

RESEARCH

KÜNSTLERISCHE  
FORSCHUNG  
ARTISTIC  
RESEARCH

DOCUMENTATION OF THE  
5TH EXTENDED SYMPOSIUM  
IN VISUAL ARTS

ARTISTIC RESEARCH:  
METHOD, STRATEGY  
AND OUTREACH

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DOCUMENTATION OF THE

5TH EXTENDED SYMPOSIUM IN VISUAL ARTS — ARTISTIC RESEARCH: METHOD, STRATEGY AND  
OUTREACH — 7/8 JULY 2022 — WORKSHOPS, LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS — A COOPERATION  
BETWEEN ASSOCIATION OF FINE ART SAXONY (LBK SACHSEN E. V.), OFFICE FOR ACADEMIC HERITAGE,  
SCIENTIFIC AND ART COLLECTIONS (KUSTODIE TU DRESDEN) OFFICE FOR ACADEMIC HERITAGE, SCIENTIFIC  
AND ART COLLECTIONS (KUSTODIE), TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY DRESDEN, AND SCHAUFLENER LAB@TU DRESDEN,  
EU4ART\_DIFFERENCES PROJECT AND THE CULTURAL FOUNDATION OF THE FREE STATE OF SAXONY.



# INTRODUCTION

As a cooperative event between Association of Fine Art Saxony (LBK Sachsen e. V.), the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony, the Dresden University of Fine Arts – EU4ART\_*differences* Project – and the Office for Academic Heritage, Scientific and Art Collections (Kustodie), Technical University Dresden, and Schaufler Lab@TU Dresden, the two-part event, based on the tried and tested symposium format, dealt with the question of what *artistic research* is, what it can achieve and what new spheres of action it creates. Intersections and perspectives for an open art practice that seeks increased exchange with the academic landscape and society were made visible using exemplary projects.

The extended symposium pursued the goal of making the current discourse on the topic of *artistic research* and the potentials arising from it tangible in a broad spectrum and to communicate it locally and internationally to society, the academic and the artistic community.

Focal points and concepts of *artistic research* from different professional and interdisciplinary artistic and academic perspectives were highlighted and discussed, and made tangible in workshop formats, lectures and discussions. The associated international academic conference focused on the overarching methodologies and theoretical approaches of artistic and academic research and explored possible fields of action in academic discourse and society.

# FINE ARTS SYMPOSIUM

7 JULY 2022

GREETINGS

DEAR PARTICIPANTS,  
DEAR AUDIENCE,  
DEAR WORKSHOP LEADERS,  
DEAR DISCUSSANTS, ...

FINE ARTS  
SYMPOSIUM

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KIRSTEN VINCENZ

MANUEL FREY

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GRIT RUHLAND

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TILL ANSGAR BAUMHAUER

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7 JULY 2022



Kirsten Vincenz is director  
Office for Academic Heritage  
(Kustodie), TUD.

The symposium, organized together with the Office for Academic Heritage, Scientific and Art Collections (Kustodie), Technical University Dresden, and Schaufler Lab@TU Dresden, represents on the one hand a direct thematic connection to our scientific-artistic projects of the last years. On the other hand, the conference allows us to show that *artistic research* or art-based research has undoubtedly long since arrived in the theoretical discourse as well as in the practice at art colleges, but for many researchers at universities it represents a rather unknown or dubious terrain that needs to be critically questioned. In this context, the legitimacy of such approaches is repeatedly questioned, insurmountable boundaries within the disciplines are pointed out, or the definitional sovereignty over a research concept that is primarily influenced by the natural

sciences is defended.

Viewed from the perspective of a classical university, *artistic research* is assumed to have a primarily political agenda aimed at equating artistic achievements within a traditional scientific landscape and its restrictive funding lines. In the Gallery of the Office for Academic Heritage (Kustodie), exhibition projects based on artistic-scientific cooperation have been made possible for several years. One concern here is to explore the great potential for cooperation between aesthetic and scientific research and to offer communication spaces and platforms for exchange. Research with and through the means of art can be a strategy, but also other artistic methods or approaches are given as much space as possible. Also included, and this is particularly important to me, are objects from our more

than 40 university collections, which offer different starting points or points of departure for artistic exploration in terms of their materiality, aesthetics, form, or even their context of use and history.

Starting in 2017, our curator Gwendolin Kremer initiated the Art Science Labs, from which various collaborative projects have emerged. The Schaufler Lab@TU Dresden, newly founded in 2020, now combines scientific and *artistic research* at the highest level. Across disciplinary boundaries, scientists in the Schaufler Kolleg@TU Dresden and artists in the Schaufler Residency@TU Dresden<sup>1</sup> will jointly scrutinize current technologies, and their origins and effects on the present. The first phase of the project, which runs until 2024, addresses the question of how artificial intelligence changes cultural and social structures and, on the other hand, is itself produced and changed by them. For 2022, the artist and composer Esmeralda Conde Ruiz has been selected for the residency program.

The Schaufler Lab@TU Dresden with its artistic residencies will enter a second funding phase starting in 2024 and will further expand the focus of *artistic research* at a technical university.

<sup>1</sup> <https://tu-dresden.de/gsw/schauflerlab/schaufler-residency/kuenstler>





Prof. Dr. Manuel Frey is director of the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony.

In the past, there have already been epochs in which the artist as researcher has gained prestige and attention. The sociologist Max Weber, for example, highlighted the artistic and scientific genius Leonardo da Vinci in this sense in his famous lecture *Science as a Profession* (1917). Today, starting from the art academies, *artistic research* has established itself as an independent practice in the field of fine arts, thus contributing to an enrichment of the field as a whole. I am therefore pleased that today's symposium is dedicated to this important topic. Three aspects seem to me worthy of discussion based on the funding experience of the Cultural Foundation:

(1) If one follows Luhmann's theory of social systems, art and science form two structurally distinct, operationally closed domains of modern society. They observe their environment according to different criteria, fulfill different social functions and organize their communication according to completely different rules. Therefore, translation difficulties have to be planned for and systematically dealt with, so that in the end there can be a successful transfer of knowledge, ideally also a successful artistic and/or scientific work.

(2) The program of the symposium makes it clear that *artistic research* can only exploit its inherent potential if it does not operate according to the principles of academic knowledge generation. Consequently, the standard cannot be the proof of a truth or regularity. *Artistic research* does not result in the formulation of large-scale conceptual and theoretical architectures and cannot or does not want

to make use of a methodologically proven toolbox. *Artistic research* practices and their results are unique and require a high degree of freedom and self-determination.

(3) Finally, I would like to take a look at the institutionalizing effect that *artistic research* has. Precisely because research in the mode of art should not be equated with the methods of other scientific disciplines, the question arises whether the associated academization, i.e., the import of corresponding theoretical models, methods, forms of evaluation and communication, as well as classical academic qualification formats (in Pierre Bourdieu's words: "title and place") is purposeful, or whether the inherent logic of *artistic research* should not instead be taken into account in a sense oriented towards the freedom of art.

However these or other questions are answered at our symposium: The fact that *artistic research* is a fruitful and forward-looking path is also shown by the great interest that this symposium has met with. I am looking forward to the discussion and to the ambitious and extensive program that the Association of Fine Art Saxony (LBK Sachsen e. V.) has put together with the partners of the Office for Academic Heritage (Kustodie) TU Dresden, the Dresden University of Fine Arts and the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony and wish us all a successful symposium.





Dr. Grit Ruhland is member  
of Association of Fine Art Saxony.

This is the 5th Extended Symposium – in addition to our traditional partner, the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony, we also have the HfBK Dresden and the Office for Academic Heritage (Kustodie) of the TU Dresden on board. This is mainly due to today's topic – *Artistic Research: Method, Strategy and Impact*. It's a broad topic, and I'll try to be brief. Germany is not a pioneer in this field. Other countries or regions such as Scandinavia, England, the USA and perhaps Switzerland already have more experience. In Germany it is a comparatively young field, in Saxony perhaps even younger. As the Association of Fine Art Saxony (LBK) e. V., our commitment is to Saxony – but of course we also look beyond.

Every single location of *artistic research* in Saxony has its specifics. Dresden is a center of science with many institutes. In Leipzig there is relatively much *artistic research* going on, according to my observations. Chemnitz has a technology focus. But *artistic research* also takes place in rural areas – we will hear about that.

At the HfBK Dresden, it is an even newer field. However, there were already approaches in that direction there, too – I studied there years ago. I fondly remember the *Interdisciplinary Anatomy*, which was offered together with the Medical Faculty of the TU Dresden. Prof. Peres, who will be moderating today, gave numerous lectures there.

I think there are more actors in this field than we are perhaps aware of. The symposium should serve to show them.

Of course, there are also concerns, reservations and aversions – perhaps we will get to discuss these in the

coming days. For us in the Association of Fine Art Saxony, it is one field of work among many. We don't want to create a gravitation, but a reflection. I cordially invite to this and thank all those who have made this symposium possible.



Till Ansgar Baumhauer Ph.D  
is Project speaker of EU4ART\_  
*differences*, HfBK Dresden.

It is a great pleasure for the Dresden University of Fine Arts to co-host this extended symposium on *artistic research*. Although this subject area has been present in design practice and in individual research projects in the education at the HfBK Dresden, it has not formed a clear field of discourse within the teaching. This has changed in recent years when the Dresden Art Academy became a member of the European university alliance EU4ART, together with the art academies in Budapest, Rome and Riga. This alliance gave rise to the possibility of launching a project on *artistic research* at all partner universities, EU4ART\_*differences*, which has been running since 1.1.2021 and until 31.12.2023. It comprises a one-year pilot project involving ten students since October 2022.

In addition to the connection to the local Dresden university context, the project has set itself the task of making *artistic research* visible in the European research context as a fully-fledged and interdisciplinary connectable practice of knowledge production. On the one hand, this gives artistic practice great freedom beyond its location in the art market, but on the other hand it also requires reflection on the structures necessary for transdisciplinary exchange, such as the linguisation of results.

The two-day Dresden conference aims to take account of the multifaceted nature of *artistic research* through three thematic pillars: artist presentations, workshops and discussions that address the potential of this relatively new discipline in academic and social discourse. We hope for fruitful discussions, encounters and the opportunity to build networks, because these are precisely the things

that are important if we want to make *artistic research* in Dresden capable of action, strong and visible.



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KEYNOTE LECTURE

# FINE ARTS WHAT IS ARTISTIC RESEARCH? — FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ARCHIVES

MICHAEL HILTBRUNNER

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DISCUSSION

# SYMPOSIUM

SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

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7 JULY 2022

MICHAEL HILTBRUNNER

## WHAT IS ARTISTIC RESEARCH? — FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ARCHIVES

The opening speech for this symposium was intended to take a different perspective on the subject of *artistic research* and engage people who are interested in the relevance and content of *artistic research* but had previously not necessarily found their way into this field.

At the Institute for Contemporary Art Research, belonging to the Zurich University of the Arts (ZUdK), I am directly involved in *artistic research*. There I became aware of a lack of engagement with its history and began to explore archives of researched art. In the meantime, I have opened or mediated numerous such archival collections, so I wanted to share my concrete experiences with the audience and give an answer to the question “What is artistic research?” from my work with archives, including: Is there evidence of research in the documentation of the artistic activity of a person or institution? How is it characterized?

