Knowledge making in fashion and textiles 2024

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Emmi Pouta

Aim of the course

- **Knowledge building in fashion and textiles;** First touch to MA thesis process in FaCT

- **Design Research;** presents different methods in design research (practice-based being one of those)

- **Thesis plan process starts in autumn 2024**

- Good time to do the thesis during the second study year until the end of May 2025

- Publish your MA thesis in repository https://aaltodoc.aalto.fi/home

Aim

- **Learning Outcomes:**

- The course provides understanding of different forms of research-based knowledge and concepts that are used in support of fashion and textile design processes.

- On completion of the course students should be able to:

1. Understand and explain the role of research-based knowledge in their creative process (e.g. in data collection, documentation, and reflexive self-evaluation)

2. Show ability to use research-based knowledge in their own design practice

3. Explain in written and textual form the use of research-based knowledge in their design practice

Aim of the course

- Presents different ways of doing Master thesis in FaCT

- Provides some writings you can use in your own process

- Provides learnings in information and visual retrieval (using and finding the right sources/repositories, google scholar and other data sources)

- Helps you to identify your own interest and viewpoint (positioning + context building)

- Helps you to be ready to start the MA process in autumn 2024

Learning process

- Pre-readings
- Journals, central articles/references in this field
- Own reflection (grounding on some theoretical knowledge and adding own reflection on it, discussing with theory/earlier studies). Learning the academic way of building argumentation.
- Group reflection
- Reflective reading, reflective writing. In your academic text you 'discuse' with other researchers
- What you can learn from a text: content, how the text is structured, how the argumentation is built, how the question is formulated, how the data is collected and used, what is the results section, how to build discussion and conclusion part

	PROGRAMME	**Pre-reading**
8.1. 13.15.- 17.00	Course starts How to do the course; First task reflective journal Kirsi Niinimäki: positioning your MA thesis	Koskinen, I., & Krogh, P. G. (2015). Design accountability: When design research entangles theory and practice. *International Journal of Design,* 9(1), 121-127. Mäkelä, M. (2016). Personal exploration: Serendipity and intentionality as altering positions in a creative process. *Form Akademisk-* *forskningstidsskrift for design og designdidaktikk*, 9(1).
15.1.	13:15-14:15 Lecture on Practice-based Research through textile thinking, and researcher's situatedness 14:30-16:00 panel + group discussion 16:00-17:00 Group task guidelines. Independent task: divide into groups and select one MA thesis for reading	Please read these texts before the session and prepare a few questions or topics to discuss with others. Nimkulrat, N. (2007). The role of documentation in practice-led research. *Journal of Research Practice,* 3(1), Article M6. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/26460719_The_Role_of_Documentation_in_Practice-Led_Research Julia Valle-Noronha, 'The body within the clothes', *RUUKKU - Studies in Artistic Research,* 10 (2019) https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/410902/410903 For group task: MA thesis guidelines

