

New Start: Artistic Research at the Finnish Theatre Academy

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Artistic research is set to gain a position as one of the forms of university research. It is searching for institutional structures and striving to be accepted for public funding. This development is strengthened by the reorganisation of postgraduate studies and research in Teatterikorkeakoulu (Finnish Theatre Academy, TEAK) completed in the autumn of 2007. Postgraduate studies and research of different performative arts (theatre, dance, light and sound design, live-art, art pedagogy) have been assembled in a group of their own, the Department of Research Development (TUTKE). The aim is to create a functional and interactive research community for the performing arts, which would have weight for both the main objective of the university, which is artist education, and more widely for the performing arts and related research. Specifically, the earlier distinction between “artistically oriented” and “scientifically oriented” degrees and research has been abandoned. Both now focus on “artistic research”. As a term, its contents are understood as equivalent to the terms “practice-based research”, ”practice as research” and ”art as research” used elsewhere¹. The purpose is to develop research arising directly from the viewpoint of the artist and the problems and needs posed by art. With this in mind, a new post was established in the department, the chair of artistic research, which I have committed myself to steer in the years to come.

What is the connection between TEAK, TUTKE and artistic research? In the following, I will explain the practical arrangements that have been agreed during the current academic year 2007-2008 and assess the principles supporting these solutions. I aim to pay attention to the specific nature of artistic research of the performing arts and define its relation to pedagogy and an institutional status.

¹ See Henk Borgdorf’s fine overview on the ontological, epistemological and methodological conditions of artistic research in “The Debate on Research in the Arts”, *Sensuous Knowledge, Focus on Artistic Research and Development*, no. 02, Bergen National Academy of the Arts, Bergen 2006.



1. Hypothesis

Ever since the last decade of the last millennium, art universities have invested considerably in doctoral studies. The reason for this has not only been the artists' own desire to do research or gain an academic degree; the phenomenon has also obvious economic and even ideological explanations. The collapse of the Soviet empire in the 1990s triggered an unprecedented depression in our country. As a result, the economic foundations of Finnish society had to be redefined. Following theories derived from the world of commercial enterprises, our success as a nation and our well-being are now seen to be based on pioneering technological thinking - "innovation" – which means not only to possess "know-how" in different fields but also to create a new type of production by bringing together different fields of expertise. This single operative goal is not only expected to work in the fields of industry and commerce, but also science and art. The merger of different universities, Helsinki School of Economics, University of Art and Design, University of Technology, with the purpose of forming a single "Aalto University"² planned for the near future relies heavily on this type of thinking. Although we could argue that some kind of "artistic research" has always been carried out even in Finland, it is only recently that it has become an institutional discipline supported by public funding. As it now, in the new millennium, is making demands for equal rights and economic support along with other disciplines, the need arises to re-evaluate critically its premises. Discussion on artistic research has hitherto emerged from fine arts, art and design in particular, and mainly focused on defining the field epistemologically and methodologically.³ In so far as artistic research claims to be research in a scientific sense, i.e., an activity that produces new knowledge through the formation of theory, how should we understand that "knowledge"? It generally seems that anything an artist touches turns into art. Why should this not happen in research as well? The discussion has been marked at times by enthusiasm at the verge

² See English website on <http://www.aaltoyliopisto.info/en/>.

³ See Satu Kiljunen & Mika Hannula (ed.) *Artistic Research*, Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki 2002; Tuomas Nevanlinna, "Is Artistic Research a Meaningful Concept?", *L&B (Artistic Research)* 18, p. 80-83; Mika Hannula & Juha Suoranta & Tere Vadén, *Artistic Research – Theories, Methods and Practices*, Academy of Fine Arts / University of Gothenburg / ArtMonitor, Gothenburg, Sweden 2005; Maarit Mäkelä & Sara Routarinne (ed.), *The Art of Research. Research Practices in Art and Research*, University of Art and Design Helsinki, Helsinki 2006; Mika Elo (ed.) *Toisaalta tässä / Here Then. The Photograph as Work of Art and as Research*, University of Art and Design Helsinki, Helsinki 2007.



of a new scientific discipline and at other times scepticism, particularly on the part of traditional academic research.

