to certain positions, examinations for higher degrees, supervisors, opponents, examiners and so forth. This goes also for arts bibliometry as an indicator for distribution of resources (see chapter 4).

If arts education from the basic level can train students to critically reflect on each other's work, to give credit to each other and use other artists' work as a reference – both in practice and in theory – a "peer culture" will evolve to change both academia and the market. Self-esteem will increase among artists as researchers, other artists and artistic activities will assume a wider role in society. It becomes easier to break with the norm. We practice how to assume responsibility for decision-making processes, distribution of funding, art reviews and other areas that together strengthen the representativity of art.

## Documentation – Representation and Dissemination

One demand on a researcher is to make the research findings available, through presentation and documentation in such a way that it can be filed and disseminated. I recently met a doctoral candidate in artistic research who professed: *"I don't give a shit about the documentation!"* Through our discussion I realized that he assumed that documentation was simply a requirement from the university, without reflecting over the question: Why? He had not thought in terms of sharing and exchanging information with colleagues or the need to store material for further development of his own project. I think that the first question we must put is: For whom? If you start with that, your methodology will evolve through: What? and How?

In artistic research, the documentation almost always covers both the process and the result, as different from the documentation in many scientific disciplines where the primary focus is on the result. In text-based arts, the formats are easily accessible, but for more visual art forms, performative disciplines and audio art, the questions of method and format for documentation are more complex.

It is during the work that meaning is created and the reflection around this process must be documented in the way that is best suited. If we seek acceptance for a new form of knowledge formation, we must also believe in it. We must allow it to be examined. In the qualifications for the Swedish arts PhD, there is no requirement for text-based reflection/documentation. For the senior researcher there are no other requirements than the accounting demanded by the source of funding. This means that there is a lot for us to take a stand on, to expand on and to present solutions for. By insisting on relevant forms of documentation, we will also make it more tangent what kind of archival systems are needed for artistic research.

Documentation doesn't necessarily mean saving in traditional formats suited for existing archives. Artistic research in and for art can also insist on new formats. What happens if you think of our

social and cultural conscience as a type of archive? Our habits as an expression of applied knowledge? Maybe that is too philosophical a start for a discussion about methodologies of documentation, but if you insist on documentation specific to art or an art discipline, the relation to the outside world is crucial. I wish that we could experiment more with these formats and from the experiences we acquire develop techniques both for archives and dissemination.

Already at the planning stage of the project, there must be ideas about how the work shall be presented and disseminated. The standard formats for presentation are well known in our respective disciplines: concerts, exhibitions, installations, stage performances as well as conferences and seminars, etc. It is important that materials and processes are documented from the outset in a way that is relevant for the research (the art form). Routines help and it is wise not to work narrowly. It is difficult to know from the start what will turn out to be important, so rather too much than too little. The documentation is important for others to understand your process, confusion, acquired knowledge or experience and conclusions. That is also what remains for the researcher as a starting point for further activities. Daily reflections, notes on references, filing of source material, meetings, conversations, calendars and other items become part of the job.

The artistic presentation/the work must represent the research. The documentation must be representative for the research, but when you work with performative art, actions, installations or other live formats, the work of art is most often presented in a context where it is confronted with an audience. If you for instance choose to tape the work for documentation, the film will be an interpretation of the work and not represent the work itself. The documentation should have a form and a content that represents the method and insights gained through both the process and the result. Questions about the development of methods for this must take into account to which extent formats for documentation and techniques influence the research.

## Discussion

One problem when it comes to research documentation is the old notion that all art must be understood by everybody. There are many ways in which art can be presented in public, but research has a different status. Who is making what available for whom? Some presentations of research are well suited for public presentation, normally with the documentation separated. In other cases this doesn't work at all. Some research demands a qualified recipient with deep knowledge of the specific field of research. Different art disciplines and areas of research have different readings, terminologies and cultures. A frontline project in choreography may be completely unintelligible for a poet, a musician or an actor. In these cases we must be careful with the peer concept and respect differences in fields of research. Research in astronomy is produced in documents full of formulas and symbols, totally incomprehensible for a student of religion. You would never invite a sociologist as an opponent to a dissertation in chemistry. But within the arts it is often a given that all artists have competence in all disciplines and oftentimes humanists from various fields of knowledge are supposed to be peers in the examination of project funding and documentation for disputations. It is our task to influence the formation of peer-driven fora, like juries, committees, reference groups and other decision-making organs. If we want to insist on another form of dissemination of knowledge and documentation than the standard prevalent in the world of science, we must do this with great conviction to make sure that examiners and other reviewers have the relevant competence for the specific field of research.

In 2011 the University of Dance and Circus, DOCH, organized a conference on documentation of artistic research within EUFRAD<sup>134</sup>, The European Forum for Research Degrees in Art and Design/ELIA together with the Konstnärliga forskarskolan, and the other art schools in Stockholm: Forms of Documentation and Presentation of Artistic Research. Different artists with research experience were invited to lead workshops about different

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<sup>134</sup> [www.sharenetwork.eu/events/eufrad-stockholm-2011](http://www.sharenetwork.eu/events/eufrad-stockholm-2011)

attitudes and methods in documentation processes; they were Sandi Hillal and Alessandro Petti (Palestina), Melati Suryodarmo (Indonesia/Germany), Gerhard Eckel (Austria/Sweden), Lisi Raskin (USA), Ong Keng Sen (Singapore) and Maria Berríos (Chile/UK). Doctoral candidates and supervisors from eight countries took part in the work. In the concluding discussions at the conference, a recurring comment was that the goals set up by researching artists for their documentation, often did not coincide with the expectations from their universities for documentation and presentation of results. A worry was also expressed that the specifics of a discipline would have to give way for cross-disciplinary ambitions. Many of the problem descriptions that were raised in the discussion pointed at conventional systems rooted in scientific traditions as stumbling blocks for the evolution of relevant documentation formats for artistic research.

A musician and composer, Sten Sandell, has chosen an interesting form of documentation for his dissertation: *På insidan av tystnaden*<sup>135</sup> ("Inside Silence", GU 2013). It is presented as a book with text, drawings and graphically presented scores with references that can be read alongside an audio-visual web-based documentation and a box of CDs. Another example is circus director Tilde Björnfors<sup>136</sup>, whose research documentation is entirely web-based (DOCH 2011).

We must also be able to separate documentation of what is (the ongoing) and what acts (the effect). The formats for documentation can be directed toward fora for publication, for archives and/or a communicative situation, like a seminar. The Sten Sandell example shows a focus on the first two requirements, while the artist Malin Arnell<sup>137</sup>, doctoral candidate at SKH, has focused part of her research on the development of documentation and presentation formats. This is shown in *My Body Remains the Enduring Reality*<sup>138</sup>, an account designed for what she called a 67,3% three-day seminar, with day one designated for

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<sup>135</sup> [www.hsm.gu.se/Forskning\\_%26\\_utveckling/avslutadeprojekt/avhandlingar/sten\\_sandell/](http://www.hsm.gu.se/Forskning_%26_utveckling/avslutadeprojekt/avhandlingar/sten_sandell/)

<sup>136</sup> [www.circusresearch.com](http://www.circusresearch.com)

<sup>137</sup> [www.malinarnell.org](http://www.malinarnell.org)

<sup>138</sup> [www.uniarts.se/research](http://www.uniarts.se/research)

reconstructions of earlier works of importance for her ongoing research; the second day a presentation and discussion of the process with other artists interested in the same themes; on the closing day a panel discussion about the development of examination forms for artistic research education.

## Conferencing

A trap many get caught in is the traditional “paper-format”, developed at conferences for scientific research, where you often get twenty minutes to present your project. The researcher will read a text, well timed to fit the twenty minutes, and then answer questions for five minutes. This doesn’t create any good communication. The audience is passive, they take in maybe half of what has been said, even if the reading is supported by some imagery. It works a little better if the texts are distributed beforehand and the participants can be expected to have read them. In that case, the presenter can focus on the artistic representation of the research, deepening the arguments and the audience can prepare questions. If you also give an opportunity for the audience to discuss in smaller groups, using their own experience, the context becomes more rewarding for everybody and increases the chances for a dialogue.

Many conferences for artistic research copy conference models from science instead of developing contexts better suited for the arts. Again the problem is convention. We can insist on choosing our own forms by taking responsibility for our needs. We don’t even have to call all our presentation formats conferences. DOCH creates a meeting platform for researchers under the heading Close Encounters<sup>139</sup>. In the spring of 2014 SAR arranged in collaboration with SKH an event, Loitering with Intent, a Feast of Research<sup>140</sup>, which was a three-day conference staged by Poste Restante<sup>141</sup>. It offered presentations, exhibitions, installations and fora for discussion in formats where every participant had a chance to

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<sup>139</sup> [www.doch.se/forskning/close-encounters](http://www.doch.se/forskning/close-encounters)

<sup>140</sup> [www.societyforartisticresearch.org](http://www.societyforartisticresearch.org)

<sup>141</sup> [www.keyperformance.se](http://www.keyperformance.se)

speak, everything arranged to cater to needs expressed by the artists themselves. Another example is PARSE<sup>142</sup>, a publication and an interdisciplinary conference format, which will be inaugurated in 2015 by the Faculty of Arts at GU.

