

Strategy plan 2016-2020

Platform for artistic research

The Norwegian Artistic Research Programme (NARP) is a joint initiative for the creative and performing arts and is the most important source of funding for artistic research in Norway. The programme funds projects at Norwegian universities and university colleges in which artistic practice is at the core of the activities, and it provides a unique opportunity for researcher training. The programme develops expertise in the sector, acts as a national arena and makes an active contribution to the development of artistic quality. Artistic research as a parallel to academic research is enshrined in law as a joint goal for higher education institutions in Norway. NARP is a unique programme in an international context and a driving force in the field of artistic research.

The programme board is appointed by the Ministry of Education and Research, and it is broadly composed to include artistic research expertise and interdisciplinary representation from educational institutions specialising in art subjects.

The programme governs the Norwegian platform for artistic research through the board's guidelines for its activities and their practice. The activities include the Project Programme and the Research Fellowship Programme. The programme board has an annual allocation of NOK 39 million at its disposal. The White Paper '*Concentration for quality, structural reform in the higher education sector - No 18 (2014-2015)*', makes greater requirements of the educational environments in terms of quality, scope and stability. The programme board assumes that the Norwegian government's ambition to develop world-leading academic environments also includes the art environments.

Driving force for academic development

The National Council for Artistic Research (NRKU) aim is for artistic research to:

- generate knowledge development on an artistic basis
- articulate and accentuate academic questions through artistic practice and reflection
- develop and challenge a broad range of forms of expression and documentation
- establish arenas for sharing both artistic processes and results
- qualify reflection in the institutions through professional and artistic contextualisation and critical discussion
- contribute to and challenge artistic practice and the art field's discourses
- strengthen artistic competence in society

Artistic research is a parallel to basic research, applied research and development work, and it covers the whole spectrum of research and development work for the art field. The practice of art is at the very core of artistic research.

NARP is a driving force for professional and artistic development. The Project Programme is a parallel to the various funding schemes run by the Research Council of Norway. It is an important mechanism in funding artistic research at and across the institutions. The Project Programme enables NARP to stimulate professional and artistic development at the institutions. The institutions and the programme board have advocated strengthening this role by increasing the programme's budget. To ensure that artistic research has the same status as other research, the programme board will work to put in place a state plan to step up artistic research, and a doubling of the programme's annual budget.

Researcher training in the art field

The Research Fellowship Programme is considered to be equivalent to a PhD programme, but does not currently confer a degree for a completed project. The Artistic Research Programme and the National Council for Artistic Research propose that institutional PhD degrees are established for creative and performing arts and that the Research Fellowship Programme continues as a national research school under the auspices of NARP. This will give the education programme a clear basis at the institutions, in line with other study programmes. The programme board supports the conversion of the Research Fellowship Programme's training component into a research school run jointly by the institutions and NARP. Art of a high international standard remains the programme's most important goal. The wording of the institutions' PhD degree regulations must ensure that artistic practice is key, and ensure that the programme remains attractive to the most talented candidates. The Norwegian PhD programmes and the cooperation on the research school aim to set an example for other PhD programmes in creative and performing arts.

The programme's activities function as a national contact point for small academic environments at many educational institutions. The programme gathers research fellows within a wide range of subjects and builds fellowship across subject areas and institutional boundaries. Even in a future with larger institutions, many of the art environments will remain small organisational entities. The Research Fellowship Programme currently has 26 posts in 12 academic environments at its disposal, with different institutional affiliations in a joint research programme. In recent years, the institutions have made significant contributions to the growth of the programme by allocating funds to finance research fellowships. NARP funding is crucial in securing volume and competition in researcher education. The programme board believes that the funding of research fellowships through NARP should be stepped up so that it has resources for at least 45 research fellow posts spread across the country.

Strategy and measures 2016 -2020

The programme shall help the government to reach its sector goals and work to ensure that artistic research at Norwegian university colleges and universities gain international recognition. The government has given the programme board the mandate for its activity, and the strategy has been devised on this basis.

The Artistic Research Programme shall work to ensure that universities and university colleges conduct artistic research of a high standard, and are active and visible in an international context

It is the government's ambition that Norway shall become one of the most innovative countries in Europe, and it states in its sector goals for research and education that Norway needs education, research and professional scholarly and artistic research that interacts with the world around it.

The Norwegian programme is internationally oriented and recognised. The Norwegian platform for artistic research, with its clear focus on artistic practice, is intended to influence international development in the field.

Project funding from NARP has a bearing on recruitment and on the development of the research culture at Norwegian art institutions/environments. The institutions' responsibility for good working conditions and quality in the projects is enshrined in the programme guidelines. The projects that receive NARP funding represent locally-based knowledge development, and the research fellows are important resources in their respective academic environments. The research fellows get development opportunities beyond what

the individual institution can provide through the interdisciplinary activities and the network facilitated by NARP.

NARP shall fund projects that promote international cooperation through project participation and the exchange of staff. At the same time, the institutions try to take advantage of other funding options that focus on international exchange.