For this purpose, I began by showing a conventional artist’s archive with numerous racks of paintings and explained that this type of archive doesn’t interest us today, because in this archive we find, for the most part, works. The archive that interests us is probably in the wastepaper basket here. In archives of researching art, there are only a few works, but many folders, publications, event documentation and surprising documents. What I should have added: there are also very many and different media for documentation and experimentation, such as video works, Super8, slides, photographs, audio tapes or



audio cassettes, as well as different generations of computers with corresponding programmes and documents.

I chose archives from the environment of the F+F School as examples, namely the archives of Serge Stauffer, Doris Stauffer, Peter Trachsel and the F+F School itself. I also looked at the archives of the Shedhalle Zurich as a place of activist art that can also be quantified as research art.

The artist Serge Stauffer trained as a photographer, but already from the late 1940s he was researching Dada, Surrealism and Marcel Duchamp, dealing with optical phenomena and the role of creativity in society. No later than when he co-founded the F+F class in 1965 and the F+F School in 1971, his artistic activity left behind the conventional expectations of a photographer, as he noted in a F+F teaching sheet on “banalities” in 1977: “As an artist I am active by teaching at the F+F, inventing tasks to stimulate the ‘free creativity of all’, writing such text sheets, developing an ‘art theory’, making efforts to find a place for ‘art research’ (art laboratory), constantly orienting myself about the current state of ‘art’ and transmitting my insights in practical form. That is – in essence – my ‘art’.”<sup>1</sup>

The artist Doris Stauffer, also a photographer and co-founder of the F+F School, was also active as an educator, journalist and storyteller, and in 1969 was a co-founder of the radical feminist women’s liberation movement FBB in Zurich. She wrote in 1978: “we don’t need a reform of existing ideologies. we need a completely new way of living. we don’t want to use our feminism merely as a reaction. we want to start living our visions and imaginations.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Serge Stauffer: *banalitäten 3*, in: ders.: *kunst als forschung*. Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2013, pp. 232–233, here p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> Doris Stauffer: feminism and creativity. In: G.J. Lischka (ed.): *Genie gibt’s. The seventies at the F&F School for Experimental Design*. Frankfurt am Main: Betzel, 1980, pp. 57–60, here p. 60

The F+F School was founded in 1971 as an interdisciplinary laboratory for experimental design, without diplomas, as an open place with courses for everyone, as a venue for events and as an island of counterculture. At this school, Serge Stauffer developed his theory on art as research, Doris Stauffer wanted to implement her feminist approaches to creative activity – until she experienced discrimination there as well – and Peter Jenny developed his ideas on self-learning design, which he was to further deepen afterwards at the ETH in Zurich. The F+F became a hub for radical education and experimental art of the time. At the ZHdK and in collaboration with the F+F, we realized *F+F 1971* as an online exhibition, thus bringing together the school’s archives for the first time and making the history of this school tangible.

The archive of Peter Trachsel, who studied and taught at the F+F School, contains the documentation of the artists’ association Hasena, the Institute for Flowing Art Traffic, which he founded and directed in 1981. With this institute he organized experimental events and performances, maintained the Passagenhaus in the mountain village of Küblis as an artist’s residence, with a lunch table, library, archive and shop, and produced a series of publications on the events and the magazine *Veleno* (Italian for “poison”) in Hasena’s publishing house. He was pioneering in the exploration of experimental performative and participatory art in rural areas.

The archive of the Shedhalle Zurich is also very revealing. The Shedhalle was founded in 1985 by artists in the alternative cultural centre Rote Fabrik as a space for contemporary art, an off-space with Swiss-wide and international exchange. From 1994 onwards, a radicalisation took place that continues to this day. There are no more solo exhibitions, only thematic exhibitions; the Shedhalle became a platform for political engagement in art, for activist positions of various kinds with a feminist and



LGBTQ+ focussed attitude. The art space receives municipal money but is independent in its programming. Numerous research projects are documented in the archive, including an in-depth examination and mediation of resistant topics. This way of working, also titled “information art”, has sometimes led to exhibitions without “works”, reminiscent of an experimental info-shop.

So what is *artistic research* from the archives' point of view? It is about documenting artistic activity, which sometimes has a “bad” reputation because, from a certain point of view, it is not really art at all. Or is it? In any case, it is not about solo careers, but about a collective way of working, social engagement, political activism, self-organization and open experimentation. While public money and other funding can be involved, what is important is the independence of the content. *Artistic research* is measured by discursive and content-related demands; there is thematic research and also events with peers: knowledge is shared, and publications: knowledge is published. In this way, new formats such as “information art” are created and an experimental expansion of teaching takes place.

There is something suggestive about this line of argument and it almost makes us forget that there are several twists going on here: for one thing, it is archives of research-based art that I have presented, so what is the connection with *artistic research*? This is in a different frame of reference; instead of the field of art, we are in the field of research. The references to activism and resistant knowledge production make it clear: it is about a claim to art that should also apply to research. This brings us to the second turn: artists in the field of research sometimes want to claim that all their work in the studio is research. But in the archives of artists there are clear differences because research wants to be documented. And this distinction materializes in the archive. From this can be derived an appreciation of researching art, also in the environment of

*artistic research*. The examination of these archives shows the relevance and commitment of this new research direction, which is already inherent in its history.

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Dr. Michael Hiltbrunner is cultural anthropologist,  
Institute for Contemporary Art Research, ZHdK, Zürich.

## SUMMARY AND REFLECTION: DISCUSSIONS OF THE KEYNOTE LECTURE BY MICHAEL HILTBRUNNER

by Florian Cramer

Michael Hiltbrunner has a disciplinary background as a cultural anthropologist. Among others, he published the writings of the Swiss art educator Serge Stauffer who promoted the concept of “Kunst als Forschung” (“art as research”) as early as in the 1970s. Michael Hiltbrunner doesn’t define himself as an *artistic researcher* himself, which avoids a conflict of interest with his research field. The basic question for Michael Hiltbrunner still is: what is *artistic research*? Why has he been asked to give this speech and not the directors of his school? His presentation is intended to be a provocation. He sees the PhD programs being founded and the research funding coming in for *artistic research* – but something is lacking in them which he wants to cover in this lecture.

Michael Hiltbrunner’s archival research on F+F was triggered by the debates of whether artists in the past, among others Malevich, were researchers or not. According to Michael Hiltbrunner, the answer is to be found in the artists’ archives, because these archives document processes. In other words: Michael Hiltbrunner’s provocation is to suggest that the existence of an archive, in whichever form, respectively of a documented work process is what defines *artistic research* and differentiates it from art that is not research.

Michael Hiltbrunner considers his lecture a provocation, because it proposes an alternative concept of *artistic*



research. While the discourse of *artistic research* in academia is important, it doesn't paint the whole picture. The whole legitimacy of *artistic research* is societal and rooted in local communities, not in institutions. Michael Hiltbrunner is therefore convinced that the pre-1989 history of independent arts in Dresden offers a lot of insight into *artistic research*.

**Question from the audience:** Isn't documenta fifteen a blueprint for this type of *artistic research*? And: were, back then in the 1970s, the *artistic research* impulses (F+F, Fluxus, social sculpture, situationism) networked among each other?

**Michael Hiltbrunner:** documenta fifteen is an exemplary site for what *artistic research* could be. But academia is building its own system and concept of *artistic research* which is getting out of touch with these self-organized initiatives. There are however avant-garde artists where there is no *artistic research* because there are no archival traces, no letters, no process documentation. Feminist art, on the contrary, could be taken as a paradigmatic example of *artistic research*.

**Florian Cramer:** the idea of the archival paradigm defining *artistic research* is an interesting provocation – but doesn't it exclude artists where work process and archives are removed from public view (out of privacy and intellectual property concerns)? Is Hito Steyerl not an *artistic researcher* because she doesn't publicly document her process?

**Michael Hiltbrunner:** In many *artistic research* processes the archive cannot always be publicly accessible. Hito Steyerl positions herself as a solo artist on the market, but certainly has an archive, but removes herself from *artistic research* if not sharing her process with others.

**Question from the audience (older gentleman from Saxony):** In East German underground art, many practices couldn't be archived and documented because of political repression. Therefore, not archives, but personal conversations were the crucial media of *artistic research* and processes. What does this mean for your concept of *artistic research* – doesn't it overlook informal processes?

**Michael Hiltbrunner:** This is a brilliant question. This history needs to be researched as oral history, and perhaps there are letters and other paraphernalia that can be found.



SHORT ARTISTIC PRESENTATIONS

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I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING

ESMERALDA CONDE RUIZ

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ARCHIVE IN MOTION — ARTISTIC RESEARCH

BETWEEN SRI LANKAN DANCE  
AND AUGMENTED REALITY

SUSANNE VINCENZ

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THE MOVEMENTS OF CLOUDS AROUND MOUNT FUJI:  
PHOTOGRAPHED AND FILMED BY MASANAO ABE

HELMUT VÖLTER

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ARTISTIC RESEARCH — THE SELF-EXPERIMENT  
AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

KATJA MARIE VOIGT

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7 JULY 2022

# I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING

ESMERALDA CONDE RUIZ

Esmeralda Conde Ruiz is a composer and visual artist who has collaborated with Ólafur Elíasson, among others, and works in particular with the human voice as a medium. In her artistic practice, she sees the singers not as a conventional choir, but as a living sculpture with which she works creatively. Her performances are therefore artistic performances, some of which take several years to develop.

In the summer semester of 2022, the artist is an *artistic research* fellow for six months with a project on the topic of artificial intelligence (AI) at the Schaufler Lab@TU Dresden. In the Schaufler Lab@TU Dresden, researchers and scholarship holders from various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences cooperate with artists as well as with researchers from the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Partner institutions are TU Dresden's Clusters of Excellence.

In her lecture, Esmeralda Conde Ruiz talks about discursive processes in the context of *artistic research* and about the productivity and potential of non-knowledge. In the Schaufler Lab@TU Dresden, her initial idea was the development of an AI choir. The following questions marked the centre of her open reflections:

“When composing, can we use AI not only – as is often the case – as a tool, but rather as an instrument?”

“How can a human influence AI in this case?”

“Can AI find or develop its own voice and thus an individual sound?”

During the exchange with scientists from the fields of computer science, it became clear within the first weeks of her residency that an AI choir would not be feasible with the existing time resources. In a next step, Conde Ruiz examined the comparability of a human and an artificial choir, among other things through AI-controlled visualisations. However, these considerations did not lead to a result that Esmeralda Conde Ruiz considered virulent and relevant. In discussions with AI and sound experts at TU Dresden, the specific sound of data centres or server farms finally became the focus of her investigations and experiments. The server farms, which operate around the clock, generate a multitude of sounds themselves. The enormous energy consumption that goes hand in hand with the operation of these centres, which function as data storage, were the deciding factor for the composer and visual artist to look into this aspect of AI, which includes environmental implications, energy policy, data security and global working conditions.

AI technology is therefore always linked to people who train these systems and to technicians who are responsible for the operation of the centres. Esmeralda Conde Ruiz sees this as the potential for her approach, which grasps and questions the sound of datafication with her artistic means.

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Esmeralda Conde Ruiz is a composer and audio visual artist, Artist-in-Residence 2022 at Schaufler Lab@TU Dresden.



Esmeralda Conde Ruiz: *Cabin Fever* (2022), TULCA Festival of Visual Art, Galway, Ireland  
photograph by Ros Kavanagh



Esmeralda Conde Ruiz: *The GrandMother Project* (2020), Performance at Union Chapel, London  
photograph by Mischa Haller



Esmeralda Conde Ruiz:  
*Waste Trilogy*, Stage  
visualisation for Dresden  
Philharmonie

# ARCHIVE IN MOTION — ARTISTIC RESEARCH BETWEEN SRI LANKAN DANCE AND AUGMENTED REALITY

SUSANNE VINCENZ

The starting point for our artistic research was our involvement with the archive of the Sri Lankan Chitrasena dance company, which contains documents from over 80 years of dance history. Photos, slides, Super-8 recordings, posters and videos form the physical stock, including many recordings of tours that have taken the company all over the world. The main question is how the archive can be made accessible as an artistic experience: how it unfolds and can be experienced sensually through artistic means – choreography, dance, music, moving image, scenography – in the best case in different ways for each viewer.

