

What do we mean by artistic research – some Nordic perspectives on artistic doctorates

Thank you to the organisers for the invitation to speak here, it is a great honour and a pleasure, too. Usually I speak about my own work, so trying to speak on a more general level is a challenge. I also realized that my position visavi artistic research has changed. To begin with I was sitting in the back row, shouting provocative comments, then I was sitting in the front row, convincing myself and my colleagues that we should do first and think later, just try it out. And now I am standing here, on stage, as one who is supposed to be 'old and wise', reminding of the distance we have travelled, even celebrating that some things have improved...

When I thought about the opportunity to make a statement, focus on something that I found important now, I realized I did not have very strong opinions about artistic research any longer, surprisingly! But I could use this opportunity to remind of two points that have been long since forgotten, but were very much present in the beginning. The first one is the link between doctoral studies and the what was then called 'further education' or something related to lifelong learning and improving your professional skills. This link was somehow not acknowledged, perhaps because the status and character of the doctoral degree. When I finished my work I still felt the need to address the question whether I had become a better artist through the process. What other way is there to become a better artist today, to improve your expertise as an artist, except through a doctoral degree?

The other point is related to that, and to the title of this talk, "what do we mean by artistic research?" The title refers actually to a reading seminar organised during a few semesters in Helsinki, and "we" referred in the first instance to Jan Kaila and me. The question of research and doctoral degrees was a hot topic at some point. One of my former teachers, Kari Kurkela at the Sibelius Academy was an eager proponent of doctoral degrees for musicians, on artistic grounds, like awards of excellence, but they would not have anything to do with research. This legacy of equivalence, a dual system where artistic excellence and research excellence are seen and maintained as separate, might seem as a support for the freedom and relevance of art. In many cases it actually led to the opposite situation, where critical thinking, experimentation or even challenging of existing conventions was excluded from the reach of art and paradoxically reserved for scholars or researchers only. The dangerous hybrid was not the doctorate, after all, there were doctors of music from medieval times, but the idea of artistic research.... well.

This was the preamble, let us return to the script...

And in the background, I will show you a video, without sound, to exemplify my current concerns. My doctoral work, in theatre directing, the first one on artistic grounds in theatre in Scandinavia, in 1998, was called in translation "performance as space" . And the first

funded artistic research project I have undertaken, in 2018-2019 in Stockholm, now, is called Performing with Plants. When you start doing research you never know where you end up...

In this talk I will describe some experiences of the debates around artistic doctorates in the Nordic context, especially Finland, and to some extent Sweden and Norway, trying to reflect on the various takes on and trajectories of the development of artistic research, from a personal point of view. With this perspective as a starting point I will look at the relationship between artistic research and performance as research, and discuss the question of artistic research and interdisciplinarity. If I do not make it till the end, and I probably will not, you can find my main points in the following texts:

(show powerpoint with references)

(start video)

1. Finding your way through the woods – experiences of artistic research

In recent years, the term artistic research has gradually been accepted in Finland, I wrote in 2008.¹ What would be artistic research in the performing arts? There have been several attempts at approaching this question since the 1990's but few systematic explorations.² Every artist carrying out artistic research as a postgraduate student has been more or less a pioneer in her field. This situation is now rapidly changing. Practice based or practice led research and performance as research has spread from the UK and Australia and challenges us to look at artistic research in terms of knowledge production³ rather than artistic excellence.

Postgraduate students at the Theatre Academy have been able to undertake doctoral degrees since 1988 with the possibility of attaining either Doctor of Arts (Theatre and Drama) or Doctor of Arts (Dance). Though, as in the original Finnish, the official title clearly states that it is a degree in Arts, long discussions over many years established a dichotomy between works with artistic emphasis and works with research (scientific in Finnish) emphasis. The latter would be approximate to the approach of a traditional PhD. The term artistic research was shunned, since it suggested a dangerous hybrid muddling the "apartheid" between these two. In the beginning artistic work was in focus. Pedagogical and historical studies, with clear models to follow, soon started to take over, however. Numerous studies in traditional format, dealing with issues related to teaching dance or theatre etc. were produced.⁴ Works with artistic emphasis, with performances examined as parts of the dissertation, were the ones challenging academic conventions.

The first attempts at research at the Theatre Academy were so called licentiate works, a degree that is still with us, though officially not encouraged, and is broadly comparative with an M.Phil. Director Raija-Sinikka Rantala was the first with a project related to acting (*The Clown*) 1991. She was followed by playwright Esko Salervo in 1993, then me, Annette

Arlander, a director in 1995 and director Tarja Laine in 1997. The first licentiate work in dance was by choreographer Riitta Pasanen-Willberg in 1997. In all these, artistic work was central, and they were all conducted and reported in Finnish.⁵

The first doctoral degree at the Theatre Academy was awarded to me in 1999 for *Performance as Space*⁶ a h thesis with artistic emphasis including three performances and a book on space and place for the Department of Directing and Dramaturgy. Soili Hämäläinen was awarded a doctoral degree in dance pedagogy in 1999 as well. Riitta Pasanen-Willberg was awarded the first artistic doctoral degree in dance in 2001 for her work, *From the Problems of the Ageing Dancer to a Dialogical Examination: a Choreographer's Point of View*.⁷ They were followed by Betsy Fisher in 2002 with *Creating and Re-Creating Dance – performing dances related to Ausdruckstanz*⁸ and Kirsi Monni in 2004 with *The Poetic Movement of Being: philosophical interpretations of the new paradigm of dance in the light of Martin Heidegger's thinking and artistic work in the years 1996–1999*⁹.

The approach in these works varies greatly, and besides treating their respective topics, they offer their own suggestions as to what an artistic doctorate or artistic research could be. First, the idea of artistic work as equivalent and parallel to historical, sociological or pedagogical research was emphasized. The concern with equivalence encouraged supervisors and assessors to focus on the amount of work, the number of performances, instead of relevant research questions. Focusing on excellence easily creates expectations of doctoral students having to prove that they are “master artists”, which was soon discovered to be counterproductive for innovative or critical research work. Thus, reflection and writing for other artists was emphasized. A tendency to do double work – first an extensive and carefully assessed artistic production or several (up to five) productions, and then a full-length written thesis – was recognized as a problem. A tendency for artwork – especially when it consists of ephemeral performances – to assume the position of research data to be reflected on, instead of constituting research outcomes, which present new knowledge and understanding, to be evaluated as results, was also discussed.

At the Theatre Academy new approaches in artistic research were experimented with; without a common methodological approach. This is easy to explain with the fact that all artists are born exceptions, and with the legally guaranteed “freedom of the arts”; or, with the notion of art prevalent in a performing arts academy - which does not always emphasize research, innovation or critical approaches as basic tools, but tends to focus on tradition, skilful interpretation and personal style or charisma. A lack of common approach also reflected the ambition of the academy, which in the beginning was to maintain the dichotomy and maintain credibility for its PhD-like works, leaving the artists to find their own way through the woods.¹⁰ – And that is what a growing number of artists evidently really seemed to do. Or what artists are generally supposed to do - find new ways where previously there were none.

Notes on methodology or where do you start?

Artistic research and practice-based research in the creative and performing arts can be understood as methodological approaches as well. The theory-practice divide and the valorisation of textual over embodied knowledge within academia have long been criticized.¹¹ Researchers have turned to practitioners for knowledge.¹² But when artists started to carry out research on their own terms, complications tended to arise.¹³ The role of the artwork varied according to context. In art universities it was often considered of prime importance.

Research is a normal part of artistic work in many areas and research methods should preferably be developed from working methods, not imposed on an emerging field from the outside. Research “from the inside” of performing arts practices has needed some time to develop its own models. Many artists are ambitious and artistic research in the performing arts has provided a place for challenging experiments, which are impossible within ordinary “show business”. For those critically inclined it has offered a site to question some of the cherished assumptions of the craft. For those more conservatively minded, artistic research has provided a means to articulate and document the tacit knowledge of practitioners in the field, which is important for developing and teaching a tradition.¹⁴

In one of the first books discussing the methodology of artistic research in a Nordic context, in 2005, the authors Mika Hannula, Juha Suoranta and Tere Vadén¹⁵ used two metaphors to describe their methodological approach: democracy of experiences and methodological abundance, meaning basically that art should have the right to criticize science and science should be able to criticize art, thereby emphasizing methodological pluralism, openness, criticality and ethical encounters. They stressed the need for open-mindedness, patience and dialogue. Artistic research needs time to develop a research culture.¹⁶ Using assessment criteria used in qualitative research for comparison they state explicitly: “The starting point for artistic research is the open subjectivity of the researcher and her admission that she is the central research tool of the research.”¹⁷

They note that artistic research is often, “a tapestry-like weave of many factors – the read, the known, the observed, the created, the imagined and the deliberated – where the author does not so much strive to describe reality but to create a reality for her work with its own laws.”¹⁸

If we look at the field not from an art school but rather a traditional university perspective, the performance as research working group of IFTR, started by Jacqueline Martin and Baz Kershaw in 2004, approached key issues related to practice as research in performance from the point of view of a predominantly theory-led research context. They shunned the word

art as is often the case with performance.¹⁹ Some of the questions addressed by the working group at its first full series of sessions in 2006 in Helsinki were:

What field(s) of activity does 'performance as research' describe?