My purpose in the following is to look for another angle of viewing the problem and study the issue from the perspective of performative arts. In this, I am specifically driven by the practical, organisational and ideological challenges which TEAK is currently facing, the quantity, manner and quality of studying and research carried out in our university, as well as the factual financial and material resources available. Just to do anything in any quantity is neither sensible nor affordable. I will start from a practical hypothesis that may even sound somewhat opportunistic. As I aim to prove, it nevertheless contains strong ideological (i.e., social and philosophical) presumptions and choices.

Hypothesis: *Artistic research is research carried out at an art institute, in this case, TEAK.*

The reason for the definition is not merely the inherent need of the institution to merge artistic and scientific orientations and bring the current, on-going theses and research in all their variety of emphasis under a common denominator, "artistic research". That would in itself give sufficient justification to the given definition. However, there are other reasons too, and with more content. In order to approach them, I will set off to deconstruct the definition I have suggested word by word. First of all, I would like to draw attention to the fact that artistic research is research carried out at an *art* institute.

2. Artistic research and art research

Artistic research is not *art* research, though the two have much in common, in theorisation as well as in academic practices. Art philosophy, aesthetics, or art research basically studies the foundation of the existence of art. Its purpose is to prove and explain the possibility of art and criticise its conditions: when it is art, when it is not, when art is what it could be and when, again, it stops short of what it could be. Research conducted in this way cannot start from art as such, art is not given to it, but the existence of art in society, history and the universe is a thing to be separately theorised. Art research aims to offer a conceptual model in the light of which art appears to us as



something understandable and meaningful and on the basis of which public evaluation of art, critique, and also art policies (social decision making concerning the status of art) are made possible. As an alternative to this, I want to suggest the following additional hypothesis:

Artistic research looks from art to theory and not the other way round.

Differently from art research, artistic research does not question the existence of art or an artistic experience, but takes it as a given fact. The starting point is the assumption that nature, the world, reality and society can be studied from the point of view or level of art, not only "artistically" but also in relation to the fact of art and its mode of existence, its practices and technique. The theoretician of art, the art philosopher or art researcher, does not study art from the point of view of art, but from the point of view of society, a citizen or decision maker evaluating art and in relation to that point of view. Artistic research, by contrast, looks from art towards society and our idea of reality, *questioning their existence*, and sets them demands according to its own mode of existence. Consequently, artistic research is, I venture to claim, ultimately more interested in reality than in art. To put it bluntly, where the research of art explains that "art exists, because ..." or "art is as it is, because ...", artistic research explains that "because art is (or because it is of a certain kind), it follows that ...". Artistic research and art research do not shut each other out, of course, but are currently developing in our country in an active theoretical and institutional dialogue. Good examples of this are the "Doctoral study programme for performing arts in Finland"⁴, which combines research related to the matter in different universities and art universities, and the "Center for Practice and Research in Theatre" founded at the university of Tampere in autumn 2007.

To be capable of the required studying angle, in other words, one needs to be to some extent an artist, maker of art, or on the way of becoming one (at least hypothetically). What is it to be an artist? Let the following definition suffice here: whoever is capable of making art, to whom art is also a skill and a technique, and not only the object of evaluation, is an artist. The artist "knows" how art is made. But what does this knowledge consist of and what does it mean?