We worked together as a team: in Colombo, Sri Lanka, choreographer Heshma Wignaraja and dancer Thaji Dias from the Chitrasena Dance Company. Heshma Wignaraja directs the company, her cousin Thaji Dias is the soloist of the troupe that was founded by her grandfather. In Berlin, Mareike Trillhaas, sound artist, Susanne Vincenz, dramaturg and Isabel Robson, scenographer and video artist working at the intersection of moving images and live performance.

The company was founded by Chitrasena in the 1940s, shortly after Sri Lanka's independence. The group toured worldwide, including the Soviet Union, with which the then

still socialist country had good contacts. Later, they also toured the GDR, where their plays were read as social parables in the Brechtian sense. The socio-political stage pieces from the distant island in the Indian Ocean were ideologically fitting: there are recordings in the archive of the troupe's arrival at the main railway station in the capital of the German Democratic Republic, of a socialist training session at the Wall, as well as pictures of a performance at the Volksbühne on Rosa-Luxemburg Platz, Berlin.

The Chitrasenas were also on the road in the West, long tours took them through West Germany and to Austria under the label, the National Ballet of Ceylon. Between socialist parable and ballet from Ceylon – these different ways of reception make it clear how problematic the classification of their dance art was, how little it can be understood with Western categories.

The fact that the Chitrasena Company has been led exclusively by women for a long time is unusual in a strongly patriarchal society like Sri Lanka. The story of successful female leadership and, above all, their artistic work was the focus of our research, an artistic portrait of the dancers and choreographers from three generations who have passed on and asserted their art against enormous social and political opposition.

For the current situation has brought dance to the brink of disappearance: it is pitched as folklore to entertain tourists who want colourful costumes and Bollywood, it is expected to renew itself to connect with Western contemporary forms and be represented in the museum as a contribution to national dance history. Against this background, the question is how this art – with ancient roots in religious ritual – can be kept alive, passed on and communicated to a contemporary audience.

In 2021, we developed a mixed reality installation *Transient Exposure* to make the first research results accessible. Mixed reality here means that different technical

levels overlap for the visitors: sound, 3D scans, some of which are interactive, life size animated digital objects anchored in space and video material, all played via AR glasses. The augmented reality is in turn embedded in a physical scenography so that haptic experiences are possible. For the visitors, a virtual trio of dancers from three generations is created making it possible to experience the historical and social fault lines of dance along the history of the island and its often distorted Western reception.

In the end, the result was an application with interaction possibilities that blur the boundaries between real space and digital content. For us, the decisive factor is that augmented reality in combination with scenography enables kinaesthetic empathy that is anchored in real space. The decisive factor here is that dance can be experienced primarily through the body and one's own movement in space. In this case, through a walk-in archive that can only be experienced by actively moving through it, choosing angles and positions in conjunction with spatial sound.

Transient Exposure was developed within the INKA-Projekt XR\_Unites at the HTW Berlin (developer Christoph Holtmann) and supported by the „national performance network (nnp) – stepping out“.





Videostill rehearsals with the Chitrasena Dance Company, Goethe Institute Colombo, Sri Lanka, Dancer: Thaji Dias, Video: Isabel Robson



Videostill Chitrasena Dance Company in the urban space Colombo, Sri Lanka, Dancer: Thaji Dias, Video: Isabel Robson



Videostill Mixed Reality Installation *Transient Exposure*, Medientheater Humboldt Universität Berlin, Video: Isabel Robson/ Susanne Vincenz



Videostill Showing, Uferstudios Berlin, Dancer: Thaji Dias, Video: Isabel Robson



# THE MOVEMENTS OF CLOUDS AROUND MOUNT FUJI: PHOTOGRAPHED AND FILMED BY MASANAO ABE

HELMUT VÖLTER

Masanao Abe was a Japanese physicist who observed the clouds on Mount Fuji in the 1920s and 1930s using film and photography. Here I would like to present my research on Abe's cloud studies on the one hand and my artistic examination of his material on the other.

Masanao Abe was looking for a research topic after his physics studies in Tokyo and an extended stay with his wife in Europe and the US. He posed a question to his mentor Torahiko Terada. His formulation is remarkable: "What research can I do with the help of film technology?" Terada recommended that Abe devote himself to the study of cloud (motion). This was the right topic for Abe in two ways: first, studies of clouds were the focus of science in many countries around the world, and second, clouds provided the ideal subject for Abe's enthusiasm for cameras and filming.

I came across Abe's research while researching my book *Wolkenstudien* (Leipzig 2011), which tells the story of scientific cloud photography in six chapters. In 2009, I traveled to Tokyo for the first time to visit Abe's family, who willingly allowed me access to the documents and equipment from Abe's cloud research. There had been much international interest among scientists in Abe's research in

the 1930s, but it had been largely forgotten after his death in 1966.

During my work in the field, it became clear to me that Abe's images, or rather his production of images, were the focus of my interest. I wanted to take them seriously in their dual character: on the one hand, they are documents of scientific research, created for a very specific purpose according to precisely determined methods. On the other hand, as aesthetic objects, they go far beyond being merely data of a scientific analysis. The motif of the mountain connects the images to the cultural tradition of artistic representation of Mount Fuji.

The result of my research work is my book *The Movements of Clouds around Mount Fuji: Photographed and Filmed by Masanao Abe* (Leipzig 2016), in which I try to do justice to both the scientific and the aesthetic value of the images, or, in other words, in which I make the images readable in both directions. That is why the book begins not with explanatory text, but with a calendar marking the days on which Abe took pictures. Then come the pictures: reproduced in sober black and white, marked only by Abe's numbering, time and date of shooting, it is left to the reader to look at the precisely captured multiformity of the clouds or to get lost in the landscapes.

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Helmut Völter is visual artist, Berlin.



Book publication Helmut Völter: *The Movement of Clouds around Mount Fuji: Photographed and Filmed by Masanao Abe*, Spector Books, Leipzig 2016

# ARTISTIC RESEARCH – THE SELF-EXPERIMENT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

KATJA MARIE VOIGT

## Introduction

My *artistic research* work is dedicated to recording, notating and mapping specifically spent time in life. In numerous experimental settings I am concerned with a critical examination of existential tensions between autonomy and dependence, control and submission, and power and powerlessness with regard to various questions of a time-based and political nature as well as those based on data and ethics.

In this context, two self-experiments and the corresponding *artistic research* consequences are presented in excerpts: *Alienated for 14 days*<sup>1</sup> with the *World atlas of alienated lifetime*<sup>2</sup> and *Tiny Data* with the *Self-worth card game*.<sup>3</sup>

## Alienated for 14 days

*Alienated for 14 days* is about the special conditions of the possibility of grasping the measure of one's own satisfaction of needs while a stranger prescribes everyday life in the form of an imposed daily structure.

For 14 days I lived squeezed into the time corset determined by a stranger. I fulfilled task by task the given time

1 Original title of the artwork: *14 Tage fremdbestimmt*

2 Original title of the artwork: *Weltatlas fremdbestimmter Lebenszeit*

3 Original title of the artwork: *Kartenspiel zum Selbstwert*

blocks... First an anonymous request was issued. In this request, a stranger was sought to create the set plan per day that I would then live by for two weeks – without regard to personal needs and social obligations. Preset action blocks for the time of the experiment could consist of office time, reading time, walking time, artistic practice time, mealtime (...). Every evening, a new schedule for the next day was delivered, each with newly arranged action blocks to be carried out.<sup>4</sup>

Inevitably, a profound confrontation with questions such as these took place:

How does it feel to live squeezed into a time corset of constraint and control? Can one speak of one's own time when daily actions are (have to be) carried out that a stranger plans without knowledge of one's own personal reality? What does control by others actually mean, how is it different from self-alienation, and how much of it arises in this particular period of time?

This experiment resulted in a *World atlas of alienated lifetime*, consisting of 14 annotated mappings. On it, for example, there are ascending and descending curves and routes, some of which overlap with other structures, that provide information about the amount of stress experienced in carrying out the unfamiliar daily schedules. "Vitality contours"<sup>5</sup> formed during the work, visually recording positive or negative emotional swings. Likewise, the real distances traveled were made available in the form of prints. In this way, a visual link was created between the obligatory tasks by the stranger and the inner experiential space of the executing (controlled) person as he or she entered into the daily plans. In this way, control by others

4 Voigt, Katja Marie 2022. *Weltatlas fremdbestimmter Lebenszeit*. Part of the collections of the Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek.

5 Stern, Daniel N. und Elisabeth Vorspohl 2011. *Ausdrucksformen der Vitalität. Die Erforschung dynamischen Erlebens in Psychotherapie, Entwicklungspsychologie und den Künsten*. Frankfurt am Main: Brandes & Apsel.

and self-experience enter into a visible dialogue and refer to precisely the resulting discrepancies between aspirations for autonomy on the one hand and diverse dependencies on the invisible stranger on the other.

### Tiny Data

The artistic experiment *Tiny Data* is about the examination of manipulative strategies and the evaluation of actual relationships to others. *Tiny Data* examines the current evaluation trend – more precisely: our evaluation society, in which we are constantly asked to give (mostly anonymous) evaluations of strangers – both online or offline, in the form of likes, star ratings.... This phenomenon is also (similar to the previous experiment) about power and invisible dependency structures.

Over a period, I rated myself after each interaction with someone and recorded this rating on index cards in real time. I tracked the degree of autonomy and dependency to each interacting partner and evaluated my performance in the occurring situation. In addition, I rated myself on a psychological scale, the OCEAN score, which is often used in opinion research, or using “the big five”: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism.

Data evaluation and data ethics, in general the relation of statistics to reality as well as the selective construction of reality by the way of data processing by empirical procedures, led to the *Self-worth card game*. This card game represents, so to speak, a physical inversion of so-called empirical evidence. In the game, one evaluates oneself or one’s counterpart on the basis of the OCEAN score and has to use self-esteem stars in a kind of casino situation in order to find out whether a concrete statement by the counterpart contains a self-assessment or an external assessment. In this way, two players can experience the principle of digital evaluation processes in their own bodies, in their inversion as direct communication processes:

thus, in the context of a playful confrontation between two people, on the one hand, the fascination of the power and influence of evaluation strategies in concrete interaction situations can be experienced; on the other hand, a reflection on the potential for manipulation inherent in anonymous data processing is triggered.

### Artistic Research Method

Thus, in my artistic work, one experiment emerges from the previous one. Mistakes in execution lead to inspirations and always new artistic experimental settings. A common thread connects the works with each other. This thread shows up as a thematic one: the examination of phenomena of autonomy and heteronomy in current social contexts. The thread also shows up as a methodological one: in order to find an approach to answers to certain questions, a work develops in a circular dynamic in about five phases: After an interest in a [phenomenon](#) (1), is defined, a setting for a [self-experiment](#) (2) emerges, which leads to its [implementation under controlled conditions](#) (3). During and after the execution, artistic and mental fixations take place as comprehensible processes of these very conditions and as [documentation of the course in its given context](#) (4). For the purpose of [critical reflection](#) (5), artistic evaluations are created with reference to selected theories and approaches from sociology, philosophy, depth psychology and art theory, paired with graphic and typographic means. Critical linguistic interpretations of the experiments with special consideration of their specific contexts thus establish references to the current world of life. Recipients can read about this as an artistic consequence in the *World atlas of alienated lifetime* or experience it for themselves in the *Kartenspiel zum Selbstwert*.