What knowledge(s) can performance generate and to what extent are knowledge and understanding increased by performance as research?

What are appropriate modalities through which to communicate the research in performance as research?

What are the implications of developing bodies of practice and theory specific to performance as research?²⁰

At the meeting of the working group in 2007 we discussed methodological issues²¹. A panel from The Theatre Academy asked: How do we understand working method and/or research method? What is their mutual relationship in our work? How do we apply them to our PAR project? How does one transform a working method into a research method, and vice versa? Each of us tried to answer those questions. For my part, I understand working method to mean a more or less personal way of proceeding when producing art works. I understand research method to mean a more or less commonly approved way of proceeding in order to produce knowledge (or perhaps data) for a specific research community. What is their mutual relationship in my work?

I use a three-stage working method for performing landscape on video. First, I repeat a still act or a simple action in the same place in front of a video camera with the same camera positioning, at regular intervals during long periods of time. Secondly, I condense the material by editing: preserving the chronological order, but choosing only a fragment of the action. Thirdly, I combine several video works to form an installation or exhibition in a specific space. For the fourth stage, I describe the work and reflect upon some aspect of the material in relationship to some concept from another field and write about it in a research context.²²

The above working method is, in itself, quasi-systematic. The data gathered by video documentation could be used as research for a study in weather and climate changes, for instance. But they do not really say anything about performing landscape, except as a form of demonstration, an example: "perhaps in this way". However, I prefer to use my art work as research data, rather than as demonstration of research outcomes, perhaps because I want to go on "singing". As Hannula, Suoranta and Vadén note, "In the artistic research experience studies experience, producing new experiences"²³

Development from dichotomy to differences

During the last thirty years, the development of practice-based research in the arts in Finland has occurred mainly within arts universities, and has followed slightly different strategies in each, due to the requirements of various art fields. My experience is from the Theatre Academy, where I studied directing 1977-81 and worked as professor of Performance Art and Theory and briefly also as Head of the Department of Research.²⁴ To some extent, the institutional history of research at the Theatre Academy coincides with my own journey into artistic research—a trip from theatre through performance to visual art and from space through place to landscape.

At the Theatre Academy the development has been from experiments with reporting artistic practice, through a dichotomy between doctorates with scholarly or artistic emphasis into artistic research. Using the spatial analogy, research has evolved from 1) clearing a space for research within a professionally oriented arts university through 2) developing a place for research using qualitative, pedagogical or phenomenological orientation into 3) a landscape of various approaches to knowledge production in performing arts under the umbrella concept of artistic research. The choice of terminology reflects the focus on artist-based rather than generally practice based research.

In 2007 the Theatre Academy chose to change its strategy. A Department of Research Development was founded, and a professorship of artistic research established, in order to develop a theoretical basis for artistic research that is specifically suited for performing arts. The first task was to abolish the dichotomy of either scholarly or artistic emphasis, make possible a broad spectrum of research approaches, and encourage practicing artists to conduct research.

In the following I explore these past changes through my own experiences as a doctoral student at the Theatre Academy in the 1990's and use the publication series *Acta Scenica* as a point of reference.

Acta scenica 1 - Knowledge is a matter of doing

The first research publication, *Knowledge is a Matter of Doing* (Paavolainen and Ala-Korpela 1995), consists of the proceedings of the symposium Theatre and Dance Artist doing Research in Practice, which took place at the Theatre Academy in October 1994. It was the first of its kind in Scandinavia in which both theatre professionals, teachers from institutions training practitioners and scholars from universities took part. A key topic was research work done in the theatre laboratories, outside established institutions.

For Grotowski, “[k]nowledge is a matter of doing” (1993, 242). This observation can still be extended to the whole field: you either do artistic research, try out various approaches, and

give them a chance to develop or you keep on discussing the problems that have to be solved to guarantee that the results are appropriate.

At the time of the symposium in 1994 I was writing my M Phil. report as a young theatre director trying to combine her artist's training and studies in theatre research into an articulation of her work in English:

Firstly, the dichotomy between a so-called scientific and a so-called artistic approach was crystallised for me in this project as being the difference between two ideas: to study the *influence of space* on the performance (both in the making and in the experiencing of it), or to study the *use of space* in a performance (both in making and experiencing it). Since I consider myself to be an artist more than a scientist, even though I am more interested in finding out something I do not know than in communicating to others something I already know or, if you wish, in finding evidence for something I believe I know, I chose the latter: how to use space, and how to do it following the logic of the play, not any other systematisation. The question was how to use both the fictive space in the text and the concrete performance space and its surroundings as a starting point for creating a third kind of space that is a 'performance world'. (Arlander 1995, 118-119)

Some Conversations XI - A report on the series of performances produced by TEE-project, Some Conversations I-X was examined in 1995. The report suggested that space and place can be used as a means of expression in a theatre performance. Not only to facilitate and influence the meeting of performers and spectators or the success of the performance event, but also as a central starting point for creating the performance composition. (Arlander 1995a).

Acta scenica 2 - Performance as Space

The second research publication, *Esitys tilana (Performance of Space)* (1998), was my dissertation—the first to be completed at the Theatre Academy. There were four examiners participating as opponents at the public defence to guarantee the quality of the work, which indicates the worries and discussions of those days.

There is no time to go into the work here; suffice it to say that in the written part of my dissertation (or doctoral work with artistic emphasis), the main premise of the work was that a live performance takes place as a space. My aim was to show that in creating a performance the space can be an interesting starting point both in terms of spatial relationships and as a place creating meaning. At a Nordic conference the next year I chose to present the work first as a discussion with theatre researchers, then as a description of artistic development (Arlander 1999), in order to clarify my critique and contribution.

Acta scenica 3 - Art, Narrative and Identity

The third research publication at the Theatre Academy was an anthology of cultural studies, titled *Taide, kertomus ja identiteetti (Art, Narrative and Identity)* (edited by Houni and Paavolainen 1999). In my contribution I compared my two research experiences, *Some Conversations XI* (Arlander 1995b) and *Performance as Space* (Arlander 1998). The text describes how I found a dichotomy between artistic and scholarly research artificial at first: to investigate and explore is possible in all areas. And how I later realized the usefulness of distinguishing artistic aims and research goals when the work contains both. Some remarks concerning artistic research were included, where I tried to distinguish it from demonstrations of excellence or from artistic development work:

As far as I understand, research, also in a wider sense, requires at least two more things: First, you should position your work within some tradition or framework, in order to continue, add to, oppose, criticize or challenge it, even if you feel your work to be unique and unprecedented. This simply means that you should try to find out what has been written about your subject.

Secondly, you should describe your experiences so they can be shared, to some extent, within the discourse you position yourself in. And you should generalize part of the experiences to concern others, at least some. /.../ what is trivial and self evident for you can be new knowledge for the reader.

The third requirement is that you have courage to question and to experiment. This was my addition, my demand to myself. According to my experience, research and experimental performances go together. Unlike natural sciences or marketing, [where risk is minimised] ... it is not accurate to speak of research in art if there is no risk, nothing unknown, no challenging question involved. What is the point of an experiment in art if you know the answer in advance? /.../ Some uncertainty with regard to the result, risk taking, trial and error or doing differently is part of research in making art within ordinary production processes. Should that not be the case even more in a research oriented practice? (Arlander 1999, 51-53)

Acta scenica 54

Since the first *Acta scenica* publications much has happened. Somewhere on the way, in 2012 I published *Acta Scenica 28 Performing Landscape – Notes on Site-specific Work and Artistic Research. Texts 2001-2011*.²⁵ Today the latest publication is *Acta Scenica 54*, Tiina Jalkanen's doctoral dissertation in dance pedagogy, "From Girl Trilogy towards the spectrum of experiences in art pedagogy".

The dichotomy between artistic and scholarly/research dissertations has long since been abolished at the Theatre Academy, but many dissertations still have a scholarly emphasis. Artistic research can be understood as one form of research, different from, but possible to juxtapose with other forms like philosophical, historical, ethnographic research etc. If we are not constantly focusing on the artworks (or artistic practice), however, and their role in the research project, then the specific knowledge embedded in artworks, artistic practices and the artists themselves is easily bypassed, colonised or assimilated into more familiar forms of research.

Strict dichotomies between art and research, art and scholarship, art and science or art and theory all lead to absurdities. Contemporary art is often involved in various forms of knowledge production. And it is not only the knowledge of artists that is embodied and situated. Or so it seemed from a Helsinki perspective, in 2009.