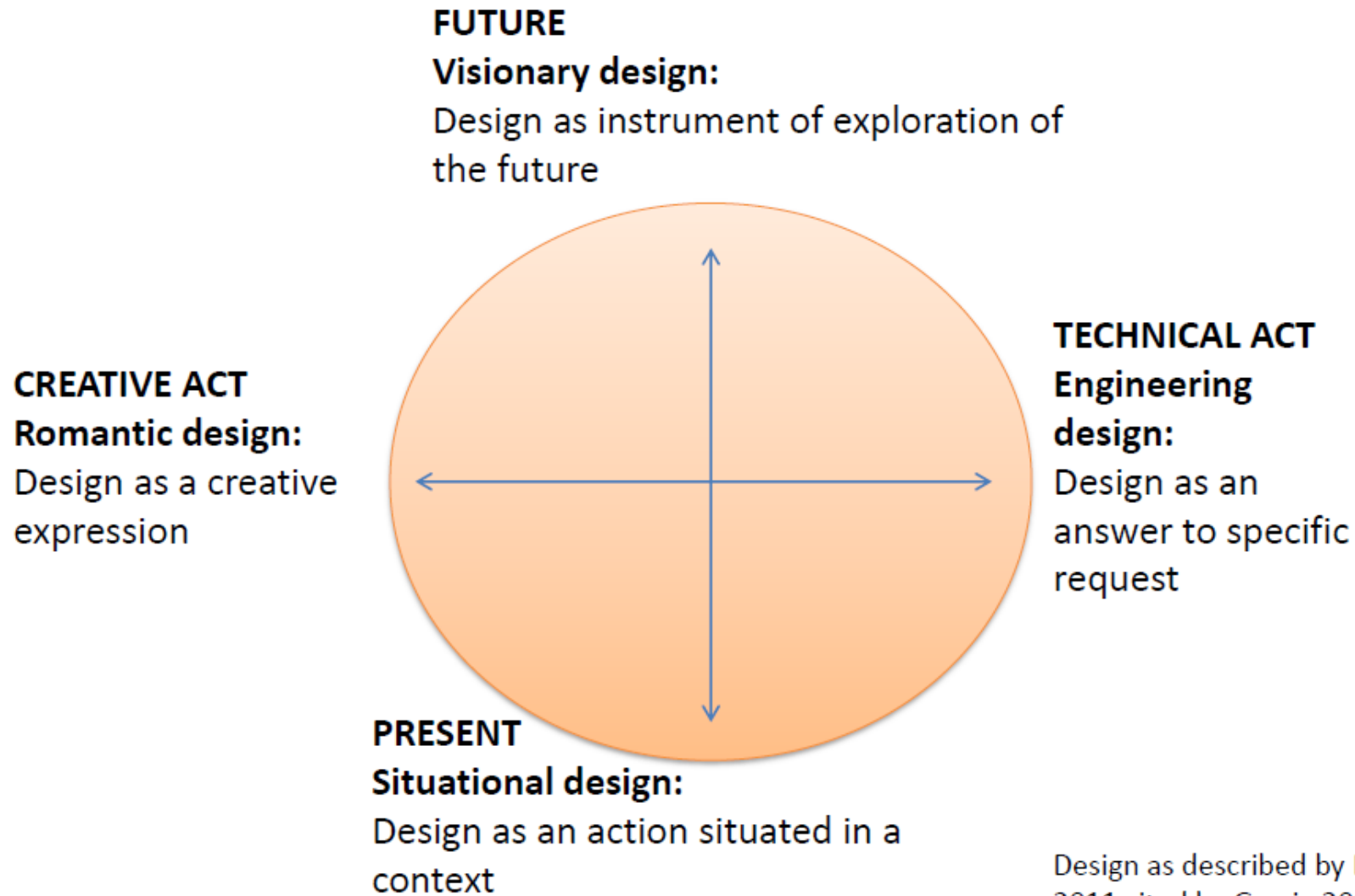|		
22.1.	13.15-17.00 Kirsi Niinimäki: User centered approach Participatory design Co-design Marium Durrani: Ethnography Group discussion on pre-readings	Please select one text from the following and read it before the session and prepare to discuss this topic Hirscher, A. & Niinimäki, K. (2013) Fashion Activism through Participatory Design, *Crafting the future conference. 10th European Academy of Design Conferences* 17-19 April, 2013. University of the Gothenburg, Sweden. Brent Luvaas (2018) Introduction: Anthropology, *Street Style,* Bloomsbury Academic https://www- bloomsburyfashioncentral-com.libproxy.aalto.fi/products/berg-fashionlibrary/book/street-style-an-ethnography-of-fashion-blogging/introduction-anthropology-street-style
29.1.	13:15-16 Information retrieval Väre/R102	Reflective journal deadline 26.1.
5.2.	13:15-15 Visual retrieval Väre/R102 15:15-17 Group task presentations	

12.2.	13.15-17.00	Please read this text before the session.
	Kirsi Niinimäki: Positioning your own interest in MA thesis	Clemens Thornquist (2014) Basic Research in Art: Foundational Problems in Fashion Design Explored through the Art Itself, *Fashion Practice*, 6:1, 37-57.
	Feedback from reflective journals	
	Discussion on the pre-reading.	
	Guidelines for the last task: short reflective text on how are you planning to position your MA thesis	
19.2.	Deadline to submit your positioning text	

Tasks:

- Reflective journal. Deadline 26.1.
- Group task: analyzing one MA thesis. Presentations on 5.2.
- Active participation to group discussions, pre-readings mandatory
- Short reflective text: positioning own MA thesis work. Deadline 19.2.

