

THEORY, ART, AND ARTISTIC PRACTICES

ARTISTIC RESEARCH

BASICS

Research is "any creative systematic activity undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this knowledge to devise new applications." (OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms, 2008) (in Julian Klein, "What is Artistic Research?")

Research therefore means not-knowing, rather: not-yet-knowing and desire for knowledge (Rheinberger 1992, Dombois 2006). (Julian Klein, in "What is Artistic Research?")

Artistic research means that the **artist** produces an **art** work and researches through the creative process, thus adding to the accumulation of knowledge. However, its forms and principles have yet to become firmly established.

Source: Hannula Mika, Juha Suoranta & Tere Vaden. Artistic Research: Theories, Methods and Practices

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ARTISTIC RESEARCH APPROACHES CHARACTERISTICS

The term “artwork” a “work of art” then to be used interchangeably but it’s useful to tease them apart. The artwork may be defined as the production -the performance, painting, sculpture, film, screenplay, poem, etc...

The “work of art” is the work that art does: the movement in concepts, understandings, methodologies, material practice, affect and sensorial experience that arises in and through art and the artwork.

The role of the artistic researcher is not to describe her or his work, nor to interpret the work, but rather to recognise and map the ruptures and movements that are the work of art in a way not necessarily open to others. The artist-as-researcher offers a particular and unique perspective on the work of art from inside-out as well as outside-in.

The positioning of the researcher as maker and observer, and the multi-dimensional qualities that arise in artistic research, gives artistic research its particularity.

Source: Barb Bolt. <https://finearts-music.unimelb.edu.au/about-us/news/explainer-what-is-artistic-research>

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ARTISTIC RESEARCH APPROACHES

GENERAL GOALS AND PURPOSES

Producing information that serves practice from ecological, psychological, social, cultural, economic, political, technical and functional points of view.

Critically analysing art and its current trends: relationships between art and technological development, art and economic development, power relationships, etc.

Interpreting art works as cultural, political, and pedagogical products.

Rethinking and questioning the role of the artist in society at large, including the historical and political development.

Source: Hannula Mika, Juha Suoranta & Tere Vaden. Artistic Research: Theories, Methods and Practices

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ARTISTIC RESEARCH APPROACHES

CHARACTERISTICS

COMMUNICATION: The basic starting point of research is the wish and need to say and convey something about something to someone else.

RELEVANCE and NOVELTY: One must present what is being researched, why it is being researched, why it is of interest and what is the aim behind it. Research must present something new about its object, something which has not been said before, or it must present previously known facts from a new viewpoint.

RELATIONAL: The question is about defining with whom the research converses, what traditions it can be considered to be linked with, and what relation it has to these different traditions. Your research attempts to find its own place in relation to what has already been said.

Source: Hannula Mika, Juha Suoranta & Tere Vaden. Artistic Research: Theories, Methods and Practices

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CHARACTERISTICS

PERSONAL: One must be able to say something, to present a substantiated opinion. This is very strongly linked with being in the world, to the fact that the researcher is part of the researched subject.

DIALOGICAL: not study something but rather study with something – not to talk or read about something or look at something but always together with something, in a sharp, intense yet even beautiful, ever-continuing reciprocity.

TIME COMPLEX: It should face simultaneously the three time spheres of the past, the present and the future. You need to articulate where you are coming from, where you are right now and where you want to move towards.

Source: Hannula Mika, Juha Suoranta & Tere Vaden. Artistic Research: Theories, Methods and Practices

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ARTISTIC RESEARCH APPROACHES

CHARACTERISTICS

HETEROGENEOUS: Artistic research is a weave of many factors – the read, the known, the observed, the created, the imagined and the deliberated – where the author does not so much strive to describe reality but to create a reality for her work with its own laws.

RELATABLE: The research should highlight the ways in which its own results connect back to the community's understanding of its own skill... meaning not only the increasing of theoretical knowledge (increasing of insight) but also organising skill in a new way (e.g. in practice, education, and institutions)

Source: Hannula Mika, Juha Suoranta & Tere Vaden. Artistic Research: Theories, Methods and Practices

THEORY, ART, AND ARTISTIC PRACTICES

WORKING ON YOUR DISSERTATION FIRST STEPS

STEP 1: Check the requirements for your MA thesis.

STEP 2: Choose a broad area of research that interests you deeply. You are going to spend a considerable time reading, thinking and writing about it.

STEP 3: Look for book and articles related to your chosen area of research.

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WORKING ON YOUR DISSERTATION

STEP 2: CHOOSE A BROAD AREA OF RESEARCH

Think of a general topic that really interests you. You don't need to be specific at this time. Ex:

- Sound studies
- Gender Studies
- World Cinema
- Finnish films
- Memory
- Digital cinematography
- Animation

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WORKING ON YOUR DISSERTATION

STEP 3: SEARCH FOR BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Your goal is to start narrowing down a bit your topic.