2. Artistic research in a Nordic context

Finland was one of the first countries to engage in artistic research, as we prefer to call it.²⁶ Perhaps due to the historical respect for a pioneering spirit (take your spade and go out in the forest and create yourself a field), Finnish artists and educators tended to do first and to think later. This approach can have its drawbacks but it can also be seen as a practice-led enquiry on a meta-level. If we had waited for philosophers to agree upon a solid ontological and epistemological basis for artistic research, we might not, even now, have begun. However, theoretical debates as well as practical experiments in artistic research have been going on for more than thirty years.²⁷

An important reason for the development of artistic research in Finland has been the independent university status of the major art schools, alongside the general policy of encouraging doctoral studies in the country. Universities without art departments have not been much concerned about practice-as-research. There are still many proponents for a dualistic model, arguing that the parallel worlds of art and research should be kept apart, and the regulations governing universities in Finland still follow that model - a situation, which has ironically been an important form of protection for the independence of the art universities. Artistic research has been a concern mainly for doctoral studies because funding is linked to the number of graduated students rather than the research output of the staff.

As more focus is placed on post-doctoral research in the art universities, the pressure on research funding to include artistic research will increase. In 2009 the Academy of Finland²⁸ published an assessment of research in art and design in Finnish Universities.²⁹ The evaluation showed that artistic research is an existing field: "The contribution that artistic

research makes to the formation of knowledge is a challenge for all the parties involved and opens up new avenues for generating knowledge.”³⁰

Today we could claim that artistic research is an acknowledged field of research and knowledge production, rather than a specific methodology.³¹ Artists undertaking research can use various methodologies.³²

*Brief overview of doctoral studies in higher art education in three Nordic Countries*³³

In the Nordic countries debates around artistic research have mostly concerned doctoral studies in the arts and have at first been related to further education for artists. I remember for example a conference in Oslo, in November 1999, *Further and Continuing Education of performing artists in the Nordic Countries – a Nordic task*.³⁴

Sweden

Sweden has PhD programmes at the art schools of Gothenburg University, (since 2000), and at Malmö Art Academy as part of Lund University (since 2008), Borås (2010), Stockholm University of the Arts (since 2016). A National research school in the arts, *Konstnärliga forskarskolan* was founded in 2010 by 12 Swedish universities and university colleges engaged in artistic education and research, hosted by Lund University (with 24 students in 2011). The programme aimed to create a nationwide structure for postgraduate arts education in Sweden, a stimulating and productive environment for artistic research, characterized by a plurality of genres, disciplines and approaches.³⁵ But it was not continued.

In Sweden the development has been complicated by the fact that unlike most art colleges, which are incorporated into local universities, like Lund, Gothenburg or Umeå, the major art colleges in Stockholm remained independent, but without university status and the right to award doctorates until 2016. They have thus engaged in artistic development work (*konstnärligt utvecklingsarbete*). This historical situation created tension and influenced how the term “artistic research” was understood.³⁶ Musicologist Henrik Karlsson proposed a dual model in 2002 and suggested that a doctoral degree should be established in higher art education, but it should be distinguished from a research degree.³⁷ The Swedish Higher Education system currently gives two doctorates in art; one is a conventional PhD as developed in the 1980’s (in Gothenburg and Lund) and the other is a doctorate in fine, applied and performing arts.³⁸ University of Gothenburg prefers to develop both whilst the University of Lund has defined their exams as artistic.³⁹

For example, Stockholm University of the Arts, my home base at the moment, with the Research Centre lead by Cecilia Roos, is authorized to award artistic third-cycle degrees in Artistic Practices, or Performative and Mediated Practices, with four specializations: Film and Media, Choreography, Opera and Performing Arts. “This means that all research is carried out from the starting point of artistic practice in some way or other.” There are about fifty

artistic research and development programmes currently under way, fifteen of them doctoral projects. At Uniarts website we can read:

“The build-up of research programmes in the faculties of Gothenburg and Lund universities has created a stable foundation for both the artistic research community and for the expansion in the number of doctoral students in the National Research School in the Arts. The introduction of the artistic doctorate in 2010 emphasises art’s specific position further. Artistic research in Sweden may be said to fall under a Scandinavian specialisation in the field of research that to a great extent stresses artistic representation as a primary focus in projects and research programmes. Uniarts’s approach is to work towards developing these fields further and contributing to their establishment internationally.”

Today all higher education institutions awarding degrees on artistic grounds collaborate in an organization called Konstex. Vetenskapsrådet, the Swedish Research Council, has a separate Committee for Artistic Research that funds artistic research projects and published a yearbook between 2004 and 2017.

Norway

In Norway the Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowship Programme (NARP), founded in 2003, lead to a diploma at third-cycle study level - though explicitly *not* a doctorate to begin with. It was and is hosted by Bergen National Academy of the Arts, and includes students from higher art education institutes and departments. Funding within the Programme is for three years.⁴⁰ The majority of research fellows are enrolled at Bergen National Academy of the Arts, Oslo National Academy of the Arts, and the National Academy of Music; others are at the Norwegian Film School, Trondheim Academy of Fine Art, and the Music departments of Tromsø, Bergen and Trondheim University.⁴¹ The programme intends to secure high level artistic research and a Research Fellow has to participate in an interdisciplinary professional community, beyond their artistic specialization.⁴² In 2018 Norway officially granted the right to award PhDs on artistic grounds to individual institutions, and for example Oslo National Academy of the Arts immediately launched a PhD programme including the stage disciplines theatre, dance and opera. NARP now organizes a research school and functions as a funding organization for post-doctoral and other artistic research projects.⁴³ Cecilia Broch-Knudsen describes the approach:

“The requirement for artistic activity of a high standard gives all NARP projects a distinct artistic profile. The involved academic institutions have supported this development unanimously; there is no obligation for the researcher to indulge in given concepts or methodologies from other fields. The trust in the value of the artist’s perspective is undisputable. The power to define the content of the research work is a prerequisite for free artistic development. Supporting the diversity of

artistic expressions is a main goal, and artistic researchers are free to choose their methods and formats according to the needs of their projects.”

Finland

There are five higher art education institutions with university status in Finland. The majority of doctorates has been awarded by Aalto University and University of the Arts, especially Sibelius Academy. University of Lapland, Faculty of Art and Design awards artistic doctorates as well, as does Tampere University (programme of acting).⁴⁴ The Aalto University School of Art, Design and Architecture (formerly University of Art and Design Helsinki) implemented doctoral studies in 1981; the first doctor of art graduated in 1991. In Sibelius Academy the doctoral programme was launched in 1982; the first doctor of music graduated in 1990. The Theatre Academy began doctoral studies in 1988, the first licentiate graduated in 1991 and the first Doctor of Arts (Theatre and Drama) in 1999. In the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts the doctoral programme was launched in 1997 and the first doctor of art graduated in 2001.⁴⁵ A four-year *Doctoral Programme in Artistic Research* commenced in 2012 as a joint project of the then independent Art Academies, and focused solely on artistic research: 1) the methodology and practices of artistic research; 2) art, aesthetics and society; and 3) a new notion of artistic agency.⁴⁶

Sibelius Academy, Theatre Academy and Finnish Academy of Fine Arts merged into the University of Arts Helsinki in 2013. Their different research cultures and approaches to research are now slowly being synchronised. In Sibelius Academy three types of doctorates in music can be undertaken, artistic, scientific, and so-called development projects.⁴⁷ In the Theatre Academy artistic research is an institutional umbrella term, which allows a spectrum of variations, including arts education.⁴⁸ In the Academy of Fine Arts the main focus is on artistic (or curatorial) practice, accompanied by a written theoretical part.⁴⁹ Importantly, unlike Norway and Sweden, the title of the degree is doctor of art, rather than PhD.

Sensuous knowledge in Norway

In Norway the *Sensuous knowledge conferences* - an international working conference on fundamental problems of artistic research organised by the Bergen National Academy of the Arts - were instrumental in developing a discourse around artistic research on an interdisciplinary basis, with a strong focus on artistic excellence and questions of a specifically artistic knowledge production. The conferences, as well as the related publication series, have had resonance far beyond the Nordic Countries. Themes include: *Creating a Tradition* (2004), *Aesthetic Practice and Aesthetic Insight* (2005), *Developing a Discourse* (2006), *Context, Concept, Creativity* (2007), *Questioning Qualities* (2008), and *Reflection, Relevance, Responsibility* (2009).⁵⁰ The discourse has represented what Henk Borgdorff has called the *sui generis* approach to artistic research, in contrast to both the central European understanding of artistic research as a critical intellectual practice and the

British focus on academic criteria, as in much practice-as-research.⁵¹ Today the Norwegian Artistic Research Programme (NARP) hosts a yearly Artistic Research Forum meeting (ARF), where current research projects are presented, all peer reviewed and financially supported by NARP.⁵² The Forum meetings have also hosted guests from neighboring countries.