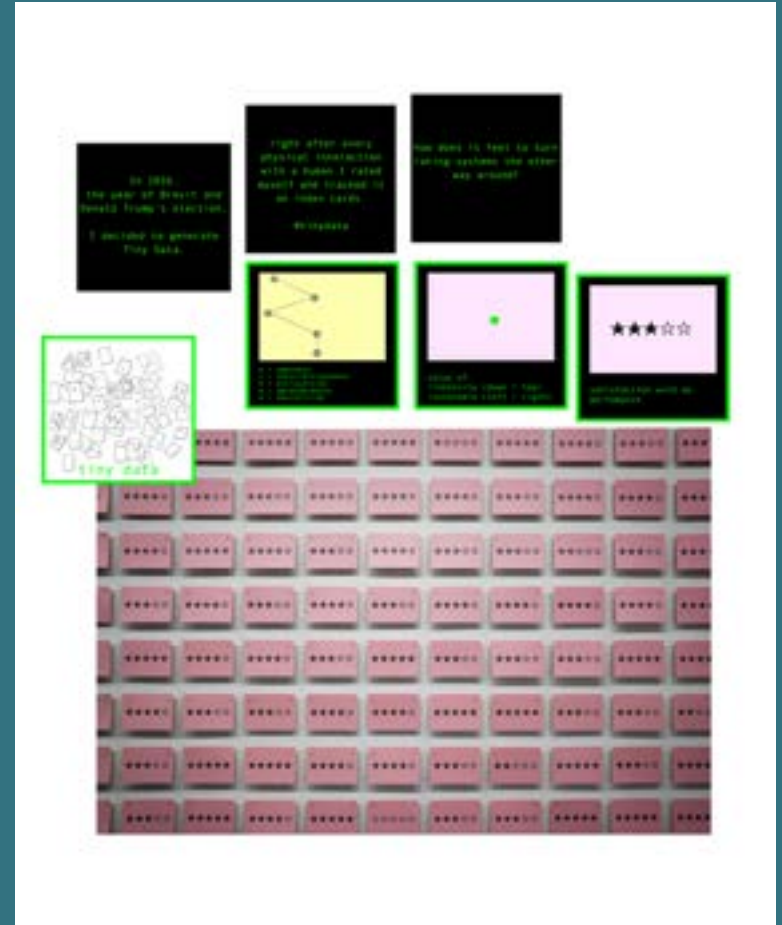
With my artistic works, I always enter into theoretical or thought processes. Perhaps I use artistic means

to play ping pong between reflection and action, between theory and practice, and thus escape the pressure of deducing reality from objectively collected empirical data? While placing myself as a sensual test object, I am less interested in verifying or falsifying a hypothesis. Instead, I pursue debates that are hidden in my art and try to make contributions to already existing socio-critical discourses with artistic and analytical means.

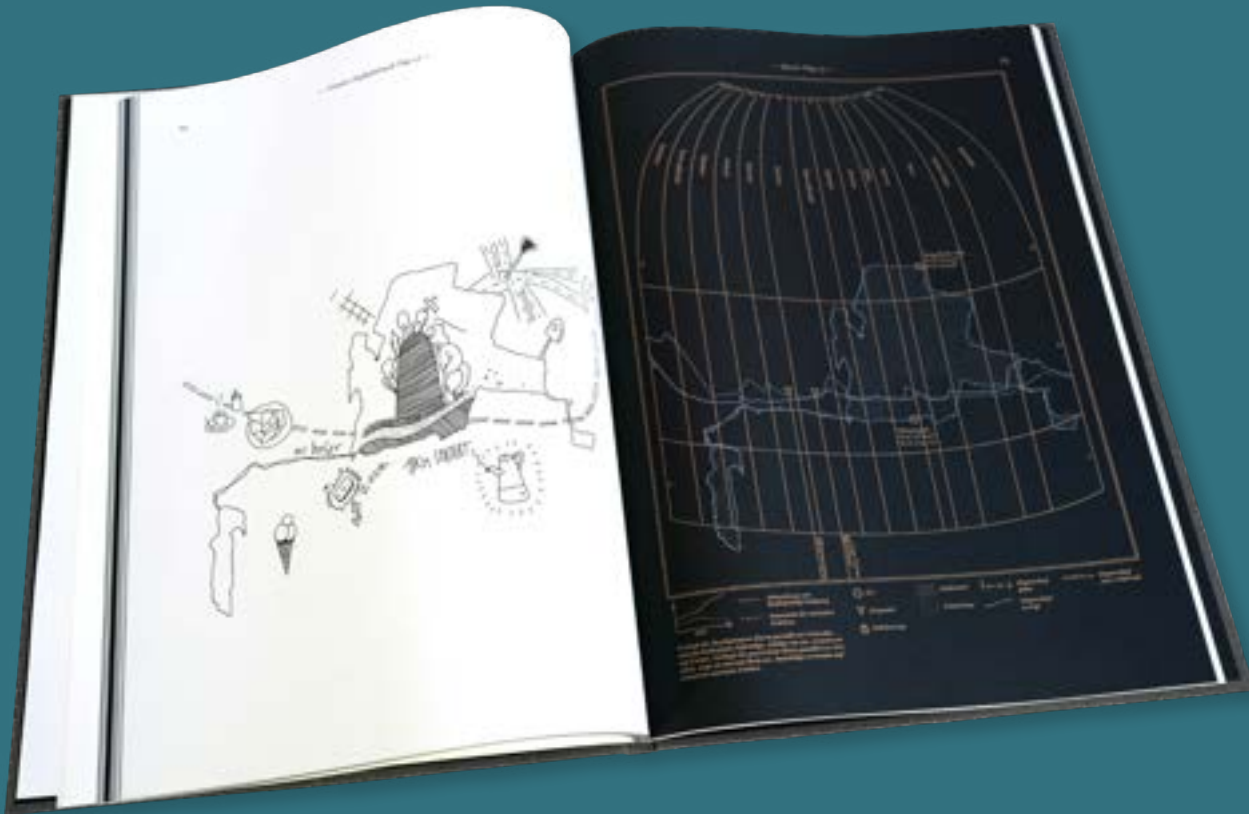




Katja Marie Voigt:  
*Self-worth card game*,  
photo: Katja Marie Voigt



Katja Marie Voigt,  
*Tiny Data Komposition*,  
photo: Katja Marie Voigt



Katja Marie Voigt: *World atlas*,  
photo: Katja Marie Voigt



WORKSHOPS

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## I ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND PERCEPTION

LED BY: EMANUEL MATHIAS

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## II ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

LED BY: KERSTIN ERGENZINGER

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## III WRITING AS ART AND RESEARCH

LED BY: KERSTIN HOF

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## IV ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND ART EDUCATION

LED BY: ANDREAS BRENNE

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## V ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND ARCHIVE/RESEARCH

LED BY: ANTJE SEEGER

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## VI ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND NATURAL SCIENCES

LED BY: ASAD RAZA, KARL-HEINZ FEGER  
UND GWENDOLIN KREMER

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7 JULY 2022



## ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND PERCEPTION

LED BY: EMANUEL MATHIAS

A research expedition in the nearby Senkgarten of the TU Dresden, in the footsteps of the ape researcher, Emanuel Mathias, as a hybrid of artist, researcher and primate, tested different methodological approaches of artistic and scientific forms of observation with the workshop participants in an imaginative field research situation.

Fourteen workshop participants, together with the workshop leader Emanuel Mathias, embarked on a research expedition in the Senkgarten with the aim of perceptually experiencing the imaginary traces of primates and primatologists. It played an important role that different forms of observation were tested in this fictitious situation. These took the form of scientific methods from primate research and different observation tools. The workshop consisted of having the participants make precise observations in a constant state of overload by simultaneously note-taking, photographing, filming, and drawing these observations. In the subsequent evaluation, the individual approaches and perspectives from the observation experience were shared and discussed.

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Emanuel Mathias is visual artist, Leipzig.



# ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

LED BY: KERSTIN ERGENZINGER

## Playing Grounds – Spinning Top[ic]s

As a starting point for the practice-based workshop *Artistic Research and Technology I* I have chosen a family of self-developed electromagnetic musical spinning top instruments.

The instruments are part of the studio and research practice of the Sono-Choreographic-Collective, in which I collaborate with musician and composer Bnaya Halperin-Kaddari and dancer and writer Kiran Kumar. We see ourselves as collectives for transdisciplinary art and research. Focusing on non-ocular domains, we develop new musical and somatic research tools as well as interdisciplinary modes of choreography and performance and related forms of storytelling.

The discs of the spinning tops, studded with magnets, generate spinning magnetic fields. These are picked up with copper coils and their movements sonified. Audible are the permanently changing frequencies of the rotational speed of the individual gyroscopes, which are tuned in different intervals by different numbers and rhythms of the attached magnets. In addition, all other kinetic events and properties affect the sound synthesis and its understanding. The result is an expanded perception of sound. One hears what one generates and observes at the same time, combined with one's own body perception of gravity and balance.

These evolved toys are artistic, musical and kinetic as well as research instruments that revolve around the thematic complex of nonlinearity.

Gyroscopes powered by our bodies are directly connected to the energy and momentum of the movement we give them. We can work in different ways to optimize the technology of both the gyroscopes and our ability to play; at the same time, only the gyroscopes once spinning determine the course of the movements that take place.

These electromagnetic and musical gyroscopes embody, address, and play very directly and transparently with physical principles such as gravity, centrifugal and centripetal force, induction, and acoustics.

I chose them for this workshop because they were created in a continuous exchange between artistic, playful practice as well as technical development and refinement of prototypes and learning, derived from *artistic research* and conceptual development from this process. In the course of the workshop, I tried to make this development tangible and comprehensible step by step for the participants without anticipating too much.

After a short introduction and step-by-step demonstration of the instruments in dialogue with the participants, we spent most of the time playing and practicing with the different gyroscopes together. During this time there was an animated exchange about various feedbacks between practice and theory, high and low tech, play and art. At the end of the workshop, I asked all participants to write selected thoughts and experiences in circular form on prepared round paper gyroscope sheets for joint reflection. We then read these to each other while slowly spinning them on a top.

[www.nodegree.de/](http://www.nodegree.de/)

<https://sonochoreographic.net/>

<https://herri.org.za/4/sono-choreographic-collective/>



## WRITING AS ART AND RESEARCH

LED BY: KERSTIN HOF



The workshop invited to write by hand in different formats, settings and variations. Research questions have been: how do format, time and intentionality affect writing, movement, content and the text production process?

The selected writing impulses can be located in the cultural history of writing and book production–Codex–Palimpsest–and methodologically in the text production process ‘Freewriting–automatic writing–Écriture automatique–associative writing–Stream of Consciousness’, as well as in literary and artistic knowledge of forms–Triptychon–.

The full-bodiedness of writing–Embodiment–can be experienced–the whole body writes. Every form is preceded by a movement. The movement makes the inner visible through the trace of writing, the silent speaking, thinking, feeling, seeing pictures, smelling, tasting, hearing–in the ‘inner studio’.<sup>1</sup>

In the overwritings on the paper–palimpsest–neuronal overwriting movements of the brain are depicted, which processes external impressions in sequences.