⁴ See the web site hosted by the Sibelius Academy: www.siba.fi/fi/opiskelu/tutkijakoulu/contact_information/

Artistic research is forced to assume that there is fundamentally unconscious knowledge, knowledge of the body or hand, which is by nature practical or possible to be made practical and is therefore in principle also possible to articulate or theorise. There is nothing strange as such in this, if we consider that all skill is accumulated experience, practice, unconscious knowledge of how to do things, which supports and surrounds our more conscious operations without being any the less "our own" and in our control. Similarly, it is obvious that the skill or technique to be acquired by making art is to some degree different from the craftsmanship on which making artefacts is based. *It is the technique of representing, describing, observing and perceiving*, and as such, it is more fundamental than any manufacturing or production. Art externalises and makes conscious processes on which meeting with reality in general and our conceptualisation of reality take place. Art or an artist who attempts to explain its own mode of existence theoretically is forced to assume that *art is the technique of reality*. It creates shared reality as some commensurably sharable dimension and not only a collection of conceptions and conceptual systems. The "aesthetic" is shared perception. In a profound sense, it is a question of what we can share in this world no longer ruled by religion and ideologies.

By explicating hidden skill, artistic research aims at *democratising* the making and experiencing of art. Artistic research does not try to prove that there is one domain of knowledge where others than artists have no access and which others can only admire from the outside. It is fundamentally against any mystification of art and the making of art. Neither does artistic research mean "stronger" art than before or art that requires more expertise from its recipient. Quite the opposite, we might say that artistic research aims to break down the bourgeois dialectics between avant-garde and popular art by making art again understandable without, however, compromising on its "difficultness" and innovative nature.

To repeat, artistic research starts from art rather than from science. This does not exclude theory, however: quite the contrary, we should perhaps say that artistic research, to be justified as research, and specifically institutional research, tries to *approach* theory, not only some possible new theory which emerges from the art practice in question, but also existing theories, including the explanations given by art research on the modes and reasons for the existence of art. This is the



approach we are entitled to expect from artistic research on the basis of the above, although it may appear discursively in various ways. We may, for example, consider whether a written thesis, the traditional academic dissertation, is the only acceptable theoretical medium.⁵

Let it be added that the sometimes-suggested distinction between researching the “product” of art and the “making” of it is not enough to explain the difference between artistic research and art research, as both can be studied starting from theory. In artistic research, the practice of art creates new theory and challenges existing theories. The initiative to artistic research is made by an artist, it is research conducted by an artist and related to the artistic practices and forms he or she is familiar with and master of, to her or his experience as a maker of art. This is of particular significance in connection with the examination procedure of doctoral dissertations. The supervisors of the dissertations generally come, after all, from traditional academic research, such as art research. An artistic researcher must be able to argue for his or her work in such a way that, on the one hand, it does not cause any misunderstanding as to its starting points and, on the other hand, that it is capable of arguing for its solutions even to a person who does not necessarily have the background of an artist.

There has traditionally been a need for research in art institutions. The teaching and its contents, artist pedagogy, has been developed by someone; it is the result of someone’s research, whether that research was in its time called ”artistic” or not. The earlier research, for its part, has always taken place in a dialogue with the scientific and philosophical theories of its time, even if it has not presented itself in the form of theory. This is particularly true in the field of performative arts, where pedagogy has always been of great importance. Artistic research must take place where the commitment is not only to produce knowledge but also art and the knowledge required to produce art, i.e., in art universities. It is sensible for an art university to conduct and promote research which cannot be done elsewhere and is characteristic of the basic principles and needs of an art school, in other words, which: serves the formation of an artist and the development of different forms of art. These objectives can never be unambiguously separated from each other within any form of art.

⁵ See Mika Elo “Art and Research Touching”, http://designresearch.uiah.fi/the_art_of_research/presentations.html.



For the same reason, the practices in art and science universities should not be considered equal. Although postgraduate studies and research are carried out in accordance with many forms adopted from universities, the most significant being doctoral education, it is not feasible to create or promote a university-type career development and educational hierarchy. Differently from universities, a doctor of art is not necessarily a more qualified artist than a master of art; a doctor of art is not necessarily better qualified for posts in the field of art than a colleague with lower academic qualifications. Similarly, it is not advisable to register for postgraduate programmes directly after taking a master's degree, as in universities; instead, they should be pursued by artists who have already demonstrated their artistic skills and gained experience in practice and who wish to theorise how art is made in their field and renew the field by means of theorising. In the overall context of TEAK, TUTKE is not meant to represent the peak of the hierarchy, but should on all occasions serve basic education. The knowledge and skill produced should flow not only out to the world but also to the faculties and to basic education.