Nordic Summer University in Sweden – developments in performing arts

Outside the academies and universities, Nordic Summer University,⁵³ based in Sweden, with a structure of funded self-organised study circles, has provided an open forum for people interested in research in performing arts. The first study circle, *Practice-Based Research in the Performing Arts*, started in 2006 and produced a publication.⁵⁴ Later the focus shifted to artistic research; the topics addressed in the sessions from 2010 to 2012 were language and discourse, documentation and dissemination. Referring to a meeting at the Centre for Practice as Research in Tampere in 2009⁵⁵ the coordinators Luisa Greenfield and Disa Kamula wrote:

We need to investigate consequences and possibilities of Artistic Research. We have passed the stage of justifying the existence of the field itself. It actually exists. We are entering a new discourse, and we need to explore the outcomes of the ongoing research. [--] We see an urgent need for investigating artistic research in a wider perspective than it is presently done at the Art Academies and Universities.⁵⁶

These study circles exemplify collaborative developments within performing arts regardless of university regulations. The title for the next meeting in 2019, which takes place in Estonia is “Absences and silences – performing heterotopia”.⁵⁷

Practice in some form is being increasingly incorporated into traditional theatre research and dance research contexts as well. NOFOD, Nordic forum for Dance Research⁵⁸ and the Theatre Research Society in Finland,⁵⁹ have included practice-as-research in their symposia and publications.⁶⁰ In an issue of *Nordic Theatre Studies* devoted to the artist as researcher in 2008, Rikard Hoogland tentatively suggested that we might be at the beginning of a paradigm, albeit with a long way to go.⁶¹ Well, we are on our way...

CARPA (Colloquium on Artistic Research in Performing Arts) in Helsinki

can serve as an example of institutional endeavours focusing specifically on performing arts. The call for the first CARPA in 2009 explained:

The purpose of these colloquia is to contribute to the development of research practices in the field of the performing arts and to foster their social, pedagogical and ecological connections.⁶²

The first CARPA in 2009 asked: ‘How does artistic research change us?’ Artistic research does not only produce knowledge; it also changes us as individual and collective beings – artists, pedagogues, spectators, citizens, and consumers. Could the change itself serve as a criterion for the relevance of the research?⁶³

The theme of the second CARPA in 2011 was ‘Artistic Research in Action’. The colloquium was to take the form of a collective laboratory in which participants could share their research as it takes place and unfolds and aimed to explore the borderline between artistic research and action research. An artistic researcher transforms his/her artistic medium into a medium of research.⁶⁴

The third CARPA, in 2013, focused on ‘The Impact of Performance as Research’ and took as its starting point the increasing demands on impact, wanting to look at the various forms of effects, affects and side-effects produced by artistic research. “How do expectations on efficacy relate to the so-called performative turn in social sciences? What is the relationship between artistic research and performance studies? What forms of shared authorship and collaboration does performance as research support? What are the results of our research projects?”⁶⁵

The fourth CARPA in 2015 focused on “The Non-Human and the Inhuman in Performing Arts – Bodies, Organisms and Objects in Conflict.” And CARPA 5, in 2017, was titled “Perilous Experience? – Extending Experience through Artistic Research”. The theme of the upcoming CARPA 6, organised together with the ADIE (Artistic Doctorates in Europe) project is “Artistic Research Performs and Transforms: Bridging Practices, Contexts, Traditions & Futures”.

Although originally planned as research colloquia with a focus on post-doctoral work, these events have become important meeting places for sharing doctoral projects as well. Other Nordic conferences include the PARSE (Platform for artistic research Sweden) conferences, hosted biannually by University of Gothenburg – the first around the theme of “time” in 2015, the second on the theme of “exclusion” in 2017, and a third, upcoming in 2019 on the theme “human”. Stockholm University of the Arts organized an artistic research conference called Alliances and Commonalities in 2018 and the next one will take place in October 2020.

Journals

There are several Nordic journals devoted to artistic research, often presenting doctoral projects in the making together with other artistic research projects.

A Finnish trilingual peer-reviewed journal for artistic research, RUUKKU, modeled on the international JAR (Journal for Artistic Research)⁶⁶ published its first issue in 2013 on “Experience and Experimentality in Artistic Research”. Issue 10 on “Catalysis” is to be published this spring.

PARSE Journal in Gothenburg published its first issue on judgment in 2015. The following themes have been 2) the value of contemporary art, 3) Repetition and renegees, 4) Times, 5) Management, 6) Secularity, 7) Speculation, 8) Exclusion.

The latest publication is VIS – Nordic Journal for Artistic Research, a joint endeavor of Stockholm University of the Arts and the Norwegian Artistic Research Program, with issue 1 on the theme of “risk” released in 2019, issue 2 on “estrangement” in the making and a call out for the third issue on “history now”.⁶⁷

...

As a person who actively worked for the abolition of the dichotomy between doctorates with scientific emphasis and artistic emphasis at the Theatre Academy, I find artistic research as an umbrella concept that embraces various approaches to the relationship between practical and theoretical parts useful.⁶⁸ Experience has shown, however, that diversity is not easy to maintain, because many scholars and researchers find it hard to see as truly legitimate any other form of research than the one they have been trained in.

In Finland the university law maintains, as noted, a dichotomy between scientific versus artistic domain, and on a legal level any blurring between them is impossible. But, by granting equivalence to art, and a specific status to art universities, a new possibility has been opened up. The artistic domain leaves the door open to many types of research. If sciences (especially *humaniora*, perhaps) want to maintain and guard a ‘normal science’ paradigm, the arts can offer an intellectual arena for experimentation and debate. This is perhaps what some critics mean by describing artistic research as a fairground for free-floating intellectuals, whose only artistic practice is writing about art. Another paradox is that many artists are uninterested in practice-as-research. They engage eagerly in their practice of course, but are also genuinely interested in writing theory or using theoretical studies to inspire them in art making. They are not always happy to articulate their experiences of practice, although that would be valuable, as a basis for teaching, for instance.

The place of the artwork or artistic practice in the research process can also be a problem. I have argued elsewhere that it could be useful to try to choose whether you use your artistic practice as data (as in qualitative research), as method (as in some types of practice-led research) or as a research outcome (as in most artistic research) or even as the mode of distributing research findings (as in so called art-based research).⁶⁹ However, in actual practice all these uses tend to, and perhaps have to become mixed.

Following Karen Barad (2007) one could say that making art and doing research are entangled, and differentiated through specific intra-actions differently in each case. In this situation a blunt opposition between artistic research and art research is insufficient, because it assumes the separation of art and research in art to begin with. Rather than focus

on the interplay of art and research in terms of inter-action it seems more fruitful to focus on their intra-action, to use the term of Barad. We should pay attention to the fact that from a research perspective art and research are constituted in relationship to each other, and to analyze how they are differentiated in each situation.

3. "Performance as research?"

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The relationship between artistic research and performance studies is particularly interesting, since performance-as-research could be seen as situated in the intersection between them. Performance studies acknowledges performance practices extending outside the realm of art into the everyday; artistic research extends the academic traditions of performance studies, 'doing' what performance studies have propagated but not always realised.⁷⁰ Is performative research an extension of qualitative research or a distinct paradigm, research that produces what it names?⁷¹ Is artistic research producing effects in the world, being successful or unsuccessful (felicitous or unfelicitous, happy or unhappy), rather than true or false?⁷²

The future of artistic research and also performance as research is linked to its past; following the thinking of Karen Barad, among others, the past and the future are continually reworked and negotiated.

One of the issues that influence the future of performance as research is how we understand the meaning of the term; is it something specific, distinguishable from research designated by other related terms, like practice as research, practice-led research, practice-based research, arts-based research, creative arts research, artistic research and so on? Or is the name "performance as research" exchangeable, allowing an interchangeability among its many designations – one option within this broad field in development? Even more pertinent is our relationship to the word "performance". Associations related to the term, like "public performance", "peak performance", "performing properly", "performativity" or even "performance art", influence our understanding of what can be done within the realm.

Although performance has been understood in a broad sense as a "doing", there is a tendency to hark back to the colloquial uses of the word associating to performing arts, and the idea of "showing doing". People accustomed to what could be called an "audience-oriented-ontology" feel comfortable with the term "performance as research", especially in the US, as exemplified by the new PARTake journal of performance as research.⁷³ In the UK the term "practice as research" is mostly preferred. Often the acronym PaR is used, because it blurs any distinction between the two. Practice as research could be criticized for separating theory and practice, and for not distinguishing between artistic practices and

other practices; theorizing is a practice, too. The latter criticism goes for performance as well; all research is performed in some manner. The problem with the word “performance” is that researchers working within performing arts often understand performance as the result, not as the action or process. In some sense performance as research is too narrow as a term, linked to performance as the topic investigated. In another sense performance as research is too general and needs to be specified – for instance by the particular doing in question – in order to be useful, as in acting as research, choreography as research, writing, singing or dancing as research.