All three ‘techniques’ can be transferred and applied to personal and social development and change processes. There is a long experience in using poetic-artistic

<sup>1</sup> *Manifest, Vol. I – Schreiben als gesellschaftlich und gesundheitlich relevante Kunst*, in: Hof, Kerstin (ed.) (2020). *Dreierlei Mut. Collagen zur Relevanz von Poesie, Literatur und Schreiben in Gesellschaft & Gesundheit*. Hamburg, Berlin, Potsdam. pp.138–40

methodologies in counseling, supervision and management consulting.

### Experimental Setup 'Handwriting meets Palimpsest meets Triptychon'

I

10 minutes: Freewriting, Écriture automatique, Rapid Writing, Associative writing linear, Format choice A5  
10 minutes Freewriting Palimpsest A5 und Miniature

II

10 minutes: Freewriting, Écriture automatique, Rapid Writing, Associative writing linear, Format choice A2  
10 minutes Freewriting Palimpsest A2 and Miniature

III

10 Minuten: Freewriting, Écriture automatique, Rapid Writing, Associative writing linear, Format choice A0 Oversize format  
10 Minuten Freewriting Palimpsest A0 Oversize format and Miniature  
Interchange . Reflection . Discussion  
Material: formatted papers, graphite pencils, wax crayons, masking tape

02 // for a write in which  
the brain by the hand thanks.

03 // for a write as  
aesthetic resonance.

12 // for a writing as performance  
in the emblematic.

14 // for an intermedial writing that is  
not committed to semantics alone,  
but also the kinetic, acoustic, digital

and visual  
dimensions of language and  
non-linear thinking.

[www.schreibzeit.de](http://www.schreibzeit.de)

[www.arts-and-social-change.de/about-us/team/profil-prof-kerstin-hof/](http://www.arts-and-social-change.de/about-us/team/profil-prof-kerstin-hof/)

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Prof. Kerstin Hof is Professor of Art and Society  
[emphasis on poetry], MSH Hamburg.

# ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND ART EDUCATION

LED BY: ANDREAS BRENNE



The subject of the workshop was an examination of the field of artistic and aesthetic research from the perspective of art education. This perspective is based on an understanding that regards artistic practices not only in terms of their epistemic dimension, but also as an instrument of participatory and critical social practice. Thus, in the sense of Sibylle Peters, it is about the “research of all”. After a theoretical grounding from a conceptual and historical perspective, it was discussed in the context of a concrete case study to what extent an *artistic research* perspective is suitable for deriving new perspectives for art education.

## Artistic Research Revisited

I would like to point out a field of research that has not only produced an abundance of anthologies and conferences but has also touched art education and art didactics. It is a field of research that – and this should still be considered – in its openness could also impulsively influence teaching research and open up a broader perspective: *artistic research*, or also *aesthetic research* – or as Sibylle Peters defines it: the research of all.

Not only since the expansion of the concept of art have practices developed in the border area of art and science that are characterized by a research-oriented approach and have recently been characterized by the term *artistic/aesthetic research*. This is not only about a holistic orientation of research and about heuristics through



representation, but always also about possibilities of social participation in knowledge processes or in the production of knowledge. This is a tradition that has been used in ethnographic settings for many years. Bruno Latour expressed this in a text from 1998 (*From the World of Science to the World of Research?*) as follows: “to the extent that the belief in a science that can develop higher-level solutions to the most diverse problems precisely by means of its abstraction is dwindling, the expertise of each individual member of society is potentially becoming increasingly important”.<sup>1</sup> Taking this seriously, the arts of the present open up their own space of knowledge, action, and experience, which can also become productive in a scientific and social context.

*Artistic research* is a term that is communicated in many different forms and that must be considered in a differentiated way in terms of terminology and content, e.g., *artistic research*, *aesthetic research*, *art-based research*, *artistic field research*. Many terms and connotations originate from art, art science, but also from art education. *Artistic research* has defined since the 2000s an interdisciplinary field between art and academics. It is about collaborative procedures of knowledge generation in which art is described as an epistemically relevant quantity. Since the 2010s, this discourse has increasingly been conducted at art colleges and universities and has been institutionalized, e.g. in doctoral programs such as the artistic doctorate (Weimar, Hamburg, Basel, Bern). There are also adequate funding sources in Austria and Switzerland. As an instrument that is directly inscribed in academic projects and develops methodological as well as content-related relevance, *artistic research* focuses on artistic procedures that, analogous to the methods of the academic fields, generate knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> Peters, Sibylle: *Das Forschen aller. Artistic Research als Wissensproduktion zwischen Kunst, Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft*. Bielefeld 2013. p. 12

Art and science are thus not opposites but share an interest in gaining and increasing knowledge.

## 1. Artistic Research in the Context of Researching (Art) Institutions

The first theories of art as research were developed by the artist Serge Stauffer, co-founder of the F+F School for Experimental Design in Zurich, starting in the 1960s. In doing so, he took up experimental investigations by, for example, Alan Kaprow or the Situationists, focusing primarily on social space and related social practices. The investigations of the Swiss architecture and design theorist Lucius Burckhardt, which were carried out in Ulm, Dortmund and Kassel, can be classified as similarly structured. This art-analogous social research lives on to this day.

In Austria, *artistic research* has been considered suitable for academic research in the context of state academic funding since 2002, so that funding guidelines have been developed, e.g. the socially oriented and participatory program *Sparkling Science*.

In 2008, the Berlin Institute for Artistic Research (led by Julian Klein) was founded. Furthermore, there is the Society for Artistic Research, which also publishes the internet journal *Journal for Artistic Research*. The IKF Potsdam explores film-artistic formats of academic generation of knowledge and cooperates with supra-regional institutions, artists and academics.

In 2016, the European League of the Institutes of the Arts (ELIA) developed an internationally ratified program for artistic doctorates at art universities.

In 2018, the Society for Artistic Research in the Federal Republic of Germany (GKFD) was founded as a federal association of all institutions and independent individuals involved in *artistic research* in Germany. In 2021, the German Council of Science and Humanities



recommended that art universities introduce a doctoral degree that identifies degrees in *artistic research*.

## 2. What is Artistic Research?

In the last two decades, a variety of new forms of artistic work have emerged as *artistic research* – collaborative formats, living archives, documentary performances and many other strategies of knowledge generation. A wide variety of research methods have been taken and transferred into artistic fields: research, experimentation, exploration, intervention, analysis, critical reflection, fieldwork, action research, working with (everyday) experts, etc.

This kind of research is self-referential and deconstructs common perceptions. Unusual references and connections between different fields of knowledge and research methods are created. A central role is played by the representation and presentation (making tangible, updating, performing, exhibiting, publicising, etc.) of findings; it undermines the difference between production and presentation of temporary knowledge; the corporeal, the material, the media-based, as well as their use are reflected and reproduced.

*Artistic research* thus has the potential to combine the most diverse forms of knowledge (including embodied/tacit knowledge, minority knowledge, experiential knowledge) in research processes and to make their results productive.

*Artistic research* is practice-oriented basic research.

**Conclusion:** considering all this, the question arises as to why *artistic research* is not used as an instrument of sustainable teacher education and has not long since become a major topic in subject didactic research. Why not use the often-described potentials here as well? Why not involve those being researched – the students or even the teachers – collaboratively in the production? Why not

visualize desiderata and transfer them performatively? Why not use a culture of *aesthetic* and *artistic research* to create and process lifeworld contexts and research them with just such means? All these aspects can only be posed here as questions. The concrete forms as well as perspectives of establishing *artistic research* are the subject of this conference. Nevertheless, I would like to refer to the efforts of the Kassel educational academic Olaf Burows in the context of an appreciative and sustainable school development as a model of a participatory and imaginative practice that can make school a visionary place for all actors.

## ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND ARCHIVE/RESEARCH

LED BY: ANTJE SEEGER

The workshop *Artistic Research and Archive/Research* took place on 7 July 2022 from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm in the historical dye collection at the TU Dresden as well as in an adjacent lecture hall. The focus was on the artistic handling of research data. Using the example of the historical dye collection, the intention was to draw network graphics which were developed from data of the collection. The aim was to have participants get not only an insight into the fascinating world of the dye collection as an archive, but also to learn something about collecting and archiving data and structuring and presenting complex research results.

The participants met shortly before the workshop started and walked together to the historical dye collection of the TU Dresden. Here they received an introduction to the structure and history of the collection in the first 45 minutes by Prof. Dr. Hartmann.

In the second part of the workshop, Antje Seeger introduced participants to the Graph Commons software, including a brief introduction into how the program works. Based on six tasks and in four small groups, they then created various small network graphics from collection data on their own laptops. For this purpose, they were provided with a data set previously prepared by Antje Seeger. Depending on their previous knowledge and understanding, the participants were able to solve these tasks. At the end of the workshop, the participants received further



links on the topic of data processing using network analysis and network graphics.

Florian Cramer

**notes as a participant of the workshop:**

The methodology of social graph recording and computer visualization brings this *artistic research* project in very close neighborhood to the digital humanities where similar, or the same, tools and visualization techniques are being used.

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Antje Seeger is visual artist, Dresden.

## ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND NATURAL SCIENCES

LED BY: ASAD RAZA, KARL-HEINZ FEGER  
AND GWENDOLIN KREMER

Together with the caretakers of Asad Raza's artistic installations as part of the group show *Down to Earth. Art and Soil Science in Dialogue* and Prof. Karl-Heinz Feger, Chair of Site Ecology and Plant Nutrition, at the Institute of Soil Science and Site Ecology of the Department of Forest Sciences of the TUD in Tharandt, the participants examined various soils for grain size, texture, plasticity, lubricity and roughness using the "finger test". In the process, "Neo-Soil" was also produced with sand, compost and various source soils. Central to Asad Raza's artistic practice is a dialogue-based idea of mediation and exchange.

Asad Raza's workshop took place within the framework of the exhibition *Down to Earth. Art and Soil Science in Dialogue* with works by Betty Beier, Anne Carnein, Veronika Pfaffinger and Asad Raza, which was shown in the University's Gallery of the Office for Academic Heritage (Kustodie) in the Görges-Bau, TU Dresden, from May to July 2022. The symposium was also held in the university's exhibition rooms.

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Azad Raza is a conceptual artist based in Berlin and New York City.

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Prof. Dr. Karl-Heinz Feger is Professor of Site Ecology and Plant Nutrition, TU Dresden.

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Gwendolin Kremer is Curatorial Head of the University Gallery, Office for Academic Heritage, TU Dresden.





PODIUM DISCUSSION

ARTISTIC RESEARCH:  
PROSPECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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PARTICIPANTS

GRIT RUHLAND

ROBERT VERCH

CHRISTIAN SERY

DIRK DOBIEY

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MODERATION

CONSTANZE PERES

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7 JULY 2022



## ARTISTIC RESEARCH: PROSPECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

by Till Ansgar Baumhauer

At the suggestion of the moderator, the panel discussion began with a round in which the participants presented their relationship to *artistic research* and their position in the discourse. Grit Ruhland referred to the educational policy problem in Saxony that artistic doctorates were not yet anchored in the Higher Education Act. As chairwoman of the Landesverband Bildende Kunst Sachsen, she also sees herself as an agent for new artistic fields of work. Grit Ruhland outlined her work in terms of the interaction between art and scientific themes, mining consequences and the nuclear industry. Robert Verch outlined his work for the Club Solitär, which sees art in the context of social and economic-scientific issues. He discussed the Funken Akademie, which with *artistic research* in connection with the field of high technology was to be institutionally initiated in Chemnitz, where otherwise no aesthetic-practical research has taken place in the academic field. Christian Sery, as a visual artist and engineer from the field of structural engineering, has already carried out transdisciplinary projects between art and science at the HfBK Dresden. He sees *artistic research* as a broad field that has its roots in art history and is characterized by interdisciplinarity, debate and openness. As a teacher, he wants to open up new fields of practice in cooperation with partner institutions, which have relevance in a contemporary digitalized reality and could become effective in curricular aspects of artistic education. Dirk Dobiéy comes from a management background in the field of information technology. He is

co-founder of Age of Artists, where networks between art and business are formed and artistic practice is to be situated in other contexts in order to promote further social development that aims at the successful shaping of reality on various levels. To this end, Dobiéy spent years talking to artists and interviewing them about their practice before founding the Age of Artists company. Constanze Peres as moderator reported on her experiences with projects between art and philosophy and outlined a project by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, where texts by Leibniz were made the basis of artistic processes.