Next, I will argue why artistic research is specifically research that takes place at an art *institute*.

3. Art and Institute

The idea of artistic research being bound to an institute is supported by the fact that, in order to succeed, research requires not only an artistic community of artists and an audience, but also a scientific community. The latter it needs because it is fundamentally ignorant of its research method, as well as its theoretical connecting points. These it has to discover, modify and, if needed, devise. Such an approach to theory cannot succeed without interaction with existing disciplines and their representatives or without their support and guidance. The person who undertakes to do artistic research and build its methods is an artist, not a scientist. He or she does not necessarily possess the knowledge and skills required by research work; instead, she or he has a problem, a question which has arisen from her or his artistic work and which she or he estimates to be of significance to the entire art field and to the conception of reality it produces.



Secondly, a community of various types of scholars is needed because the artistic phenomenon is characterised by the use of multiple viewing angles. Besides the fact that a work or act of art can be analysed and studied from the point of view of several different sciences, it is also apt to create hitherto unknown connecting points between the different fields of knowledge. In other words, it is not only some previously unknown area within the domain of some known research, in which case its status as a research object would be questionable. Instead, artistic research is forced to justify the existence of its research object every time; in other words, it invents and argues for new perceivable reality the way art does. It proceeds in principle in a direction where nothing appears to or is known to exist. For this reason, a research community which is competent both artistically and scientifically and has as a great variety of disciplines and viewing angles is necessary in order to evaluate the results of the research and communicate them to others. We may, of course, ask whether that community needs by necessity to be an institute: perhaps not necessarily. The answer ultimately depends on how we understand an “institute”. Let me now approach that question.

A third point related to the institutional aspect of artistic research is the fact that, in most cases, research requires specific economic, material and human resources, such as another artist or team that practises and demonstrates the results of the research, or the opportunity to try out complex and sometimes expensive technological solutions. As far as TEAK is concerned, I must particularly mention the new, technological state-of-the-art premises now at the disposal of the department of light and sound design, which make it possible to conduct far-reaching experiments in the research of performative sound and light.

A fourth point justifying the institutional nature of artistic research is related to the fact that artistic research always has some pedagogic significance within performative arts. This significance may be so great that the research may announce as its unique objective the creation of new artist pedagogy or its application in art education. There has always been this type of artistic research at

TEAK. It is, along with dance research, the form of artistic research most often pursued and furthest taken.⁶

Both art education and art educate, but in different ways. *However, a certain pedagogic aspect and even a demand for it is, as I see it, always present whenever artistic research is done.* Pedagogy should be seen as an opportunity, an aspect that can help the artistic research of performative arts both socially and scientifically. For the research results to achieve a knowledge status, they have to be commensurate, possible to evaluate and verify in public, sharable, and ultimately also possible to teach. The results of the research of performative arts and the artistic knowledge thereby produced go further in their pedagogic nature: they modify our behaviour, our ways of observation and action, and thus create new forms of social interaction. They are encouraged by the demand or wish not only to learn, absorb things and increase the amount of knowledge, but also to achieve a more comprehensive change, growth and development as an individual and as a community. The pedagogy of performative arts contains strong and critical, more or less openly expressed statements on what it is to be an individual, together with others and acting in society.

The practice of pedagogy, both from the point of view of the one teaching and the one being taught, and the study of pedagogy are delicate processes which require a secure and trusting environment to succeed. As long as the institute also has the duty to protect and support the progress of these learning processes, there is a risk that the activity will become supervision or control. The cradle of art may become a reservation of art. How does art education differ from the pedagogy of art? What happens if the two are considered identical? Who is in charge of the education, by what means and in whose name? Our time, which shuns from any tampering with the assumed freedom of the individual and which talks about “life-long learning” instead of growing up, can hope to avoid these questions only by ignoring them.