The term “as” in performance as research could be criticized for indicating that something is not research, but only presented as if it were research. While we can study something that “is” performance, we can also study almost anything “as” performance, even a map can be analysed as (if it were) a performance, an active entity (Schechner 2006, 38). In a similar manner we could consider any artistic process as (if it were) a research process. A clear distinction between a thing that “is” something and a thing considered “as” something is hard to maintain. This “is/as performance” distinction has been criticized as an ontology-epistemology binary and “a form of modernist behavioural humanism” (Kershaw and Nicholson 2011, 4), and debated in performance philosophy (Cull 2014).

We could understand research as performative in the same ways that documentation is performative and actually produces what it is supposed to document; documenting an action as performance art constitutes it as performance art (Auslander 2006, 7). Documenting or exposing an artistic project as a research project probably constitutes the project as research. Another way of looking at it accepts that sometimes an artistic practice is research (in whatever way we want to define research); sometimes an artistic practice can be exposed (presented, documented, staged, translated) as research; and sometimes research could be presented in a more artistic, sensuous or experiential way. These perspectives produce widely diverging ideas of what performance as research could be used for. A key issue is whether we want to see performance as research as a methodology or as a field.

One future development of performance as research, a continuation of previous developments, is a methodological understanding of PaR. PaR is increasingly used as one methodology among others within humanities and social sciences, although most frequently in theatre and performance studies. If we understand PaR as a mode of “investigating by doing”, like learning by doing, it can be developed as one research tool, either as part of the qualitative paradigm, or even as a separate performative paradigm, as Brad Haseman (2006) has suggested. Emphasizing the methodological aspect of PaR foregrounds performance or doing as a method in producing research material or data, or as a method in sharing research results, or any combination of these. This methodological approach is what PaR mostly has come to mean.

Another future development for performance as research is to coevolve with the contested field of artistic research, with its roots in the contemporary art world and the legacy of conceptual and critical art, and all the challenges that entails. PaR can be linked to developments within the arts, including artists entering academia, research entering art institutions, and a growing interest in practitioner knowledge within the study of arts. Although all artist-scholars do not necessarily see themselves as engaged in artistic research, but rather in performance as research or practice as research or embodied research, most of them are practicing artists, too. Clearly the interests and needs of artists entering the world of scholarly practices differ from those of scholars exploring physical or practical research methods or artistic modes of presenting research results, based on their previous experiences and skills.

Performative research?

Should performance as research be understood as part of the performative turn? Does it have any relationship to the performative research paradigm? The first version of one part of this talk was presented for the meeting in Osaka in 2011 of the performance as research working group of the IFTR, at the time led by Mark Fleishman and Anna Birch. There is no time here to go into detail, the history of performance as research remains to be written – by somebody else. For a brief overview of the performative turn I refer to the last chapter in the book *performance as research* (2018).

Performance as research is/as artistic research?

What distinguishes artistic research from performance as research as it is mostly understood is a stronger link to the art world and the claim that artistic research is a field or a discipline (perhaps an anti-discipline?), an area for knowledge creation, rather than a specific methodology. Although artistic research is still contested and many prefer to use other related terms in order to avoid the controversial tone of the term in English (with meanings like artificial, gay and camp), the debates around artistic research have continued long enough for us to acknowledge that something like that can be said to exist. Artistic research is undertaken by artists, and researching artists can adopt different methodologies. Different disciplines, however, tend to define themselves either through their research object or through their specific methods. Should not artistic research do the same? Every discipline produces knowledge via its own methods: “If we for instance apply the methods of cultural studies to art education research, we get cultural studies as an outcome . . . There is no such thing as a neutral research method” (Varto 2009, 159). The same could be expected of artistic research. Although there is a general consensus that performance as research is not restricted to investigating performance, but is applicable to a broad range of topics, there is actually much overlap between method and topic within PaR.

Is it possible to talk about common methods for areas as diverse as music, theatre, visual art, literature, dance, film and architecture? Should we not have various methods based on the specific traditions of each art form? Perhaps we should limit our look to the traditions within each artistic discipline, as is often done within music, architecture or design, domains not necessarily actively engaged in the debates around artistic research on a general level. Or should we look for common denominators for all the arts? An artistic researcher within, say, choreographic practice, has sometimes more in common with dance scholars than with artists in other fields. Various art forms have such differing approaches to artistic practice, tradition, the position of the artist and the status of the artwork that any unified understanding of what constitutes artistic research is hardly achievable. There are such a variety of disciplines already within scholarship related to art (history of art, history of dance, film studies, theatre research, aesthetics and so on); how could artistic research be a field less diverse? Add to that the variety of topics explored and investigated by artists, and we have a domain as large as life, or so it seems, and equally diverse. There is not one form of artistic research but many, partly because artistic research has evolved from different streams both culturally and institutionally. One of the first tasks for an artistic researcher, regardless of the type of model being applied, is to be aware of and articulate the varied preconceptions and truisms that one has inherited or adopted with one's artistic field.

The many trends contributing to a culture slowly accepting artistic research include the recognition of the value of tacit knowledge, practical knowledge or so-called Mode 2 knowledge and thus also of the artists' knowledge. In contrast to traditional scientific Mode 1 knowledge, Mode 2 knowledge refers to knowledge production that is context-driven and problem-focused, often in multidisciplinary teams working for short periods on real-world problems (Gibbons et al. 1994). Another stream mentioned earlier is the performative, bodily and lately the material turn in social sciences, which followed the linguistic turn of structuralism and post-structuralism, and has emphasized knowledge embedded in oral and material practices. A third is the work undertaken within feminist and postcolonial thought in order to reveal the biased nature of so-called objective and universal knowledge production. Current debates around artistic research tend to overlook and forget the work done already in the 1970s by feminist theorists like Sandra Harding, Donna Haraway and others, who developed so-called standpoint epistemologies and the idea of situated knowledge, as Pilvi Porkola has pointed out (Porkola 2014, 42–46). Estelle Barrett has recently taken up this legacy (Barrett 2014, 7–9). As a thread running alongside these trends is the critique of global capitalism and its instrumental approach to the resources of the planet, and to other beings sharing them with humans. Thus emancipatory and political struggles on one hand and epistemological debates on the other have created a ground for old dichotomies like art and science or theory and practice to crumble, at least momentarily and locally. Add to this perhaps the main requirement for the development of artistic research – that is changes within the arts, with conceptual art as one important starting

point, together with socially engaged art practices that challenge the traditional role of the artist. The heavy emphasis on theory in art education since the 1990s and the attempt at synchronizing the third cycle in higher arts education in Europe, criticized as the academization of art, are other factors.

Artistic research is diversifying not only according to various methodological approaches, or by following artistic disciplines and their traditions, but also according to affinities with various traditional forms of research. Today interdisciplinarity, integration of knowledge across academic disciplines, is increasingly sought, to complement the ever-narrowing disciplinary expertise, and the possibility of a meeting ground or a (relatively) free space for various disciplines to interact offered by artistic research is needed more than ever. Transdisciplinarity, too, the production of knowledge with parties beyond the academy (Frodeman 2014, 3) and thereby the practising artist's point of view, is increasingly valued today. We could also claim, however, that we are moving towards a post-disciplinary condition of art and of knowledge production.

Interdisciplinarity seems to be linked with artistic research in at least two ways. Artistic research provides the site for interdisciplinary (and transdisciplinary) encounters. Various types of artistic research have developed through interdisciplinary entwinements, like art and critical theory, art and aesthetics, art and pedagogy, or art and anthropology. Interdisciplinarity becomes evident when creating multidisciplinary publications; how can we understand each other without unnecessary simplifications?

The first aspect, artistic research as an interdisciplinary (or multidisciplinary) meeting place, is a result of the eclecticism, which used to be considered the weakness of artistic research – artists simply picking up a mixture of incongruent thoughts and concepts and then combining them at will – can be considered a major asset today. When disciplinary knowledge production remains within the bounds of each limited domain, digging deeper and deeper into predictable knowledge sources, artistic research can provide a site for unexpected clashes and combinations, within the realm of art, thus creating new possibilities for understanding.

The second aspect includes the various types of artistic research created in interdisciplinary entanglement with supporting disciplines: artistic research utilizing the tools of art history, contextualizing the practice within previous discussions and works by artists, or artistic research using ethnographic methods and sociological or anthropological approaches. Artistic research which has developed in parallel with research in arts education could be called pedagogically inclined artistic research, and research devoted to questioning the conditions of the art form related to philosophical concepts could be described as philosophically inclined artistic research. Other types, depending on the collaborating

parties, include technologically focused research or art-science collaborations. Even combining theoretical and practical work could be thought of as interdisciplinary.

