“Supervising Art Researchers and Performativity: Reverse Mentoring, Ethics, Adjacency and Consilience”

Lerm - Hayes, C.M.K.E.

Publication date
2024
Document Version
Proof
Published in
Challenging Institutionalization

The Contemporary Condition book series offers a sustained inquiry into contemporaneity as a defining condition of our historical present. Departing from the assumption that the relationship between artistic practice and sociopolitical reality is undergoing substantial changes, the series centrally explores the coming into being of planetarity, the aesthetics and sensing of eco-systemic changes, and how the networked image can be understood as a relational assemblage to address the politics of infrastructure and wider ecologies.

THE CONTEMPORARY CONDITION

SternbergPress

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Published by Sternberg Press, 2024

Series edited by Geoff Cox and Jacob Lund

Published in partnership with the Centre for Research in Artistic Practice under Contemporary Conditions at Aarhus University, made possible by the Novo Nordisk Foundation investigator grant NNF21◊C0068539, 2022–2026, with additional funding from Södertörn University.

AARHUS UNIVERSITY

novo nordisk
foundation

Design: Dexter Sinister
Proofreader: XXX
Printing and binding: Tallinn Book Printers, Estonia
Paper: XXX

ISBN 978-1-915609-61-8

Sternberg Press
71–75 Shelton Street
London WC2H 9JQ
www.sternberg-press.com

Distributed by The MIT Press, Art Data, Idea Books, and Les presses du réel

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PREFACE: PRACTICES *AS* PROPOSITIONS

Considered from the perspective of the theory-informed, politically driven art institution that is BAK, basis voor actuele kunst in Utrecht, the research imperative in contemporary art concerns not merely some ontological reflection upon the world or a critical assessment of it that reproduces its status quo; it is rather a matter of radical commitment to this very world. A commitment that engages — concomitantly — thinking how things are, imagining them otherwise, and enacting these imaginaries as if they were possible. I have often dubbed BAK's mission with these very words, especially when pondering the role of art in the face of the morbid symptoms that define the present — ecological disaster and multiple wars the world over included — reasserting time and again systemic inequalities and injustices into the lives of the people and the planet. How do we create, labor, and live in such circumstances, and exist not merely against but *in spite of* them?

Emerging alongside the ideals of social and ecological justice, this practice of "thinking how things are, imagining them otherwise, and enacting these imagines as if they were possible" in spite of the way of the world has been the political project of "instituting otherwise" at BAK. It foregrounds practices that do not depict or represent but rather *conspire* where art, knowledge production, and social action intersect. A collective practice of coming together in, with, and through art, I see it as *practicing propositions* of what does not yet exist: a just society in which a livable life-in-common is possible.

While I write from the space of experimentation with research and pedagogical agendas that engage the conditions of the world from outside of academia, how does one "teach" and "supervise" such artistic and practice-based research in the context of the university?

This very core question has shaped the summer school "Supervising Artistic and Practice-Based Research," which we at BAK were honored to host in the summer of 2023, together with a consortium consisting of Centre for Research in Artistic Practice under Contemporary Conditions, Aarhus University; The Laboratory for Art Research, The Schools of Visual Arts, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen; and Utrecht University. It convened with PhD and postdoc supervisors from across Europe and beyond to reflect on and challenge the existing formal educational pathways for artistic and practice-based research. The gathering aimed to develop collective and collaborative mappings of *practices* and *propositions* into a toolkit for researchers, supervisors, and evaluators, to experiment with concrete pathways for pedagogical approaches to — and commitments of artistic and practice-based research toward — societal and planetary urgencies of our era.

This publication offers a vista onto the *practices* and *propositions* that shaped the exchanges during what has, in my view, become an extraordinarily inspiring gathering during the summer school. Seeking ways to navigate across the interstices of possibility in — and in spite of — the neoliberal educational-industrial complex of late, they cast forward the realities of urgent social, economic, and ecological challenges into pedagogical formats. In doing so, the *faux* distinction between *practices* and *propositions*, along which we as organizers structured the school's curriculum, gradually ceases to exist. One encounters instead the radical politics of generative learning, as well as a prefigurative research space that involves collectively practicing a comprehensive and nuanced imagination about what ultimately makes for a good university, and with it perhaps even a good society. This is achieved by thinking how things are, imagining them otherwise, and embodying that imagination as if it were — and until it is — possible.

Maria Hlavajova, Artistic Director, BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht

NOT ONE TOOLKIT, BUT MANY

Maibritt Borgen, Iris van der Tuin, Jacob Lund, and Henk Slager

You are holding in your hands a publication that is a toolkit. Or perhaps, one could argue, a series of propositions for toolkits (and propositions-as-toolkits) where each individual contribution performs an actual toolkit, and the book itself articulates a different kind of practice. That's our editorial hint for how to make your way through this volume modularly. Dig into it bit by bit, make its individual elements work for you in your current situation. Poach, perhaps, as you read, in the spirit of Michel de Certeau who described readers as "travellers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write."[1]

Who is invited, then, to poach here? This book is written for and by supervisors of practice-based arts research PhD and postdoc projects, and for those whose work rests in and embraces the fruitful yet often unusual place of the interface between art and academia: an environment where artistic practice can be articulated and developed forcefully *as* research. Where what Barbara Bolt describes as the "work of art" becomes an important contribution to knowledge. But it is also the place where artistic and cultural practices intersect with neoliberal logistical management systems, haunted by the ghost of what Laura Guy emphasizes as the "measure of value" seeps in, "couched in the language of innovation." In this institutional ecosystem artistic practice meets practices of validation and oftentimes translation into writing, all aspects that provide art with an additional dimension and temporality. From here, one might poach the experiences, advice, and practices of others.

1. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 174.

In that way, one could read *Challenging Institutionalization* as both an invitation to, and articulation of, community. You will find threads of participation, kinship, and comradery running through the texts. Because the truth is that the place between art and academia can be lonely, and just as art is not created in a vacuum, neither are good supervisory practices. Most often, you are one or a few people at an institution.

This publication came out of a 2023 summer school in Utrecht, the Netherlands that sought precisely to bring people together and foster community. It can be seen as a collective mapping of this summer school into a constructive toolkit that brings together a plurality of voices. You can read the contributions diffractively, focusing on how they broaden or deepen each other, or use them individually to shape solidarity.

Challenging Institutionalization also contains an actual toolkit that can be used for situations of supervision or assessment, by supervisors and PhD researchers alike. This toolkit for artistic and practice-based researchers, supervisors, and evaluators provides a multi-layered approach to formulating and reflecting on the conditions of the research both during the process itself and afterwards. Researchers, in conversation with their peers and/or supervisors, are invited to set the conditions of the research by working with two sets of interlinked questions. The toolkit supports a prospective and retrospective reflective process that respects the performative—non-linear and unpredictable—process of artistic research. A first draft of this toolkit titled "*Setting and reflecting on the conditions from within: A prospective and retrospective toolkit for artistic and practice-based researchers and their supervisors*" was developed in between Denmark and The Netherlands in 2021–22 by Jacob Lund, Iris van der Tuin, and Maibritt Borgen. The toolkit took inspiration from, and was developed in dialogue with, Barbara Bolt and Henk Slager. We invite you to bring this toolkit along

in your practice as a supervisor to develop and enrich each individual project through dialogue.

Toolkitting as a verb is a sign of our algorithmic times. While these times accelerate and dynamize text, images, and processes, our artistic research practices require careful and situated reflection and accountability. Toolkits offer modular recipes, and using them carves out time and space, alongside the exhausting academic routines, for guided consideration and setting of conditions. Using a toolkit, one comes out with a plan of action. In artistic research supervision scenarios such a plan materializes as specific takes on inter- and intra-relating concepts, percepts and affects, to borrow a tripartition from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.[2] Underlying this work and this publication is an attention to the question of how artistic and practice-based research relates or should relate to current societal and planetary urgencies. As Maria Hlavajova writes in the Foreword, it is about "*practicing propositions* of what does not yet exist, [...] generative learning, as well as a prefigurative research space that involves collectively practicing a comprehensive and nuanced imagination about what ultimately makes for a good university".

Thus, *Challenging Institutionalization* is the outcome of collective knowledge production. For that constructive and inspiring exchange of thought we would like to thank all the contributors who entered into this collaboration with us, as well as all the participants in the 2023 summer school who came together and shared their practices and experiences. Finally, we would also like to thank the Novo Nordisk Foundation; Centre for Research in Artistic Practice at Aarhus University; The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Visual Arts; Utrecht University, and BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht for making this project possible.

2. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, European Perspectives (New York: Columbia University Press, [1991] 1994).

"F*CK YOU AND YOUR FOOTNOTES": ON SOME TROPES IN THE RHETORICAL SITUATION OF SUPERVISION.

Mick Wilson

> [T]his is not a case of an inquiry extending to infinity. That is, to find the best method of seeking the truth, there is not need of another method for seeking the method of seeking the truth, and there is no need of a third method to seek the second method, and so on to infinity. For in that way we should never arrive at knowledge of the truth, or indeed at any knowledge. The case is analogous to that of material tools, where the same kind of argument could be employed. To work iron, a hammer is needed, and to have a hammer, it must be made. For this purpose there is need of another hammer and other tools, and again to get these there is need of other tools, and so on to infinity. In this way one might try to prove, in vain, that men have no power to work iron.
>
> —Baruch Spinoza, *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione*, 1677[3]

Some Operational Assumptions

In order to rehearse a specific practice of supervising doctoral research, it is necessary to set out something of the operational assumptions that frame this teaching practice. Firstly, and decisively, doctoral education is being approached as an entry-level training in a craft of research. Even where the student has an advanced practice, it is still a matter of an entry-level training with respect to a craft of doing research – I say "a" craft rather than "the" craft, as I am not aware of a single all-encompassing craft of research, nor do I

3. Baruch Spinoza, *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1895), 14–15.

know of any research practitioner who convincingly advocates for such.

The model of research education proposed here is broadly that of many training programmes in the arts, especially in the contemporary art field: a student learns and develops an artistic practice through actively "doing" such practice, while also looking at instances of contemporary art practice, and discussing in different idioms and rhetorical frames their own work and that of others, including that of their peers. In like manner, the doctoral student learns a craft of research by doing a research project or research process (i.e., a concrete and delimited instance of inquiry is undertaken as the occasion of acquiring a craft of doing research) and by discussing—in a range of specialist and non-specialist idioms—the research undertakings of others.

While many art educations may seem to imagine themselves capable of supporting an un-foreclosed and open spectrum of potential artistic practices, in contrast research educations—in most domains—tend to be a little less presumptive about their breadth of reach and capacity. They tend to specify their particular horizons of competency, their preferred thematic priorities, objects, instruments, methodologies, canons, concerns, and so forth.