In a first round of questions, Peres asked about the character of *artistic research*, as an individual or group project, about its inherent research concept and responsibilities in group work processes. Christian Sery answered that cooperative practice was a current trend in art, but in view of the digital availability of information, *artistic research* was also possible on its own, provided that reflexive discourse nevertheless takes place. Dirk Dobiéy discussed how he understood research as an always collaborative process in which the individual was subordinated. Grit Ruhland, on the other hand, referred to the art community as a discursive space, against the background of which *artistic research* can also take place without group reference. Finally, Robert Verch drew a picture of group processes in which the artistic gaze enriched the collaborative practice with the academic actors and in which it was more about the development of (thought) material than about art objects.

In the next round it was discussed whether *artistic research* can rather be situated in protected spaces or in public. Grit Ruhland located the *artistic researcher* as a participant observer in rather protected constellations, actively participating in the research. The discussion circled back to Michael Hiltbrunner's morning keynote and

the relationship between what is archived and the demonstrability of *artistic research*; it was asked whether there is a clear boundary between *artistic research* and art practice in general. Constanze Peres noted that art was, after all, always cognitive. The audience commented that Hiltbrunner was not concerned with archiving as such, but with a concept of art that entered discourse and took a look at itself in the exchange between disciplines. In this way, it becomes connectable and does not conceal itself.

Building on this, the moderator asked whether *artistic research* should test itself in exchange with artists. To this, Ruhland replied that there was not a comprehensive academic field as such, but rather varying criteria depending on the field. She emphasized that for artists, it was difficult to face these (often not communicated) criteria, such as unambiguity or reproducibility. And, of course, not every artistic practice is also *artistic research*.

Ms. Peres asked Robert Verch: How should we deal with the different languages of art and high technology? Where do the language boundaries lie, and does this understanding lead to an additional level of practice between art and science? Verch emphasized that it was precisely this discourse within the event that was essential in cooperative processes at eye level; in these situations, the essential steps were taken together. Dirk Dobiéy added that this very process of making was itself a negotiation of semantics, of empiricism and theory building. He stated that it was important to allow for the playful and the non-linear, because both made possible the encounter and learning experience in the communal, which could lead to shaping and change.

Afterwards, Ms. Peres recalled the lecture by Esmeralda Conde Ruiz, who had emphasized the empty space as a potential in which one did not yet know what one wanted. She asked how this could be communicated, in language or the symbol system of the body. Dirk Dobiéy

emphasized the importance of nonverbal communication; from the audience, Gwendolin Kremer stressed that in the context of a processual, collaborative approach, language must always be reconciled, and its categories and boundaries negotiated, even within one's own discipline. For academics, too, perception was a central aspect; in the case of artists, a speculative moment was added that was also interesting for cooperating academics. Grit Ruhland emphasized the productivity of non-verbal forms of expression, which differed according to discipline (for example ethnology and natural sciences). In art, language was not only a means to an end, but also a creative medium of expression, which required training and awareness in exchange. Christian Sery then referred to aspects of a language problem also in the field of cybernetics between man and machine.

The audience asked to what extent body knowledge that cannot be spoken about also played a role in the academic and scientific field. An example could be the Japanese researcher presented by Helmut Völter. Such ways of working opened up free spaces which, as resonance spaces, could neither be verbalized nor archived. Constanze Peres underlined this by stressing that what was archived could only be a residuum of former wealth that could be comprehensively documented, and in turn led to imagination.

From the audience, Alexandra Hopf criticized the lack of recognition for artistic language in the academic context. She pointed out that *artistic research* offered an opportunity to question and break up hierarchies of verbalisation.

The moderator took this as an opportunity to ask about another dimension of language, the poetic and mysterious, in which, as in all art, there always remains an unanalysable residue. Christian Sery agreed. Robert Verch pointed to the possibility of artistic practice to take a

holistic perspective in the context of work with the scientific and academic field, thus bridging the gap between different research concepts and enabling knowledge production at eye level.

With a reference to the neurosciences and the incredible possibilities that continue to arise in the interdisciplinary field from a reflection on brain functions, Constanze Peres concluded the discussion round.

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Dr. Grit Ruhland is visual artist, LBK Sachsen e. V., Leipzig/Dresden.

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Robert Verch is visual artist, Klub Solitaer, Chemnitz.

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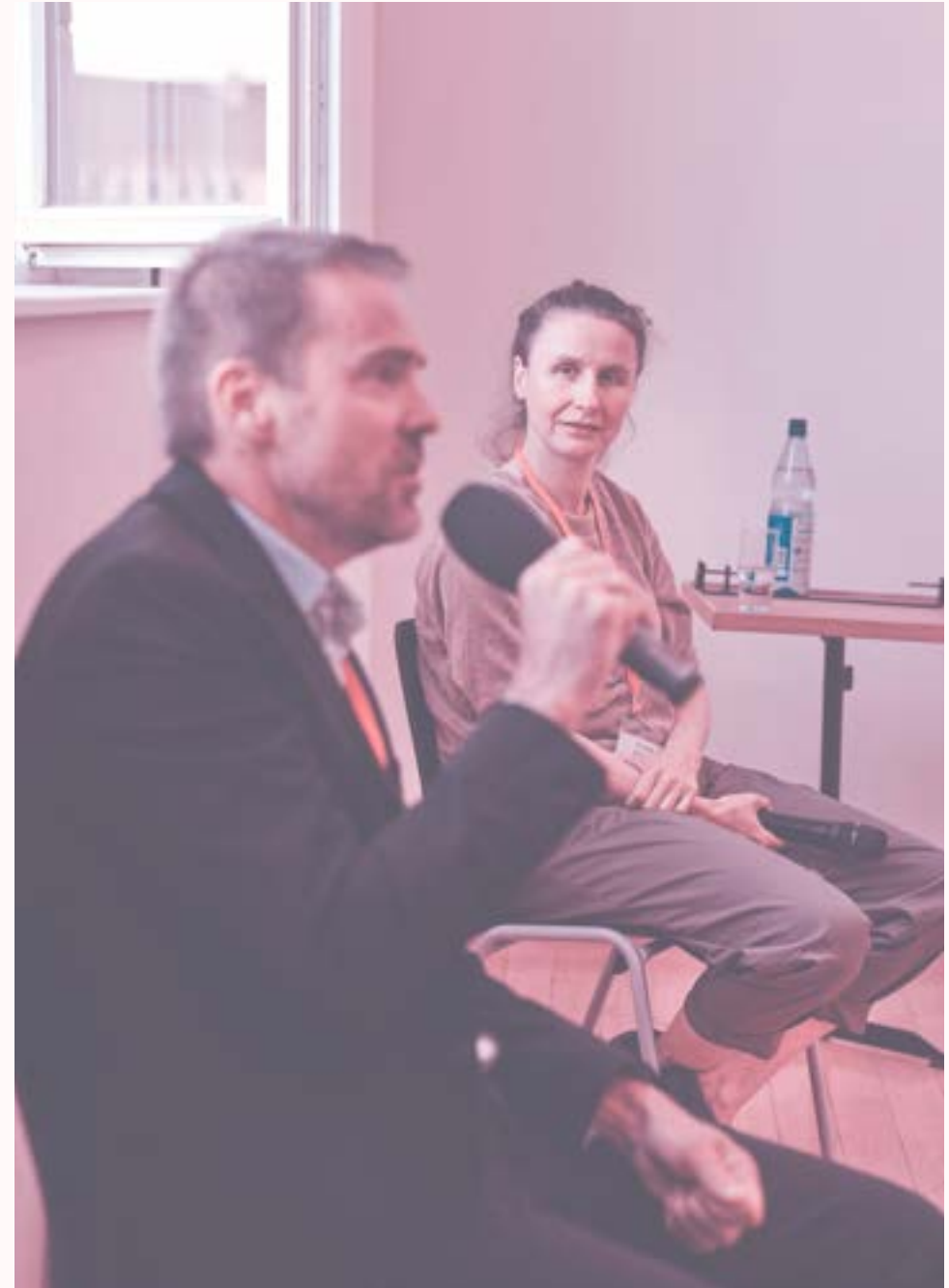
Prof. Christian Sery is Professor of Interdisciplinary and Experimental Painting, HfBK Dresden.

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Dirk Dobiey is co-founder of Age of Artists, Nossen.

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Prof. Dr. Constanze Peres is Professor of Philosophy/Aesthetics, HfBK Dresden.











# **INTER NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**8 JULY 2022**



# PANEL I ARTISTIC METHODOLOGIES

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LECTURES

## FRAGILE FORMATIONS — ARTISTIC ACTION AS A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

ALEXANDRA HOPF

## ARTISTIC RESEARCH: POSSIBILITIES FOR 3RD CYCLE PROGRAMMES ACROSS EUROPE

JOHN BUTLER

## ARTISTIC RESEARCH AS ECCENTRIC RESEARCH

AMALIA BARBOZA

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MODERATION  
MICHAEL HILTBRUNNER

8 JULY 2022

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ALEXANDRA HOPF

# FRAGILE FORMATIONS — ARTISTIC PRACTISE AS A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

by Till Ansgar Baumhauer

You can't answer the question, you can only demonstrate it.<sup>1</sup>

The lecture *Fragile Formations – Artistic Practise as a Source of Knowledge* focused on the exhibition *fragile* realized by students of the postgraduate course in art therapy at the HfBK Dresden which was shown parallel to the symposium and conference on *artistic research*. The works on display made the perspectives and strategies of *artistic research* comprehensible and anchored them theoretically. They arose from an artistic relationship of practicing and questioning and referred to being fragile as an experience of social change during the Covid crisis and the current war in Ukraine, in the art therapy context in which people are encountered in crises, but also as students' personal experiences.

The term "formation" in the title of the lecture refers to form as a provisional result of practise, perception, movement and bodily reference that can always be re-shaped.

<sup>1</sup> Matt, Mullican (2008): *A drawing translates the way of thinking. Drawing papers*. Number 82. New York: The drawing center. p. 7. [https://issuu.com/drawingcenter/docs/drawingpapers82\\_mullican](https://issuu.com/drawingcenter/docs/drawingpapers82_mullican): access 25.09.2022.



The works and poetic texts enabled visitors to participate in the students' exploratory research, ways of knowing, and insights, which they carried out with the help of selected materials such as newsprint and tracing paper, pencils, ink, gesso, needle and black thread.

Formal and aesthetic references were established through common materials, which were condensed into a methodological vocabulary. Individual perception and artistic action with material form the basis of this exploratory process. The exploration led from body and sense references, from links of implicit knowledge and its recognition to unexpected, unique processes and works.