⁶ The following English works have been published in TEAK’s *Acta Scenica* series (AS): Pentti Paavolanen & Anu Ala-Korpela (ed.), *Knowledge is a Matter of Doing* (AS 1, 1995), Paula Salosaari, *Multiple Embodiment in Classical Ballet. Educating the Dancer as an Agent of Change in the Cultural Evolution of Ballet* (AS 8, 2001); Betsy Fisher, *Creating and Re-Creating Dance. Performing Dances Related to Ausdruckstanz* (AS 12, 2002); Leena Rouhiainen, *Living Transformative Lives. Finnish Freelance Dance Artists Brought into Dialogue with Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology* (AS 13, 2003); Eeva Anttila, *A Dream Journey to the Unknown. Searching for Dialogue in Dance Education* (AS 14, 2003); Leena Rouhiainen, Eeva Anttila, Soili Hämäläinen & Teija Lyytinen, *The Same Difference? Ethical and Political Perspectives on Dance* (AS 17, 2004).

Artistic research and its success, by the criteria presented above, is certainly possible outside a public institute. There is also private, sponsored artistic research. However, an "institute" and institutional connection mean a greater and more extensive commitment to social practices and the work of maintaining and renewing them. If we look at Bauhaus as the model of a modern art institute, we may ask: was it simply a historical coincidence, an idyll, which was as fragile as the Weimar republic in whose bosom it prospered? Can art and society become institutional allies in a way that will renew both art and society? Should they do that or does all institutionalisation inevitably mean "established institutionalisation", i.e., a way of consolidating the structures of power and production as an end in itself? Can any institute avoid this? On the other hand, even if research were possible outside an institution, would it not as it progresses still start to build an institutional context for itself (something "set up", "established", "caused to stand", *institutus*)? To answer these questions we would need to define the historical and ideological relationship between art and institute, and ultimately to answer what "institute" means in western society. Instead of answering this question, I will go on to demarcate it by one further observation.

Institute has a very particular meaning within performative arts in Finland, and artistic research as institutional research cannot take a neutral stand to the question. My observation concerns the theatre, in particular, which in the past century, for historical reasons, was divided into bourgeois and left-wing theatre and their respective unions. This gave rise to an internationally unique two-theatre system.⁷ Since the 60s, however, a systematic effort has been made to dismiss this division. It is worth noticing that the common denominator through which left and right-wing forces, artists and audience, could unite was no other than the institute: "institutional theatre" – and corresponding educational institutions in the field. As in the case of Bauhaus mentioned earlier, the institutional ideology was boosted by social democratic optimism, a belief in society which reproduces and develops its own structures through different commonly known democratic action communities organised according to its own model. This model is also a historically unique Scandinavian model which has become part of our world of thought and values, whether we like it or not, and for which we must today render account, both politically and mentally. Similarly, artistic research as institutional research must dare question its own societal conditions. Primarily, the

⁷ See Mikko-Olavi Seppälä, *Teatteri liikkeessä. Työväenteatterit Suomen teatterikentällä ja työväenliikkeessä kaksiteatterijärjestelmän syntyyn asti vuonna 1922*, Helsinki: Mikko-Olavi Seppälä 2007.

institutional ideology itself must be analysed; its historical, political and philosophical backings must be brought to light and a choice must be made as to which of them will be strengthened and which avoided. The role of artistic research in an educational institute is, besides serving the basic objective of the institute, i.e., the growth of an individual as an artist and the development of a particular field of art, also to criticise and renew the foundations on which this growing takes place.