At times you tire of the word "responsibility". Particularly when you are asked to show individual responsibility for something that can only be influenced collectively. Yet, when I write so much about the importance of taking responsibility, this is motivated by insights formed about reflections over phenomena we perceive as barricading, repulsive, corrupt or simply wrong. We must then pose the question: What is the alternative? Would I stand up for it? Should I take part or support those who do? If you want to push for an improvement of the conditions for presentation of research documentation, you need peer support. Are we prepared to accept documentation that is not text-based as relevant research presentation if the artist as researcher insists on this – or are we not? The Swedish model makes this choice possible. The limitations are only in the eyes of the beholder.

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<sup>142</sup> [www.parsejournal.com/conference](http://www.parsejournal.com/conference)



# 3 Artistic Research Education

## **The Specificity of Innovation**

Through art we can widen the borders of what is possible, take risks and challenge our abilities to the utmost. We can use ideas about how we from individual or collective standpoints can make our existence more meaningful. Since our philosophy of life shapes our outlook on the world, the image and/or the mirror image that comes from art is crucial to our interpretation. Through art we test society's ideologies by expressions of provocation, questioning, reflection or confirmation. Many of us artists feel that it is difficult to enter deeply into these questions, take risks with experimental or controversial practices, develop methodologies and forms of presentation, when everything must be done under market conditions. We must capitalize our competence, our work and our products to survive. At the same time we must be able to develop and test ideas not (yet) demanded on the market. Contribute to progress. Show the specificity of innovation. Do research.

To be able to formulate the research question or the complex of questions that make up the core of your project, you definitely need previous experience of artistic processes. This is again under the Swedish model. In many other countries you can complete your artistic education in one progression, from a candidate programme to a PhD without establishing yourself in the profession. That makes artistic research education into something else and the doctoral candidate is often someone who enters an existing research project as an assistant to acquire training.

When the artistic researcher is an experienced artist, the demands on the research education are somewhat different than within

science. This is because the doctoral candidate is expected to come into research with a project developed from an established practice (experience). Research education under the Swedish system is expected to enhance your ability to critically examine methods, develop and express them. Most of the doctoral candidates, who choose an artistic research education, do this to develop their artistic competence and strengthen their abilities to perform on the market, even if they may return to research and teaching for a period. Many candidates for a PhD within the humanities have an academic career as a lecturer or researcher as a goal.

When you as an artist apply for an artistic research programme, it is in order to find a forum for examination of complex questions, methodologies and theories related to your practice. It is a way to develop new knowledge, conquer new insights and contribute to your own practice as well as to your discipline; it is a way to seek progress together with other artists and theorists, not primarily to understand, but to find techniques to handle a life of uncertainty. Most of the doctoral candidates in artistic research have many years of artistic practice, as have the arts professors, who act as researchers, supervisors and teachers.

I talked to an artist, who had applied for a doctorate, despite being qualified for a professorship. On my question about why she had chosen a research education, she responded that she was seeking a dialogue with other artists to give herself a chance to develop her methodologies, to catch sight of intentions she found unclear and to practice ways of expressing herself in relation to the content of her own work. Expanding the realm of the possible. As an artist as researcher you work constantly with expanding the borders you set for yourself and for art, identifying which ways are open, even if they are not obvious. Artistic research can be the environment and the context needed to give advanced issues and problems play, a platform for artistic discourse and innovation.

We are aware that the research process in a doctoral project spans over a long period that must be documented. How? At the end of the process the research must be examined. By whom? The opponent should maybe be involved over time and not just appear

to "check the result"? The ritual of a doctoral disputation is important. Rituals are. But how is an artistic dissertation or a disputation best designed? And how should the examining committee best work to judge the research? And how is the research best disseminated to the outside world and made available to the discipline in question? How do we move forward?

We have good reason to question practices developed for other knowledge formation processes and instead look for forms that suit the artistic research practice. The Swedish system encourages the development of new work practices and ways to build research education, since it can be art-based. At the same time, we have a lot to learn from other fields of knowledge, as long as we don't get stuck there. Seminar formats, open discussion formats, performative formats – there is a wide choice with artistic practice as the foundation.

## Conventions

Traditions within science and academia are strong and have developed over a long period. Very much in academic life is set in stone, but also within science there are processes of renewal and exciting developments in terms of work forms and forms for presentation and examination. In artistic research environments there is at times uncertainty, which leads to a reliance on traditional methodologies, theories and practices. This is particularly the case when leaders have too little knowledge about regulations and are scientifically merited rather than artistically. It can also be the case when professors, research coordinators and supervisors are recruited from countries with no recognition of research on artistic basis; they are not only unfamiliar with the Swedish system, there is also a cultural difference. With good intentions they make sure that well established and tested scientific formats are applied to achieve a result that is as correct and legitimate as possible. Legitimate – for whom?

The new organizational forms and work forms within contemporary art have an influence on both artistic research and

research education. One problem raised by many artists I have met is that you apply, get accepted and examined as an individual. Today many artistic activities are undertaken in collective processes, where it is sometimes difficult to identify individual input. To be accepted in a collective research process, every participant needs to be qualified, take part in the development of the project and get accepted with approved methods of research. If this is not possible, one individual will be formally in charge of the research and work with associates, who take part under other conditions. Research projects can only hire staff if there is funding in place. This is food for thought and different educational institutions have different standpoints.

As staunch individualists we must be able to function in the collective contexts needed to carry out processes that require other skills than our own. As collectivists we must function in a system that focuses on the individual. I'm sometimes confronted with the notion that we as artists possess another vision, another insight, a kind of creativity that others lack. This is not the case. But maybe we possess a reliance on impressions, impulses and an ability to see opportunities, because we have learnt to rely on intuition and our senses; to rely also on the subjective experience.

## **Artistic or Scientific Research Education?**

Why artistic research education and not scientific? Artists are also welcome in the scientific system. I've written about this in the first chapter, but it is worthwhile to reflect over the specific conditions for research education.

The key to making the right choice lies in the project. Is it best suited for artistic methodologies, practices and theories – or scientific? Is the goal art or science? As long as we are qualified, we are in a situation where we can and must choose. Where do I find the environment that can further critical reflection, discussion and the best conditions for the research and the presentation form I'm looking for?

Regardless of whether you set a standard PhD or an arts PhD as a goal, you are as a doctoral candidate in a situation between studies and your profession. In the Swedish system, a position as a researcher means being paid full time for four years, while you in many other countries may have to pay for your tuition. In some cases you can negotiate a half-time or part-time position, if you for instance need to maintain your place as an artist on the market. There are some complications in this, for instance the interpretation of regulations for how much flexibility you are allowed with work time during your studies. Some institutions accept that you take time off for artistic projects, others don't. It is to some extent open for negotiation, to some extent a question of how to interpret regulations.

Routines and regulations for hiring doctoral candidates differ between disciplines and institutions. Wages are about the same, but the conditions for employment can vary in terms of raises, teaching, practical resources and project funding. The law and the national ordinance apply equally for all higher education institutes. This means that you are eligible if you have at least 240 merit points under the academic system or artistic experience validated as equal competence. Beyond that requirements vary between the institutions. For specific information, you must contact the institution where you want to study. Every programme demands a project description, which includes one or several research questions.

## **Project Description**

The project description must clearly state the object of the research, which questions will be answered, process and logistics, time plan, budget, method(s), presentation(s) and documentation. It helps the application if there are notes on relevant artistic or scientific theories, methods or public debate relating to the theme of the project and references to other artists, who have worked with ideas and notions relevant to the project. This makes it easier to examine the relevance of the project for the art discipline. The project description must answer the question about WHAT will be

researched, WHY and HOW. WHAT is the hypothesis. WHY is a target description of the forces that generate the project in a wider context, which is achieved by showing the relevance of the project for the art discipline in question. HOW is a definition of the methodological framework and the process action plan over time, the funding, but also ideas about how the project and its findings will be presented, documented and disseminated.

You need a well-established base of practice to do research, but also knowledge about other artistic attitudes, methodologies and expressions of relevance for the project. In order to clarify this it can be useful to establish a network of peers or other knowledgeable people, who can help define and make the questions more stringent. This is also a good strategy for learning the techniques of an artist-to-artist dialogue, which is the foundation of a strong research environment.

### **Examination Criteria**

The criteria for examining an application and the project description will probably include: the applicant's formal merits, the applicant's artistic competence, the applicant's ability to formulate and specify the research question, the applicant's ability to complete the project in a given time frame; the project's artistic quality, its relevance for the art discipline, for the field of research, and for the profile of the educational institution. All of this will hopefully be judged by those who have relevant competence for the specific field of research. Having read a great number of project descriptions, nationally and internationally, I would suggest that an important factor is the ability to show credibility and trust in your own ideas. The sincerity of the application is of considerable importance for the reader to understand the project's potential for artistic research. It's easy to see through an application written to please the reader, rather than presenting the project in the most suitable form. Some institutions accept "art-specific" applications, with for instance video or sound, others want them based only on text. Some require admission tests, others don't, but the project application is always decisive.