Another key working assumption in this teaching practice pertains to the diverse domain of research that operates in some substantial way through practical production, art making, or forms of invention that are not primarily in the form of discursive textual inscription. In this approach to supervision, it is proposed to treat this congeries as divergent, plural, non-monolithic and in a state of flux. This avoids constructing an essential ontology of "practice based research," "artistic research," "research creation," or similar, while accepting that such terms can be of use in different registers as designating non-essentialized typologies.

In this approach, saying that a research process is artistic is understood to be as helpfully informative about the nature, remit, tenor and focus of the research as saying that it is done through French, or that it uses computers, or that it is done in the Netherlands, or that it often uses A4 sheets of paper, or that it is aural. This is not to say that specifying that artistic process or concerns are operative in a research undertaking is a nullity or trivial. It is just to say that it is far from exhaustively specifying the research and has relatively small value in disclosing what is at stake in a research undertaking or contribution. Denominating some inquiry as artistic research has only very limited utility in accessing the specificity of its contribution to a community of practice and knowledge. This is not to ignore the significance of institutional protocols, of constructing typologies and of doing advocacy work. It is more a matter of placing these in a register that differs somewhat from that of the substantive research contribution circulating within given communities of knowledge/practice.

It is also important to note one further operating assumption here. In order to do research in the explicit and willed service of the process of learning a craft of research, it is necessary to specify a research task. Note that this is not necessarily a "project" but can take many forms, and may be a task that is in service to the research concerns and undertakings of others. Note also that this is not to say that all research must take the form of pursuing a pre-specified research task. On the contrary, this is to be agnostic on the question of what might or might not be the fundamental requirement of research-in-general. It is rather to be committed on a pedagogical question of how to teach and how to learn a craft of research.[4]

4. This is to propose one viable model of learning a craft of research and not to suggest that this is the only possible route nor that there is only one model of doing research. I use the term "craft" loosely here to invoke the idea of an applied skill achieved by actively "doing." I am using it in the way that the older term "art" or the Latin "*ars*" or Greek "technê" (*τχνη*) would have been used before the 18th Century elaboration of the system of fine arts and before the modern transformation in the usage of the terms "art" and "craft." By speaking of "craft" I hope to indicate research as a practice that can be learned in a progressive manner, and learned primarily by doing research rather than by receiving descriptions of research or epistemological schemes. The latter have a central role but are not typically used as the primary means of entry into learning the activity. A friendly interlocutor might be tempted to ask at this point: "Well, if you are not going to specify what research-in-general is, then how can you specify what a research task is?" However, this is like saying: "Well, if you cannot tell us what the essence of nutrition is, how can you possibly decide what you would like to eat, taste, try to cook, or what might even make for a pleasant meal?" For all the glorious decades of rhizomatic enthusiasms, we sometimes seem to still grow along the fork-tongued paths of Aristotelian arboreal categories. Practical operations can be specified and pursued without initial dependency on the primacy of explicating conceptual schema or invoking foundational criteria. Furthermore the explication of any concept, the invoking of any criteria, will typically require operations that cannot be fully thematized in the same moment as these explanations and invocations are produced.

It is important to qualify these working assumptions with the observation that artistic practices are not required to orient to a research paradigm or modality in order to have a claim on our attention. There are other, and indeed sometimes more interesting conversations to be had about contemporary art than the somewhat tired and often tendentious conversations about artistic research. Elsewhere, I have attempted to describe and advocate for a move away from what I term "a covering theory" of the specificity of artistic research or practice based research, and for a move toward a focus on the concrete instances of inquiry and for the particularity of the research or knowledge work being done to be considered in tandem with the way it is being done.[5] In my own teaching, I try to minimize the use of covering pronouncements: "Art is basically X…" "Research is basically Y…." I only use these kinds of general formulation as a last — and unhappy — resort. There is a formulation of a language practice called English prime, whereby speakers and writers are quarantined from the use of the verb "to be" and its variants. I propose to my students an analogous language practice of "research frugality" whereby researchers at the point of initiating and specifying a research project,

5. Mick Wilson, "Take One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," in *Futures of Artistic Research*, ed. Jan Kaila, Anita Seppä, and Henk Slager (Helsinki: Uniarts Helsinki, 2017).

for the purpose of learning a craft of research, forego the use of general pronouncements on the nature, essence or fundamental criterion of art, of research, and of artistic research and similar "covering" pronouncements, in as much as this is practically possible.

This constraint is not proposed as a dogmatic prohibition, but as a guide to writing and speaking that does not easily avail itself of the generic covering pronouncement. I recognize the need for generalization and summary in description, conceptualization and positioning. In what I have already written here I have made use of generalizations and summary descriptors. However, this use of summary and generalization is not quite the same thing as the use of covering pronouncements in formulating a specific research undertaking, and it is the latter that is eschewed within the research "frugality" proposed. The attempt is to avoid using general covering pronouncements on the nature of art, research and artistic research in the formulation of a concrete research task that is to be undertaken as a means to learn a craft of research. What motivates this is the way that such covering statements tend to reduce a nexus of contestation to an un-problematizing statement of essence, nature or fundamental criterion and to the rehearsal of cherished beliefs and rhetoric. ◊f course, this research frugality is itself exquisitely vulnerable to this same critique. However, I would hold out for the difference in operational outcomes when we consider and apply all this within the space of actual learning by doing, rather than exclusively within the space of a textual inscription or a discursive exchange on the general criterial or conceptual limits of key terms.

◊f You and Yours

In adopting the title — "F*ck you and your footnotes": ◊n some tropes in the rhetorical situation of supervision" — I am riffing on Lisa Soskolne's 2015 contribution to

PARSE Journal.[6] What interests me in this formulation, is the way a practice (the crit, or the critical apparatus of footnoting) is cast as a possession — "your crits" / "your footnotes." I describe this as the twinning of a personae ("you," the teacher, the supervisor, the police) and an institutional protocol ("your footnotes"). This twinning is proposed by a subject-in-refusal, who announces their refusal by disowning this practice — "Fuck you and your way, of doing things: It is not what I stand for!"

This specific formulation — "F*ck you and your footnotes" — is a fiction. However, let me share an example, derived from an email exchange with a doctoral researcher, that conforms to its general rhetorical form.

> I am deeply disturbed and disgusted by what you said in proposing an analogy between queer valorisation of transgression and alt-right shock tactics. I would like to have a one-to-one with you for clarification of your intentions in making your comments. I find that they reinforce a colonial hegemonic discourse that I am very much against. I find that it does not tend toward progressive knowledge. In fact, I find it rooted in white academic ideology.[7]

I am not so interested in the emotive tenor of this, so much as the operation of differentiation of "me" from "you" and "yours" — between "I" the subject in refusal and "you" the bearer of institutional protocol, of "hegemonic discourse." Let me take another example,

6. Lise Soskolne, "You and Your Crits," *Parse Journal*, no. 2 (2015), https://parsejournal.com/article/you-and-your-crits/.

7. I have adjusted the text to render my correspondent anonymous, while trying to retain the essential rhetorical form. The student is taking exception to the assertion that a queer advocacy of transgression as intrinsically good is vulnerable to infelicities or unhappy instantiations, when not anchored by some definitional or other mode of specification that delimits queer counter-hegemonic from what are effected as pro-hegemonic transgressive moves.

which is also differentiating "me" and "you" — "me" in refusal and "you" as the bearer and agent of unacceptable institutional protocols.

I take this from the perennial return of the "academic writing" bogeyman: "Do you require me to produce an academic text?" Most of us working in doctoral education with artists can recount similar encounters and exchanges where a monstrous genre raises its dogmatic head summoning that fearful incantation of "the academic," as the spectre of the school rules, of the fearful "big other" arises from the deep to haunt the put-upon doctoral student. Supervisors are asked, as the friendly approachable neighborhood police: "Is this the law?" Here, without the combative aggression of my first example, is another instance of an operation in the speaker's positioning: "Is it the rule that *you* bear for *me*? I'm only asking *you* because I find academic writing can be very " Dishearteningly, the much maligned footnote — that most playful and potentially destabilizing of literary devices — is often adduced as the epitome of the *academic* and of its restrictive policing of mind, its injuring of potential and its denaturing of practice.

In focussing on the rhetorical dynamics of these conversational moves, I am especially interested in what the old rhetorical schools termed "*ethos*." "*Ethos*" is, in one sense, the suasive effects of the speaker's character. It is the appeal to the speaker's character as the guarantor of reliable utterance: "Ask yourself, would I lie to you?" However, I am interested in the reverse engineering of this *ethos*. This is an interest not the suasive power given to what I say by virtue of who I present myself to be, but rather in the production of my *ethos*, of my character, of my persona, by the very performance of my saying things.

In these two examples I cite, one of the processes unfolding is the production of "I" — of my *ethos* by a distanci-

ation and differentiation, with respect to "you" and "yours."[8] Most importantly there is the address to "you" as the one who embodies institution, the one who is in, and of, the institution — invested — and serving as its police. We supervisors, that happy band of gaolers, blithely incarcerating our would-be runaways in the prison house of academic language practice.

Let me take a third example, which does not manifest with the explicit opposition of "me" and "you" but which I propose has a trace of the same rhetorical game, the same differential production of the speakers' *ethos,* as against that of the teacher who is cast as the bearer of institutional restriction and unfreedom.

My wish to talk about a specific embodied experience is entangled with my uneasy and unresolved relationship with the tools provided by contemporary identity discussions and postcolonial/decolonial practices. ◊n the one hand, I can fully relate to these discussions and practices. ◊n the other hand, I find these are very restrictive and disallow a great deal. In a paradoxical manner, we end up defining ourselves through the very same systems of classification that we set out to deconstruct. In most situations, and especially academic situations, it is impossible to speak constructively about these contradictions.[9]

So here we have the "I" and "we" and the many "situations" that this "we" moves within. So why cast this as a case of an "I" and "you" where the teacher role is posited as the personification of institutional limitation and investment? I would argue that in this example it is the teacher and not the ambivalent PhD student who is placed as being most "especially" in the "academic situation," and that this is the primary positioning effect produced by the PhD student making this utterance.