4. Art and Research

I will now return to my definition that artistic research is research conducted in an art institute and deconstruct it by focusing on its nature as *research*. We may agree, I presume, that contemporary art in its different forms is still more like “research” by nature. Why this should be so, why modernism in art should seek support from the human sciences, the natural sciences and philosophy is a question to be pondered on its own. I myself see it partly as a sign that modernistic art in its many forms has reached the limit of its means and its struggle to survive and renew itself forces it to turn to reevaluate its own foundations. It also has to do with the fact that art has in our culture ceased to be an internal, self-reflecting symbol and as such, an “end in itself”. Perhaps even “culture” as such, as a sphere of the self-building – *Bildung* – of a community, has disappeared or split into “subcultures” with no common denominator. The stepping forth and need for artistic research appears as a defence of the autonomy of art at a time when art has ceased to be an end in itself. It is obvious that art, in all its forms and practices, is at the same time undergoing a fundamental change.

Similarly to art that researches, artistic research is not research of art but research of reality by means of art; it restructures and criticises our conceptions of reality by appealing to the evidence of art and its mode of being and manifesting itself. Let “reality” here be understood as a discursive entity of meaning, which always opens up from some symbolic system and whose scope and variety depends on the quality and variety of each particular system. Thus we may again ask, why artistic research should be conducted in an institutional form, unless we are dealing with clearly definable pedagogic research or development work directed to the instruments of making art. Has not reality, too, been defined through each institutional framework?



What distinguishes artistic research from researching art in general is its goal of theory formation. Artistic research is not only a freely chosen way of carrying out one's own artistic projects, but must accept a certain requirement of truth and knowledge. This does not mean the requirement of methodological monism. It is possible to start simply from the idea that, through sufficient effort, each research problem will find or create the methods to solve the problem. The essential demand is the demand for method, knowledge and truth, which has been set to the research and which each particular piece of research must answer in its own justifiable way.

I again refer to the pedagogic aspect. Artistic research strives to show the validity of other ways of being and perceiving. Here it may look for help from natural sciences quite as well as from humanistic sciences. How to define artistic research is often less an epistemological question (What is knowledge? What is artistic knowledge?) as it is *political*: Whose knowledge or what knowledge should we value and consider meaningful? Whose voice or what voice should we listen to in society? In artistic research, a work of art, an artist (which in performative arts are often one and the same thing) assume theoretical and social discourses and learn to speak at their level. This does not banalise art, let alone explain it to pieces, quite the contrary, it changes those discourses and in that way articulates the forces of change inherent in art.

Artistic research is not only interested in developing the artist's personal skills or art. This is where postgraduate studies differ essentially from professional competence building or extension of skills courses. The latter is above all motivated by personal interest. A fundamental ethical criterion of research is at work here, defining what it means to be an artistic researcher as compared with other artists. Although artistic research is related to some particular field of art or even its most delicate branch, it does not actually study that, to be exact. The theoretical objective simultaneously distances the author from his or her position and, as it were, takes her or him to the edge of her or his art, where its modes of articulation, or art as a technique of perceptual reality become manifest. The researcher who redefines his or her relationship with his or her own field of art at the same time defines that field of art as a whole. When this happens, the position of the researcher strictly speaking no longer lies within the sphere of that particular field of art. Where, then, does it lie? I



claim that it lies in artistic research. The purpose of TUTKE is to secure an institutional stronghold for this unique position in relation to performative arts.

In artistic research, the evidence of art questions reality and our conceptions of reality, in other words, our metaphysics. This can be articulated justifiably, theoretically, and in a critical relation to existing knowledge and theories. As far as there is evidence derived from practice it must also be possible to verify it in practice. It is often practice – the way in which a model, method, application or device is shown to be possible and functional – that provides the most successfully justified form of artistic-theoretical evidence. In other words, the practices justified by artistic research pinpoint our most fundamental ways of understanding and articulating our world. The same criterion also holds for the more exactly defined pedagogic artistic research and development, which always builds on some “concept of man” and its substantiation and execution while, on the other hand, criticising other concepts of man. Education is always the education of certain kinds of people and avoidance of other kinds of people; similarly, artistic research is not a neutral valuefree description of the laws of a “given” reality, but the substantiation and, to some extent, execution of the possibility of another kind of reality.

