

# Documenting and reflecting creative process

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# Artistic practice

- "Artistic practice is an attempt at controlling complex combinations of materials, practice, techniques, stimuli, performance practices, and discourses, recipients, institutions, and trade.
- These practices have produced coping strategies which are an important part of a practitioner's professional skills.
- All this is included in artistic research and may be the most important contribution artistic research makes to knowing" (Varto, 2018, 85)

# Practice-led, Practice-based

- Doing design is a practice
- Making art is a practice
- Focus in professional practices
- Knowledge making: The brain controls the hand which informs the brain.
- Practice-led research, where the end product is an artefact – where the thinking is embodied in the artefact
- Practice-based research, design practice is part of the research process

# Reflective practitioner

- Setting problems and solving them in real world and professional context
- Based on personal knowledge and professional practices, which are not always articulated
- Knowledge in action (embodied knowledge)
- This kind of knowing is dynamic – knowing how rather than knowing what (Schön, 1983)

# Thinking in creative process

- The process is iterative in nature
- "Unlike many other disciplines, where formal logic and serial thinking are predominant, artists and designers are usually **visual, lateral thinkers**. In our domain we know that there are no certainties, no 'right' answers, no simple solutions, no absolute objectivity.
- All views are admissible, many interpretations are possible, different 'ways of seeing' are encouraged." (Gray & Malins 2017, 40)

# Reflection-in-action

- "Research is an activity of practitioners. It is triggered by features of the practice situation, undertaken on the spot, and immediately linked to action
- The exchange between research and practice is immediate, and reflection-in-action is its own implementation." (Schön, 1983, 308)
- Reflective practice attempts to unite research and practice.

# Reflection

- Reflection-on-action, critical research skill, review, evaluation, analysis
- Reflection-in-action, activity of professional practitioner, thinking about what you are doing and reshaping action while doing it. Improvisational and relies on feeling, response and adjustment.
- Designing is like reflective conversation with the material and the process (Gray & Malins, 2017)

# Reflective practitioner

- We understand and become aware of our creative practice by telling ourselves a story about ourselves and our practice
- Capacity for self evaluation and self improvement
- The problems of practice are open to reflection and inquiry
- "To look at one's own creative practice means taking on both a creative and a reflective role." (Douglas, 1994, 45)



# Creative practice

- "Practice can be understood primarily as the knowledge, tacit or otherwise, of how something is done within the context of a professional and cultural framework, a contingent activity that makes or establishes meaning or significance, although not through the application of thought alone. Practice needs to be understood in its wider sense as all the activity an artist/creative practitioner undertakes. **Practitioners think, read and write as well as look, listen and make.**" (Haseman & Mafe in Smith & Dean, 2014, 214)

# Creative practice

- Something is done in a certain professional context, through creative and technical skills and using different knowledges (material, color, aesthetical, form, style.....)
- Also haptic and tacit knowledge is used
- Meaning making in a selected context and through professional practice

# Creative process

COMPLEX

CHAOTIC

INTUITIVE

MESSY

UNEXPECTED

SURPRISING

GENERATIVE

# Reflecting creative process

- In the creative process you collect ideas through visuals, sketches, material example ect.
- This method of collecting ideas can be repurposed to serve as a research method to documenting and recording discoveries
- Repurposing can mean regular reflection with the material: reviewing and re-reading the journal through to identify key moments in the creative journey
- All the time practice-led researcher is making decisions and moving forwards and backwards in the process of creation

# Reflecting

- Practice-led process needs heightened reflexivity
- The process of searching and "not knowing" takes time
- The process of maturing or accidental discovering
- To understand this process own reflection is needed

Why to write about creative process?

You learn writing by writing and reading

# Writing in MA thesis

- Thesis is a written academic deliverable that needs to show mature thinking.
- In other words, you should be able to craft a research question, and to show how you plan to collect and analyse your observations, how do you plan to support your creative work with findings from research or theories, on what do you build your academic contribution.
- What is the literature that connects to and supports your work? Even when doing a production based thesis these issues are relevant component of master's thesis.



# Reflective Journal

# Why

**To make sense of things that happened.** What you write should sound as if you are describing the details to someone who wasn't there. Be as descriptive as possible. Just the act of writing down the details of what happened may give you perspective that you may not have otherwise considered had you just continued to think about it.

# Why

- **To get thoughts and ideas out of your head.** Writing down your thoughts can help relieve pressure or help resolve problems. It will also help you focus the task at hand.
- **To share your thoughts and ideas with others.** Getting opinions from others about what you wrote can help you clarify your feelings for a deeper understanding of yourself.

# Reflective Journal

- Is a purposeful process for helping to expose and explore various models of practice
- Have effective conversation with ourselves
- Journal is a store – a repository for different kind of information, which is added to and consulted on a regular basis
- Can include different types of information

# Ingredients can be ect.

- Observation
- Visualization
- Photography
- Videos
- Sketchbook
- Diary text
- Readings

# Reflection

- Reflection-in-action
- While doing something
- For capturing actions, design process, design decisions, critical moments, your learnings
- To describe and evaluate the action

# Reflective Journal

## **AIM**

- A reflective journal is a dialogue between you and your teacher(s). Writing helps you to become aware of your own thinking, which in turn helps and supports you in your creative process. It also helps you to contextualize your own work in the wider field of fashion/textile design. Writing makes your thinking and creative process visible to others.

# Reflective Journal

## **PROCESS**

- Simply start by documenting your creative process; your ideas, thoughts, feelings, choices and decisions. Start by writing short diary entries. Write continuously, either daily, a couple of times a week or once a week. Read the previous text before adding new text and reflect on it.



# Reflective Journal

- At the same time, think about the wider context of your work: how and by whom (designers, artists, theorists etc.) has the subject been treated previously? What has been done, what has not been done? What is your contribution to the subject?

# Reflective Journal

- Try to identify critical moments in your creative process by asking yourself the following questions: How do I create? What / who inspires me? How do I make creative choices? How did I resolve problems? These questions help you to become aware of how you work as a creative designer. The writing process is free-form meaning that you can choose the style of writing that suits you best.

# Reflective Journal/interpretations

- When you have gathered enough visual and textual information (towards the end of November), go through it and try to identify moments which were important in the process. Write these moments down and reflect on them.
- Ask yourself: Why were these moments important? Why did I make the choices I did? What did I learn in these moments? Where does my project situate in the wider field of fashion/textile design? In this phase you give meaning and context to your creative process.

# Reflective Journal

- When writing, you can also think about following questions:
  - Which subject did I choose and why?
  - How did I find information (both visual and textual)? How has the subject been approached before me? What is my contribution?
  - How did the material help me in my own creative process?
  - What did I learn? What did I enjoy? What did I find difficult and why?
  - What were the critical points in my learning?

# Reflective Journal

## **OUTCOME**

- 4-6 pages of text
- 1-2 pages of visual representations
- Final submission of the journal will be on 30.12
- We will go through your journals in the first session on 11.1

# References

- Gray, C. & Malins, J. (2017). *Visualizing Research. A Guide to the Research Process in Art and Design.*
- Haseman, B. & Mafe, D. (2014). Acquiring Know-How: Research Training for Practice-led Researchers. In Smith, H. & Dean, R. (Eds.) *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts*, pp.211-228.
- Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner; How Professionals Think in Action.*
- Varto, J. (2018). *Artistic Research.*