8. I say "one of the processes unfolding" because there is perhaps more afoot in these ◊edipal games.

9. Again, I have adjusted to make this anonymous, but tried to retain the essential form.

Let me call upon one final example, which is the way in which PhD students by practice will sometimes appeal to a refusal of disclosure with respect to some aspects of their practice within the supervisory dialogue. There are lots of variations on this: "I don't want to displace the work itself by an explanation that will only overwrite and reduce the work"; "It's in the register of affect and performative force and not of semiosis or interpretation or through commentary that my practice is operating"; "It is in the doing not the saying" There is an especial interest for me in these formulas when they seek to refuse the requirement for a disclosure of a reasoning on "method." Some form of method talk is a typical requirement of doctoral pedagogy and examination, and is often seen by PhD students as an importuning, a putting-upon practice of an alien demand that risks spoiling and de-naturing it.[10]

For the supervisor, addressed in this way — as the agent of the institutional imposition of unfreedom, as the diligent foot-soldier frog-marching the student into imprisoning

10. In my teaching practice, I propose a simple distinction in word usage (at the commencement of studies) whereby "method" is employed as a term for naming a way of doing something, and "methodology" as a term for naming the reasoning and discursive unpacking of a way of doing something. This initial usage is then open for problematisation at a later stage in the process. "Research method" is then a term for naming for a way of doing inquiry. In some disciplines, there are very specific method resources in play such as statistical analysis and inference, or construction of model organisms, or corpus analysis and so forth. Very often these method resources can also be used without being used in order to do research. A method—a way of working—can be opportune for doing an inquiry, it does not have to be something intrinsic to a work practice. For example, it is an affordance of interview practices that these can be used to do research, but it is not the intrinsic destiny of the device. Interviews can be done for entertainment or for assessment of suitability for employment. I labour these somewhat simple terminological usages, because there is so much misdirection in doctoral education arising from method talk. For this reason, within a supervision process, it helps to distinguish between different modes of method talk, most especially to distinguish between the fetish of "method-guarantee-ism"—a way of talking that suggests announcing possession of a method somehow guarantees the legitimacy of one's knowledge claims—and the pedagogical operation of "method-questioning" — a way of talking that asks, at certain moments in a process of learning to do something, why a particular way of way of proceeding or working has been adopted. The latter is a teaching action that is deemed useful only on certain occasions, and seen as enormously disruptive on others. It is in the inexact and exacting craft of teaching to judge the moment when such a question might be generative.

inscription within the system — there are a number of rhetorical moves possible. The supervisor/teacher might wish to evade the address by claiming to stand on the same side as the student, and disavow the "big other" and its institutional machinations, all those neoliberal devices, extractions and platitudes. "I also am a renegade, working below the radar, a refugee in the very same undercommons who disdains the siren call of the police, disdains the incitement to discourse, and refuses the heavy-handed regime of explanation." An alternate move, is to play along, and inhabit the role assigned by the student's mode of address, perhaps using it as an enabling move to concretize the "big other" for the student, who may need this figure as a foil and also need to play out the drama it allows. In this way, the supervisor re-asserts, perhaps even tries to justify the institutional protocol contested by the student. Another move, is to acquiesce in part to this address from the student, and then propose an inauthentic or *resistant* compliance: "Yes but let's just go along with this, and get what we want out of it without attracting too much attention and hassle." There is another deflationary move — that rubs the other way — and says: "Well let's, for a moment, put to one side all our critical, ideological, philosophical reservations and other cautions that we might have, and consider what is really being asked of us here. Perhaps, it's not quite so overdetermined and restrictive as it first appears." Another possibility is to ramp up the irritation and intensity at play in this game, by chasing after the cherished self-image of the student and attempt to rehearse an analysis with them of their speech act and its secret (or not so secret) animus. These are just some, and not an exhaustive list of the rhetorical moves available to the teacher. They each afford something, and they each disable something, each can have some utility on some occasion, but all are somewhat unhappy moves, if only because they shore up business-as-usual as business-as-usual

and leave one or more players happily ensconced in their un-self-critical image of their own critical reflexivity: unchallenged student, unchallenged teacher, and unchallenged institution.

Experiment in Speaking Differently

Recently, I have begun to experiment with a different rhetorical move. This is rather than directly contest or evade the mode of address within the student's utterance and its relative positioning of "me," "you" and the institutional protocol, it is to propose that "we" together reconstruct the exchange as one structured by a principle of inquiry.[11] This means instead of affirming our values, our perspectives, our respective positions, we try to bracket for a moment what we firmly believe and feel, and consider what we know and what we don't know within the situation we seem to be placed inside — or, indeed, to have electively entered. This is an attempt to recast the situation as a site and occasion of inquiry: What is it that is known and not quite known within the constellation of the operating situation? How might it be re-framed as an act of inquiry rather than an act of affirming belief and position? Of course, beliefs, perspectives, positions are still at work in framing any inquiry. However, in this move to produce an *ethos* of inquiry rather than one of self-possession and confident pronouncement on "what I stand for," and on "how things really are" in the situation, a path to something un-foreclosed may be opened.

This move may also be framed in terms of the frugality I mentioned earlier: This frugality that tries to minimize the appeal to covering pronouncements in specifying a research task. Frugality, as I am modelling it here, is a response to

11. This rhetorical move invokes a provisional and highly fragile "we" inquirers in place of the certainties set to work in the foregoing oppositions of "me" against "you." It is of course a move that — like all invocations of the "we" — might easily become an oppressive power play and disciplinary imposition. However, it is not inevitable that it becomes so, and inthe invocation of this "we" its provisional nature is foregrounded and remains subject to renegotiation or deconstruction as the process of inquiry proceeds.

the question of how to negotiate the challenges of protracted onto-epistemological cum ethico-political disagreements, and of how to communicate from within that process of negotiation. It is especially a proposition of how to do this in a spirit of inquiry, rather than in the spirit of mastery and (complete) self-knowledge — "This is what I believe," "This is my embodied lived experience," "This is what I know in my heart," "This is what I am against," "This is where I'm coming from…"

In this attempt at a re-articulation of the impasse, the questions proposed, the rhetorical moves are formed as follows: "What becomes possible if we pretend for a moment that we are not sure where we are coming from?" "What happens if we pretend for a moment that we do not fully accept our current mapping of positionality and institutional inscription?" "What might be allowed to unfold if we decide for a moment that our sense of our relative standing is not well specified nor fully known?"

This might seem to risk advocating some "view from nowhere" or some other "universalizing conceit" or to be yet another egregious action to disable and nullify difference, especially those differences subjected already to erasure and epistemic repression. Although of course there are many such potential risks for mis-stepping within this strategy, it is not necessary nor inevitable that this move to suspend "what I know for certain!" becomes one of repression and silencing. This proposed gambit is merely one moment, temporarily bracketed and not presented as a habitual or normative routine mode of operation. It is not the imposition of an epistemic principle or criteria of legitimacy, it is an elective and temporary experiment in thinking-speaking-doing otherwise, a heuristic play not an appeal for guarantee.

In this move, we try to go back to the work of "ethos", and specifically what might be called the "ethos of inquiry," meaning by this a willed disposition, an active "openness" to

undergo a change of thinking, knowing, understanding, believing, positioning, or values, based on considered active participation and reflection on experience and encounter within a community of practice and dialogue.[12] The key feature of this ethos is a considered open-ness to the possibility of changing my mind, to the possibility of coming to think, believe, and act otherwise. Although I am attempting to outline the general operating terms of a practical strategy in supervision, this is still somewhat abstracted. So let me try to concertize it in relation to one of the earlier examples.

Say for instance the simple caution often expressed by some artist researchers — "I'm reluctant to talk about method, as this is not a way of talking integral to my practice. It is a model imposed from the humanities and sciences" Reconstructing this in a spirit of inquiry, with a certain frugality, would mean proposing a formulation something like: "Well, we suspect this might be the case, i.e., that this mode of disclosure harms or denatures that which is disclosed, and that it has its origins and mandates from elsewhere. However, on what basis do we suspect or know this?" "With what different possible agendas might such method talk be framed?" "What are the possible genealogies of method talk?" "Let's test — with respect to a concrete instance — and seek to describe the affordances and disablements of this method talk."

An important, aspect of this move will be that on occasion — responsive to whatever particular issues might have been set in play — the question of institution will be activated, but activated as a matter of inquiry and not simply as the already known. This is not then the institution as already specified in various traditions of institutional critique

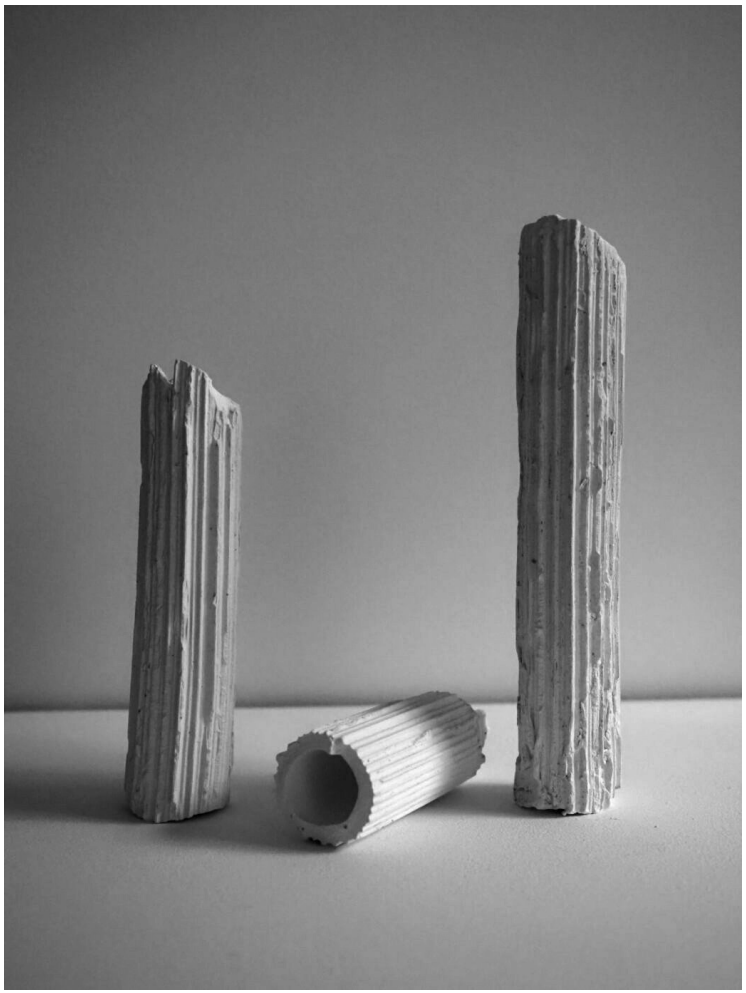
12. The "ethos of inquiry" is a term, the construction and justification for which I can only summarily indicate here. An early attempt at elaborating the term can be found in Mick Wilson, "Between Apparatus and Ethos: On Building a Research Pedagogy in the Arts," in *Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art*, ed. James Elkins (Washington: New Academia, 2014).

or analyses of neoliberal reforms and proxy markets etc., but rather the institution as an object of inquiry, not an essence already disclosed and foreclosed in advance. However, it is also not the institution simply taken at its word, and accepted in its own self-assertion and announcement.[13]

This is a horizon of inquiry that allows the possibility of new rhetorical situations to be rehearsed and invented which are not the tired drama of "me," "you" and the institutional protocol that you force upon me, not the tired drama that requires me to declare that I take exception to this rule.[14] Let me be clear, though, I am not proposing that a simple re-arrangement of rhetorical devices is sufficient to produce massively transformative effects. However, I am proposing that the current tendencies for the recycling and repetition of these familiar tropes is a fundamental blockage in developing a craft of inquiry.