Objective:

- *NARP shall safeguard the programme's core activities and unique international status by making strict demands of the artistic activity that is granted funding*
- *Through the Project Programme, NARP shall play a key and unifying role in funding and promoting artistic research in Norway*
- *NARP shall consider the strengthening of institutions' own research environments in connection with awarding project funding and research fellowships*
- *NARP shall support the processes involved in establishing institutional PhD degrees and the conversion of the Research Fellowship Programme's training component into a research school jointly operated by NARP and the institutions*
- *NARP shall be visible in an international context and contribute to new and ground-breaking knowledge in an international context*

Measures:

- *The programme board shall promote artistic research in relation to national decision-makers, and work to step up the state's financing of artistic research*
- *NARP shall help to establish and run the research school in creative and performing arts, and ensure that the Research Fellowship Programme is maintained until PhD degrees are developed for all subject areas*
- *NARP will devise a proposal for how an external evaluation of the programme should be conducted and initiate a pre-project*
- *NARP shall strengthen cooperation with the Research Council of Norway and encourage the institutions to take advantage of the council's expertise and funding schemes in connection with applications to the Research Council and to the EU*
- *NARP shall assist institutions applying for mobility funding from the EU by facilitating international participation at the research school*
- *NARP shall actively participate in international artistic research environments*

The Artistic Research Programme shall contribute to promoting reflection and insight based on artistic practice

NARP shall fund projects based on quality and open competition. The programme board places emphasis on the institutions and persons responsible for projects also including a gender perspective and ethical issues in all artistic practice.

The programme has brought to the sector a culture for using peer reviews as an important element in the institutions' quality development. The programme contains quality requirements that help to strengthen the academic environments' insight, knowledge and awareness of methods, ethics and context in artistic processes and to initiate discourse about these issues.

NARP contributes to developing language based on insight and understanding that can only be developed from inside the artistic practice. This strengthens the discursive dimension of artistic research in Norway.

Requirements for explicit reflection are stipulated in the guidelines. The research fellows must document their reflection and process as part of the final evaluation of their project. Projects that receive funding from the Project Programme are obliged to seek international publication. Both research fellows and project managers shall make their works available to the public, and for critical dialogue and feedback from peers.

NARP makes an important contribution to the whole field of art and culture. Today, former research fellows hold positions in and outside educational institutions or are established as professional artists in the independent art scene. NARP requires projects that receive funding to establish contact and cooperate with other higher education institutions or external art environments and art scenes that have professional expertise, production or exhibition resources. The programme activities thereby have ripple effects far beyond Norwegian university colleges and universities.

In recent years, the institutions have been awarded greater responsibility for the Research Fellowship Programme. The establishment of institutional PhD degrees and the national research school in creative and performing arts represent a sought-after and major restructuring of the programme. For NARP, this means a shift in emphasis to the Project Programme. NARP regards this as a good point of departure for initiating a step-up plan for the art environments. The programme board believes that the Project Programme should be able to provide NOK 10 to 15 million in funding for individual projects over a three-year period.

Objective:

- *The allocation to the Project Programme shall be stepped up to NOK 30 million per year*
- *The projects shall have an international scope*
- *NARP shall contribute to the development of professional Norwegian art terminology*
- *NARP shall create a tradition for qualified critical reflection*
- *NARP shall clarify the relevance of art to society and contribute to innovation and adaptation*

Measures:

- *NARP shall use artistically strong international experts to assess applications*
- *NARP shall regard gender perspective awareness in art as a value in itself, and gender balance in its organisation as a quality indicator for projects granted funding*
- *NARP shall help to maintain a focus on ethics in artistic contexts and reflection*
- *NARP shall require artistic research to be openly disseminated and subject to peer review*

The Artistic Research Programme shall encourage interdisciplinary communication and be a meeting place for art education institutions

The creative and performing arts cover the whole art field. As operator of the Research Fellowship Programme, NARP has an important function as an arena for developing a broad, national academic environment. NARP shall create interdisciplinary meeting places and strengthen the contact between the different parts of the art field and the educational institutions. NARP recognises its responsibility to highlight joint issues and themes that the academic environments must focus more on at a local level and that are key elements of all artistic research.

The programme shall help to strengthen the dissemination of artistic research. Dissemination shall take place in the art, research and educational environments, as well as in the public sphere. NARP shall encourage international presentation and peer reviewed publications of Norwegian artistic research. NARP shall facilitate the documentation and registration of artistic research.

Objective:

- *The programme board shall garner international attention to the programme's goals and activities*
- *NARP's arenas for artistic research shall stand out in the international landscape of conferences and discourses*
- *The results of NARP-funded projects shall be used to form a reference in an international context*

Measures:

- *NARP shall prioritise projects involving several artistic forms of expression and in which international partners participate*
- *NARP shall strengthen the Artistic Research Forum as an international and inter-artistic point of contact*
- *NARP shall work to further the development of multimedia platforms for project cooperation and documentation*