Reducing the material produced a friction that deepened the engagement with the topic and created a reference between the works but also a re-enactment of and discourse with the audience.

In dealing with the material, the students exposed themselves to the openness of the results just as much as the viewers were set into an inner motion by the presentation of the works and texts. What emerges through perception, experience and material is the immediate bodily-aesthetic reference of actors (students) and recipients (viewers).

JOHN BUTLER

## ARTISTIC RESEARCH: POSSIBILITIES FOR 3RD CYCLE PROGRAMS ACROSS EUROPE

by Till Ansgar Baumhauer

In his lecture, John Butler presented an institutional perspective on the possibilities of postgraduate studies in the field of *artistic research*. His reflections were based on two exemplary university projects closely related to his professional activities which he had initiated or in which he had participated over the years.

After serving as head of the Birmingham School of Art and as Director of Research at the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design, Butler today is the CEO of EQ-Arts, an independent agency for quality assurance and enhancement in the field of artistic academic practice.

As a first example, the speaker introduced the Center for Artistic Research (CFAR) doctoral school at the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design at Birmingham City University. The doctoral school is made up of five research centers with ten specializations in which 34 PhD students are currently enrolled. The research specializations were developed according to the researchers' areas of interest and were transdisciplinary in nature, with a focus on collaborative practice and the exchange with stakeholders outside the academy. Since an important topic in *artistic research* is externalization through non-linguistic media, visibility was ensured through specially established galleries as well as archives, but also through peer-reviewed publications. Participation in a regional



university consortium reinforced the importance of the doctoral school to the institution and the city.

Butler's second example was the EQ-Arts-supported Creator Doctus project realized from 2018 to 2021, in which seven international art institutions of higher education developed new models for *artistic research* that followed the guidelines of European standards while responding to their respective national legislation. Together, they discussed and developed issues of selection, methodologies, training for students, teachers and supervisors, development of a research environment, and quality assessment and dissemination of results. The Creator Doctus claims to be suitable for all fields of artistic and design practice and to be transdisciplinary and oriented towards intrinsic methods. However, it aims not to form an antithesis to scientific research but instead to be a model oriented towards the specifics of artistic practice.



AMALIA BARBOZA

## ARTISTIC RESEARCH AS ECCENTRIC RESEARCH

by Till Ansgar Baumhauer

The lecture began with a biographical recollection about the time when Amalia Barboza studied at the HfBK Dresden, the art academy where the conference took place. In the mid-1990s she experienced the time shortly after the wall fell when several professors from East Germany were still teaching at the University and an increasing number of professors were arriving from the West. Barboza stressed that reflecting on *artistic research* today require reflecting on the diversity of artistic and research approaches. She explained that many of the approaches from the Eastern Bloc had been forgotten as art from the West was established. She emphasized that this historical view of the diversity of *artistic research* is central to thinking about this field.

After this introduction, Barboza presented her view of *artistic research* through theoretical reflection and the example of her own work. For her approach, she uses the term “eccentric research” to deal experimentally with the diversity of disciplinary approaches and to position her own work in a dynamic relationship to other disciplines such as sociology and cultural studies.

To describe eccentricity as a state of being off-centre, Barboza referred to the concept of “ostranenie”, introduced in 1916 by the Russian formalist Viktor Šklovskij. The principle of “ostranenie” is to make the familiar unfamiliar



through displacement. The resulting effect of strangeness is intended to enable the audience to question the familiar and make new perceptions possible. Even the term “artistic research” works with this “ostranenie”, as the classical concept of research is repeatedly questioned anew in *artistic research practice*.

Amalia Barboza pointed to Don Quixote de la Mancha as a well-known example of an eccentric. Cervantes’s character questions everyday life through the perspective of literature and sets off on an adventure that questions the boundaries of art and life (as well as past, present and future). Quixote’s actions are performances and negotiations between literature, imagination and reality, which initially, in Cervantes’s first book, are met with incomprehension. In his second book, however, Don Quixote encounters an audience that already knows him and builds a stage for him to perform on. His deeds become a powerless spectacle in the negotiating space between art, fantasy and life. Here, Barboza posed the question of whether art, as eccentric research, only retains its power to act if it is not completely turned into a spectacle, but retains its own space of action to enable shifts between worlds (art and life) and times (past and future).

Barboza then presented her own work, in which she analyses and produces exemplary shifts between art and life. In her book „Im Rampenlicht. Expeditionen in die Ästhetik des Alltags (In the Limelight. Journeys through the Aesthetics of Everyday Life)”, she presents three projects that play with the separation between everyday life and art (Dachwohnung/Attic Apartment), front and backstage (Pause/Interval) and work and leisure (Casual Fridays). Her last project *Brazil on the Main* is also based on a shifting of boundaries between sociological and *artistic research*, between distance and approach to the object of research.

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Prof. Dr. Amalia Barboza is Professor of Artistic Research,  
Linz University of the Arts.

## PANEL I – ARTISTIC METHODOLOGIES

by Till Ansgar Baumhauer

After three extremely different presentations, according to the moderator, it seemed difficult to transition to methodologies. While Alexandra Hopf had spoken about the perspective of healing and John Butler had discussed building structures and strengthening the field of *artistic research*, Amalia Barboza had referred to sociological, poetic and field research strategies.

Hiltbrunner asked all three speakers why they were personally involved in the field of *artistic research*. Alexandra Hopf highlighted her goal to empower people from within artistic practice and to enable them to autonomously and individually enter into aesthetic resonance with the world surrounding us. Amalia Barboza emphasized that in her engagement with artistic production, social contexts were referred to and thus, in the form of socially engaged interaction, transformative processes were initiated. John Butler, on the other hand, expressed that his approach to *artistic research* from multiple perspectives (as a practitioner, but also a manager) has always been driven by working with communities. It is his goal, he said, also in cooperation with health institutions and other social entities, to get students to use their creativity for socially engaged practice; in doing so, methodologies must always be re-thought.

Michael Hiltbrunner emphasized this need for individual solutions. He then turned to Amalia Barboza with the question of the tension between East and West in the HfBK of the late 1990s. Barboza emphasized the existence of the

still unresolved conflict and referred to Grit Ruhland, who, as deputy chairwoman of the Landesverband Bildende Kunst Sachsen, described the problematic nature of the paradigm shift in the art scene of the former GDR brought about by the reunification process, pointing to the large number of abruptly broken artistic careers.

Finally, the audience posed a question regarding the current existence of such a multitude of discourses on *artistic-research* practice and its institutionalization. Is there an underlying larger context or consensus? In response, Hopf pointed to the need for research from within the practice in order to provide practice-based research alongside quantitative and qualitative research in art therapy. Barboza emphasized the need for research that doesn't fit within the canon in favor of a space for experimentation. Butler pointed out that even after 28 years, the acceptance of *artistic research* in a political context is still pending.

At the end of the discussion, Till Ansgar Baumhauer noted that the three speakers precisely reflected the constellation of the HfBK project EU4ART\_*differences*: on the one hand, to question the institution with the view of current and former students, on the other hand, to find new, custom-fit solutions for the implementation of *artistic research* and, last but not least, to form alliances between the researching practices within the institution beyond the framework of fine arts.





PANEL II  
ARTISTIC AND ACADEMIC RESEARCH  
AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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PARTICIPANTS

TAL ADLER

ANTRA PRIEDE

FLORIAN CRAMER

KATHERINE BEHAR

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MODERATION

TILL ANSGAR BAUMHAUER

---

8 JULY 2022



## PANEL II – ARTISTIC AND ACADEMIC RESEARCH AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

by Till Ansgar Baumhauer

How and to what extent can *artistic research* take place at institutions of higher education? What tools does it use and what consequences does it have? What are its conditions in different national contexts? What are the expectations of external stakeholders and the institutions themselves? These questions shaped the first discussion panel of the afternoon. Actors with very different profiles and working backgrounds were invited.

As an introduction, the moderator asked the four panellists to briefly introduce themselves and their work.

Tal Adler focused on the practitioner's view of the infrastructure and policies of *artistic research* in educational institutions. He compared his activities at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna with his later work for Humboldt University and the Humboldt Forum. The focus point of his presentation was the possibility for artists to earn money with their practice outside the art market and to contribute to the creation of alternative fields of activity and employment opportunities for artists. With a Horizon2020-funded project, he applied for what was essentially an artistic project for a non-artistic area of research. The question is not what to call the activity, but how to do it.

Antra Priede emphasized the ability of *artistic research* to communicate with society and saw a close relationship

between artistic and curatorial practice. Her central themes were the question of what is hidden behind images (in general, not only in a two-dimensional context), how the body interacts with them, for example through feelings and surprise, how inspiration can be formulated and how new knowledge can emerge through curating. In this context, she emphasized the democratic nature of the experiential process in *artistic research* and made the case for a “poetry of bureaucracy” and more courage to face bureaucratic challenges.

Florian Cramer outlined the situation of artistic educational institutions and thus *artistic research* in the Netherlands. In the country, art schools neither have university, or an independent status, but are polytechnics (i.e. colleges of higher vocational training). There is a general focus on design, with some schools having only few fine art students, and a distinction is made between “autonomous” (i.e. fine) art and applied arts (which raises the question of the underlying concept of autonomy). In this context, *artistic research* builds the argument for being perceived by the state as an institution that conducts research and not only offers vocational training. In the Netherlands, university research has a strong empirical bias and privileges qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Until recently, artistic PhD programs didn't exist, with the exception of a program at Leiden University whose work and supervision focus is on the written thesis. However, there is now a growing number of PhD programs realized in cooperation of art schools and universities, and a polytechnic-specific ‘professional doctorate’. With their vocational school legacy, Dutch art schools are thus in a similar situation as those in Switzerland and, until recently, Scandinavia

Katherine Behar's approach to the concept of *artistic research* differed from those discussed so far because it was set in the context of the US educational system. There,

government funding for research projects does not exist; research is funded by universities and private foundations. Behar focused on two issues from *artistic research* practice: contamination by adjacency and non-expertise. She believes that *artistic research* practice, in cooperation with academic projects, allows her to operate more freely and take risks; thus putting herself in a position of benefiting from academia. As an artist and teacher, she starts processes together with the students out of a position of “not knowing” and thus undermines classical expectations of teaching. In her eyes, the institutionalisation of artistic PhDs endangers the free space of knowledge production, especially since it is primarily intended to generate future jobs for an increasing and oversized number of students.

The moderator summarized the diversity of the four positions and asked Tal Adler how *artistic research* intentions and perspectives could be discussed in different institutional contexts. Adler referred to the power of trans-disciplinary inspiration, which he had experienced more strongly in collaborative academic research contexts than at art academies. According to his experience, academic structures were very helpful for this collaborative practice.

Baumhauer then asked Florian Cramer about how *artistic research* could be accommodated and communicated in a pure system of goal-oriented vocational training. Cramer emphasized that in this context, students and the institution have different goals: while students are interested in the freedom provided by *artistic research*, it primarily serves university management to grow their institution and as a narrative that legitimizes its academic status. He asked his fellow discussants to what extent their doctoral degrees were important for their work.

Baumhauer passed this question on to Katherine Behar and asked her to describe the possibilities of academic work without a doctorate. Behar emphasized that, in her own estimation, she belonged to the last generation

of artists who could work in teaching without a doctorate. She believed this to be extremely important, especially when one’s own art production is not designed to be marketable.

Baumhauer referred to the situation at German art academies, where an appointment for artistic teaching is usually not dependent on a doctoral degree, but on artistic reputation. In this context, the question arose as to whether a doctorate was always proof of the ability to teach. He then asked Antra Priede how students in Latvia were prepared for professional fields of activity.