It may appear as if you risk locking yourself into a strict format. Images clad in words can be perceived as captured, but this is not the case, at least it needn't be. In the project description we create both new words and images, or re-use old ones. For many of us, writing is the obvious road to communication. Personally, I often experience an exaggerated belief in the language, in its intelligibility and claims to objectivity. Words are as subjectively interpreted as for instance movement or imagery. Yet, we choose to write, over and over again in endless efforts to expose and demask the language. You can direct associations toward a particular hierarchy of interpretations, but you must never think that someone else can read your text with the same understanding that you have tried to express. The only thing we can do is to try to find the words that make the description of the project as relevant as possible. A project description is always hypothetical and it will be revised as the work progresses. That is simply in the nature of things. The artistic research process provokes new questions and motivations, techniques and methodologies evolve. The project description is the starting point for the peer process that begins with the examination of the application; it is a tool for the initiation of the research work and the basis for formulating a study plan; it is also the instrument the supervisors will use as a basis for their initial input.

Every doctorate will have an individual study plan established, with the project, the project plan and the candidate's competence profile as the starting point. There are often a number of compulsory courses early in the study plan, so that the latter parts can be suited according to the development of the research. Most educational institutions will design this plan together with the candidate in co-operation with the supervisors involved in the project.

## **The Research Process as Education**

In Sweden, the doctoral candidate is employed as a researcher, while still in a process of education. This is an unusual situation. The attitude here varies greatly between different institutions as

well as between art disciplines. In some research environments, doctoral research and senior research are considered equal, in others the candidates are treated more as students. Some offer a great degree of individual freedom and influence, others demand adherence to strict systems. Regardless of which, the important thing for the candidate's ability to exert some influence is to understand the system as such. The better you know your rights and opportunities, the easier it is to make relevant demands and offer constructive suggestions for progress.

Thoughts and action are often limited by our notions of cultural, social, moral, economic or other restrictive conventions. Our ideas of what is possible are formed in our cultural, social and political context, even within research education. Most of us think rather narrowly and accept experienced limitations as given. Removing these limitations demands active positioning. I like to talk about good frameworks and bad limitations. We need (good) frameworks as constructive resistance. Resistance feeds creativity. Which frameworks are good and what limitations are bad then, in relation to a good process of artistic research?

### **Supervision**

Designing a good research framework is a task for you and your supervisor. It is hard to overestimate good supervision. Finding a good supervisor is therefore crucial and may take time. It is also possible that the need for supervisory competence may change with the progress of the research. Most educational institutions will appoint two supervisors, with the intention that the main supervisor (who will spend most time with the candidate and bear the primary responsibility) should be from the institute, while the assistant supervisor can be recruited from outside. Some institutions demand that the supervisor has a doctoral degree, but most will appoint a supervisor on artistic merit without any specific academic requirement. Supervisors can be art professors or active artists with special knowledge suitable for the project. In some cases it is advisable to appoint supervisors with scientific merits. Many universities also offer supervisor training and special fora for

discussion. Being an artist-to-artist supervisor is both demanding and rewarding. Which values are passed on from the supervisor to the doctorate? How do you support and guide without interfering too much? How do you deal with the notions of succeeding or failing, with risk-taking, with issues of quality?

An important task that often falls on the main supervisor is keeping track of the project's budget, time schedule and logistics. The research process demands that the candidate is given every chance to really delve deeply into the research questions, take risks and subject the project to various kinds of trials. That is when it is important to be able to rely on the supervisor's overview and good advice. This in turn is possible only if there is a trustful relationship. Trust is needed for the supervisor's criticism and advice to be received constructively and contribute to the research process.

The supervisor's support is also useful for the study course planning. Considering that most doctoral candidates come with the experience of advanced artistic practice, it is a relevant question what should in this case be considered a course. How is a course designed to generate the best educational input? What constitutes a course on artistic base?

A course can be seen as part of the framework around the project development based on discussion and critical reflection; it must be a mainstay for the evolution of the research subject and offer techniques for treating complex matter through structuring; it must enable new insights and knowledge to appear in a way that can be established through examination. A course can be theoretical and/or practical. It can be designed by peer researchers and artists, established by the teaching staff or suggested by specially invited guests. By being well versed in the specific research field, the supervisor can also suggest useful references and connect the candidate to relevant networks.

The supervisor is often tasked with directing or helping to frame the research, sometimes to speed it up. It can be a question of finding the right balance between writing and planning in relation

to the research practice, the educational practice (courses) and the artistic process, but also when it comes to the development of courses and study plans. It is therefore a great advantage if the supervisor has experience of artistic practice and production.

Dialogue is an important part of supervision and a training process in how to express thoughts around the research process and the work, around good results and failures. The thought takes form through constructive questioning. New insights are gained through dialogue. Words often appear when we talk. It's just a question of not getting stuck in them! The supervisor's role is not primarily to "know the answers", but to use knowledge and experience to guide the candidate through earlier or current research, artistic work on themes and ideas that relate to the project, point to relevant information, theories, artistic practice and other inspirational elements. In short, the supervisor should be a sounding board.

### **Degree Ordinance**

The formal requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy in the Fine and Applied Arts is published in the Higher Education Ordinance. (2009:33)<sup>143</sup>

*Scope: A doctorate in the fine, applied and performing arts is awarded after a third cycle student has completed a study programme of at least 240 credits in a subject in which third cycle teaching is offered.*

#### *Learning outcomes*

*Knowledge and understanding*

*For a doctorate in the fine, applied and performing arts the third cycle student shall*

- *demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field as well as advanced and up to date specialized knowledge in his or her artistic field, and*

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<sup>143</sup> [www.konstnarligaforskarskolan.se/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Examensförrdning.pdf](http://www.konstnarligaforskarskolan.se/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Examensförrdning.pdf)

- *demonstrate familiarity with artistic research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular*

### *Competence and skills*

*For a doctorate in the fine, applied and performing arts the third cycle student shall*

- *demonstrate creative capacity in his or her artistic field,*
- *demonstrate the capacity for artistic analysis and synthesis as well to review and assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations autonomously and critically,*
- *demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate artistic issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified artistic tasks within predetermined time frame and to review and evaluate such work,*
- *demonstrate through a documented artistic research project the ability to make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge through his or her own research,*
- *demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general,*
- *demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge, and*
- *demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in some other qualified professional capacity.*

### *Judgement and approach*

*For a doctorate in the fine, applied and performing arts the third cycle student shall*

- *demonstrate intellectual autonomy, artistic integrity and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics, and*
- *demonstrate specialised insight into the possibilities and limitations of art, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.*

*Documented artistic research project (doctoral thesis)*

*For a doctorate in the fine, applied and performing arts the third cycle student shall have been awarded a pass grade for a documented artistic research project (doctoral thesis) of at least 180 credits.*

### *Miscellaneous*

*Specific requirements determined by each higher education institution itself within the parameters of the requirements laid down in this qualification descriptor shall also apply for a doctorate in the fine, applied and performing arts with a defined specialization.*

*(unofficial translation)*

The main theme in the degree ordinance is how to raise competence. The presentation of the research findings is crucial for how this will be understood by reviewers and examiners. As a doctoral candidate, supervisor or research coordinator, you would like to think that every research project has the potential of generating a strong and interesting process, to be reflected in a presentation/work of importance for the development of the art discipline. This is not always the case. What to do then if you lose faith in the project? How do you tackle a situation where the duties are not fulfilled by the doctoral candidate or the supervisor? What defines failure? Or success?

Doubt, dejection, helplessness and anxiety are inevitable ingredients in a process that involves questioning old knowledge and searching for innovation. Delight, satisfaction, joy and maybe

euphoria can be other parts of the same process. In between there are periods of hard, slogging work that doesn't raise any strong emotions at all... We liberate our creativity by taking ourselves seriously. The whole notion of research is after all to add new perspectives, to contribute to an alternative description of reality through art. Most of us are trained to think that there must be an external confirmation of success to make it believable. More often I sense a discrepancy between what I myself judge as good and what is judged good by others. I can seem very successful, when I see myself as a failure – or the other way around.

The final examination of one's research process can be exacerbating, but if the process has been good, the supervisors and research coordinators will have enough insight into the project not to let it go that far if they don't believe that it will stand up. That is still no guarantee for it to pass, but it is good to know. A decisive element is who will be appointed opponent and who is on the examination committee. It is a question of finding people with the proper merits.

