



# approaches to writing

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Introduction to the intensive writing course - 2022

Lucy Davis - María Villa - Paola Jalili



# course timeline

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**Mondays: 10-12 am, 1-4 pm**

**25 April - Introduction.** Discussion of readings, ViCCA  
Faculty relationship with writing

**2 May - Formats** and standards of text production - Intro to print  
making - Paola Jalili

**9 May - Thesis writing experiences form ViCCA - Experimental  
Writing Workshop** - María Villa & Laura Leif

**16 May - Printmaking** session, Paola Jalili (Väre)

**Wed 19 May - 10:00- 13:00** (Printmaking workshop) - Paola Jalili.

**23 May - Research Cartographies and Embodied Writing** - María Villa  
(AM: Väre/PM: Multifacility Hall)

**June 6 - Delivery of Final Assignments**

# writing in an expanded field

This course hopes to give you a way to think about your thesis and artistic research in relation to words, reflexivity, and dialogues with varied contexts of meaning-making.

This involves a multiplicity of approaches and practices with text and words, including:

- Academic writing – engaging with theory and positioning yourself in larger discussions.
- Relating to case studies.
- Other research processes going on in your practice.

# final assignment

**A Thesis :**

**Your topic or case study  
+ your perspective on the topic  
= An Argument**

\* **Research Plan**

\* **And 2-3 paragraphs** to introduce your topic in a compelling way.

Think about the reader: how to engage their attention? Don't tell the whole story, show what it feels like—from the experience of the work, not a flat explanation. An evocative way to situate the reader in your topic.

Can be submitted in an unpredictable format.

# research plan



1. **Research questions** : a series of them, provisional, both **material** and **theoretical**.
2. **Critical review** : situating or positioning critically in relation other artists/practitioners/theories
3. **Method**: How you envision developing this process.
4. **Perspective**: Where do you hope to land?
5. **Timeline**: break your process down in stages.

## 1 . What questions are you asking of your case / topic / your practice?

### Examples

Q: How might readings of tracks in the snow reveal the political inclusions and exclusions of urban Helsinki life?

Q: How might a microscopic analysis of Helsinki sand reveal interspecies traces of empire?

Q: How can drawings dance and dances write?

Q: What are some of the relationships between smell and memory, how do such processes work neurologically and in the body?  
How might smell be a shared way of working through loss in an artistic practice?

Q: How can drawing figures as a media of research enable the emergence of new narratives and ideas? How can we trace the speculative potential of diagrams, develop discursive analysis of artist's diagrammatic maps and models, and so create unique correlations between thinking and drawing?

## Unravel the questions...

**Thesis question from a MA thesis on performance art in a time of extinction at TEAK by Harriet Froelich 2017:**

**Q:** How might I research via my own performance practice, potential modes of resistance against the paralysis I find myself in, overwhelmed by the complexities and manifestations of the crisis that has been termed ‘anthropocene’?

How to stay in motion, be stubborn, persistent and (almost) hopeful while at the same time acknowledge the feeling of pending doom? Is there an artistic possibility of embracing futility? How to practice this mode in a perceivable way? What images and materials emerge in the process?”

**Maria Mastola: Shipyard - A possibility for free play, ViCCA thesis 2016:**

“Children depend on adults. ... Thoughts about an individual’s autonomy and how it changes throughout the human life led me to thinking about children’s autonomy in play. It was spring 2015 when I started to be increasingly interested in playgrounds and play. It raised a lot of questions. Why do playgrounds look like they do? Who uses playgrounds? Who has the ownership of the playground? Are there any other types of playgrounds than the ones I see right now? What does the word play mean? What types of play are there?

With these questions I found myself digging deeper into concepts of adventure playgrounds, the importance of play at all ages and especially into the quality of play. ... The focus of the thesis is in theory. Production, however, has an essential role in my own learning process. Without production I would still be having a delusional image of the perfect playground and what it would be like to make one. The production phase gave a lot of relevant information for creating a playground of my own if I choose to do that.”

## 2. Critical review .... *Situate your work*

Researching, formulating and presenting a FIELD where your work emerges

Who is already doing the kind of work you are interested in? Who is responding to similar kinds of questions to your own, both in **theory** and **practice**?

In a transdisciplinary programme like ViCCA, quite likely you are drawing on many disciplines to define your own very particular **field**.

**What are your references like?**

They are the companions on your artistic journey.

How are you paying tribute to them?

### 3. Your Method : Your specific research approach

**How** are you seeking to answer your research question(s)?

Is your practice a method, or part of the topic? ...Both?

What specific approaches are you using?

What kinds of partners and examples, disciplines and practices might help you develop your method?

### 4. **Perspective:** Where do you hope to land?

Tentative answers, insights, hunches —hypothesis.

**5. Timeline:** Spot your deadline, break your process down in chunks/ smaller steps.

### The writing process

Often the process of writing requires a good deal of mind-mapping, free writing, sketching, long walks, reading, and a lot of procrastination.

Eventually you find a series of triggering questions, situations or insights in the practice, and you begin from there.

But your process will lead to other ideas, which you realize are perhaps more relevant than the ones you were asking to start with. This is completely normal and may mean you need to re-route, re-assemble, and put aside/discard!

**The form your thesis takes:** How might it better reflect and enable your main concerns, questions and practices?

**Do give yourself time for this process.**