13. I think this kind of move will be especially helpful in avoiding the empirically vacant and astonishingly reductive thinking at work in the diagnosis of artistic research as a reflex of Bologna reforms or of cognitive capital

14. Perhaps what is being especially obscured in the recycling of these tropes is our deficit of understanding with respect to the institutions we inhabit, appropriate and reproduce, and perhaps even that capacity we have to invent and re-instantiate.



Maria Howard, *Column as invasive species*, 2024, unfired parian clay, dimensions variable (max 25 cm)

MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS

Laura Guy

Contribution is a condition of participation at the summer school, with the days structured around short presentations made by all attendees. These presentations on the subject of supervising practice research do not simply sit alongside a predetermined curriculum. Our contributions *make* the curriculum, offering material for group discussion and further inquiry.

Contribution is also a condition that all doctoral work is required to meet if it is to be successful. Looking up the regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the art school where I work, I read that a candidate is required to make "a significant and original contribution to existing knowledge." In the UK, the extent to which this condition has been met is interrogated during the viva, an oral examination on which the outcome of the award depends.

Although contribution is a dictate of all kinds of doctoral work, the need to quantify or qualify exerts specific pressures on PhDs by creative practice. In an essay examining the issue of evidencing knowledge production within practice, Michael Cawood Green and Tony Williams suggest of the UK context that the onus placed on text to do this work of evidencing is challenging, if not completely disorientating, to visual and creative outputs. They write:

> we would like to talk about distortion – the likelihood that 'writing up' reflection on practice into the classic scholarly article is likely to distort practice, like a strangely shaped mirror in a hall of mirrors, making some areas of the body bulge and others thin to almost nothing.[15]

15.Michael Cawood Green and Tony Williams, "On reflection: The role, mode and

The authors acknowledge that this is not a new problematic even if it is a stubborn one. Within the UK model, text continues to be asserted as the privileged medium through which research findings might be evidenced and claims made.

Though the authors suggest several useful approaches to counter this, other hierarchies of value are at work within and around PhDs by creative practice. Emphasis is unevenly distributed across the phrasing "a significant and original contribution to existing knowledge." Supplementing contribution, originality stresses proprietary as much as participation. This is inflected by the various checks and balances through which value is measured in research.

As I write this short text in early 2024, major changes are proposed to the way that funding for doctoral study is organized in the UK. These changes coincide with —indeed are a route to implement— further defunding by the state of the arts and humanities. As part of the proposed changes, the number of overall PhDs funded by the Arts and Humanities Council (AHRC) is anticipated to be cut by a quarter by 2029–30.[16]

This reduction in resource is also a redistribution and reorganization of funding. These changes indicate a move toward strategic investment that will be focused around particular research themes. At the time of writing these include the creative economy and "humanities for a healthy planet, people and place," a vague designation that incorporates themes with scientific inflection such as ecological approaches both to public health and wellness and to climate change.

Creative practice has much to offer these urgent areas of inquiry, yet the orientation of doctoral funding toward

medium of the reflective component in practice as research," *TEXT* 22, no. 1 (2018), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.52086/001c.25106.

16. Jack Grove, "Arts and Humanities Research Council Cuts Funded PhDs by Quarter," *Times Higher Education*, September 10, 2023, https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/arts-and-humanities-research-council-cuts-funded-phds-quarter.

centrally devised, governmentally driven, strategic investment belies the on-going and ideologically motivated attack upon the arts and humanities in higher education enacted by successive governments. The measure of value for public money is largely determined by economic benefit for society and rests on an instrumentalized notion of contribution within research. It is couched in the language of innovation that pervades UK research and its indicators of value.

Writing on the Better Shelter project, a product and campaign launched by IKEA and the United Nations High Commissioner Office, Ariella Aïsha Azoulay identifies the "racist capitalist economy of innovation and partnership between corporations, built upon the creation of displaced clients of the humanitarian industry that provides them with 'innovative products.'"[17] The brief critique of innovation that Azoulay offers is precise, an entry point for problematizing the orientation of the human within rights-based discourse in a study that seeks to unlearn the legacy and affects of imperialism. The project from which this excerpt is taken was at least partly prompted by Azoulay's experience working within the neoliberal university. She directs us to stakes of resisting contribution as either a proprietorial claim or as one delivered within a client-based model, especially when made from institutions shaped by imperialism and its legacies.

At present, many thinkers are interested in re-examining the value of productivity in our time of crises. In *The Plague*, British psychoanalyst Jacqueline Rose's astonishing treatise addressing the aftermath of COVID-19, the author argues that "if we want to prepare for a better, fairer, life —if we want to prepare for any kind of future at all— we must slow the pace and change our relationship to time."[18] The theatre and performance scholar Carl Lavery proposes an ecological approach to participation that:

17. Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (London: Verso, 2019), 449.

18. Jacqueline Rose, *The Plague* (London: Fitzcarraldo, 2023), 85.

> does not revolve around issues of intentionality and agency; rather, it concerns an aesthetics of disclosure. In other words, the point is not to produce yet more artworks that seek to create participation or immersion (or both) as intentional acts; rather the more humble, but just as vital, objective is to uncover the extent to which we are already participating, always already immersed.[19]

Artist Maria Howard works in a studio two floors beneath my office at the art school, making modest sculptures from unfired clay. Her PhD research interrogates the architectural column, a feature of classical architecture incorporated widely within colonial architectural styles. As well as a building, we also share a city — Glasgow — that was once described as the "second city of the Empire." Howard's work starts here and works out from urban sites encountered in various states of dilapidation, many of which feature neo-classical elements such as columns.

Howard's ceramics are small in scale and fragile, objects made by hand from Parian, a fine, unglazed porcelain. A recent series of column-like forms are cast from the stout stems of giant hogweed. This invasive and poisonous species that "colonizes" riverbanks was first introduced to Britain as an ornamental plant in the early nineteenth century. Its striated form is as entangled in histories of imperialism as the architectural features it resembles.

In Howard's objects, and the creative writing that she produces alongside them, columns are encountered everywhere throughout the city. Sometimes they are decorative. Other times they are integral to the structures they support. Remapping these structures along with various root systems that threaten to overwhelm them, Howard

19. Carl Lavery, "Participation, Ecology, Cosmos," in *Reframing Immersive Theatre: The Politics and Pragmatics of Participatory Performance*, ed. James Frieze (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 304.

interrogates complex ecologies that bind us into post-industrial and post-colonial formations.

Sharing an institution, and working close to hand, Howard's sculptures help me to think through what an ecology of contribution in practice research might offer. Instead of asserting a proprietorial claim to knowing, contribution implies a relationality that is always already a part of the process of making.

LOST LUGGAGE

Maureen de Jager

Limbo

I arrived at a loss (as the saying goes) — with my luggage in limbo, somewhere between Johannesburg and Amsterdam. I was minus clean clothes; minus my familiar things; minus a handcrafted artist's book, which I had tossed into my suitcase almost as an afterthought. Titled *WRITING (AS) PASSAGE*, my bookwork comprised passages of text excerpted from my PhD thesis and transcribed, by hand, onto the cut-up test-prints from an earlier project. A meditation (of sorts) on practise-based writing as a rite of passage, *WRITING (AS) PASSAGE* had seemingly failed to make "safe passage" (it was *lost*, and, as I settled into this unhappy realisation, so indeed was I).

Maureen de Jager, *WRITING (AS) PASSAGE* (2023), page 22.
Test print with handwritten text on tracing paper overlay.

Passage

noun
: a way of exit or entrance
: a corridor or lobby
: the action or process of passing from one place, condition, or stage to another
: a continuous movement or flow
: a specific act of traveling or passing especially by sea or air
: a privilege of conveyance as a passenger
: the passing of a legislative measure or law
: a right, liberty, or permission to pass
: something that happens or is done
: something that takes place between two persons mutually
: a usually brief portion of a written work or speech
: a detail of a work of art

verb
: to go past or across
: to subject to passage[20]

Writing (as passage)

In the context of doctoral research in the arts, the interface of "writing" and "practice" is often a site of tension. The thesis requirement typically demands a body of writing *on* or *about* one's creative practice, in a manner that retrospectively "locks down" its open-ended mutability. Within and against this tension, *WRITING (AS) PASSAGE* (my lost-in-transit bookwork) tentatively posited the notion of "praxis-writing," conceptualised not as the inverse of practice, but as a mode of writing *as* practice. Praxis-writing (I suggested) uses modalities of practice to elucidate practice. It is exploratory, performative, and processual; it is writing *as passage*.

20. "Passage," Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, accessed January 25, 2024, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/passage.

To think of writing *as passage* (as *a* passage) is to recognise the inherent restlessness of writing, which always gestures beyond itself. "Passage" implies a motion into/out of/between/across: "a way of exit or entrance," "the action or process of passing," "a continuous movement or flow."[21] For Janneke Adema, the book (or text) is always caught up in "a process of becoming (albeit one that is continuously interrupted and disturbed)."[22] This is because books (or texts or pieces of writing) are "performative; they are reality-shaping, not just mirroring of objective knowledge."[23]

In this same vein, praxis-writing embraces the "reality-shaping" impetus of its intrinsic performativity. Instead of closing in *on* practice (as a reductive framing/exegesis) it opens up *as* practice, in a manner that is, to use Jill Bennett's expression, "generative rather than representational."[24] In line with the practice that it elucidates (albeit obliquely), praxis-writing directs itself at "a not knowing, or a not-yet-knowing"; it "creates room for that which is unthought, that which is unexpected – the idea that all things could be different."[25]

Beginning to know

To write on praxis as praxis is thus the challenge; to write as a matter of praxis Sometimes — oftentimes — I write to *work out*, in the handling of language, what it is that I could be thinking. And it is in these moments (as I weigh up my words, pressing them into the palm of my hand) that I begin to know.[26]

21. "Passage."

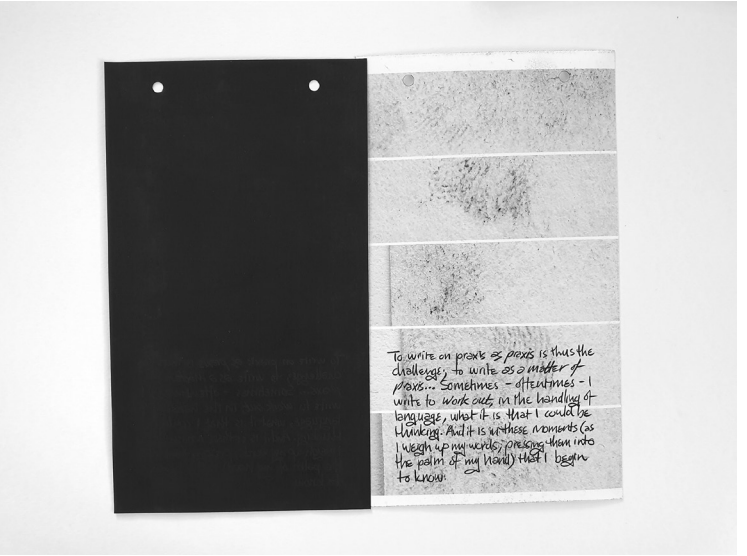
22. Janneke Adema, *Living books: Experiments in the Posthumanities* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2021), 248.

