

# Context building Theory + practice

Kirsi Niinimäki 9.11.2020

- *As a practitioner-researcher belonging to the art and design research community, I would rather define this form of research in a broad sense, as an **interpretive engagement with artistic production and experience**.*
- *Such research feeds on practice as well as the practitioner's reflections, such that the practical and the reflective parts could stimulate each other.*
- *What would be a suitable method for conducting this type of research? Since practice (i.e., artistic production and experience) plays a significant role in such research, it is usually **performed in dialogue with practice**.*
- ***Research questions generally originate from within practice.***
- *In order to answer the research questions, the artistic production and experience--**both facts and feelings**--are to be captured, whether in **visual or textual formats**.*

(Nimkulrat, 2007)

# 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)

Julia Valle-Noronha, 'The body within the clothes', *RUUKKU - Studies in Artistic Research*, 10 (2019)  
<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/410902/410903>

# Focus

- Designing + wearing
- *Building the understanding and meaning grounding on earlier studies on wearing and clothing design.*
- *The efforts that look into fashion designers' practices as case studies and **autoethnographies** that take wearing as a methodology to academic enquiry particularly interest this study.*

# Autoethnography

- Qualitative research
- Researcher uses own reflections and writing
- to explore anecdotal and personal experience and connect this autobiographical story to wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings (Garancem, 2010; Carolyn, 2004)
- What this means to me, what this means to others

# Research approach

- *Interested in wearing as a field of investigation, recent works **a subjective perspective** on how people and clothes relate, building especially from **artistic research methods**.*
- *In these investigations, the designer's **body** becomes both object of and tool for research.*

# Context building

- *Some examples concentrate on investigating the process of constructing a garment (Lee 2012), living and caring for clothes (Splawa-Neyman 2014) and making and wearing shoes (Sampson 2016).*
- *Yeseung Lee (2012) makes a comparison between the processes of constructing, wearing and researching through the making of a seamless garment.*
- *Through this, she investigates the construction of the self as a fluid process supported **by theories** in a wide range of fields such as **fashion, philosophy, and anthropology**.*

# Context building, showing your academic knowledge, building on previous research

- *The field of **pattern cutting**, an essential stage in the creation of clothes, is probably one of the scopes with the largest amount of contributions in research into fashion practice (Valle-Noronha and Chun 2018).*
- *Within it, most of the attention is given to the development of pattern cutting methods and the final outcomes, with little focus on the **experience of wearing** (e.g. Rissanen 2013).*
- *Some works, on the other hand, take the **motility of the human body** as a point of departure, but still, the experience of wearing is little discussed (e.g. Simões 2012, Lindqvist 2015).*

# Research approach

- *These two streams of investigation (**autoethnography and fashion practice**) help understand fashion design from the creative process to the use phase.*
- *By investigating the creative process of making clothes informed by **autoethnographic notations on daily wearing practices**, this study can be situated in the intersection between these three streams of works.*
- *It aims at discussing the entailments of the situated designer's body (not dissociable to its mind) in the designing process when visually inspired by these wearing practices.*
- *In order to do that, it asks '**how can the body of the designer be used to inform the design process?***

- *The design practice is observed from a phenomenological perspective, in which diaries, photos, and videos were kept to inform longitudinal data about the experience of creating and making clothes.*
- *The nature of the data produced **via autoethnography is understood as descriptive data** (Creswell 2007).*
- *A phenomenological approach was used to investigate the material produced using an interpretative approach (Creswell 2007).*

# Phenomenology

- Phenomenology is the philosophical study of the structures of **experience and consciousness**.
- Researchers own experiences can be in the center
- E.g. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre.

# Results, contribution

- *While making use of autoethnographic research methods, the projects presented here show how research can inform and catalyse **new expressions in fashion design**.*
- *In this way, it contributes to the field of creative pattern cutting as an alternative to traditional western methods.*
- *Lastly, they suggest that we, designers, be open to and aware of the bodies that are found within the clothes.*

# Group session

- Bring your thoughts to the session based on reading; how Julia is building her knowledge based on clothing design practice, how Julia is combining practice and theory.
- Please write a short memo of your thoughts which can be shared with others during the session on 9<sup>th</sup>
- Write a short memo of your discussion:
- **How we build our knowledge as designers?**
- **How our body informs us design related knowledges?**

# Practice and theory

- *Nigel Cross has argued that designers should concentrate on the underlying forms of knowledge particular to themselves.*
- *Cross pins this knowledge down to the practice of design, which he labels “designerly” ways of knowing, thinking and acting (Cross 1982, 2001: 55 in Mäkelä 2006).*

# Knowing while designing

- *Knowledge of design resides in **people** (i.e. designers), in the **processes** and in the **products** themselves (Cross 1982: 223–225; 1999: 5–6).*
- *Part of this knowledge is inherent in the activity of designing: it can be gained by engaging in and reflecting on that very activity.*
- *Knowledge also resides in artefacts themselves, **in the forms and materials**.*
- *Some of this knowledge is also inherent in the process of manufacturing the artefacts, and it can be gained through making and reflecting upon the making of those artefacts (Cross 2001: 54–55 in Mäkelä 2006).*

# Artefacts

- *Artefacts are essential outcomes of artistic process, but in the context of practice-led research they have an even more important role.*
- *They function as a means of realising a thing which has to be **perceived, recognized and conceived or understood**.*
- *It is the making of the artefact, even if intuitive, which determines the direction of the practice-led research process. (Mäkelä 2006)*

# Practice-led

- *In conventional research, making is generally regarded as consequent to thinking – at least in theory.*
- *Thus, a series of experiments, for example, are carried out in order to test a certain assumption, i.e. to solve a problem or answer a question.*
- *In the field of practice-led research, praxis has a more essential role: making is conceived as the driving force behind the research and in certain modes of practice also the creator of ideas – such as, for example, painting (Scrivener and Chapman 2004: 7).*
- *In this way, invention comes before theory, i.e. the world of ‘doing and making’, is prior to understanding (Cross 1982: 225 in Mäkelä 2006).*

# Autoethnography

- Qualitative research
- Researcher uses own reflections and writing
- to explore anecdotal and personal experience and connect this autobiographical story to wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings (Garancem, 2010; Carolyn, 2004)
- Practice-led; practice leads the process, but the meaning making (deepening the understanding) needs theory

# Next time

- Bilge Aktas' text + Maarit Mäkelä's text
  - Practice-led approach
  - Learning new skill(s) as a designer
  - Working with material + technique
  - Material thinking, material tinkering
  - Material agency (pots-humanism, new materialism)
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- Aktas' doctoral defence will be on 26.11. at 12.00-15.00 through zoom <https://aalto.zoom.us/j/67605771918>