## **Disputation**

The disputation is the occasion when the candidate presents and defends the research in public. In many institutions this is a moment with strong traditions and rituals, formed over centuries of academic learning. For a long period this level of academic knowledge was reserved for men only. In Sweden, the University of Uppsala was the first to confer a degree of PhD to a woman in 1883. Here is a somewhat simplified way of describing the current procedure: first the candidate is allowed a short introduction to report misprints or other alterations that have been introduced after the material was exposed to the opponent and the examination committee; then the opponent makes a review of the project and poses a number of questions to the candidate; the examination committee, which has already seen the material, listens in and may ask additional questions; some institutions allow questions from the public, some don't; after this the examination committee withdraws and returns when a decision is made; the

committee chairman delivers the decision. This is how the procedure has evolved, sometimes coupled with a certain dress code or other particulars.

Candidates for an arts degree try together with their supervisors and the management of their institutions to find routines and rituals that best fit each particular project to be presented. The artistic representation needs a forum that allows a critical discussion (opposition) and the process with the examination committee. In addition, there must be room for the public. The degree of success varies between institutions; the degree to which the candidate can influence the event also varies. It can be exciting to follow the actual examination, when there is a chain of events over time, presentations in several venues, etc. It is just as exciting to see how well we are able to shoulder the role as opponents or members in an examination committee. The arts degree is so new that all of this must be seen as an evolutionary process. The most important is not to simply accept formats established for other fields of knowledge, but look broadly at what is possible within the framework of the system. Beyond that each institution will have its own traditions and rituals, based on the ordinance as a common foundation.

### **What about a career?**

Most artists still seek education mainly as a way of becoming better artists. They want to get deeper knowledge, new insights and develop their tools. In the profession your career is dependent on political, social and cultural factors. The common understanding is that we have become more flexible, partly because we can use digital media, partly because more of us can reach a global market. The flexibility leads to quick shifts in trends, tendencies and actual working conditions. Most markets are strongly capitalized and give scant margins for the kind of risk-taking and experimenting that is the lifeblood for many artists. The market is not interested in degrees, just the artistry, occasionally the artistic competence. These days the demand is not simply for products/works of art, but also the ability to pursue a process, integrate in other contexts,

like social events, or take part in different kinds of innovative activities.

For those who do not find support in any radical art institution, the academic world becomes more and more attractive. Not just for the pay, but because there is room for risk-taking and processes that move art forward. Sweden offers very few post doc positions for artists and there are only some 150 professorships within the arts in the whole country. The competition for teaching and/or research positions is fierce. The tendency today is that more institutions are trying to set up new post doc positions and professorships. Internationally, the picture is more complicated, since there are countries where there are no such academic positions open on artistic merit. A Swedish PhD in the arts should be validated as equal to a PhD in another country, but in some countries this still presents difficulties. It is also a fact that in most countries PhDs are valued differently depending on the status and profile of the institution.

In relation to the notion of artist empowerment, it can also be said that artists are today welcomed in many areas of society, including positions that have a direct influence on society's view of art, politics and market control. There are artists who have made careers as politicians, bureaucrats, research coordinators, vice-chancellors, company CEOs, circus directors, theatre directors, programmers, critics, curators...



## 4 What is Good in Art?

### **Quality Assurance – About Not Getting Stuck in Conventions**

*”Good Artists are Economically Independent”* – this is how the business daily Dagens Industri, DI, headlined an advertisement for itself (Dagens Nyheter, April 9, 2014). This is of course an intentional provocation that touches on several taboos: the notion of quality, the power of the art market, the independence of art or the artist as ”a free spirit”.

To be able to speak about what is good in art, we must in some way formulate an idea about what art represents. The ad in question claims that good art is art that sells; the market value is part of the quality assurance. But which interests drive the market or the markets? Visual arts, performative art, music and poetry compete on totally different markets, with different base values and criteria. In general, markets are conservative and put a premium on objects that represent established norms or values. Market forces rarely identify innovative or experimental art as good. An artistic peer group is better at examining a presentation from the point of view of how it enhances art, of methodology, production forms and so on; such a group is more likely to dare break even with artistic norms. Since artistic research that is represented art-specifically often belongs to this category of experimental works, it takes a qualified peer environment to critically reflect on the representation, which is absolutely crucial for real quality assurance.

Good art is not equal to good artistic research. Good artistic research is not the same as good art. Through research we become

better artists, the role of art is strengthened in society and we get better tools for quality-driven processes. To establish relevant fora for the dissemination of artistic research, we establish different international platforms for dialogue, where artists can present their findings live or digitally; get it reviewed, criticized and reflected upon by other artists as researchers. When we set up these platforms for peer examination, they will also be accepted by the scientific community as inspiring quality and hence as a basis for distribution of resources. Academia also builds markets.

### Waddya Mean – Art?

In our West European context the concept of art is addressed from at least two different traditions: one is the Germanic Kunst, which stands for knowledge and the other is the Latin ars (Eng. art), which originally was more associated to events and activities. In Swedish culture, art (Sw. konst) was for a long time closely linked to crafts and special skills. The motto of the Royal Technical University in Stockholm reads "Science and Art", which in its original context referred to the particular skills thought of as "engineering arts". There are those who think of football as art. But football has the game and the competition as its aim – not art. To see Zlatan Ibrahimović<sup>144</sup> play may give you an aesthetic sensation, but that is not what he is primarily working at; he plays to score goals and win matches (even if he gets extra points for style...).

In his book: *Vad är konst?* (What is art? 2010), artist Ernst Billgren<sup>145</sup> deals with the concept of art and our most frequent questions, prejudices and comments about art. He contends, among other things, that "*all events and objects can be art*" ("alla händelser eller föremål kan vara konst", p. 65). Similarly, the conceptualist Joseph Beuys<sup>146</sup> has stated that "*all human activity*" can be art. Philosopher W.E. Kennick<sup>147</sup> has this reasoning in an article: *Is traditional aesthetics the result of a mistake?* (Skriftserien

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<sup>144</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zlatan\\_Ibrahimović](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zlatan_Ibrahimović)

<sup>145</sup> [www.ernstbillgren.se](http://www.ernstbillgren.se)

<sup>146</sup> [http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph\\_Beuys](http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Beuys)

<sup>147</sup> [www.bokus.com/bok/9789187214684/konsten-och-konstbegreppet-skriftserien-kairos-nr-1/](http://www.bokus.com/bok/9789187214684/konsten-och-konstbegreppet-skriftserien-kairos-nr-1/)

Kairos nr 8:1, 2005): “*Despite what has sometimes been said, art has no function in the same sense as knives or ophthalmoscopes, and that is a lesson you can learn from the concept ‘art for art’s sake’. This doesn’t mean that we cannot use certain works of art for specific purposes; we can and we do. We can use novels, poems and symphonies as sleeping pills, vases to hold flowers and sculptures as letterpresses or doorstops. This is what makes it important to make the distinction between examining something as a piece of art or examining it as a sleeping pill, a pick-me-up or a letterpress.*” (unofficial translation). Or as choreographer Mette Ingvarsten has written on her current research: “*The affective as a mode of offering, receiving and exchanging information...*”. Inspired by political theorist professor Jane Bennett<sup>148</sup> (my interpretation) Mette Ingvarsten adds this question in her Artificial Nature Project<sup>149</sup>: “*How can one address the force of things, materials, objects and matters as something that acts upon humans?*” My own understanding is that it is not *what* I do, but *why* that decides if it can be understood and accepted as art.

## The Public Debate About Quality

When art is presented in public, it triggers a discussion that is a natural part of the quality-generating process. The value argument is unavoidable. To reach the level that generates quality, one must take risks. Risks converted into practice through artistic methodologies can bring forward imagery and storytelling that make us revise what we previously thought of as knowledge and approach something unknown with curiosity; leaving behind an established notion of quality to seek something else.

As an artist, I’m used to being scrutinized in public and criticized, by the knowledgeable and the less so, often the object of opinionated commentary. There have been a great many interpretations of my artistry. Within academia there is less public criticism, but it is still subjective. When artists are engaged in research the discussion about quality widens to include the

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<sup>148</sup> <http://politicalscience.jhu.edu/bios/jane-bennett/>

<sup>149</sup> <http://metteingvarsten.net/2012/05/the-artificial-nature-project/>

research process and from that also the result. The deepened process involved in research opens an opportunity to develop practice and theory. Artists get their ideas, their knowledge and competences examined. What I often miss both in the public criticism and the academic examination, is relevant competence on the part of the reviewer. You must know art to be able to offer the kind of critique that I as an artist can use for my continued artistic development and research. Other critique can be stimulating and thought provoking, but for frontline projects you need a good peer review process at a level of relevant competence.

When I discuss choreography with my colleagues, we rarely think in terms of good or bad. The quality criteria are more interesting and more diversified. An important part of the process of generating new knowledge in my discipline is the understanding of the process that lies between what is a subjective experience and its choreographic representation. To seek what creates meaning from bodily movements is to use the earlier experience and memory in a new context; to seek the expression of this experience rather than retell it. What you think is visible. A thought is reflected by the body. Thought and action become one – or each other's opposites for a more complex expression. We must train the eye to see, the intellect to reflect and the body to act. We must make the body act/speak the thought. It is also about understanding how an intention can develop into an accord, from the subjective experience to the understanding established in the eye of the beholder. This theoretical and practical knowledge based on experience is difficult to formulate and explain to the person who is not in possession of it.