Creative problems tend to be transdisciplinary – that is involving real-world problems. Many researching artists are exploring various phenomena in the world. Although many would disagree with the conflation of art and problem solving, much artistic research is engaged with agents outside academia. This concerns not only so-called applied arts, or collaborations with institutions or NGOs. Many contemporary artists take pride in involving various communities in their work, although they might be showing the results mainly for art audiences. Artistic research is transdisciplinary simply by involving the art world and collaborators beyond academia.

Is artistic research to be understood as an area of its own, an in-between area between art and academia, the art world and the university, as for instance Biggs and Karlsson have asserted? They propose a

shift of perspective that allows certain activities to become meaningful in the context of arts research, even though those activities may not have been meaningful in either the context of academic research per se or the context of professional arts practice per se. (Biggs and Karlsson 2011, 409)

They understand arts research “as a distinct and separate field from the existing fields of arts practice and academic research” (Biggs and Karlsson 2011, 413), and maintain that art researchers should be professionals in art research, not in traditional academic research nor in professional arts practice, but in this “third professional category that is as yet undefined” (Biggs and Karlsson 2011, 423). This view has consequences for doctoral education as well.

A slightly different way of looking at the hybridization of art practice and academic practice is to understand it as boundary work, as proposed by Henk Borgdorff (2012). Much advanced academic research today could be called post-disciplinary or transdisciplinary, he notes. “Artistic research is better understood as something that represents this border-violation rather than being a discipline alongside other art-related disciplines” (Borgdorff 2012, 177). Artistic research has two contexts, the academic environment and the art world, and is thus an example of contemporary academic research, which no longer takes place within the university alone. In the blurring of art and other life domains “artistic research is also transdisciplinary research, because it stretches out to the wider community, making it a good example of what people call Mode 2 knowledge production” (Borgdorff 2012, 179). Borgdorff distinguishes artistic research from other Mode 2 forms of knowledge production using two primary points: the fact that “artistic research takes place in and through the making of art ... [and] the outcome of artistic research, which, partly at least, is art” (Borgdorff 2012, 182). Artistic research is “creating, a free space that is also in opposition to

the demands of the market, to the creative industries, to the daily strains of production – a free space for ‘material thinking’...” (Borgdorff 2012, 183). In performing artistic research, we can influence what counts as art; “not only our understanding of what academia is might change in the future, but also our understanding of what art is” (ibid.). The presumed boundaries are under debate. This approach, too, has consequences for doctoral education.

In the introduction to *Material Inventions – Applying Creative Arts Research* (2014) Estelle Barrett mentions her previous claim concerning “the intrinsically interdisciplinary dimension of this mode of research that is derived from its material and social relationality” (Barrett 2014, 3). She understands creative arts research as a successor science following Haraway, which means that

it articulates the notion of ethical or embodied forms of observation – ways of looking and being accountable for knowledge claims that do not deny the agency of the objects of research – in particular human participants; it is a mode that replaces traditional notions of objectivity with the idea of situated knowledge and partial objectivity; finally it asserts the potential of situated and partial knowledge for forging webs of connections – identifying for whom, how and where else knowledge can be put to use. (Barrett 2014, 9)

And with whom it is created, I would like to add. – Within contemporary art, critical questioning is the basis for art’s self-understanding. Art can be understood as “a creative and intellectual endeavour that involves artists and other arts practitioners in a reflexive process where the nature and function of art is questioned and challenged through the production of new art” (ELIA outline 2006). This sounds very much like the traditional self-correcting scientific ideal. Not everyone in the performing arts would probably agree with this since, despite experimentation and questioning being valued, performing arts are more audience-oriented in their approach. Furthermore, research that entails an attempt to articulate and theorize an ongoing practice, based on acquired and thus usually more or less unconscious skills, has a different emphasis and uses different methods compared with research that attempts to develop a new type of art work or design product, and explain the route to that result. We could perhaps say that artistic research can be practice-oriented, when the practice of art is more important than an individual artwork, or product-oriented, when the main goal for the research is the creation of an art work. Furthermore, the research process can be forward-looking, striving to create something new, or rooted in reflection, trying to understand and articulate what one has already done, or any mixture between them. These distinctions concern performance as research as well.

Another way of understanding these diverse approaches in artistic research is to look at the research process in relation to ordinary artistic practice in various contexts. Is research taking place in the preparatory phase or during the actual work (as experimentation for

instance) or after the fact as reflection and as a gathering of audience responses, and so on. This could be further simplified in temporal terms: 1) Is research undertaken mainly at the planning stage, before engaging in the actual production or as a form of gathering of knowledge and materials for the artwork or performance? 2) Does the actual creation of the work take the form of research in some type of experimentation, trial and error or testing of alternatives? 3) Does the main part of the research take place after the creation of an artwork or engagement in the practice, by reflecting on the experience or process afterwards? Although many artist-researchers probably would say that all three temporalities apply to their work, that planning, experimentation and reflection are intertwined and happen in a cyclic manner, there can nevertheless be differences in emphasis. Some art forms put much emphasis on the design process of a specific object, while others are inclined to reflect on an ongoing practice. For a conceptually oriented performance artist the process might simply mean walking back and forth in agony for weeks until an idea for an action pops up, a process hard to document and describe. Whereas documenting a highly regulated material procedure of creating a choreography or a sculpture, for instance, could generate important knowledge of the process. And somebody engaged in music- or dance improvisation could choose any slice of time from an ongoing practice to reflect upon and articulate. These differences become evident when discussing the role of writing in artistic research.

When does the writing take place? Is it a working tool, part of the thinking process in planning the work, or part of accounting for the process afterwards, or a more or less artificial addendum required by the institution. In projects with strong influence from social sciences the artistic process easily becomes a method for producing data and the art works or documented actions become data to be analyzed and reflected upon afterwards. From an art historian's perspective this seems problematic, how can you analyze your own work; but from an ethnographer's perspective there is no problem in using your field notes and experiences as material when "writing up" the research, provided the necessary self-reflexivity is included. From an artist's perspective the problem can be that in many cases the main research result and the core output of the research project is the artwork itself, rather than the "writing up" of the experiences or effects. But if the artwork is the outcome, how do you then distinguish research from ordinary artistic practice? This has been further complicated by contemporary artistic practices that tend to emphasize research, process, collaboration, social engagement and so on.

...

What seems the most obvious result of the debates and demonstrations so far is the diversity of the field today. There is not one form of artistic research but many types. In many cases, artistic research can be understood as an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary

entangled activity and the different inter- or transdisciplinary entwinements lead to different types of artistic research (Arlander 2016).

Despite the diversification of the field, there are surprisingly few typologies created around artistic research; most categorisations concern the various relationships of art and research, often assuming a dichotomy, envisioning configurations (Elkins 2009), creating a third zone (Biggs & Karlsson 2011) emphasizing boundary work between the two (Borgdorff 2012), or suggesting various combinations (Keinonen 2006). Other typologies relate to methodology generally, adding a third dimension to quantitative and qualitative research, such as performative research (Haseman 2006), arts-based research (Leavy 2009) or conceptual research (Smith & Dean 2009). Here I suggested a typology based on emphasis between either product-oriented or practice-led artistic research on the one hand and either developmental or reflective artistic research on the other. But although fun, such exercises in categorisation are fairly meaningless in the end; each project wants to be unique.

One interesting example of interdisciplinary engagement is the contemporary development of performance philosophy, a new interdisciplinary field distinct from performance studies and philosophy, which is nevertheless more linked to scholarly activities than artistic research as such. The debate between maintaining the distinction between performance *and* philosophy, rather than exploring performance *as* philosophy or philosophy *as* performance, and moving beyond application, or philosophy *of* performance, into something where philosophy is performed and performance contributes to philosophy⁷⁴, could be illuminating with regard to artistic research as well. In a more modest sense many artists use philosophical thought as inspiration or legitimation and this tendency to utilize philosophical concepts could also be criticized. On some level an artist researcher could nevertheless “test” and criticize philosophical concepts based on her practical experiences.⁷⁵ The ideal that an artist should contribute to the philosophical discussion on an equal basis, rather than use philosophical concepts or arguments as support, is quite a challenge. The same type of challenge exists in most truly interdisciplinary attempts.

Artistic research as speculative practice

CONTINUED FROM HERE TO END

Instead of asking what artistic research is or means, many prefer to ask, what can it do? What can be done with or within artistic research?

At a seminar organised in Helsinki in 2014, Janneke Wesseling referred to artistic research as a mode of speculative thought, which immediately inspired me to insist on artistic research as a form of speculative practice. Although, it is of course hard to imagine an artistic practice without thought.