Look for some recent publications that tackle the general issue you are considering. Are there any academic journal on the subject?

When you check these articles, write down any reference that seems interesting for you. And write down any idea that feels relevant!

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WORKING ON YOUR DISSERTATION

STEP 3: SEARCH FOR BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Some sources:

[Aalto Library](#)

[JSTOR](#)

[Google Scholar](#)

[Project Muse](#) (Humanities and Social Sciences)

[FIAF](#) (International Federation Film Archives)

[Yale Film Research Guide](#)

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WORKING ON YOUR DISSERTATION

STEP 4: GET MORE SPECIFIC

You need to start narrowing down your topics and ideally find a niche of an area that has not been studied so much; or a question that is still debated; or a very practical issue.

Ex: Is there a neglected author that you think has not been considered enough? Is there a time period you are interested in global/local film history?

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WORKING ON YOUR DISSERTATION

STEP 4: GET MORE SPECIFIC

Gender studies — Women filmmakers in Finland — Women filmmakers in fiction films — An author? A time period? A particular role within film industry?

Politics of representation — The representation of race in Finnish films — The representation of African immigrants in narrative Finnish films in XXI century.

Performance studies — Performance in Documentary — Documentary reenactment — The creation of reality through documentary reenactment.

Source: <https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/dissertation-topics/>

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WORKING ON YOUR DISSERTATION

STEP 5: WHAT TYPE OF RESEARCH?

Are you collecting your own data (interviews, fieldwork, surveys, etc)?

Are you analyzing existing data (texts, archives, statistics, etc)?

Are you interpreting cultural objects (films, media objects, sound compositions)?

Are you comparing different theories towards an issue?

You will most likely combine more than one. But it's important to think which type you feel closer to.

Source: <https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/dissertation-topics/>

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WORKING ON YOUR DISSERTATION

STEP 6: DETERMINE THE RELEVANCE

- ▶ Apart from being relevant to you, it has to be relevant for other people. Different kinds of relevance:
 - Academic relevance. Can your research fill a gap or contribute to scholarly debates in your field?
 - Social relevance. Can your research advance our understanding of society and/or foster social change?
 - Practical relevance. Can your research be applied to solve practical problems or advance the practice in your field?

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WORKING ON YOUR DISSERTATION

STEP 7: MAKE SURE IT'S FEASIBLE

Can you complete your dissertation in the time you have?

Will you have time to read the most important literature related to your topic? If the topic is too big, then better to narrow the focus more.

Contrarily, if the topic is too narrow and does not allow you to find enough relevant data, you should broaden your focus a bit.

Do you have to go to any special place to carry out your dissertation? Make sure you have access and resources to do so.

Source: <https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/dissertation-topics/>

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WORKING ON YOUR DISSERTATION

REMEMBER

- ▶ To stay motivated it's essential that you choose something you feel very passionate about.
- ▶ Choosing the topic and the research question is crucial. You need to spend time thinking, reading and working on defining your question.

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DEVELOPING STRONG RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ⇒ A good research questions is essential to guide you through your thesis.
- ⇒ It states exactly what you want to find out and gives you a clear focus and purpose.

Research questions should be:

- ▶ Focused on a single problem or issue.
- ▶ Researchable using primary and/or secondary source.
- ▶ Feasible to answer within the timeframe of your research.
- ▶ Specific enough to answer properly.
- ▶ Complex enough to deserve the length of a thesis.
- ▶ Relevant to your field of study and/or society more broadly.

Source: <https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-questions/>

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TYPES OF RESEARCH QUESTION

Descriptive Research *What are the characteristics of X?*

Comparative Research *What are the differences/similarities between X and Y?*

Correlational Research *What is the relationship between X and Y?*

Exploratory Research *What are the main factors in X?*

Explanatory Research *Does X have an effect on Y?*

Action Research *How can X be achieved? What strategies to improve Y?*

Source: <https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-questions/>

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WHAT MAKES A STRONG RESEARCH QUESTION

Focuses on a single topic and problem.

- ▶ It keeps your research focused.

Answerable using primary and secondary data.

- ▶ You should be able to answer it using your own produced data (primary data) as well as using scholarly sources on the topic (secondary data).

Feasible and specific

- ▶ Make sure you have enough time and resources to answer the question.
- ▶ Use specific, well-defined concepts.
- ▶ Avoid vague language and broad ideas.
- ▶ Be clear about the *what*, *who*, *where* and *when* your question addresses.

Ex: What effect does social media have on people's minds?

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Ex: What effect does social media have on people's minds?

To: What effects does daily use of Twitter have on the attention span of under 16s?