### Quality Criteria

To offer you a few examples of relevant quality criteria, I quote from an article I wrote for the journal InFormation<sup>150</sup> (What's Good in Art? 2012): *Is there something original, a personal approach/expression in the work? Can I distinguish a purpose and*

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<sup>150</sup> [www.artandresearch.info](http://www.artandresearch.info)

*direction behind the work? Is there a contextual discussion or positioning? Is there a development of time, space and form in the presentation? How are intra-medial effects used, such as music, light or imagery? Is the work relevant in a current discourse? How is the work related to other choreographic practice? Is there a development of established codes or other contextual spheres (social, political, cultural)?*

To be able to answer questions like these, you need knowledge in and about choreography, artistic process and production, both from experience and commitment to the field of choreography. All artists do not have the interest or the knowledge it takes to do this. To me, knowledge in art is partly what I need to know to do what I wish to accomplish, express my idea and communicate it to the public. But it is also what I receive from experiencing art, a developed ability to communicate, information about the world from another perspective than everyday life, a consciously reflected visualization of how important it is with subjective experience/interpretation. There are surely more arguments, other criteria and opinions one could include on the subject of relevance.

Another set of criteria is the one used in the JAR peer-review process. The following categories of criteria are mentioned: Reviewer self-assessment, Interest and relevance, Potential, Exposition of practice as research, Design and navigation, Ethical and legal concerns, Conclusions and revisions, Recommendation and Feedback. All of these are explained in a public document (on the web) together with guidelines for reviewers. The reviews are presented anonymously to the researchers, but if the project is accepted for publication, the reviews are also made public as part of the dissemination.

These are the criteria applied for reviewing applications for artistic research funding at VR<sup>151</sup> (in 2014):

*Innovation and originality: Artistic specificity and depth that can contribute to new knowledge and opportunities to present problem*

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<sup>151</sup> Source: Chair of the Committee for Artistic Research, VR

*complexes; explorative action to critically examine, research, uncover and deepen insights about contexts, processes, alternative interpretations or complex solutions; staging of research problems, explorative experiments, interventions, etc.*

*Scientific quality (as artistic research): Chances of essential knowledge formation and methodological renewal, including analysis of the problem complex within the research process; theoretical reflection and relations to national and international research, artistic practice and/or theory formation of importance for the discipline; the expected level of artistic research argumentation and communication using text, imagery, objects or other forms of presentation.*

*Merits of applicant(s): Particularly merits of the applicant responsible for the project, but also co-applicants (artistic and/or scientific).*

*Feasibility: Ability to carry out the project under the suggested time period with the available resources.*

*Relevance for artistic research and development.  
(unofficial translation)*

The PEEK programme in Austria lists the following criteria<sup>152</sup> for judging applications for funding (also 2014):

*importance to the international community in the field(s) concerned*

*extent to which the project could break new ground scientifically/artistically (innovative aspects)*

*importance of the expected results for the discipline (based on the project described)*

*clarity of the goals (hypotheses)*

*appropriateness of the chosen methods (including work plan, time plan and planned strategies for dissemination of results)*

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<sup>152</sup> [www.fwf.ac.at/en/research.../fwf.../peek/](http://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research.../fwf.../peek/)

*quality of the co-operations (both national and international)*

*quality / potential of the scientists/artists involved*

One more example is Professor John Adams at the University of Bristol, who has written an article named Presenting the Evidence: the REF2014 output statement and portfolio<sup>153</sup>, where he suggests qualitative criteria to be used in the English Research Evaluation Framework, REF<sup>154</sup>.

Critics play an important role in the public discourse about art. Media corroborate or deny, criticize and take a leading role in the evolution of quality criteria. In the performative arts it is practically impossible to sell a performance that doesn't get good reviews. Programmers, producers and curators are often trend conscious, since whatever they choose to present must sell. What reaches the public will first pass these filters. The public discourse is therefore mainly about art that fits within the established quality framework. Artistic research must secure a quality system beyond the market forces, communicate this research in an active dialogue with the world outside and in this way contribute to the public discourse in a direction that reflects our idea about the relevance of art in contemporary society.

In my opinion, artistic research must strive to work within a wide definition, inclusive rather than exclusive, where artistic quality is given more weight than traditional academic quality; a definition that doesn't seek support or legitimacy through established scientific research, or tries to compete with it. It is up to us to be able to express what we mean by quality.

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<sup>153</sup> [www.jmpscreenworks.com/hive/resources/uploads/File/REF2014%20PtE\\_JMPScwk.pdf](http://www.jmpscreenworks.com/hive/resources/uploads/File/REF2014%20PtE_JMPScwk.pdf)

<sup>154</sup> [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk)

## **Why Education is Good for Research Quality – and Vice Versa**

### **The Importance of Education**

A good education disarms impotence. It brings out strong, creative individuals, who are not afraid of themselves or the world; who can express an opinion and raise relevant demands based on a good base values and an awareness of the role of art for the progress of society. It teaches an ability to understand and communicate with the world, to apply education, experience, emotion and intuition into being human, a human being in motion. A relevant and radical education presents knowledge about techniques, style, art, culture, society, economics and politics – and in this way also about the self. It instils an ability to understand and critically evaluate your place in our Western society, an ability to generate change, evolve and suggest ways forward instead of getting stuck with describing symptoms. When education is at its best, it brings out artists with communicative abilities, diversified artistic and cultural expressions and a view of art as an experience, a force for change, a way to teach and a source of knowledge. A bad education will isolate the students in genres, without offering the insights and the knowledge needed to understand themselves and art in a cultural, social, economic and political context. Through education we can also hand out the tools for cultural insight into value hierarchies and notions of quality.

Many artistic higher education institutions today offer courses in artistic methodologies as a basic preparation for a research perspective. If you are trained already at the candidate level to take part in the intra-collegial critical discourse, we get competent peers, who dare stand up for their artistic competence and their ability to examine qualitatively other processes and results. You are trained at translating practices into discussions for re-evaluation of conventions and old standards of quality, in favour of a contemporary discourse. That is how we develop competences, insights and knowledge needed to move on to research. But to have an education is not the same as being educated. An arts education

does not make an artist. There are choices to be made and stands to take before the student can develop into an artist. An education must be converted into action. An education can also lay a foundation for becoming educated. To be educated is to have an ability to discern and communicate the world; an ability to apply education, experience, sensitivity and intuition into being, into living and into art.

An arts institution has a great responsibility to elucidate and motivate art as art; the artist as a collaborator with others in pursuit of art; artistic research as equal to scientific. It has a responsibility to communicate the societal values represented by these "products for the senses", this knowledge and these competences; it has a great responsibility to engage in the discussion about quality. The organizational/practical development of educational programmes and research projects will influence and develop not just future artistic representation, but also the work market and the relation to the cultural policy that will build new venues for art, motivated and knowledgeable programmers, committed politicians, the audience's great curiosity, participation and respect as well as a mature market.

### **The Importance of Research**

Research is of crucial importance for the development of arts education. A staff room with strong individuals, highly competent on artistic and/or scientific merit, will develop conditions for new, didactic work forms, a positive attitude to critical reflection, innovative practices and risk-taking in line with the development of independent-minded artists. The experienced artists and artistic researchers who participate in the programmes bring in networks and knowledge about art and the market, about innovation and entrepreneurship, about artistic methods, theories and practices. A closeness to ongoing research processes, sometimes sharing in these processes, provokes and stimulates the students in their own formation of practices. Innovation and creative problem solving become everyday activities and the realm of possibilities expands.

Strong, innovative artistry attracts students, who want more than just learning skills. The competition is fierce in these programmes and this makes it possible to admit students not just on technical talent. The presence of research programmes in the curriculum changes the criteria for selection of students and this in turn affects the artistic development and the role of art in society.

### **The Importance of Being Educated**

An educated person can see the importance of understanding and critically relate to her own context, to be able to influence whatever feels wrong or at miss. To be educated is to be able to see through fear or guilt as driving forces. Regardless of whether we are driven by fear, fright, guilt, hunger, desire or passion, we need the insights and knowledge that can make our driving forces understandable as a forward movement. Ignorance is the force that halts this movement, stunts you. In between there is resistance. Resistance movements work backwards, reactively, while the educated individual works proactively and moves us forward. A society's relationship to the notion of being educated mirrors the state of the culture. Culture policy steers this more than education policy. By all international standards, the Swedish Ministry of Culture has a very generous policy on funding, but to my opinion that is not enough. I would argue that the current Swedish system with a culture policy almost entirely focused on subsidies, harms the conditions for us to become educated cultural beings, since it fosters the idea of the artist as a burden to society. Going back to the DI ad, we can see it is as an expression of a policy that sees the artist as a subsidized individual in need of support, rather than a competent partner for cultural development. We need a policy that states the importance of art and recognition of the artist as a core actor for societal development.