Nevertheless, I like to think of artistic research as a speculative practice, not necessarily

linked to speculative realism in philosophy, nor to the speculative economy, but as an activity engaged in imagining alternatives, as a form of speculation through practice. The most varied forms of artistic research could be called speculative practices, if the speculation takes place with the help of and through artistic practice.

If we understand speculative in the sense of imagining, of envisioning alternatives, most artistic practices have a speculative dimension. Even my own practice, which is based on repeated visits to the same site, on creating a routine, is speculative in the sense of creating a space for the unexpected to occur. Rather than speculate on alternative possibilities as a mental exercise, the speculation takes place by repeatedly creating the conditions for alternatives to appear, or not to appear, in and through the practice.

Moreover, the aspect of experimentation and play with alternatives, artistic research as imagining and trying out possible futures, is more and more needed within society at large. Imagining, envisioning and rehearsing futures are tasks suited for artist researchers as well as or even better than analysing, criticizing and recreating the past. Performance as research, like artistic research, could be understood as a speculative practice engaged in both.

¹ Satu Kiljunen ja Mika Hannula (ed.) *Taiteellinen tutkimus*, Kuvataideakatemia 2001. English version *Artistic Research* Fine Art Academy 2002.

² The symposium *Theatre and Dance Artist Doing Research in Practice* in October 1994 was the first of its kind in Scandinavia asking whether practical artistic work should be an acceptable part of research in an academic context. The proceedings were published, Pentti Paavolainen & Anu Ala-Korpela (ed.) *Knowledge is a Matter of Doing*, Acta scenica 1, Theatre Academy 1995. Since then artistic doctoral works in theatre or dance have been undertaken at the Theatre Academy by Annette Arlander, Betsy Fisher, Riitta Pasanen-Willberg, Kirsi Monni, by Ilari Nummi, University of Tampere, and Kaisu Koski University of Lapland, and more.

³ Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research – Inquiry in the Visual Arts*, Sage Publications, California, London, New Delhi 2005; Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (ed.) *Practice as research – Approaches to creative Arts Enquiry*, I.B. Tauris, London, New York 2007.

⁴ For instance Soili Hämäläinen, Pia Houni, Timo Kallinen, Paula Salosaari, Tapio Toivanen, Soile Rusanen, Leena Rouhiainen, Eeva Anttila, Teija Löytönen, Maarit Rantanen etc. A list of completed works can be found on the web, in Finnish, with English abstracts, http://www.teak.fi/Tutkimus/Valmistuneet_ja_post_doc_tutkijat,

⁵ The first licenciate in dance- and theatre pedagogy was carried out by Elina Rainio (An artist-pedagogue researching her own work) in 1998 and the first licenciate awarded from the Department of Light and Sound Design was to Ari Koivumäki for a work on spatial expression in radio plays in 2002.

⁶ Annette Arlander *Esitys tilana*, Acta scenica 2, scenic art and research, Theatre Academy, Vantaa 1998.

⁷ Riitta Pasanen-Willberg *Vanhenevan tanssijan problematiikasta dialogisuuteen-koreografian näkökulma*, Acta scenica 6, scenic art and research, Theatre Academy, Helsinki 2000.

⁸ Betsy Fisher *Creating and Re-Creating Dance – performing dances related to Ausdruckstanz* Acta scenica 12, scenic art and research, Theatre Academy, Helsinki 2002.

⁹ Kirsi Monni *Olemisen poeettinen liike: Tanssin uuden paradigman taidefilosofisia tulkintoja Martin Heideggerin ajattelun valossa sekä taiteellinen työ vuosilta 1996-1999*, Acta scenica 15, scenic art and research, Theatre Academy, Helsinki 2004.

¹⁰ An earlier version of this description was included in a leaflet published for the IFRT/FIRT congress in Helsinki

in 2006 by the Theatre Academy “Theatre Academy – Research and Processes”, and includes a presentation by professor Pentti Paavolainen, who was responsible for research at that time, as well as abstracts of completed projects.

¹¹ For one eloquent plea for balance, see Dwight Conquergood, “Performance Studies, Interventions and radical research” in Bial (ed.) *The Performance Studies Reader*, Routledge 2004.

¹² See for instance Elaine Aston “Knowing Differently: Practice as Research and the Women’s Writing for Performance Project”, *Nordic Theatre Studies* Volume 19, 2007.

¹³ For instance Kaisu Koski, *Augmenting Theatre – Engaging with the content of performances and installations on intermedial stages*, Acta Universitatis Lapponiensis 116, Enschede 2007.

¹⁴ Henk Borgdorff, “The Debate on Research in the Arts”, Sensuous Knowledge series *Focus on Artistic Research and Development* 2/06 published by Kunsthögskolen i Bergen, Norway, p 16. I first encountered the quotation in his lecture handout at ELIA conference, Berlin 13.10.2005 in the following form: “Art practice is research, when it intends to advance our knowledge and understanding, by way of an original investigation into art objects or creative processes, starting with questions which are relevant in the research context and the art world, with experimental and hermeneutic methods articulating and revealing the tacit knowledge which is situated and embodied in singular art works and processes, and with the research routes and outcomes adequately documented and disseminated to the research community and the wider public.” Henk Borgdorff, Amsterdam School of the Arts 2005.

¹⁵ Mika Hannula, Juha Suoranta and Tere Vadén, *Artistic Research – Theories, Methods and Practices*, Academy of Fine Art Helsinki and University of Gothenburg, Sweden 2005

¹⁶ Ibid, 159.

¹⁷ Ibid, 159.

¹⁸ Ibid, 160.

¹⁹ “Performance as research investigates creative-academic issues raised by performance as research across the performance media: dance, film, television and theatre. A number of key issues are driving the formation of the working group focusing on Performance Research including the following: The nature of Performance as Research /--/ Significance /--/ Dissemination /--/ Institutional and academic frameworks.” (Jacqueline Martin/Baz Kershaw)“ See <http://www.firt-iftr.org/firt/site/workinggroups.jsp>

²⁰ Call for Papers for the working group meeting in Stellenbosch 2007, Baz Kershaw

²¹ The call for proposals for the meeting during IFRT/FIRT conference in Stellenbosch, South Africa, 10-14 July 2007 described the current project of the working group: “To investigate the methods of performance as research, and in particular to explore approaches to developing such methods through reflexive (and, where appropriate, participatory) performative presentations. Relevant issues in this investigation include knowledge-types, aesthetic values, contextual responsiveness, practice-theory problematics, training methods and so on. For the purposes of the Group, 'performance' is understood to include a range of media, from theatre through dance to film/video, and interlocking research interests, from aesthetic through thematic to contextual.” Baz Kershaw

²² “The ‘still-act’ is a concept proposed by anthropologist Nadia Seremitakis to describe moments when a subject interrupts historical flow and *practices* historical interrogation. Thus, while the still-act does not entail rigidity or morbidity it requires a performance of suspension, a corporeally based interruption of modes of imposing flow. The still *acts* because it interrogates economies of time, because it reveals the possibility of one’s agency within controlling regimes of capital, subjectivity, labor and mobility.” Lepecki, op.cit 15. See also Seremitakis, C. Nadia. “The Memory of the Senses, Part I: Marks of the Transitory” and “The Memory of the Senses, Part II: Still Acts” in *The Senses Still – Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity* (pp1-18 and 23-43) Ed. C. Nadia Seremitakis Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1994.

²³ Hannula et al, op.cit., 59.

²⁴ I also work as an artist; see: www.harakka.fi/arlander.

²⁵ *Performing Landscape – Notes on Site-specific Work and Artistic Research. Texts 2001-2011*. Acta Scenica 28. Theatre Academy Helsinki 2012. <https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/37613>

²⁶ The terms practice-as-research, practice-based research, or practice-led research are clumsy to translate into Finnish. The term “tekijälähtöinen” is often used, which literally means author-based or maker-based, instead of “käytäntöön perustuva”, based on practice, which in Finnish sounds like a truism. The adjective artistic, “taiteellinen”, seemed equally artificial in Finnish as in English, but people quickly grew accustomed to it, and welcomed its core meaning, a focus on art. Today the term artistic research is used more and more as an umbrella concept for research undertaken in art universities.

²⁷ In a proposal for a Nordic study circle in 2006, Annika Sillander and Sidsel Pape observe: ‘Practice-Based Research (PBR) is an academic discipline that is fairly new in a Nordic context. Of the Scandinavian countries

Finland is clearly ahead, as PBR was established there in the 80s and 90s. Sweden is currently most active in implementing PBR within its institutions of higher education. Norway and Denmark, where PBR was introduced in 2000 and 2002, are following hesitantly'. <http://www.nsuweb.net/wb/pages/att-delta-i-nsu/ff6rslag-till-nya-studiekretsar/2006/d.-practice-based-research-in-the-performing-arts.php>

²⁸ The Academy of Finland is the major funding institution for research. For a presentation see www.aka.fi/eng

²⁹ The evaluation focused on research and doctoral education at all four Finnish art universities and the University of Lapland's Faculty of Art and Design in 2003–2007, with a focus on the quality of research, doctoral education, research environments, national and international cooperation and the societal impact of research in the field. The chair of the panel was professor Richard Buchanan (chair). *Research in Art and Design in Finnish Universities* Evaluation report Publications of the Academy of Finland 4/09.

http://www.aka.fi/Tiedostot/Tiedostot/Julkaisut/04_09%20Research%20in%20Art%20and%20Design.pdf

³⁰ *Research in Art and Design*.... , 6.

