

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.

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BASICS

The starting point of research is always an interest in some phenomenon, event, process, etc. According to an established custom, this interest is called the research object. (109)

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FILMMAKING RESEARCH

Filmmaking research is neither research as ipso facto, nor a posteriori; It is not research after the film is completed. It is critical that the research questions and choices of methodology, which describe the research approach and design, are clearly explained (or at least start developing) at the beginning of both the research and filmmaking.

Filmmakers devise specific questions about their own practice, or the practice of filmmaking more generally, and use the making of a film to answer these questions. Filmmaking research aims to reveal the complexities of a filmmaker's environment: It might include research about a project's production contexts, stories and narratives, screen cultures, participants, logistics, budget as well as the filmmakers' experiences and collaborations when making a film.

The filmmaking practice sits at the centre of the research and as such leads to research insights gained **through, for and about filmmaking.**

Source: Batty, Craig and Susan Kerrigan Editors. Screen Production Research: Creative Practice as a Mode of Enquiry

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COGNITIVE TWO-STEPS

Such knowledge arises when the filmmaker-researcher experiences **the immersed**, messy routines of creativity oscillating **with the distanced** analytics of reflective critique and theorisation.

You need to **step both outside and inside the mystery that you are using cinematic means to address**. Not one without the other.

Filmmakers, whether they label themselves documentarists or creators of fiction, know this two-step well. It is the routine they enact when trying to understand firstly what the film needs in order to account for the mysteries being filmed and edited, and secondly what the film is revealing to them about the phenomenon that they are trying to know better.

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THREE-FOLD CHARACTER

The **three-fold character of the research:** to face simultaneously the three time spheres of the past, the present and the future, and to articulate in terms of one's interests and specific type of content where you are coming from, where you are right now and where you want to move towards. (120)

Correspondingly, the artist must rely, at least partly, on earlier debates and research on the subject in order to adequately analyse the practice of her field. She must also analyse the practical background suppositions and action context. (105)

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METHODOLOGIES

ANYTHING GOES

Reality is not organised according to beautiful models but requires, according to Feyerabend, **an anarchistic starting point**: the only principle that can be defended under all circumstances is "**anything goes.**" Anything goes, yet anything that goes also leaves a trace and makes a shadow. (38) From Paul Feyerabend's *Against Method*.

In other words, anything is possible, but not everything possible is meaningful. Nevertheless, it is important to defend the idea that all methods and ways of perception are in their basic premise possible and nothing is excluded when aiming to understand the world.(38-39)

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METHODOLOGIES

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But do not textbooks on methodology and research courses stress that the research objects must be objectively distanced from the researcher and concern only serious issues? You can believe that if you want to! **Our advice is, take on a phenomena that interests only you yourself!** (78)

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SOME COMMON METHODOLOGIES.

- Conversation and Dialogue
- The Analysis of Art and Media Representations and Objects
- Collaborative Case Studies
- Ethnography and Interventions
- Practice-based Research

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PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH

In practice-based research, it is the problematization of some aspect of artistic practice, rather than some ready-made theory or theoretical viewpoint. (105)

Talking about **theorization** rather than simply theory is justified because it **refers to the active, critical and creative skill of thinking**. (103)

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.