Artistic research is in this respect supported by a typical aspect of modernism in art: the desire to become reality and participate in reality. To what extent this desire is justified and to what conflicting is a fundamental philosophical question in the arts, which the fact of artistic research puts forth. I do believe, however, that we are here maintaining a hold on the healthy core of art institutional thinking. Artistic research may, after all, also be opposed ideologically: let artists know their place and stick to the spheres and closets where the prevailing cultural policy has seen fit to place them.

5. Conclusions and Models

I would now like to summarise the assumptions I have made. Artistic research is research conducted in an art institute. Artistic research is the research of *aisthesis* by means of art, or the rearticulation and critique of our conceptions of reality by means of appealing to the practices and evidence of art.



On the basis of these assumptions, I would like to approach the more methodological question I posed at the beginning, which was based on the idea that "everything an artist touches turns into art". The problem becomes particularly acute in that part of artistic research where the starting point is, as it were, the artist *self*, the artist's own experiences of making art and his or her own works, already completed or to be completed in the process of the research, and the description and analysis of the objective and subjective aspects of the artist's own artistic processes. There are several such research projects currently going on at the university (I am here including doctoral research). Most projects of artistic research include artistically creative parts. What are the epistemological problems related to this position? I would like to summarise them in three points:

1) The theorisation of one's own activity cannot present or identify a criterion for when the theory serves as a universal model for the activity or when the theory continues the artistic process in the form of a theory. At its worst, the author's discourse becomes a mere imitation of theoretical discourse; in other words, a generalisation of one's own experiences and purposes which are claimed to be "singular", but are in fact purely subjective. At its best, the theory completes or extends the work of art and the result is theoretical art – conceptual art.

2) The theorisation of one's own activity cannot present or identify a criterion for when the author allows the artistic phenomenon to appear in its multiple interpretations and when, again, he or she reduces it to some particular interpretation or at least significantly limits its possible interpretations; in other words, when theorising is reduced to the author's intentions and when again it aims at something universal and shared. Contrary to the former case, where theory threatens to become art, in the latter case, art is mercifully killed by being reduced to the purposes of knowledge.

It may be generalised that every artistic researcher, as long as he or she sets a certain demand of objectivity to her or his research, is forced to struggle continuously with the double bind here described. The research community may play a key role in providing the researcher critical distance and feedback. It alone is not enough, however, if the research, at its very starting point, does not offer means for self criticism and for guiding and evaluating its own realisation. The definition of



these means, the structure of the arguments, and theory formation related to artistic research are a problem to be solved case by case both in the supervision of individual dissertations and in the jointly chosen procedures.

3) To the arguments above must be added the philosophical art perspective included in them, namely that a work of art takes place and becomes real in an area that lies in the unconscious of the author. I neither assume nor expect everyone to share this view. If one does not accept the unconscious element of art, however, the autonomous status of artistic evidence and consequently the possibility of artistic research are questioned. The idea of the autonomy of art goes back to continental aesthetics derived from Kant. According to it, to put it very roughly, art is something absolute, where an individual's activity and expressions manifest themselves in their connection to some more universal level that embraces us all – a people, society, Spirit, or the universe. This gives the work of art its paradoxical nature as some, at one and the same time, conscious and unconscious instance which, on the one hand, is independent of the interests of society and wants to pull itself free from them and which, on the other hand, operates with the elements of that society, claims to be somehow more “real” than it, and demands to be made real. It is not easy to free ourselves from this model of thinking, either, nor do we need to, even though it has a long and partly questionable history behind it.