³¹ Professor Esa Kirkkopelto began with this assertion his presentation "Inventions and Institutions: Artistic Research as a Medium of Change" at the seminar of the Finnish Society for Aesthetics, 1.3.2012.

³² Smith & Dean (2009, 5), add conceptual research to quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

³³ [The situation regarding doctoral studies in art in Finland, Sweden and Norway is partly drawn from an overview provided by SHARE](#), an international networking project comprising 39 partners from across Europe working together on enhancing the 3rd cycle of arts research and education in Europe.

<http://www.sharenetwork.eu/home>

³⁴ See for example *Further and Continuing Education of performing artists in the Nordic Countries – a Nordic task*, Proceedings from the conference in Oslo, 12th -14th November 1999, TemaNord 2000:621.

http://openlibrary.org/books/OL3772202M/Further_and_continuing_education_of_performing_artists_in_the_Nordic_countries

³⁵ Konstnärliga Forskarskolan <http://www.konstnarligaforskarskolan.se/wordpress/>

³⁶ See Efva Lilja's home pages <http://www.efvalilja.se/page.php?id=start&lang=eng>

³⁷ Karlsson 2002, 20-21.

³⁸ With regard to the title Sweden has recently taken a step "ahead" of Finland, since "konstnärlig doktor" (literally artistic doctor) is translated as PhD rather than Doctor of Art, as in Finland, mainly to assure the equivalence internationally, since Doctor of Art is a separate lower degree in some English speaking countries.

³⁹ Hans Hedberg, Gothenburg University, handout at SHARE conference 2012.

⁴⁰ Presentation of Norway <http://www.sharenetwork.eu/artistic-research-overview/norway>

⁴¹ Presentation of Norway <http://www.sharenetwork.eu/artistic-research-overview/norway/national-fellowship-programme>

⁴² Norwegian Artistic Research Program <http://artistic-research.no/>

⁴³ <https://diku.no/en/programmes/norwegian-artistic-research-programme>

⁴⁴ Besides these Tampere University has a Department of Communication, Media and Theatre with education in acting.

⁴⁵ *Research in Art and Design in Finnish Universities*, Evaluation report, Publications of the Academy of Finland 4/09. http://www.aka.fi/Tiedostot/Tiedostot/Julkaisut/04_09%20Research%20in%20Art%20and%20Design.pdf See also Karlsson 2002, 187-192.

⁴⁶ TAHTO doctoral programme in artistic research

http://www.teak.fi/Doctoral_programme_in_artistic_research

⁴⁷ The first are evaluated for artistic excellence, only a modest written study is required. The second include musicology, and historical or pedagogical research. The third seems to resemble Research & Development type of applied research. See Sibelius Academy Doctoral Academy <http://www.siba.fi/en/how-to-apply/doctoral-degrees/doctoral-academy/about-us>

⁴⁸ Until 2007 there was a dichotomy between doctoral works with scientific emphasis or artistic emphasis. Today all research, whether educational research using qualitative methods or work emphasising theoretical reflection, is called artistic research and is required to include some practical (although not necessary artistic) parts. See Research and Post-graduate Studies at Theatre Academy, Helsinki <http://www.teak.fi/Research>

⁴⁹ The problem with using a terminology separating the production component and the theoretical component has been discussed, though. Finnish Academy of Fine Arts Curricula guide 2010-2015, pages 102-105, http://www.kuva.fi/images/uploads/oppaat/curricula_guide_2010-2015_eng.pdf. See also presentation of doctoral studies <http://www.kuva.fi/en/research/doctoral-studies/>

⁵⁰ Sensuous Knowledge Conferences <http://sensuousknowledge.org/>

⁵¹ Borgdorff, 2012.

⁵² Cecilia Broch-Knudsen <https://jar-online.net/building-culture-dissemination-artistic-research>

⁵³ “The Nordic Summer University (NSU) is a long-established institution within the Nordic intellectual arena. During more than 50 years of existence it has provided a lively forum for academic and intellectual debate, and involved many leading academics, politicians, and intellectuals from all the Nordic Countries. The NSU has always been at the forefront of intellectual thinking, juxtaposing views from the international and Nordic academic arenas, and introducing new thinking and influences into the Nordic Countries. [...] These thematic study circles form the backbone of our organisation, creating interdisciplinary networks that function within the Nordic Countries for three-year periods. Study circles largely focus on issues related to the social and human sciences, and most participants are PhD students or post-doctoral scholars in these fields.” (presentation at the website <http://www.nsuweb.net/wb/pages/information/briefly-in-english.php>)

⁵⁴ Barton, Friberg, Parekh-Gaihede (eds.) *At the Intersection Between Art and Research. Practise Based Research in the Performing Arts* 2010.

⁵⁵ The host - Centre for Practice as Research in Theatre, founded in 2007 - is a centre of expertise and research at the School of Communication, Media and Theatre at the University of Tampere, Finland concentrating on collaborative practical research projects rather than education. “Projects carried out within the Centre for Practise as Research in Theatre have a direct connection to working life. Project teams involve individual artistic and connecting technical and productive research components. Results and practical innovations produce benefits to theatre professionals, producers and audiences.” <http://t7.uta.fi/en/center/index.html>

⁵⁶ Artistic research – strategies for embodiment, project description NSU study circle 7 2009 Artistic Research – Strategies for Embodiment, Introduction <http://www.nsuweb.net/wb/studiekretsar/>
The text by Borgdorff referred to is probably *Artistic Research within the Fields of Science*, Senuous Knowledge Publications 6/2009 <http://sensuousknowledge.org/publications/62009-artistic-research-within-the-fields-of-science/>

⁵⁷ <http://nordic.university/study-circles/7-artistic-research-performing-heterotopia/summer-2019-absences-silences/>

⁵⁸ NOFOD <http://www.nofod.org/>

⁵⁹ The Theatre Research Society <http://www.teats.fi/english.html>

⁶⁰ See for instance the bilingual web publication Liisa Ikonen, Hanna Järvinen, Maiju Loukola (eds.) *Näyttämöltä tutkimukseksi – esittävien taiteiden metodologiset haasteet*, [From Stage to Research – Methodological Challenges of Performing Arts] Näyttämö ja tutkimus 4, Teatterintutkimuksen seura Helsinki 2012. <http://www.teats.fi/TeaTS4.pdf>

The slightly misleading rubric ‘artist’s statements’ encompasses a huge spectrum of approaches.

⁶¹ Hoogland, Rikard ‘Introduction’ in *Nordic Theatre studies* vol 20 (2008) The Artist as Researcher <http://blogs.helsinki.fi/nordictheatrestudies/2009/12/01/nts-vol-20-2008-the-artist-as-researcher/>

⁶² CARPA description in the first call for presentations http://www.teak.fi/menu_description.asp?menu_id=1198

⁶³ Call for CARPA 2009 http://www.teak.fi/menu_description.asp?menu_id=1198

For the proceedings *How does artistic research change us?* <http://www.teak.fi/tutkimus/carpa/proceedings>

⁶⁴ Presentations could take the form of installation, experiment, workshop, performance, rehearsal, exercise, discussion, or test. Proposals were expected to include a purpose statement, research topic or research questions, a description of the arrangement of the presentation and practical requirements. Call for CARPA 2 (2011) <http://www.teak.fi/carpa2011> For the proceedings *Artistic Research in Action*, see <http://www.teak.fi/tutkimus/carpa/proceedings>

⁶⁵ Call for Carpa 3 http://www.teak.fi/Tutkimus/carpa/call_for_presentations

⁶⁶ JAR Journal of Artistic Research <http://www.jar-online.net/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.en.visjournal.nu/journal/>

⁶⁸ For a brief historical description of the development at the Theatre Academy Helsinki, see Arlander 2008 or Arlander 2009.

⁶⁹ Arlander in Biggs & Karlsson 2011.

⁷⁰ McKenzie, Lee & Roms 2010.

⁷¹ Haseman 2006.

⁷² Bolt 2008.

⁷³ See www.partakejournal.org

⁷⁴ Cull 2014, 15-38.

⁷⁵ One example is Tero Nauha, who has experimented with the metamodelization of Felix Guattari in his artistic practice. (Nauha 2013)