23. Adema, *Living books: Experiments in the Posthumanities*, 20.

24. Jill Bennett, *Practical Aesthetics: Events, Affects and Art after 9/11* (London: Tauris, 2012), 153.

25. Henk Borgdorff, "The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research," in *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, ed. Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson (London: Routledge, 2010), 61.

26. Text excerpted from Maureen de Jager, *WRITING (AS) PASSAGE* (2023).



Maureen de Jager, *WRITING (AS) PASSAGE* (2023), page 27.
Test print with handwritten text on carbon paper overlay.

The world to come

Praxis-writing (as *praxis*) is "always in part the creation of the world to come,"[27] exemplifying "the critical and inextricable meld of theory and practice."[28] How, then, does one supervise a doctoral student in and through this liminal space, the "becoming," "not-yet-knowing" and "beginning to know?" For, in this scenario, "writing up" is no longer a retrospective "explanation" of practice (as if this were stable and concluded) but a perpetual and prospective "writing through and throughout."

27. John Lysaker, "Writing as Praxis," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 28, no. 4 (2014): 535, https://doi.org/10.5325/jspecphil.28.4.0521.

28. Robyn Stewart, "Practice vs Praxis: Constructing Models for Practitioner-Based Research," *TEXT* 5, no. 2 (2001): 3, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.52086/001c.35795.

Barbara Bolt's notion of "praxical engagement"[29] — which emphasises the ongoing "work" of art on makers and readers — is perhaps useful in this regard. The "work" of art lies partly in the student's intrepid engagement with praxis, as an exploratory "knowing through handling." But the research process also includes the reciprocal workings *of* praxis *on* the student-researcher, in a manner supported by the "work" of supervision. As Angelique Bletsas explains, producing a thesis entails not only the completion of a finite text but also "the constitution of the PhD student as a discoursing subject"[30] — it is a *rite of passage*, in other words.

Against this backdrop, the supervisor's role is (arguably) to *facilitate passage*, or even "to subject to passage,"[31] as the need arises. At times, the student may face the passage of praxis-research with trepidation and distrust, preferring certitude and stasis over limbo. At times, the student may accept (and even embrace) the passage as a "privilege of conveyance"[32] — appreciating, in turn, the supervisor's role as "conveyancer." Eventually, hopefully, the student may come to understand that praxis-supervision is its own form of passage, as "something that takes place between two [or more] persons mutually."[33]

Arrival

I arrived at a loss (as the saying goes), temporarily unmoored by the interrupted passage of my luggage (my familiar things; my bookwork). As it transpired, my bookwork was *not* irre-trievably lost. For several days, it lay mute and unopened in a dank back-room at baggage reclaim (nestled

29. Barbara Bolt, *Art Beyond Representation: The Performative Power of the Image* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 65.

30. Angelique Bletsas, "The PhD Thesis as 'Text': A Post-Structuralist Encounter with the Limits of Discourse," *New Scholar* 1, no. 1 (2011): 9.

31. "Passage," Meriam-Webster.com Dictionary

32. "Passage."

33. "Passage."

in a protective bed of compressed clothes, in a hard-shell suitcase, in the dark). *WRITING (AS) PASSAGE* survived the passage home (still mute and unopened), a meditation on praxis-writing that mattered in passing (appropriately so). Its rereading, all these months later, now enables passage into a liminal space of reflection: a brief passage *on* passage, "a way of [both] exit [and] entrance," and finally, simply, "something that happens or is done."[34]

34. "Passage."

EXCEPTIONAL US

Andrea Philips

Within any generic argument about education's capitalisation, or the meritocratic ascendency warranted by a practice-based PhD; beyond the circularity of calls for artistic entry into, then rejection of, the "higher" academy, lies a continuously denied repetition of the production of exceptionalism.

Carl Schmitt designated a state of exception as that which occurs when a sovereign (or someone determined to assert their sovereignty) takes the law into their own hands, bypassing juridical — "democratic" — legislation. From democracy (the artist demands their rights to the self-determination of the shape and form of their PhD) to exceptionalism (the artist refuses the regulations of the PhD on the basis of their difference), the artist-researcher, like the market in which their subject is conditioned, must negotiate how to be exceptional to governance frameworks. A saviour of critical research practice, or an autocrat perfecting self-mastery? The institution lags behind, afraid of its own market redundancy, rendered speechless through the fog of bureaucracy. The supervisor, an implement, plays back and forth.

Exceptional us

1

> Where can the work of (re)creative thinking be done in the midst of the enclosure of the art world, in the vocational enclosure of the university, in the ideological enclosure that one might call, even though both of its terms need radically to be called into question, the intellectual's public?[35]

35. Fred Moten, *Black and Blur: Consent not to be a Single Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 155.

It is perhaps self-evident that the field of higher degrees, particularly as it has been developed as a mechanism of exclusion (economic, racial, gendered), has deep roots in our colloquial understanding of what it is to be exceptional. For example, it is presumed that the field of PhD research is only a field for those that have attained an exceptional form of proven intelligence; that that form of intelligence meets criteria that are regulated through academic histories of sanctioned knowledge; that those that name the exception are in themselves exceptional; that the infrastructural systematisation of exceptionality is itself sanctioned by the preclusive strata of the social as they exist in a first world modernist epistemology.

This book addresses the ways in which practice-based (or "artistic") PhD supervision is provided and supported in Northern European art schools and includes contributions from both supervisors (such as myself) and practice-based researchers, and it is focussed on practice in the arts. Whilst I recognise the generic nature of exceptionalism within the race, class and gendered mechanisms of higher education, here I want to point to a specific, and logically contorted, aspect of exceptionalism at work in practice-based PhDs in the arts. My contribution will, therefore, speak from within an already delimited problematic to which the practice-based PhD is indebted, and in full acknowledgement of the history of practice/theory debates that still cause tension in this field (despite their longevity) as well as the pugnacity often enacted to defend its externally presumed coherence.
I want to examine this coherence as it pertains to the already acknowledged contradictions inherent within practice-based research, namely; how can practice be assessed as knowledge production? why does practice need a theoretical addendum to prove it is knowledge? how can practice-based PhDs be supervised? etc. Such navel gazing seeks a coherent face for a field. Why? What does this teleological demand do for research itself?

The supervisor, an implement, plays back and forth. When Fred Moten says, "[w]here can the work of (re)creative thinking be done in the midst of the enclosure of the art world, in the vocational enclosure of the university, in the ideological enclosure that one might call, even though both of its terms need radically to be called into question, the intellectual's public?" he calls into question the cycles of power as they are enacted through structures of teaching *to*, teaching *about*, teaching *what it means* to be an intellectual, separated from a public, whose public is, somehow, *owned* by the researcher. This *owned* is what the supervisor confers in a strict sense: the right to have a *public*, the distinction, the exception.

It is, thus, inferred, or presumed, or expected, that the supervisor knows how to correlate an *owned*, the having of a vocation; to pass on the legitimising claim of a *mine*: my knowledge, my art, my public. They are an implement of passage, a conduit of the exception.

I will return to the supervisor; the vocation, its construction. As will become clear, my central criticism of the conditions of knowledge production generally, but also particularly in the context of practice-based research, is this construction of a vocation that is both separate and separating from other knowledges and practices that are largely unrecognised. The supervisor, in a bare reading, is the person that trains up the builder of vocational barriers — or enclosures as Moten says. So, in what follows, the supervisor's role as a builder of barriers haunts my thoughts. I think there is another way of supervising, a way of admitting the joyful inadequacy, the generous permeability of thinking and acting. I will call this "good enough" supervising.

In my experience, over the past twenty years there has been a notable shift in the ambitions of the people, be their artists, musicians, theatre makers, dramatists, etc, that pursue practice-based PhDs. When I first started supervising in the Department of Art at Goldsmiths in the early 2000s those people that I supervised were in the main, for example, artists who are painting and writing about the history of figuration, or musicians performing and at the same time looking into the history of improvisation. These examples are perhaps slightly exaggerated, but the practice-based PhD opened up forms of intelligibility for these people that were otherwise occlusive. It enabled practitioners to contribute to the formations of knowledge within the university (to become authors, "poets their own affairs"[36]). It conferred power where it was assumed there was none. It presumed a lack. It made the supposed powerlessness of art into an idiom of power in order that it might compete with other subjects and subject positions, whilst retaining its right of mute difference. This relation between lack and muteness is a problem which contemporary structures of practice-based research inherit and usually progress.[37]

Over the course of my twenty-year experience as a supervisor, whilst the exacerbations of mute lack continue, I have also seen the area of academic training, knowledge-gathering and examination transformed by both the positions of people who are engaging in practice-based PhD research, and the positions of people that are supervising them.

36. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), XX.

37. Another paper must recognise the inherent racialisation (Moten's 'deprivation-in-privilege') that is missing from my argument here. The terms "mute" and "lack" are references inverted for their ostensible depriviligisation. This could be read as a serious mistake. See Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Unpayable Debt* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2022) for a poethics of unpayability with an extremely different politics of lack.

In particular, the discursive arena of practice has been absolutely changed by the entry of the "social turn" into its field, influenced by forms of knowledge produced within the wider social sciences from which it borrows much methodology and content, alongside a newly enacted claim for difference from or to this wider field continues. What Moten calls for "(re)creative thinking" to "be done in the midst of the enclosure of the art world" many would respond that this is already at work in the arena of social practice PhDs (by which I mean artists engaging in forms of nominally collaborative, ethnographic, participatory or action research that propose a breaking out of the enclosures of the art world by dint of the ethics of contact). I have attempted to unpick the problems of these categories and practices elsewhere.[38] Aside from the multiplications of the assumptions of mute/lack that govern many of these practices (the artist does not have to speak/the participants speak on their behalf/the participants are a lack that is fulfilled by the art), the university has been obliged to deal with the ethics of its own handling of knowledge culled from elsewhere (in other words, the complexities indicated in Moten's "vocational" enclosure).

> What comes before autonomy must, then, also *exceed* it, that is to say, succeed it, survive it, and indefinitely overrun it.[39]

But my contribution is not about practice-based research and the social turn (despite the need for an intricate, detailed and as yet unwritten political study of the topic), but an acknowledgement that many of my conclusions are influenced by the contradictions of study, power and exceptionality

38. See, for example, Andrea Phillips, "Arts Organisations, Educational Institutions and the Collaborative Imperative," in *Institution as Praxis: New Curatorial Directions for Collaborative Research*, ed. Carolina Rito and Bill Balaskas (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2020).

39. Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship* (London: Verso, 1997), 365.

that become hyper-visible in such projects (that autonomy, structured into the *telos* of a project, that, in Derrida's words, denies the "symmetrical and heteronomical curvature of the social space prior to any organized *socius*"[40]). Rather than profoundly changing our understanding of the subject of research alongside the subjectivity of the researcher, I notice an entrenching of a form of isolationism within practice-based research, especially that with a social claim: to not be the social as a cause of study even as sociality is the aesthetic regime. Superficially this is due to accusations of "the academicization of art" occasionally emitted by art stylists; more pertinently, it is to do with the artist-researchers educated instinct that the mute/lack has been inculcated into their chosen life, and whilst muteness serves a purpose, lack cannot be filled by the speech of others whilst autonomy is necessitated.

To claim exception – difference from the norm – in research, to aim beyond the academy (towards the public or the world) is, rather than revolutionary, exactly the way modernity has always demanded the university should operate (the foundation, in fact). Revolution – perhaps via the establishment of equity within the institution – is an excellent goal, but one that is hindered by the self-imposed demands that being a client of the intellectual machine imposes. Clientage – an ambivalent dependency - within the economic and aesthetic infrastructure of the institution struggles to maintain a psychosomatic isolation in the name of consumer rights ("I am paying to be better than others"). The supervisor is the conduit. This is further enforced when exceptionalism and clientage meet, in the conductive body of the producer (in this case the supervisor), constructing a toxic habitus wherein all research must be economised, and in which all higher education institutions must become porous to the externalities that they have traditionally been

40. Derrida, *365*.

exceptionalised from (a double exception). Bourdieu would remind us that all habiti are more or less toxic; that the fact of the existence of a habitus is the always already circulation of the condition: "To speak of habitus is to include in the object the knowledge which the agents, who are part of the object, have of the object, and the contribution this knowledge makes to the reality of the object."[41]

4

Breaking the law

What is exception? Beyond colloquial uses (to stand out as much better than competitors, to be beyond normative forms of excellence, to be distinct, etc.), the concept has a specific history grounded in legal theory in which was determined both the power of rule and those deemed to life outside of regulation (outcast or existing outside regulated social structure).

Twentieth century political-philosophical history moved exceptionalism from a political and juridical question stemming from Roman law towards an ethico-juridical tool to challenge what it means to "live politically." Giorgio Agamben begins *State of Exception* by saying;

> There is still no theory of the state of exception in public law, and jurists and theorists of public law seem to regard the problem more as a *quaestio facti* [question of fact] than as a genuine juridical problem. Not only is such a theory deemed illegitimate by those authors who affirm that the state of necessity, on which the exception is founded, cannot have a juridical form, but it is difficult even to arrive at a definition of the term given its position at the limit between politics and law.[42]

41. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 467.

42. Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 1.

Agamben here insists on a legal — and perhaps ethical — ambiguity regarding what the exception is (an ambiguity that he goes on the expand). He quotes the legal and political theorist Carl Schmitt, who begins his 1922 essay *Political Theology* with, "Sovereign is he who decides on the exception."[43] This phrase, much picked over in the century that follows, is normally read through the fact that Schmitt joined the National Socialist party in Germany in 1932. Schmitt directs the reader to understand that the Sovereign (the ruler of any constitutional or non-constitutional State), when confronted with a "state of exception" ("any kind of severe economic or political disturbance that requires the application of extraordinary measures"[44]) has the right to override constitutional regulations in order to declare a person/people/situation/event outwith the constitution. Beyond declaring that thing unconstitutional, that thing is beyond the field of constitutional practice. Deemed thus, the thing is available to the Sovereign to do with as they please. For Schmitt, who in 1933 was quick to join in with Nazi book burning, this power — to name or designate the exception — is the very power that constitutes sovereignty. In Schmitz' 1932 publication *The Concept of the Political* he clarifies his position; "*The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy.*"[45] For Levinas, and, as has been referenced, Derrida, this very notion constitutes the basis of what it means to be other or othered, the basis of which opens up the thing to direct spatial, physical and psychological violence. Schmitt says, "The exception is to be understood to refer to a general concept in the theory of the state, and not merely as a construct applied to any emergency decree or state of

43. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), X.

44. Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, X.

45. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 26.

siege." In other words, it is the exception that gathers the sovereign to itself.[46]

Here, the sovereign (the ruler or that person who has taken rule), in a state of emergency, is able to transcend state constitutionalism — the rule of law — for what they deem to be the public good (which might be the meting out of extreme violence to annihilate the exception). The exception is thus a figure/thing that in its obverse constitutes – shapes, performs – sovereign-controlled concepts of the so-called good and the constitution of the so-called public.

Agamben's *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1995) is both a retort to Schmitt, and a complication of the political-conceptual forms of both the sovereign and the exception. In it he reminds us of the Ancient Greek distinction between *zoe* and *bios*. He says:

> The Greeks had no single term to express what we mean by the word "life." They used two terms that, although traceable to a common etymological root, are semantically and morphologically distinct: *zoe,* which expressed the simple fact of living common to all living beings (animals, men, or gods), and *bios,* which indicated the form or way of living proper to an individual or a group.[47]

Homo Sacer (in Roman law literally: set apart from the socius, and both hallowed and cursed) is a person who is banned and might be killed by anybody, but must not be sacrificed in a religious ritual. It is the state of exception. "The protagonist of this book is bare life," Agamben says, continuing; "that is, the life of *homo sacer* (sacred man), who *may be killed and yet not sacrificed,* and whose essential

46. Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, 5.
47. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 9.

function in modern politics we intend to assert."[48]

Bare life, therefore, is not simply *zoe* (living outside or beyond the law), but a form of being bound to it whilst excluded from it through the form of sacrilege which both suspends and binds close the individual to the category of "exclusion/inclusion."[49] The thing "separates and opposes himself to his own bare life and, at the same time, maintains himself in relation to that bare life in an inclusive exclusion."[50] Derrida takes up this friend/enemy, inclusion/exclusion thesis in *The Politics of Friendship* when he claims that justice – non-juridical - beyond the dualism of *zoe* / *bios*, takes the form of an "infinite place of resistance." A place that, however, despite its infinity, is primarily resistant to immanence. Of which, the philosophical scholar Ariane Conty asks, "How can the citizen be bound by fraternity and community and vow to protect the nation, while professing at the same time a radical universal freedom and equality that has no borders?"[51] This idea of justice that supersedes a Schmittian idea of the state and the sovereign leaves recipients in a difficult position: the phenomenological metaphysics of infinite justice, inflected with expanded notions of non-teleological belief that is at the same time anti-immanent (since there is no teleology) suspends the friend/enemy in an exceptionalism which is both sovereign (it is non-immanent) and anti-sovereign (it is infinite).

5

The claim of many practice-based scholars is that practice-based research is exceptional and cannot be treated (organised, supervised, examined, assessed) in the same way

48. Agamben, 12.
49. Agamben, 12.
50. Agamben, 12.
51. Arianne Françoise Conty, "Sovereign Power, Sovereign Justice: Carl Schmitt and Jacques Derrida on the State of Exception," *Philosophy Today* 62, no. 3 (2018): 3, https://doi.org/10.5840/philtoday20181024229.

as non-practice PhDs. Beyond the general exceptionalism of the PhD form with which I began, *this* exceptionalism is based on what are in my view Jacques Rancière's deeply critical idea of the aesthetic regime of art, in which art "frees itself from any specific rule, from any hierarchy of the arts, subject matter and genres."[52] This it does "by destroying the mimetic barrier that distinguished doing and making affiliated with art from other ways of doing and making, a barrier that separated its rules from the order of social occupation."[53] In a double move, Rancière thus disaffiliates art (art in/of the aesthetic regime – a regime that is not tethered to historical or genre or material designation) from both representative chronology and political ("ethical") injunction. It is this form of exceptionalism that both now "makes" art and frees it from hierarchies of necessity. Rancière's description is both accurate and acute; it also leaves the practice-based researcher with a new power: total subjective designation. If we push this claim through the sieve of Schmitt/Agamben/Derrida/Rancière outlined previously we might reach some initial conclusions:

a. Schmitt:
   – Practice serves the Sovereign by designating the juridical limit;
   – Practice is the exception due to its acting outside of sovereignty.

b. Derrida:
   – Practice/the practitioner performs non-juridical justice;
   – Practice takes/makes the form of an "infinite place of resistance."

52. Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (London: Continuum, 2004), 23.
53. Rancière, 23.

c. Agamben:
   – Is the practitioner *homo sacer* (who *may be killed and yet not sacrificed)?*

d. Rancière:
   – Art made by the practitioner in the aesthetic regime is free from representation and ethics and can thus take any position.

It is in this miasma of definitions that the very theorists so enmeshed/utilised in critical and political art discourse provide the perfect conditions for presumptions about the nature of practice-based PhDs:

1. the *normal* PhD is regulated by a state constitution that is questioned by practice;
2. practice is assumed to be exceptional due to its immanent/incalculable nature (if it meets the criteria of the aesthetic regime);
3. but practice is also sovereign: it overrides the constitution and declares that it is itself the exception;
4. Practice is *homo sacer*, with its reference to sacrifice and sacredness in opposition to constitutionalism (which here is represented by the university);
5. Practice as the *bios*/state of exception is also an "infinite space of resistance";
6. Practice-based research is therefore both sovereign in its power to supersede regulation, weak in its position as *homo sacer* and an infinite place of resistance;
7. The practitioner is thus in an unalienable, uncriticisable position of immanent power/abjection.

Here the distinction between art and artist is blurred. Art (that which the artist(s) make) and the artist's "subject position" are often aligned in scholarship in such a way as to maintain the incalculable space of resistance both in social, embodied and material terms. However, such political subjectification brings with it a tethering — a demand for the acknowledgement of space/time/body/matter — is to the world of the calculable, the unjust, the binary, the sovereign-colonial. Practice-based research can't have it both ways, however: it is either free of jurisdiction or it arises from the realpolitik of contemporary life.

6

How to supervise? Eight propositions:

1. We recognise that the exceptionalism claimed by and/or on behalf of practice-based PhD research is based on the idea that practice is understood as outside of the law (the university);
2. We refute this.
3. We refuse the idea that practice's exceptionality automatically enables so-called theoretical scholarly divestment (because it is an aberration from the law/lawless and also precarious/*homo sacer*);
4. We refute this.
5. We teach (we don't confer knowledge);
6. We don't know everything/we don't have experience of many things (we demonstrate this);
7. We are ourselves extremely partial (we argue from our own positions);
8. We become good enough.