The matter can be understood in many different ways, and has been. One fundamental assumption is, however, that a work of art thinks or bubbles forth new reality exactly in an area its author is unconscious of, the zone where art is revealed, steps forth and manifests itself to others – audience, critic or theorist. This perspective remains, by definition, beyond the reach of the author him or herself, and she or he can only reconstruct it for him or herself through the mediation of the parties mentioned. The paradox is particularly manifest and emphasised within the performing arts, where the author is often at the same time the work itself. The division of labour within performative practices, performer – director, is not just another convention, but a sign of this constitutive discontinuation, which even the sharpest theoretical eye is unable to bridge. The reflection of one's own artistic work is regulated by this paradoxical dynamic, where the same thing that enables reflection also sets a certain barrier to it, which cannot be warded off by negation. How to face it should be understood as a methodological challenge.



The methodological and epistemological problems of artistic research mainly have to do with the points I have put forward. How to avoid the pitfalls? An artistic researcher can and should find and justify his or her solutions – both in the name of honesty and the general credibility and reliability of the research community. However, I shall in the following present one way of planning and evaluating one’s own research, which will at least guarantee its justifiability as a research of reality conducted at an art school. At the same time, I would like to return to the pedagogic aspect involved in research, which I discussed earlier.

The research might consist of three parts or intertwining approaches. These are (a) invention, (b) theoretical part and (c) artistic part. The invention could be called less demandingly a skilled, applied or technical part. The three parts support each other and argue for each other. That is why the model can be analysed starting from any one of them, in principle. I will, however, start from the invention because its existence opens a way out of the double bind of science and art I described above.

a) By invention I mean something derived and abstracted from one’s own activity and experience, which, however, is independent of them as a universally adaptable, shared and testable skill, method, model, demonstration, strategy, technique, device or application. It can be used in artist education or applied to different social contexts. It verifies as possible and functional certain unconscious ways of existing and acting. It is an apparatus, application or optics through which reality manifests itself or is articulated differently from before. The invention renews the field of art by showing a new way in which art participates in the construction of reality.

b) The theoretical part defines the theoretical dimensions of the technique and skill in question: what objectives does it pursue in relation to the traditions of art and art philosophy, and to our conceptions of reality? What objectives does it criticise within each sphere?

c) The artistic part would form one artistic application of the invented technique or model, at the same time leaving room for other and others’ applications. The artistic part verifies the fact that the skill has been justified on the basis of artistic practices proper and by appealing to an artistic



phenomenon. The work may have been completed earlier or it may be carried out during the research. What is essential for the research is that the work and its process of completion have been sufficiently well documented and the work is also justified, as much as possible, with reference to theoretical material.

The artistic part may be omitted from the research, if the research concentrates on developing the methodology of some pedagogy of art or artist, for example. The aspects of skill and invention should not be neglected, however, but the research should in some way demonstrate its own applicability and objective ability to challenge reality by universally shared means. The demonstration may, of course, take place on paper, or why not digitally; what is essential is that it does take place. As long as this happens, we are dealing with artistic research that justifies its own existence.

There must be other models justified in the above sense, too. An artistic proof may directly form a demonstration justified as research and be articulated in an interactive relation to theory. In that case, whatever becomes the object of research is also inevitably the model of an autonomous work I have here described. The fact of the work itself must be deconstructed and questioned, and this goal, too, must be included in the research topic. Artistic research might also proceed as a series of artistic demonstrations or tests, where some starting hypothesis is tested or an effort is made to make something hitherto never manifested manifest itself to us. Even artistic work processes may form a research object, if they, through repetition, produce working models that can be jointly evaluated and shared and not only their author's personal journey to experience or a generalisation thereof. In other words, there are many models, and every research is permitted to argue for its choice. From the point of view of research ethics, it is important to avoid the double game, where the researching artist defends her or himself against criticism appealing to his or her position now as an "artist" and now as a "researcher". The role of the artistic researcher must not be given, nor should it be a matter of identity let alone image; instead, it follows when one sets oneself in a position between art and the unknown and starts asking questions. This paradoxical and difficult state is now attracting many people. There are certainly other and weightier reasons for this than the fact that such activity has become possible institutionally. It appears obvious, however, that artistic

research can in the future continue and be successful only by turning the institutional conditions analysed above to its advantage.