An educated person is perceived as wise, since she can listen, see, sense, know and intuitively choose the right way to express herself in a context, enter into a dialogue and work proactively; an educated person knows a lot about the techniques of listening and seeing; she knows quite a bit about forgiveness and about being her

own history and future simultaneously; she knows how to live life as a forward movement.

## How Quality Evolves

It's all about having good strategies for survival! We owe this to ourselves: living the life, seeking knowledge and developing art. Survival is intimately connected to the discussion about quality. A long life in art can put you on the market, where the success you had before doesn't protect you against new pressures and ever increasing demands for productivity. Produce more, faster, better and better, preferably cheaper. How and to what effect can artistic research influence our notion of what is good in art?

The fact that you appreciate a work of art doesn't mean that it is good. But risk-taking sharpens the senses and your sensibility; it offers you a keen ear and an empathic ability that creates unexpected intimacies. The artist as researcher uses acquired skills, knowledge and years of practice, along with personal and individual abilities. The research cannot be separated from the artistic practice. This is how the artist becomes both the subject and the object of the research.

Maybe artistic quality cannot be formulated. Maybe it is more important to decide which competences are needed to judge quality in art? What is recognizable in a broader perspective by as qualitative or as something "good", is almost always based on conventions established by traditions, in a social and political context. That makes the notion artistic quality conservative by definition.

Conventional wisdom translates into conventions. But we must move on. Art can break with normalcy and highlight hidden values. Innovative art challenges conventions and traditions and makes us rethink our ideas about the self and the world, about that which seems normal, about that which is called good or that which is recognized as being of good quality. Our thoughts and experience

move us on to new insights and positions in relation to the contemporary. This goes for living as well as for art.

We research and fight with our notion of art; what is good, what is quality, what constitutes meaning? And we think that we must get better at taking responsibility for the formation of theory and for dissemination of the knowledge that is lodged in the artistic practice. Artistic or scientific research - the demands are the same. To elucidate accepted knowledge, but also create what is new to legitimize the values we want to defend in relation to our ideas of what constitutes quality.

Words are read in a subjective interpretation, like movement, imagery and other expressions in our communicative toolbox. The meaning is formulated by the context. Artists with a relevant level of competence can judge what is good, regardless of whether it is about completely innovative activities or a development of an established tradition. To express what is good and why, is a challenge for the brave to meet.

## **Systems of Quality Assurance**

Quality criteria are tools for grading in education, for examination of research education and for the distribution of research funding. The science community judges research quality with a number of parameters, like the share of external financing, the number of professors and lecturers with doctoral degrees, but primarily through the number of published articles in highly ranked scientific journals. The result of the research is made available mainly through publishing. The number of published articles is an important factor for quality assurance, partly because it is guaranteed by peer-reviews and partly because it makes the findings accessible, open to debate.

Within artistic research, funding from VR is an important part of the external financing, but also co-producers of different kinds step in, in lieu of the foundations, funds and/or industrial sponsoring in the science community. The number of arts professorships or

artistically merited staff can serve as relevant quality criteria, but there is a need for other tools of measurement, for instance when it comes to the public presentation and dissemination. The theoretical representation cannot be the qualitative denominator within the arts. Instead we must use important international art fora of different kinds, depending on which area and discipline is represented by the research; plus the contemporary peer-reviewed publication platforms specifically designed for artistic research. Different art disciplines have different platforms for the representation and a variety of presentational possibilities.

In Sweden, quality assurance of both education and research is the domain of the UKÄ. It has a role as the general overseer focused on transparency. This examination consists of several parts, including a so-called self-evaluation done by the institution. The self-evaluation is based on a process over time in combination with goal-fulfilment, for instance a review of how the doctoral candidates communicate and critically reflect on their research, along with artistic production, method and documentation. The self-evaluation also includes the internal work culture, leadership and organization; ability to evaluate work forms favourable for individuality, creativity and the ability to take responsibility needed for the development of new artistic methods and theories. The examination of an instituting also includes a process where a group of examiners choose a set of goals and criteria for evaluation. The examination group consists of experts within the disciplines, students and representatives for the profession. They examine steering documentation, education plans, course plans, exam works and conduct interviews with students and staff.

When the examination process is completed, there is a written report and the examined institution is graded on a scale from "very high quality" to "high quality" or "lacking in quality". A "very high quality" grade means additional money to the institution, while "lacking in quality" can lead to a programme being closed down (withdrawal of examination rights) if the problems are not corrected within a set time frame. These processes are meant to guarantee society's interest in qualitative education financed by taxes. Such a review takes about one year to complete.

Today 80 % of the basic funding for higher education is fixed, and 20 % is distributed based on performance. How is this going to be in the future? What criteria will decide? A new quality assurance system for research funding is under development. VR was tasked with this work in 2014.

For an arts doctorate or a research position, it is useful to know the mechanisms that affect chances of funding a research project, the conditions for presentation, dissemination through distribution, archives etc. The more you know, the easier it will be to use the system to the limit, but also to be able to contribute to its evolution.

The higher education institutions within the arts in Stockholm cooperate with other institutions and universities, with different art fora nationally and internationally. We work together to influence for instance the UKÄ examination system for the institutions. But this is, to my mind, not sufficient. The absolutely crucial element is the involvement of professional artists, who are prepared to do research based on a well-established artistic activity. We need strong interaction between artistic process, production, research and education.

## 5 What Does Research Do For Art?

In today's world it is often easier to sell ideas and debates than artistic products and actions. The notion of art as the realm of free thought and an activating force as opposed to consumerist passivity, is moving away from the market towards the academic world. "*Artistic freedom is democracy's immune defence*", said theatre director Stina Oscarson<sup>155</sup> in a panel discussion in Gothenburg on May 15 2014. The Swedish model of equitable redistribution of taxes according to national priorities can be seen as a support system of social solidarity based on a common political project. Subsidies to arts and education are an integral part of that social-political vision, in constant competition with other priorities like health services and national defence. As a highly export oriented country, Sweden is also very dependent on the changing market and the political situation in Europe. All of this has a strong impact on our chances to produce art, to educate and to research. It affects how art is viewed and what we as artists are expected to accomplish.

We generally choose to see art as mirroring, provoking or aestheticizing society and politics, but I think that we should rather look at the conditions for producing art and the role of art as the true statement on politics; we should look at what it means to work as an artist, rather than what is produced. This would help us to a deeper understanding and more constructive strategies for the future.

The conditions for artistic production are constricting. It is clear that artists are increasingly looking for completely different modes

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<sup>155</sup> [http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stina\\_Oscarson](http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stina_Oscarson)

of artistic presentation than objects or performances for traditional venues, galleries and concert halls. Many artists try to be socially integrated in an everyday context, where art contributes to reality formation, sharpens the senses and develops new communicative strategies. Collective work forms beyond the traditional ones are taking over, as are new forms for collaboration, production and presentation. Art is becoming political.

Art as politics is the art that by insisting on the right to organize, produce, present and interact in various social and societal situations, can be understood as a political action. Political art on the other hand, is art that takes a political stance. It is most obvious in a local or regional context, where it comes out against injustice, corruption or political intrigue. But it can also be a force that initiates strategies for change.

There is also the concept of "Public Anti-Art". According to Simon Raven<sup>156</sup> (NVA magazine no 10) this is a distinct form of creative activities that reformulate normative and socially conservative behaviour by caricaturing violent action, metamorphosis and political vindication. Put somewhat differently: creative activities as a challenge to public, social or institutional values through humoristic or destructive interference, such as graffiti, desecration of political posters, altering or adding to public art and decorations, etc. Is it through these conceptual actions and interferences that our social and cultural behaviour can change?

Today there is a clear tendency for many fields of art to become politicized. I am not talking about party political "poster art", rather an increased interest and commitment to new forms of expression that interact and provoke debate and generate progress in society. Politics becomes art material. Simultaneously we all need aesthetic experiences, beauty and gentleness. In the public at large there is a utopian expectation that art can make us all happier, more creative, stronger and wiser... If we think that we are all dependent on each other, the strategies will be different than if we

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<sup>156</sup> [www.nottinghamvisualarts.net/articles/201303/public-anti-art](http://www.nottinghamvisualarts.net/articles/201303/public-anti-art)

think of ourselves as solitary individuals in opposition. The changing market simply demands peace and new strategies.

The market finds new ways of exploiting people, when they are ever more willing to pay for extraordinary experiences. The so-called "experience industry" tries to capture creativity in new production processes and tame it as an object to capitalize. Similarly there are ways to legitimize economic investments in art and research from a utilitarian perspective. This has less to do with communicative or intra-human evolution; it is more about productivity, economy and to some extent knowledge formation.