Design in its placement

FUTURE
Visionary design:
Design as instrument of exploration of the future

CREATIVE ACT
Romantic design:
Design as a creative expression

TECHNICAL ACT
Engineering design:
Design as an answer to specific request

PRESENT
Situational design:
Design as an action situated in a context

Design as described by Deserti 2011 cited by Garcia 2012, 154

Documenting and reflecting creative process

Kirsi Niinimäki

Artistic practice

- "Artistic practice is an attemp 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 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 allways 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 attemps 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 an 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 contex and through professional practice

Knowing in creative process

- *As Polanyi (1969) asserted, knowing and doing are rarely exercised in isolation and their combination is present in the working of our sense organs.*

- Haptic knowledge

- Tacit knowledge

- The Tacit Dimension argues that tacit knowledge—tradition, inherited practices, implied values, and prejudgments—is a crucial part of scientific knowledge (Polanyi)

Explicit

Codified knowledge found
in documents, databases, etc.
IT is essential for transfer and storage

Tacit

Intuitive knowledge & know-how, which is:

Rooted in context, experience, practice & values

Hard to communicate - resides in the mind of the practitioner

The best source of long term competitive advantage and innovation

Transferred through socialization, mentoring, etc.   IT mainly as support

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 backwords 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.

Context building

- In which context your work is relevant to study?

- Artistic? Commercial? Sustainability? Certain theoretical context

- Links to the literature you are using to build the context (theoretical framework)

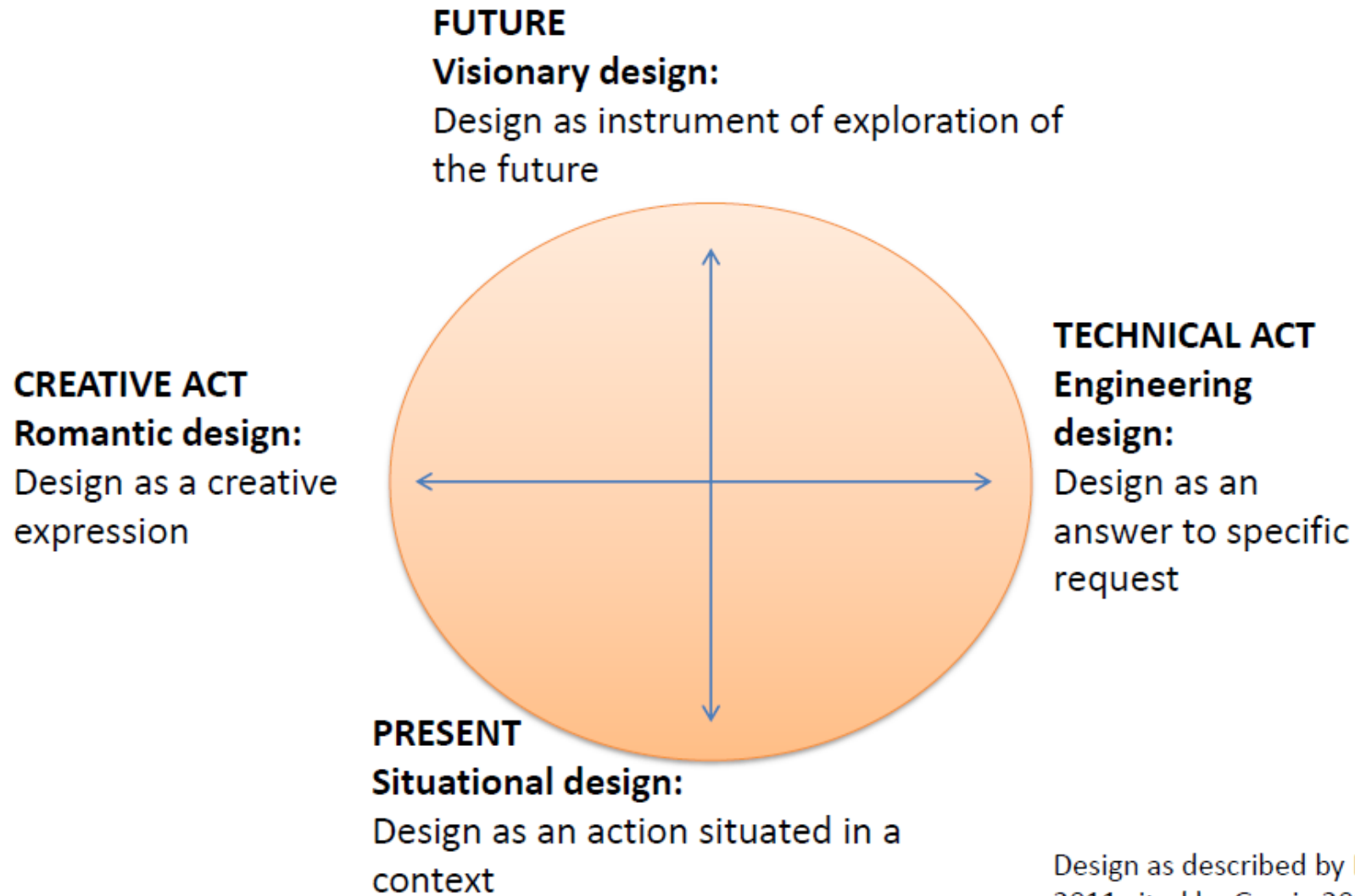- You reflect your own process and thinking against the context

