

# Practice as Research in the Arts

## Robin Nelson (ed)

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Notes by Katarina Blomqvist

# Relation between theoretical knowledge and practical knowing

*Personal research* – involves finding out, and sifting, what is known

*Professional research* – involves networking, finding sources and collating information

*Academic research* – involves conducting a research inquiry to establish new knowledge

There is small but significant difference between making artworks and conducting academic research

-> it is important to mark the proposed line of flight

-> It is important to plan beforehand what I am doing

# Wanted: Substantial new insights

In doctoral thesis: 'Substantial new insights' or 'new knowledge'

Typically affords substantial insights rather than coming to such definite conclusions as to constitute 'answers'

It is important to be as clear as possible at the outset about the line of inquiry you propose to follow.

## -> How to attain substantial new insights

1. We have to first know what the established knowledge or insights are
2. Engage yourself in conceptual debates

# How to attain substantial new insights

”If we wish to claim that our praxis manifests new knowledge or substantial new insights, the implication is that we know what the established knowledge or insights are.”

- We know what other artists in this domain have achieved historically and, in particular, what other practitioner- researchers in the field are currently achieving
- writing about context (Finland, elsewhere, role of national broadcasting companies, ties to journalism, esthetics, comparison to documentary film)
- Assessing the achievements in other people’s practice (peculiarity of Finnish documentary audio works)

# The benefit of engaging in conceptual discussions

Big adjustment that the practitioners have to make: engage in conceptual debate

”intelligent contemporary work is likely to resonate with ideas circulating elsewhere in culture and perhaps more specifically within other academic disciplines”

- an unhelpful initial stance in arts PaR that artists have an exclusive way of seeing and doing which nobody else understands

help: identify parallel approaches -> mark differences

Acknowledge a consonance -> sense of belonging to a society of explorers

But it is important to reflect over the nature of relation

Maybe it is only analogical

The solution: Doing-reflecting-reading-articulating-doing

# Interesting challenge

Challenge is to develop a methodology and methods to frame that knowledge not based on the formulation of laws by way of deduction and induction but on a different, but nevertheless equivalently rigorous basis.

Drawing upon contextualization in relation to what is already known, and on critical reflection on what we might call practical experiments, it may indeed appear, as Van Gelder and Baetens have remarked, that ‘the research methods of the hard sciences are closer to those of research in the arts than the methods and models of the humanities

# Practical tips and formulations

*To make tacit knowledge more explicit involves a process of dynamic movement from the closeness of subjectivity to a greater distance (how is this to be done)*

*Research plan: it is important to be as clear as possible at the outset about the line of inquiry you propose to follow. Articulate the research question*

*Trust syncretism, not depth mining*

*Make timeline of your research (and follow it)*

*Make plan of documentation (are recordings sufficient? Do I need field notes?)*

*Theory imbricated within practice*

*Writing is also a practice*



# A Performative Paradigm For The Creative Arts?

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Barbara Bolt

# New Research Paradigm: Performative Research

- way of distinguishing research from the dominant models of research (quantitative, qualitative)
- research findings are presented as performative utterances
- practice brings into being what it names
- research process inaugurates movement and transformation, it is performative
- refigured the relationship between subject and object, observer and observed, artist and audience -> transformative event
- performativity ≠ performance
- J. L. Austin, speech act theory
- stake its 'truth claims' in terms of the force and effect of a creative production