At CARPA 3<sup>157</sup> in Helsinki (2013), Heike Roms<sup>158</sup>, lecturer in Performance Studies at the University of Aberystwyth in Wales, gave a presentation called "The Impact of 'Impact' - Performing Artistic research in the Ruins of the University?", in which she presented her view on the situation in Great Britain. She recounted how one has to describe the impact of activities, regardless of whether it concerns funding for research, for art or for evaluations. How does one measure impact of research or art in a societal perspective? In the last twenty years artistic research has become accepted as the generator of "embodied knowledge", "tacit knowledge" and what is known as "knowledge in action". In the wake of a more privatized educational system, of dwindling state funding for art, lack of "impact" is used as an argument for such cutbacks. In her presentation, Heike Roms, described artistic research as a "help crutch" in the current situation.

An American report about the performative arts, called *The View from Here*, (Brooklyn Commune Project 2013<sup>159</sup>), lists and analyses possible strategies for development. The report is authored by artists and one of the strategies is about redefining terms like "impact", "growth" and "value". I see this as an important report!

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<sup>157</sup> [www.teak.fi/menu\\_description.asp?menu\\_id=1197](http://www.teak.fi/menu_description.asp?menu_id=1197)

<sup>158</sup> [www.aber.ac.uk/en/tfts/staff/hhp/](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/tfts/staff/hhp/)

<sup>159</sup> [www.culturebot.org/2014/01/20477/the-view-from-here-the-brooklyn-commune-projects-report/](http://www.culturebot.org/2014/01/20477/the-view-from-here-the-brooklyn-commune-projects-report/)

Academia and artist-driven fora open to the various forms of work and presentation have a crucial impact on progress in this field. Artists meeting, discussing and critically reflecting on each other's current and/or completed processes and productions, contribute to stronger cross-discipline relations and an increased space for the different disciplines. This is also important for the political activism that is a part of everyday life for many artists.

In some countries, artistic activism is more and more visible, often lead by artists with academia as a platform. Some examples: Leonidas Martin<sup>160</sup>, an artist and professor of political art in Barcelona; Larry Bogard<sup>161</sup>, artist and theatre professor at the University of California; Kristin Horton<sup>162</sup>, artist and guest professor at Fordham University New York; Erdem Gunduz<sup>163</sup>, choreographer and teacher, also known as The Standing Man after having stood silent and still on Taksim square in Istanbul in June 2013 as a protest against the Turkish government; Olafur Eliasson<sup>164</sup>, artist and professor at UdK in Berlin. The first group on this list are activists in the traditional sense, while Olafur Eliasson acts through his art in public places, as well as in a project like A New Narrative for Europe<sup>165</sup>. Many artists describe their work with words like "resistance" or as professor at KKH Ann-Sofie Sidén<sup>166</sup> said at a VR conference on artistic research in 2012: "*my work is a resistance movement*". Choreographer Apostolia Papadamaki<sup>167</sup> in Athens disregards the traditional stage for political reasons, moving her works on to public places in order to turn them into social meeting points for artistic interaction. Swedish choreographer Malin Hellqvist-Sellén dedicates her artistry to gender activism from a queer perspective. Visual artist Sara Mara Samsara<sup>168</sup> in Nicosia, Cyprus is building a fictive subway system to ease communication within the divided city.

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<sup>160</sup> <http://beautifultrouble.org/author/leonidas-martinsaura/>

<sup>161</sup> [www.lmbogad.com](http://www.lmbogad.com)

<sup>162</sup> [www.kristinhorton.com](http://www.kristinhorton.com)

<sup>163</sup> [www.erdemgunduz.org](http://www.erdemgunduz.org)

<sup>164</sup> [www.olafureliasson.net](http://www.olafureliasson.net)

<sup>165</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/debate-future-europe/new-narrative/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/debate-future-europe/new-narrative/index_en.htm)

<sup>166</sup> [www.kkh.se/index.php/en/about-the-studies/professors-groups/ann-sofi-siden](http://www.kkh.se/index.php/en/about-the-studies/professors-groups/ann-sofi-siden)

<sup>167</sup> [www.quasistellar.gr](http://www.quasistellar.gr)

<sup>168</sup> [www.nicosiametromap.com/about.html](http://www.nicosiametromap.com/about.html)

Generally, it is only the functional presentation that is awarded any importance; art works as aesthetic, a distraction, a form, a product to be capitalized. Function is synonymous with economic value or art as a tool for development of creativity, entrepreneurship or leadership; as in primary school, where art is often used as a medium for learning, group dynamics, or a healthy life style – but not as art. Art is often seen as related to the sensual experience (aesthetics, form, feeling) and science as factual (reason, theories, rational methods). Yet, we know that in many fields of science the aesthetic, composition and intuition are important components, just as reason and theories are applied in art. Even if rationality is rarely used in art, there are very advanced methodologies for different processes in artistic research.

## Social, Cultural and Political Positioning

Journalism has a considerable influence on art and culture in these contexts and for the evolution of cultural interpretations of art, both as a notion (idea) and an action (product). Artistic research is still an unknown concept for many journalists, who therefore do not communicate this field to their readers or viewers. This is a considerable challenge for the different research communities. It is up to them to find the relevant routes to communicate their findings to the outside world. In academia this is known as the "third pillar", i.e. dissemination of new knowledge to the public. The other two are teaching and doing research.

In the Higher Education Act of 1977 (1977: 218)<sup>169</sup> it says:

*“Among the tasks enjoined to higher seats of learning shall be to disseminate information about research and development work. Information should also be disseminated about which results and knowledge has been achieved and how these experiences can be applied. The higher education institution shall also interact with*

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<sup>169</sup> [www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Lagar/Svenskforfattningssamling/Hogskolelag-1977218\\_sfs-1977-218/?bet=1977:218](http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Lagar/Svenskforfattningssamling/Hogskolelag-1977218_sfs-1977-218/?bet=1977:218)

*society and inform about their activities.*” (unofficial translation) In 2009 there was an amendment introduced in the Act that specifically talks about the third pillar. It now reads: “*Among the tasks enjoined to the higher education institutions is to engage with society in general and inform about its activities and act for research findings at the institutions to make an impact.*” (Lag 2009:45, unofficial translation). Here is this word again: impact. If our research must generate impact, we must take a stand on the idea of what constitutes impact.

Already in 1976, one of the pioneers within artistic research, Serge Stauffer<sup>170</sup> wrote an essay with a 16 point manifesto for “Art Research”, which he dubbed *Kunst als Forschung – Essays, Gespräche, Übersetzungen, Studien*<sup>171</sup> (re-published in 2013, translated to English by Mark Kyburz). Here are some of the points:

4. *Today, “art” should become a specialized profession that serves research on society; art should be an extended anthropology, a study of human beings, concerned with the whole human being.*
5. *I call the results of this research “art research.”*
6. *Art research requires specialized studies, which not everyone is willing to take upon themselves and which take several years; it is elitist, that is, not accessible to everyone, like all scientific research within this system; it must beware of serving those in power.*

Art works through expressions and actions for cultural development and the reality formation I talked about in the first chapter. Through research we can develop more knowledge about what and how, with arguments about why. Through research we can add new insights about the political hierarchies and orders that

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<sup>170</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serge\\_Stauffer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serge_Stauffer)

<sup>171</sup> [www.bokus.com/bok/9783858813770/serge-stauffer-kunst-als-forschung/](http://www.bokus.com/bok/9783858813770/serge-stauffer-kunst-als-forschung/)

stand in the way; we can create an understanding for an inclusive notion of art, i.e. not fenced in by genres.

I have worked in the international steering group for PEEK since it was inaugurated in 2009. For this purpose I read some fifty applications for research funding every year. It comes out very clearly how the various art disciplines have totally different traditions and cultures, also in terms of research. We think, we do and we express ourselves differently. The demands on cross-discipline research platforms are considerable. Contemporary, innovative art is diversified, interacting with the public and civil society far beyond the aestheticized entertainment format, which lets the audience lean back and just let life pass by for a while. I am personally tired of art that flirts with conventions and disappears into life's background noise. It is much more interesting to see how new work forms, organizational forms, productions and presentations evolve to offer totally new expressions. This art demands listening, positioning and participation of the audience. It is about our right to stick out as human beings, thinking and feeling; it is about our ability to communicate and interact. There is a frailty in this, which must be nurtured. We have to be aware of factors working against progress.

Good strategies for survival open doors to completely disparate rooms. Rooms that welcome also troublesome people. Lit-up rooms. Dark rooms. Windy rooms. Transparency turns its back to the sun and displays other qualities than the easily attainable. Questioning and despair are constant followers, but also the strong euphoria when the bits and pieces in life's puzzle sometimes fit, when something turns out well. Practice generates insights that develop those communicative abilities that constitute the foundation of a democratic society. In art, like in research, everything novel is examined and everything pioneering is critically scrutinized. And it's still damn good fun!