Context building

- How you position your work

- How others see your work and its value

- How your work is understood and evaluated

- When you read academic text or previous MA thesis, evaluate, what is the context in this work

Context building

- *Documentation renders the implicit artistic experience accessible and discussable in the context of **disciplined inquiry.***

- Discipline; fashion design, textile design, design, material-based/contemporary art

- *In my research project, I examine **the relationship** between **materials** and **artistic expression**, in the context of **contemporary art*** (Nimkulrat, 2007)

- MA thesis=Disciplined inquiry positioned in a selected context

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Design + research landscape

FUTURE

Visionary design:

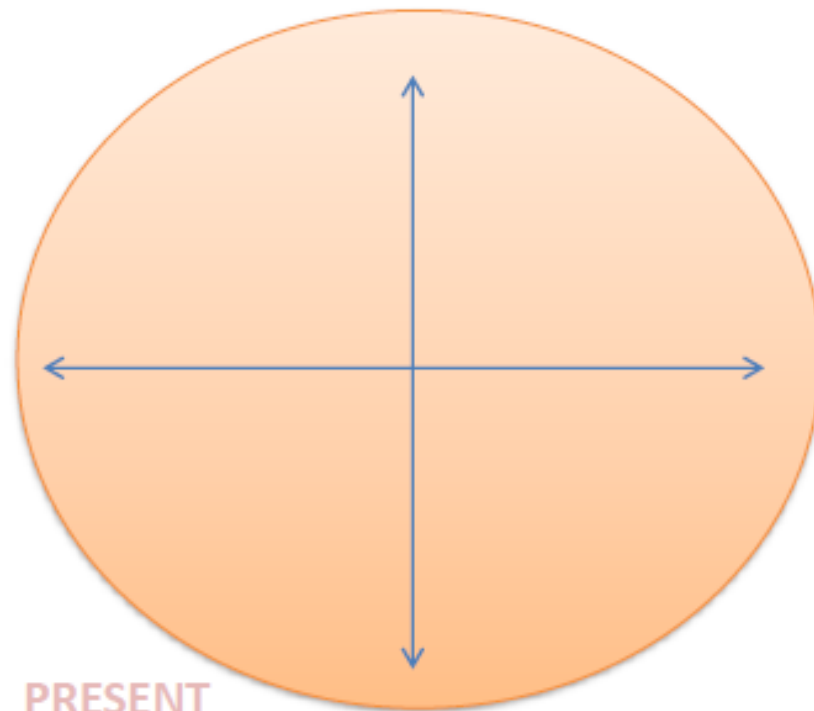Design as instrument of exploration of the future

Aesthetics
Artistic
expressio
n,
e.g.
Practice-
based
research

CREATIVE ACT
Romantic design
Design as a creative
expression

Traditional
research,
Positivist
research
E.g.
investigating
some
phenomena,
ethnography
...