Source: <https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-questions/>

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WHAT MAKES A STRONG RESEARCH QUESTION

Complex and arguable

- ▶ They cannot be answered using yes or not.
- ▶ If you can answer your questions using a basic Google Search or reading a single article/watching a single film probably it's not complex enough. A good research question usually requires multiple sources, interpretation and argument to provide an answer.
- ▶ Provide scope for debate and deliberation. The answer should not be a simple statement of facts: there needs to be space for you to discuss and interpret what you found.

Relevant and original

- ▶ The research question should be developed based on initial reading around your topic, and should focus on addressing a problem or gap in the existing knowledge.
- ▶ You don't have to ask something groundbreaking that nobody has ever thought of before, but the question should have some aspect of originality (for example by taking a new angle on a long-running debate)

Source: <https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-questions/>

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EVALUATING RESEARCH QUESTION

Question:

How is race represented in Shakespeare's Othello?

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EVALUATING RESEARCH QUESTION

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How is race represented in Shakespeare's Othello?

The question is not original. It has been answered so many times that it would be very difficult to contribute to anything new.

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EVALUATING RESEARCH QUESTION

Improved question:

How have modern adaptations of Shakespeare's *Othello* dealt with the theme of racism through casting, staging and allusion to contemporary events?

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EVALUATING RESEARCH QUESTION

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How have modern adaptations of Shakespeare's *Othello* dealt with the theme of racism through casting, staging and allusion to contemporary events?

The second question takes a specific angle to make an original argument, and has more relevance to current social concerns and debates.

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EVALUATING RESEARCH QUESTION

Question:

Why is there a housing crisis in Netherlands?

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EVALUATING RESEARCH QUESTION

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Why is there a housing crisis in Netherlands?

Starting with “why” often means that your question is not focused enough; there are too many possible answers and no clear starting point for research.

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EVALUATING RESEARCH QUESTION

Improved Question:

What impact have university internationalisation policies had on the availability and affordability of housing in the Netherlands?

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EVALUATING RESEARCH QUESTION

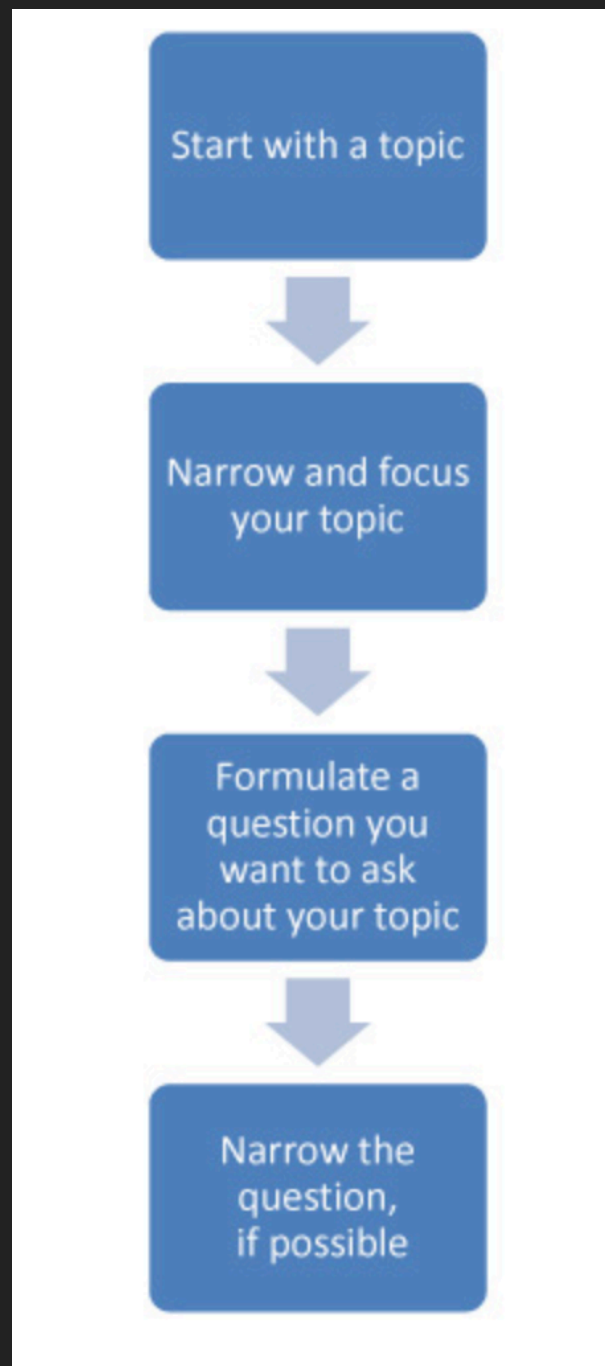
Improved Question:

What impact have university internationalisation policies had on the availability and affordability of housing in the Netherlands?

By targeting just one aspect of the problem and using more specific terms, the second question offers a clear path to finding an answer.

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REMEMBER



Source: <https://sscc.libguides.com/c.php?g=18253&p=102734>