Research in, through and for artistic activities can strengthen the knowledge about art's diversified expressions in our multi-cultural everyday life. Many artistic endeavours can be labelled challenging and provocative, since they demand new thinking and questioning

## What Does Research Do For Art?

of established truths. Artistic research is one way of moving this process forward. If we help each other and give references to interesting research projects and fora where we can learn and be inspired, we will find ways to co-operation that is both useful and enjoyable. Together we can show ways to the future, to develop both education and research. All of this will have implications for society and politics. Whatever artistic research is up to, it is the evolution of art and the knowledge formation it generates that will spread like rings across the water.

# Epilogue

Seeing the world, education and research, with the eye of the artist is watching, listening and using your knowledge and intuition to relate to the present without taking anything for granted; constructive questioning, rethinking and broadening your vision; finding a new methodology for thought; meeting challenges in politically complex sectors of society and cultural contexts through art. Complicated chains of events are uncovered for re-examination in naked presentations. Research takes its starting point in the artistic process that applies methodologies identified and formulated in practice; frequently also in artistic theory formation, although not always characterized as such.

There is a growing interest in co-operation between different artistic disciplines as well as between art and science, but we must also secure space for specificity. One prerequisite for interdisciplinary co-operation art-to-art or art-to-science, is mutual trust and the independence that rests on separate infrastructures. In practice, there is a need for acceptance, funding and strong, more diversified research environments with room both for the specific and the interdisciplinary. To succeed we must get better at co-operation. We must take up more space both in politics and in the research community, and most of the time we are welcome.

The structures that frame our work as artists and researchers must always be under re-examination. If something appears to be wrong or limiting, the task is to find constructive alternative proposals for systems, regulations or whatever needs mending. Regulations should support activities in the interest of transparency, legal protection and quality assurance. Regulatory frameworks can evolve and change if that is needed, as long as we can argue sensibly

with an attentive partner. Sweden prides itself on relatively flat hierarchies, reachable even for the individual, even though we are always stronger as a collective force both in action and in argumentation. The collegial and democratic systems within the sector of universities and other higher education institutions, help us secure this influence if we only make use of them.

Our culture has an affinity for normalcy and consensus, which is often a hindrance for change and development. We are raised with behavioural norms that are not only expected to be fixed, but also possible to evaluate. It starts with the growth curves of infants and goes on to the measurable indices of adulthood. All of this directs undue attention towards the ego. Everything can be quantified and compared (body, happiness, pain, money, projects and results). Impact is used to legitimize action. The culture bureaucracy applies numbers and other standards to make the models for distribution of resources effective and tangible. So do those who fund research and sometimes academic structures fall in the same trap. I argue that universities and seats of higher learning should be the fora where risk-taking and innovation should get the space needed to generate progress and find new explanations of what is and what can be described as "good" and "useful". Those should be the fora where we can question the norm, skip the consensus and conduct the kind of work and the research that stretches borders also for normalcy.

There is an inherent danger in the fact that artistic research is often valued on the basis of the artistic result of the research project. Research is not just a question of the individual researcher, it is something that injects new insights into the outside world, knowledge and critique that enhances academia, artists outside of academia and the public through increased artistic presence and interaction in a number of activities. We need also to improve our dissemination of different practices within artistic research. This can be done in a variety of ways, as long as we don't feel limited by conceived boundaries. The realm of the possible is often far beyond these limitations. If we succeed, artistic research will be more visible in the public space, in the discourse and also in the academic structures that hold the power over systems and funding.

We sometimes like to see ourselves as "guerrilla fighters", which presupposes subordination. But today I don't think there is this relation between art and science. It is more prevalent in the gender field, in economic and social structures. We need to see through the passing clouds of fog and the devastating concept of consensus. Smuggling in knowledge, insight or information to avoid systematic glitches just create new mystifications. An open import of ideas between different fields and institutions demystifies and raises access to knowledge. I'm all for transparency and an open dialogue, while I can accept an intra-artistic need for the mystic, the mythic and the ritual.

What is hard to explain triggers and stimulates re-thinking through art and curiosity-driven research. Trust in what art does and what art represents is obtained through education, work and research. We prove this through public presentation and discussion, sometimes through provocation, occasionally through pure pleasure – but nothing is a given; neither is the role of art in the societal, multi-cultural world we inhabit; nor is education or research; nor are funding systems or presentation fora. We must stand up for our work, take power and share in the strategic development work. We can do this in many different ways. We can do it through art, through political activism, through non-governmental organizations, as teachers, in peer fora or in other ways, as long as we do act. We cannot make excuses. A critical perspective is sustained through action. A changing market demands peace and new strategies in social, cultural and political positioning. Research is one way.



# Presentation of the Author

Efva Lilja is an artist, working with choreography, visual arts, film and text. She has attracted particular attention for her distinctive performative works, site specifics, imagery and books, presented in more than thirty countries around the world. She started as a dancer and made her debut as a choreographer in 1982. In 1985 she formed E.L.D, a company and a forum for new choreography where she was active until 2005. 2003 - 2006 she was Professor of Choreography at the University of Dance and Circus (DOCH) in Stockholm, where she continued as Vice-Chancellor 2006-2013. Efva Lilja is also an activist in cultural politics. In 2012 she was invited to take part in a EU project called Team Culture 2012 and during 2013-14 she was invited by then president of the EU Commission, José Manuel Barroso to participate in the project A New Narrative for Europe. Her first book was published in 1985 and since then her books have been distributed in a dozen countries.

Since late 1990s she has worked with artistic research and been an active force nationally and internationally, lecturing, presenting and working to improve conditions for artists to undertake research in their artistic practices. She is a board member of SAR and has been a board member of PEEK (2009-2014) and ELIA (2010-2014). This book is written in her capacity as Expert Advisor on Artistic Research at the Ministry of Education and Research, 2014.

Efva Lilja has been decorated and she has received a number of awards, grants and other recognitions. The full documentation of Efva Lilja's artistry is filed at the National Library of Sweden, KB, acc. no 2009/20. For more information, work list, bibliography, etc.: <http://www.efvalilja.se/>



# Examples of Publishing Fora for Artistic Research

JAR Journal for Artistic Research,  
[www.jar-online.net](http://www.jar-online.net)

PARSE, dialogues,  
[www.konst.gu.se](http://www.konst.gu.se)

setup4, Online Magazine of the Research Association for Artists' Publications,  
[www.setup4.org](http://www.setup4.org)

transart, MFA Creative Practice and Studio PhD,  
[www.transart.org](http://www.transart.org)

ARA (Artistic research archive),  
[www.aramer.org](http://www.aramer.org)

Nordic Journal of Dance,  
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# Acknowledgments

Many thanks to all artists, researchers, lecturers, research coordinators and others, who have contributed with criticism, good advice, facts and valuable insights throughout the process of writing this book. Thanks to those who have read the script or parts of it for quality assurance: Artist Gabriel Bohm Calles, Lecturer and leader for research education Camilla Damkjaer, Choreographer and Doctorate Marie Fahlin, Musician and Composer Sten Sandell, Editor Anna-Greta Stenung, Artist and Professor, Chairman of the board at Konstnärliga forskarskolan Måns Wränge, as well as Deputy Director Anna Humble and Desk Officer Eva Stensköld at the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research.

The information about artistic research in other European countries in chapter 1 are gathered from the respective web sites of the different institutions, from facts published by ELIA and from interviews. Special thanks to researchers and leaders in various functions, who have fact-checked information about their own countries: Composer and Professor Gerhard Eckel, Austria; Director Orpheus Institute Peter Dejans, Belgium; Theatre Director and Professor Goran Sergej Pristas, Croatia; Dance Artist and Professor Vida Midgelow, England; Choreographer and Professor Leena Rouhianinen, Finland; Director of the Department of International Affairs ESADSE Josienne Franc, France; Choreographer and Professor Nik Haffner, Germany; Vice-Chairman SAR Johan Haarberg, Norway; Professor Giaco Scheisser, Switzerland.

Thanks to Professor André Lepecki, Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and Professor Chris Wainwright, Pro Vice-

## Acknowledgements

Chancellor of University of the Arts London and Head of CCW, for proof-reading of the English edition of the book. Special thanks also to Journalist and Editor Malcolm Dixelius for assistance with the English translation, and of course thanks to family and friends who have "put up" with me, when I've been obsessed with writing this book...



# Art, Research, Empowerment

The artist as researcher

Every person contributes, consciously or subconsciously, to the foundation of our culture. Our culture encompasses all that leaves an imprint on our intra-human relations, here and now. An element in our culture is what we call art. Some choose to become artists and produce art. What does it mean to see the world, to see education and research with the eye of an artist?

This book is written from an artist's perspective. It discusses cause and effect, steering and empowerment in relation to artistic research based on the Swedish system; it explores how the artistic researcher can enhance art, artistic education, markets and commercial values.

Knowledge is power. Money is power. So are positions, decision-making, major commissions, market demand and networks also power. More knowledge means a better chance of using the findings from research and applying them in frontline artistic activity. Increased knowledge helps stretch and move limits, makes constructive use of resistance and restraints; it empowers networks for cooperation. A market in flux demands new strategies for taking a stand in social, cultural and political matters. Research is one way to do it.



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