TECHNICAL ACT
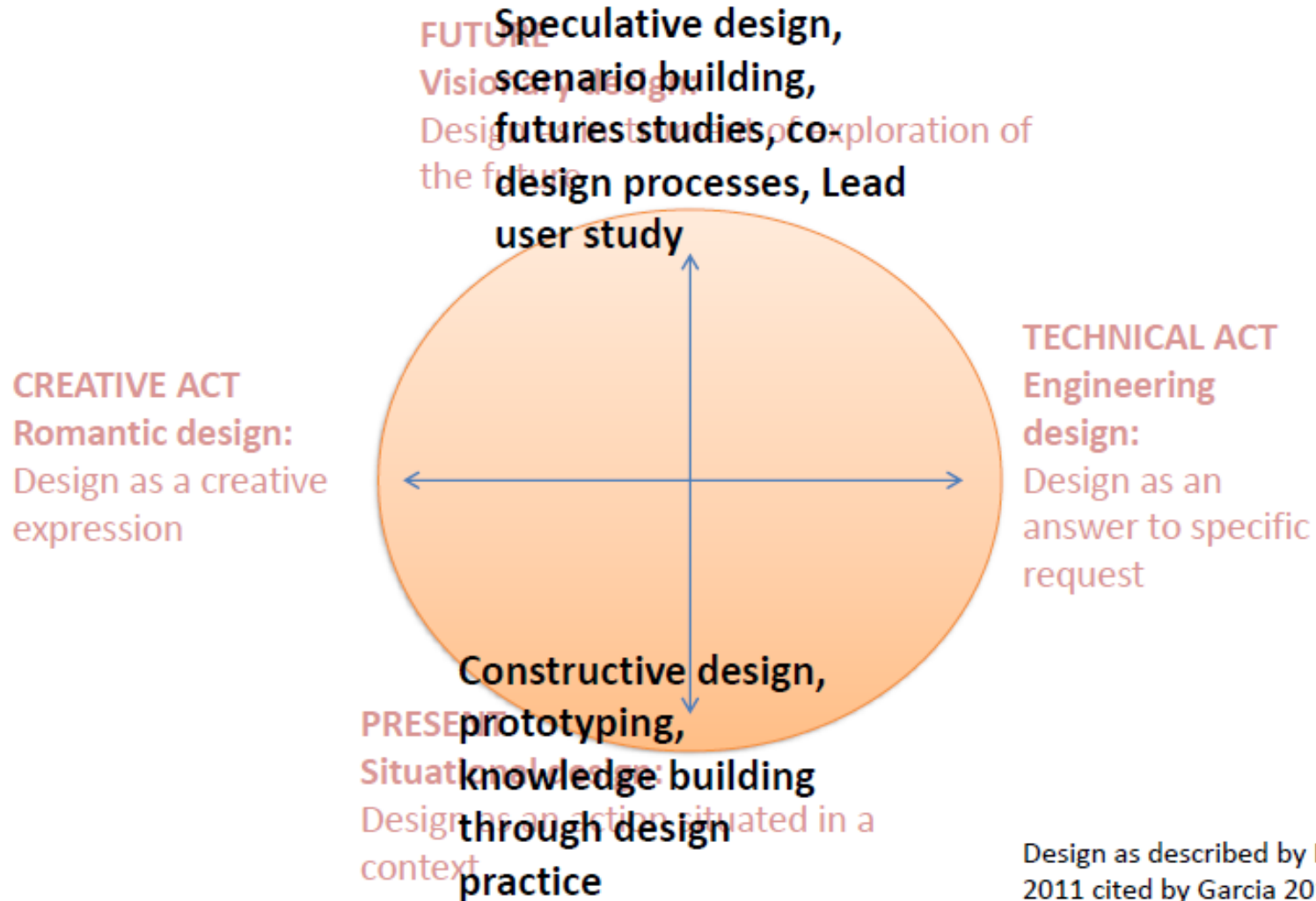**Engineering
design:**
Design as an
answer to specific

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Design in its placement

FUTURE
Visionary design:
Design as a direct exploration of the future.

Speculative design, scenario building, futures studies, co-design processes, Lead user study

CREATIVE ACT
Romantic design:
Design as a creative expression

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Constructive design, prototyping, knowledge building through design practice

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Context

- Support structure to create the meaning to your design/creativity/process

- Meaning making

- Research context; Lab, Field, Gallery (Koskinen, Binder, Redström, 2006)

LAB: traditional scientific research, testing + measuring

FIELD: ethnography, observation, experimentations with people

GALLERY; Art/Creative context

Group discussion

- What to document in your own creative process
- What are key elements/materials/ingredients in your creative process
- What enhances/inspires your creativity and thinking/understanding
- What kind of questions you ask from yourself when you do your creative practice
- How you build your knowledge

Practice-led, Practice-based, Research through design readings

- Maarit Mäkelä
- Nithikul Nimkulrat
- Linda Candy
- Tim Ingold
- Juha Varto
- Michael Polanyi
- Kristina Niedderer
- Ilpo Koskinen
- Christopher Frayling
- Tim O'Riley

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.*