Priede reported that after recent reforms in the education system in Latvia, doctorates were now required of teachers, a task to be fulfilled step by step. This had led to the practical PhD programme that was now being applied. It was born out of necessity, but at the same time was an important means of professionalising artists. She again referred to the field of “poetry of bureaucracy” and saw this dealing with institutional expectations as a possibility of artistic empowerment.

John Butler asked the audience whether it should not generally be the responsibility of universities to provide their students with all opportunities for further education. At the same time, he emphasized that a PhD was not generally a prerequisite for working in artistic teaching.

The moderator followed up with a question to Florian Cramer, referring to his critical article on the Vienna Declaration, a position paper on *artistic research* in the context of the academic third cycle. Cramer underlined his concern that an alienated language and discourse – that leaves behind the field of art in favor of a neoliberal-technocratic policymaker discourse – will end up disconnecting institutional *artistic research* from larger, non-institutional art practice and turn *artistic research* into a secluded academic art system of its own. He pleaded for the utopia of a university study and research without degree certificates,

no matter whether in the arts or other disciplines. Baumhauer concluded by asking Tal Adler to report briefly on his *TRACES* project. Adler used the example of this research project to describe the existing necessity of doctoral degrees for the enforceability of an *artistic research* funding application and argued in favour of filling such projects and the positions they create not only with doctoral graduates, but with collaborating researchers from different backgrounds. Finally, Florian Cramer pointed out that the panel discussion was not only relevant to the arts: thinkers such as Walter Benjamin and Hannah Arendt didn't have required professorial post-doc degrees, therefore couldn't work at universities at all or only to a very limited degree, and thus wrote many of their best-known texts as journalistic essays. Diedrich Diederichsen, perhaps the most influential contemporary German-language cultural theorist, doesn't have a study degree at all, but fortunately holds a theory professorship at an art school. These possibilities need to be preserved in the art school system.

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Tal Adler is visual artist/project researcher, Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage (CARMAH) at the Institute for European Ethnology, HU Berlin.

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Antra Priede is Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, LMA Riga.

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Dr. Florian Cramer is reader in 21st century Visual Culture/ Autonomous Practices, Willem de Kooning Academy, Rotterdam.

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Katherine Behar is visual artist/Associate Professor at Baruch College & The Graduate Center, City University of New York.

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Till Ansgar Baumhauer PhD, is project speaker of EU4ART\_ *differences*, HfBK Dresden.









PANEL III  
ARTISTIC RESEARCH  
AND SOCIETY

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PARTICIPANTS

AMAN MOJADIDI

DOREEN MENDE

ALEXANDER KOCH

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MODERATION

TILL ANSGAR BAUMHAUER

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8 JULY 2022



## PANEL III — ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND SOCIETY

by Till Ansgar Baumhauer

The concluding panel included three high-profile players in the field of artistic practice and society who approached the panel's topic from very different angles and introduced themselves through short presentations.

Doreen Mende's presentation *Art/Research in Geopolitical Contexts* reported on her work at HEAR Geneva, where she directed the CCCS (Critical Curatorial Cybernetic Studies) program for over seven years, approaching research through the means of art and the curatorial with a focus on research practice. In doing so, she was interested in the notion of society, the geopolitics of exhibiting and the politics of memory; she worked with art students who had diverse concepts of research practice. Two aspects were particularly important to her as connecting art research and society: on the one hand, the processing of knowledge as a means of crafting society in times of fake news and the construction of alternative truths, and resisting these assaults on epistemic truths, as well as the instrumentalization of the politics of memory – on the other hand, the politics of history and how we position ourselves in relation to it. This included questioning narratives through the analysis of power structures.

In this context, Mende referred to further aspects such as chronopolitics, the politics of time and historicity in relation to *artistic research*, questions of material, temporal, and geopolitical embeddedness and entanglement, which

have an impact even on the local, or the question of before and after in the context of representation. In Mende's work, the curatorial and the political are found at the centre of a field of tension between coloniality and decoloniality, exhibiting and in-hibiting. She stressed that exhibition processes always reflected their place and the history of the institution as well.

Aman Mojadidi began by introducing himself as probably the most unaffiliated participant in the discussion so far. Drawing on his personal biography, he discussed cultural anthropology as the starting point for his artistic practice and his on-site visits as the starting point for critical site-specific and performative art projects. For him, he said, the birth of his daughter triggered a change of direction in his work. Under the premise of not wanting to pass on physical, social, emotional and spiritual traumas, he turned to healing modalities, consciousness and shamanism and turned away from the intellectualization of his previous work. Now, he said, he is interested in a path to artistic practice guided by feelings; questions of cultural appropriation and legitimacy continue to arise for him. He sees his creative work, which is congruent with his healing activity, in direct relation to society; he is particularly interested in the question of the different levels of interaction of his work with society – the collective, not the collectors – compared to his previous artistic practice, especially since both approaches were directed at vulnerable groups.

Alexander Koch spoke on the panel for the New Patrons project with a focus on *artistic research* that addresses socially engaged processes. Founded 30 years ago in France, the New Patrons project enables citizens of any social background to commission contemporary art according to their needs, and New Patrons support them in this process. After the commissioning citizens and social groups have formulated their needs, there is usually a year-long process of local knowledge production and awareness

about needs, public interest, and concrete goals of the project.

Koch presented two projects as examples. On the one hand, he introduced a project commissioned by pigeon lovers to preserve knowledge about pigeons and their breeding based on the expert knowledge of those involved. On the other hand, he presented *The Potosí Principle* project by Alice Creischer, which was a year-long investigative research on the colonial exploitation of silver deposits in Latin America. The research took place in an informal way, had no institutional background, proceeded via private networks and, with the publication of a 1800-page archive, made the little-researched topic visible in an artistic as well as academic context.

Koch asked at this point whether it was always necessary for a researching artist to disclose the research itself, especially since the production of knowledge was reflected in the artworks themselves.

The moderator asked how information and experiences from *artistic research* processes could be shared if the research were not published; *artistic research* is not necessarily tied to artifacts, but it is tied to sharing. He then summarized the various forms of knowledge sharing from the panel. In Koch's case, citizens share their knowledge with the artist as a basis for the work; in Mojadidi's case, it is a guided, shared, and yet personal experience; and in Mende's case, it is the situatedness of knowledge, in which the place where the exchange of information happens, that plays a central role.

Baumhauer then asked Aman Mojadidi how he connected experience and artistic thinking and how he could communicate artistic practice as a shared practice, and finally how he dealt with his multi-faceted role as an artist. Mojadidi described the path from external to introverted research as a process of unlearning and relearning and as a turn towards a way of life as artistic practice itself; none

of this existed in a documented form and could therefore be used in the classical art context.

Doreen Mende emphasized that this was less about questions of knowledge than about the potential and the capacities for action of contemporary art, as exemplified by the New Patrons pigeon project. In experimentation and thinking, the artistic field also allowed non-knowledge and not-knowing as a fruitful basis. Here, art created new spaces, forums and time zones. She stressed that at the same time, the context of and the struggle for knowledge as key capital in the information society must always be considered. This context was of great importance in the connection between academia and art. Mende stated that artists had always had the competence to share knowledge. With the integration of non-knowledge in *artistic research* constellations, the step out of disciplinary thinking took place.

Baumhauer noted that his desire for the communicability of *artistic research* was not based on neoliberal concepts. He referred to the controversial discourses of EU4ART\_ *differences* regarding the exploitability of artistic processes within the EU working groups. According to him, artistic processes could never be used as blueprints. Nevertheless, the question was how to communicate knowledge, experience and also vulnerabilities in the process of not-knowing. He emphasized that the complexity of the framework became important as soon as the process of sharing began.

Alexander Koch interjected that the notion of sharing needed a more precise discussion; on the one hand, sharing knowledge was a great value. On the other hand, the creation of a work of art was already an act of sharing, the practice of informed production was essential, and a narrowing definition of *artistic research* with a view to art history was questionable. Koch stated a current formalization of *artistic research*; publishing, moreover, was not a specific feature of artistic practice.

The moderator raised the question of the degree to which dialogue helped form the processes and products of *artistic research*. He emphasized the differences between knowledge produced by the work, its sharing, and the content that went into the process.

Following on from this, Doreen Mende asked Aman Mojadidi how he dealt with the question of safe space; how did this relate to the question of the public sphere and social effectiveness? Were there different degrees of being public?

Mojadidi described his practice as a structure of different levels and visibilities, in which shamanistic trance dance was also possible in museums and public spaces, and he was thinking about reaching more people at the same time. He said it was about creating personal and collective networks and living on multiple levels at once in a decolonized connection with people, nature, and intangible realms of the world, especially in the current times of great ruptures.

Baumhauer confirmed that a re-building of community was of central importance to all panellists. To Doreen Mende, he asked how the Dresden State Art Collections, in its interaction with society, had redefined the role of the museum in society?

Mende emphasized that this was a long road with high stakes, on which structures must be changed to meet the needs of the world; a shift away from the normative dominance of Central Europe in the world was necessary for this. In this context, she reported on current events and projects of the Dresden State Art Collections.

Alexander Koch joined in here with the remark that participation in the artistic process in the context of the New Patrons also influenced the participants' concepts of themselves, including their life situation. In Germany, he said, the project's experience had been that the building of new communities was a central concern; dysfunctional

communities were a main reason for the clients to establish contact. This mission could be an important task for artists, in which a wide variety of factors would come into play: emotional aspects, precarious knowledge, habits, and local as well as singular elements. He emphasized that it was about imagining a new social space, as in processes of peace-building.

Koch pointed out that problem solving was usually a process from point A to point B; transformation, on the other hand, brought point C into play, as a third space not yet known, which was the place where artists are needed, who in their actions go beyond the limits of what is socially expected. He emphasized that this was an enormous challenge for artists; on the other hand, it was precisely this kind of artistic, expanded thinking that can be experienced by society in its relevance and as a response to social needs, and that triggered positive reactions.

The discussion ended with this open constellation of world views and possibilities for artistic practice in the social field.

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Aman Mojadidi is freelance anthropologist, visual artist and curator, Paris.

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Prof. Dr. Doreen Mende is Head of the Research Department, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

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Alexander Koch is Director of Gesellschaft der Neuen Auftraggeber [New Patrons], Berlin.

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Till Ansgar Baumhauer PhD, is project speaker of EU4ART\_differences, HfBK Dresden.











## 5th EXTENDED SYMPOSIUM IN VISUAL ARTS ARTISTIC RESEARCH: METHOD, STRATEGY AND OUTREACH

Gallery of the Office for Academic Heritage (Kustodie), Görge-Bau, Technical University Dresden and Lecture Hall of Dresden University of Fine Arts

A cooperation between Association of Fine Art Saxony (LBK Sachsen e. V.), Office for Academic Heritage, Scientific and Art Collections (Kustodie TU Dresden) and Schaufler Lab@TU Dresden, and Dresden University of Fine Arts (HfBK Dresden), EU4ART\_differences project and the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony.

**Layout:** Daniela Weirich

**Photographs:** Robert Gommlich,

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p. 74 Florian Cramer; p. 78 Kathleen Rosenthal

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Sponsored by the Saxon State Ministry for Science,  
Culture and Tourism. This measure is co-financed by tax  
funds on the basis of the budget passed by the Saxon  
State Parliament.



This project has received funding from the  
European Union's Horizon 2020 research  
and innovation programme under grant  
agreement No 101016460.

ARCH

KÜNSTLERISCHE  
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RESEARCH

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