7

Back to Moten:

> Where can the work of (re)creative thinking be done in the midst of the enclosure of the art world, in the vocational enclosure of the university, in the ideological enclosure that one might call, even though both of its terms need radically to be called into question, the intellectual's public? The ascriptions of "self-taught" or "outsider" are expressions of desire and anxiety that redouble the structures of deprivation-in-privilege to which they react.[54]

In the quote I have repurposed throughout this text Moten is talking about Thornton Dial, the African American artist born to Alabama cotton plantation sharecroppers in the 1920s who worked as a metalworker for Pullman Cars, making large abstract images out of found and scrap, often industrial materials. Moten calls Dial's university the Pipe Shop named for the studio warehouse in Bessemer Alabama Dial used as a workshop. When Moten talks about ascriptions of self-taught and outsider he is referring to the labels the art world uses to classify Dial. When Moten says that these terms are "ascriptions" that express "desire and anxiety that redouble the structures of deprivation-in-privilege to which they react" he is describing Exceptional Us. Our anxiety over exceptionalism "redoubles" our "deprivation-in-privilege." And in fact we are not exceptional; we are good enough. Moten continues: the "narrow slice of the intellectual and artistic milieu delusionally thinks of itself as central in the perennial inhabitation of a crisis."[55] Here he identifies the small-mindedness of our exceptional "deprivation-in-privilege."

54. Moten, *Black and Blur: Consent not to be a Single Being,* 155.
55. Moten, 155.

How to loosen the desire for deprivation-in-privilege, marked not only by replications of poverty, but also by the deprivation /privilege of exceptionalism (Agamben: *homo sacer* who *may be killed and yet not sacrificed*)?

Given the framework of supervision *per se*, with its performative role in the "vocational enclosure" machine of the university, it is hard work to maintain a political vigilance as a supervisor whose role as a conduit is regulative in the one hand and permissive on the other. But *loosening* may be a good strategy. My response — and my practice — is to locate within any PhD project a form of domestic pleasure that, whilst enabling the exploration of strange and complex phenomena, beds these explorations in quotidian scenographies with forms of joy-in-the-doing. Importantly, this is an exercise, not a demand for a certain type of content (one may not be joyful in the content, but joyfulness is a type of method).

In using the term "good enough" I am referencing the sometimes controversial work of paediatrician and child psychotherapist W.D. Winnicott, who coined the term "good enough mother" to describe a form of parenting of babies and young children that, rather than subscribe to Kleinian theories of the "good mother" who is there for every moment of a child's emotional and physical needs, gradually and safely enables the child to learn to control their feelings of, for example, loss and separation, through a practice of removal:

> The good-enough mother starts off with an almost complete adaptation to her infant's needs, and as time proceeds she adapts less and less completely, gradually, according to the infant's growing ability to deal with her failure.[56]

56. D. W. Winnicott, "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena — A Study of the First Not-Me Possession," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 34, no. 2 (1953): 89–97.

If it's possible to ignore the gendered negation of this 1953 text (it is a mother; she is a failure), then I suggest that the job of the supervisor is to deflate the "perennial inhabitation of a crisis" through the quotidian exemplification of a "good enough." This by no means suggests sloppy scholarship; rather I am suggesting the tiring exceptionality of exceptionalism, when loosened, might lead to more substantive, social, pleasurable and shareable research.

Finally, it goes without saying that we must reconfigure the university as a place of non-exceptionality. This would seem to me to be the place we need to start, that is, if we are to accept certain conditions of state legislation, or choose to work to change them from within; to be reformist (this is certainly a "good enough" position). How might a university reconfigure reward based on the non-exception? By privileging collective work, by spreading the modes of supervision across many skills (technical, administrative, without professorial or scholarly jurisdiction). In the reconfiguration of a university able to de-exeptionalise practitioners of the art world an act of de-privileging must take place, where no one can say; I refuse to explain/articulate/share/open. The good enough researcher and their good enough supervisors will work together with their limitations and lack of omnipotence, without romanticising self-sacrifice in the face of desire-in-otherness.

ENGAGING SOIL, WATER, ART, AND ACTIVISM

Mari Mäkiranta

I can feel the river's cool water and its current through my rubber boots. I lean over, plunge my hands into the water and bring up the sample bottle. Against the light the water has a yellowish tinge to it. I see no signs of life in it. Can water die? How should we react to dead water, when bacteria and microbes are an essential aspect of the forces that sustain life and help us stay alive?

—14 July, Seurujoki River, entry in a research journal

The above is an excerpt from our research journal, part of the activities of our collective *Flowing Waters*. The collective consists of post-doctoral artist-researchers, local people, and scientists. It is advocating for water conservation in the North and contributes opinions on the mining industry in Lapland and struggles relating to natural resource policy. The work of the collective — nurturing the land and the water through non-violent action, combining concern and political action — has inspired this short essay. In the essay I ask what kinds of specificities, resources as stated below, are involved in supervising eco-activist and collective research and art. Since the late 2010s, artists have increasingly started to work together based on shared ideologies and aesthetics. Nevertheless, art collectives are not a new phenomenon: After the mid-1900s, collectives have been a significant part of contemporary art,[57] to endure in times of socio-economic challenges and ecological crisis.

Dismantling the modernistic conception of art has constructed a space, in which conceptions of art, produced ideals, working methods, and contents have changed. The change has enabled negotiations between various conceptions and brought about new relations between art and activism. The art-historical contexts of artivism (artistic activism) are rooted in *German Expressionism, Feminist* and *Avant-garde Art* and in the anti-racist civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s. Politically transformative and activist art plays a central role in fights for social justice, such as environmental rights, gender diversity, and anti-racism. Artivism not only intents to raise awareness, mobilize people, redefine traditional political or societal issues and agendas, but also to reinvent art, transform existing concepts and distinctions. Artivism seeks for expressive ways of political intervention and initiates new forms of action beyond traditional paradigms of research.[58]

57. Charles Green, *The Third Hand: Collaboration in Art from Conceptualism to Postmodernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

58. Mari Mäkiranta and Vesa Puuronen, "Long live artivism," *RUUKKU — Studies in Artistic Research*, no. 20 (October 2023).

First resource: Committing on slow, uncertain changes and celebrating failures

In *Flowing Waters* our activism focuses on soil and water samples collected in areas impacted by mines, holding performances in riverine environments as well as documentation of the performances. The soil and water samples that the collective has gathered provide alarming evidence that the toxic substances used in mines are inexorably making their way through wastewaters and discharge pipes into natural waterways in Finnish Lapland.

Artist-researchers of the collective subject themselves in spots to what some would call irrational behavior—like walking twenty-five kilometers on top of a discharge pipe carrying wastewater from a mine into rivers. (Image 2) Such "irrational" performances reveal power hierarchies, draw attention to social injustices and bring forth critical perspectives on reality. Artivism is often associated with shocking or provocative behavior. In its work, *Flowing Waters* is not out to shock as much as it is to approach the natural environment compassionately. The collective focuses on slow rituals in company with the waters and the land. Characteristic of the performances in natural surroundings are a slow settling alongside nature, lingering in sometimes difficult riverside terrain and gathering corporeal knowledge. What is essential is commitment to a long-term effort and cooperation with a range of experts, nature, communities, and other activists. Artivism, based on the interests of a researcher, artist, activist, or various communities, can be connected to personal and political objectives related to subjugation, resistance, and empowerment. Supervising eco-activist research project requires an understanding that activist art may also be quiet, tentative, experimental, and searching. Sometimes, it leads to social, environmental, institutional, and political changes. At other times, it appears as slow, nearly invisible movements and powers.

Activist art and research may provide the alarming evidence of environment's state in well-honed arguments, socially impactful artworks and meticulously justified scientific findings. However, the outcomes of the research might be ignored in political decision-making processes and performances could be regarded as "irrational" and "nonconstructive." For supervision, these "failures" can reveal something with far more potential to prompt change than flawlessly realized research. In feedback sessions, "failures" can be seen as significant stages of gaining knowledge and a new perspective through "error."

Second resource: Rehearsing epistemic disobedience

The *Flowing Waters* collective frames its activism through historical and societal debates dealing with mining, critique of colonialism[59] and the ideas of cultural ecofeminism.[60] Critique of colonialism and cultural ecofeminism share a

59. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (ed.), *Another Knowledge is Possible: Beyond Northern Epistemologies* (London: Verso, 2007); Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2014).

60. Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Hanna Johansson, *Maataidetta jäljittämässä: Luonnon ja läsnäolon kirjoitusta suomalaisessa nykytaiteessa 1970–1995* (Helsinki: Like, 2005).

point of departure in epistemic disobedience. This entails critical understanding of and disengagement from the political and economic frames used to describe natural resources, narratives often featuring the resource-rich earth of the natural areas in the North. The position of the white, academically educated representatives of the mainstream population who have benefited from colonialism and residents of an area colonialized by the mining industry gives rise to a contradictory and critical epistemological horizon.

Epistemic disobedience means an effort to create connections between reality and different and unaccustomed forms of knowledge.[61] The core issue in supervising is to reflect on questions such as how the established methods of methodologies used in research in the humanities, social sciences demarcate, guide, and constrict the art and research praxis. Epistemic disobedience requires unlearning and contesting information produced by normative Western science, challenging the individualism embedded in the established methods of art-making and research. Artivist collaboration with the local people situated outside the academia and art world is an essential part of decolonial knowledge production and distribution.[62] As a supervisor I encourage artist-researchers to formulate concepts in collaboration with local communities, within people's ways of living. Concept-creation is not only an academic practice, but it occurs in social actions, for instance in anti-mining social movements and struggles for Indigenous livelihood. The challenge for artist-researchers is to listen to, learn from, and build responsible dialogues with both human and more-than-human beings.

61. Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 143.

62. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 2021).

Third resource: Seeking new ways to transform the power structures of the art, activism and research

Flowing Waters' activism is framed not only by experiences of nature but also by the theory which informs the work. In its thinking, the collective draws on colonial critique and cultural ecofeminism. Nature is not a passive object of research, waiting for engagement on the part of an artist-researcher, activist, or mine worker; it is conceived of as a non-human agent, as motion and force following laws of their own. In many respects, these echo the spirited "new" —materialist and post-humanist discussions in art and cultural research on the agencies of non-human nature, challenges to the anthropocentric mindset, and different approaches highlighting, ones that emphasize corporeality, affectivity, and materiality.[63]

Inspired by our collective's work, I encourage artist-researchers to challenge the individual ideals of authorship in research, art, and activism. I also supervise artist-researchers breaking the boundaries between different art-forms and venues — moving from site-specific performance to photography and video art, from art galleries to natural environments, villages, cities, and streets. In traversing nature along rivers, the *Flowing Waters* collective has extended its gaze in an effort to take in the dependency between the human and non-human. The connectivity with other species, nature, soil and water is something I encourage to explore deeply in eco-activist art and research. This enables seeking of the new ways of transforming the power structures of the art world and challenging the anthropocentric worldview.

63. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a "New Materialism" Through the Arts* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013); Katve-Kaisa Kontturi, *Following the Flows of Process: A New Materialist Account of Contemporary Art* (Turku: Turun Yliopisto, 2012); Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies* (Michigan: Open Humanities Press, 2012).

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE
BRIEF NOTES ON ARCHIPELAGIC THINKING AND ARTISTIC RESEARCH

Glenn Loughran

> I find it quite pleasant to pass from one atmosphere to another through crossing a border. We need to put an end to the idea of a border that defends and prevents. Borders must be permeable.[64]

Archipelagic thinking can be understood as an alternative systems-thinking framework that emerged out of Caribbean discourses in the late twentieth century.[65] Expanding on this in *Contemporary Archipelagic Thinking: Toward New Comparative Methodologies and Disciplinary Formations* (2020) Michelle Stephens and Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel argue how that main difference between archipelagic thinking and other systems theories concerns their grounded theory of relation, they write; "Archipelagoes are concrete and material, spatial, geographical, and geological occurrences that have been resignified by human interaction. They involve and entail a direct reference to the embodied experience of space that translates into a cognitive process."[66] Thinking beyond the archipelago as a system-metaphor, this definition connects archipelagic thinking to artistic research disciplines as "geographical, historical, social, and political."[67] From music to visual arts, circus to theatre, Ireland to Sweden, England to Portugal, each artistic research discipline is an island in a

64. Manthia Diawara, "One World in Relation," *NKA Journal of Contemporary African Art 2011*, no. 28 (2011), https://doi.org/10.1215/10757163-1266639.

65. Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989).

66. Michelle Stephens and Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, *Contemporary Archipelagic Thinking: Toward New Comparative Methodologies and Disciplinary Formations* (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2020).

67. Stephens and Martínez-San Miguel, *Contemporary Archipelagic Thinking: Toward New Comparative Methodologies and Disciplinary Formations*.

chain of islands, and each artistic research discipline is tied to an "embodied experience of space that translates into a cognitive process."[68]

To think artistic research through the lens of an archipelagic framework is to consider how the complex assemblage of artistic research disciplines could be supported by a border-crossing, trans- disciplinary, educational framework to challenge some of entrenched ideological assumptions surrounding artistic research, through the hegemonic lens of the sciences. In a general sense, these characteristics could be categorized as; expressive, individualistic, poetic, performative, inconsistent, incommensurable, andopaque.[69] Antithetical to the character of opacity in artistic research, the Open Science Paradigm, is held up as a beacon of light in support of transparency, access, knowledge and research.[70] Philosopher Byung-Chul Han has problematized such excessive forms of openness, optimization and transparency in digital culture. According to Han, the demand for transparency in the information society has fragmented social relations, flattened their complexity and undermined our capacity for trust. Because trust relies on our fundamental acceptance of unknowing, of the "other," demanding total knowledge and openness amounts to an obliteration of the "other," of difference, of diversity.[71] DATA that lacks the friction and opacity of the other, information that is in tune with the *Transparency Society*, is; techno-scientific data.

Within this context we can see how artistic research could be viewed as "other" to the techno-scientific paradigm in open research. The unknowability of artistic research is

68. An Yountae, *The Decolonial Abyss: Mysticism and Cosmopolitics from the Ruins* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2020).

69. OECD, *Frascati Manual 2015 Guidelines for Collecting and Reporting Data on Research and Experimental Development, The Measurement of Scientific, Technological and Innovation Activities*, (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2015).

70. "Open Science," European Commision, https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/open-science__en.

71. Byung-Chul Han, *The Transparency Society* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2015), 48.

obstinate and resistant to the full capture of knowledge in the transparency society. To look at this dynamic value-system through the lens of Island studies is to attend to the colonial, epistemological divisions inherent in the demand for openness and transparency. This is the lesson inherited from post-colonial thinkers such as Édouard Glissant, who wrote: "We need to claim the right to opacity,"[72] and Boaventura De Sousa Santos who, more recently, argues against the "abyssal line" that historically separates western knowledge from everything else,

> Modern Western thinking is an abyssal thinking. It consists of a system of visible and invisible distinctions, the invisible ones being the foundation of the visible ones. The invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of "this side of the line" and the realm of "the other side of the line." The division is such that "the other side of the line" vanishes as reality, becomes nonexistent, and is indeed produced as nonexistent. Nonexistent means not existing in any relevant or comprehensible way of being. Whatever is produced as nonexistent is radically excluded because it lies beyond the realm of what the accepted conception of inclusion considers to be its other. What most fundamentally characterizes abyssal thinking is thus the impossibility of the co-presence of the two sides of the line.[73]

Through archipelagic/post-abyssal frameworks we can argue for a different understanding of research, one viewed less through the rationalist-ontological approaches

72. Edouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. B. Wing (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997).

73. Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges," *Review—Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations* 30, no. 1 (2007), http://www.jstor.org/stable/40241677.

prescribed by the open research paradigm and more for research paradigms grounded in a relational ontology. Where archipelagic thinking is built upon relations between entities, islands, and disciplines, post-abyssal thinking is non-ontological, it prescribes a "groundless ground," where flux and the unfolding of knowledge take priority over its capture and calcification. These frameworks can support the valorization of the diverse range of disciplines, practices and places that make up the field of artistic research, provide alternative means, methods and forms through which to articulate and evaluate artistic research as complex, contingency, and diverse. Crucial in this process is an understanding of *Relation* between knowledge fields (similarities and differences), but also, as defined by Glissant, the space of poetic hybridization (Chaos) that emerges through movement, through disciplinary transgression.[74] By mapping these border crossings, we affirm the right to opacity, diversity and contingency in artistic research and enable alternative processes of self-identification that are simultaneously *rooted* by disciplinary characteristics and rootless in their becoming with and through the *other*.

74. Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*.

WE SUPERVISE TO FIND COMRADES!

Geoff Cox

> Input is data, it has a form and a purpose. It is always ready to be in relation, to make a connection.
> —Denise Ferreira da Silva[75]

Cultural forms have been radically transformed by computation, but what of research itself? How do collaborative practices associated with computational and network cultures challenge the production, circulation and supervision of research? These questions emerge from the intersection of artistic and cultural practices with computational capitalism, and the desire to find alternatives to the predominant neoliberal logistical management of knowledge production. Recognizing there is no outside as such, it remains important to challenge the relations of supervision from within, to break from its inherent individualism and managerialism, and to offer some examples of relational and connective practices that are attuned to the material systems and infrastructures through which research is instituted.

These opening comments are situated in the context of my (supervisory) work at the Centre for the Study of the Networked Image (CSNI), a research centre at London South Bank University.[76] The majority of our research is undertaken through collaborative partnerships with cultural institutions, and in what follows some examples are described which have the general function of challenging institutional practices. Each in their own ways allow for a rethinking of curatorial and artistic research paradigms in practice, and for a re-assessment of the forms through which this is expressed and made public. Our working assumption is that images

75. Denise Ferreira da Silva, "Foreword," in Stefano Harney & Fred Moten, *All Incomplete* (Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions, 2021).

76. More on CSNI can be found at https://www.centreforthestudyof.net/.

are not singular objects, nor necessarily visual, but rather assemblages, dependent on specific software and hardware environments to be executed and rendered.[77] We think that distributed forms and collaborative practices associated with computational and network cultures can provide a useful challenge to dominant forms of supervision which perpetuate unhelpful knowledge hierarchies.

In one of our collaborative PhDs, Victoria Ivanova has worked with—and has since become research and development strategic lead for—the Arts Technologies programme at Serpentine Galleries.[78] The project aims to remodel the contemporary art institution into a platform to support the development of generative, systemic and impactful modalities for the interaction between the contemporary art field and the technology sector. The collaborative research project of Rachel Falconer sets out to do something similar, working with Whitechapel Gallery, asking how technology disrupts the value chain of contemporary art, and reflecting on the challenges and potential futures of distributed audience engagement and public programming, as well as challenging the sovereignty of the curator. By extension, we might ask how technology can disrupt the value chain of research, and thus allow for reflection on the challenges and potential futures of distributed curatorial and indeed sovereign supervisory forms?

In another case, and arguably our most developed partnership, CSNI has collaborated with The Photographers' Gallery, and in particular its digital programme, on a number of PhD projects. In the first of these, Nicolas Malevé has examined how machines learn to see the world with a focus

77. These ideas are further developed in the collaborative text, developed in the context of the Centre for the Study of the Networked Image (CSNI) at London South Bank University. For more on this, see Geoff Cox et al., "Affordances of the Networked Image," *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* 30, no. 61-62 (2021), https://doi.org/10.7146/nja.v30i61-62.127857.

78. Arts Technologies programme at Serpentine Galleries, https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/arts-technologies/.

on the visual dataset ImageNet and annotation practices to register hidden human labor and to better understand epistemic regimes of visuality.[79] The interest in this context of supervision, is how parallel understandings across computer science and pedagogy open up new insights for both. What can we learn about learning from the dynamics of machine learning? What might be gained from moving from a constructivist model of learning associated with Piaget (which machine learning is based on) to the radical pedagogy of Paolo Friere or bell hooks or the *undercommons* of Fred Morten and Stefano Harney? Furthermore, along similar speculative lines, we might ask what can be learnt about supervision from so-called supervised and unsupervised learning?[80] It might be productive to think about some parallels here, at least to challenge lazy assumptions, even though clearly the terms mean different things in different contexts. It is noteworthy that in machine learning it is generally understood that an unsupervised approach to learning yields more novel and unexpected outcomes.

In a second PhD with The Photographers' Gallery, the photographic image is examined as a computational object comprised of data circulating within networks, with damaging ecological effects. Working with the title "The Image at the End of the World"[81] (inspired by Anna Tsing's "Mushroom at the End of the World"), Marloes de Valk draws attention to the weight of image data, the hardware required to transmit, receive and view it, how these are produced, consumed and disposed of, to ask what alternative practices exist that try to reduce its environmental impact. Taking

79. Nicolas Malevé, "Algorithms of Vision: Human and Machine Learning in Computa-tional Visual Culture" (PhD diss., London South Bank University 2021), https://unthinking.photography/other/algorithms-of-vision.

80. Note that in supervised learning, the algorithm "learns" from the training dataset by iteratively making predictions on the data and adjusting for the correct answer, whereas unsupervised learning processes unlabeled or raw data. See https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/supervised-unsupervised-learning/.

81. Marloes de Valk, "The Image at the End of the World," https://thephotographersgallery.org.uk/image-end-world.

a further reference from Tsing, the project refuses the rhetoric of progress and the dismissal of alternatives based on their scalability, and instead focuses on small scale practices that aim at lowering the network infrastructure's environmental costs.[82] In this context it is important to reflect on the research infrastructures of the university that tend to be outsourced to big tech (such as Google, Amazon, Microsoft) that retain no interest — or indeed expertise — in education as such. These services do not facilitate safe spaces nor are focussed on the free exchange and care of knowledge and learning but logistical capitalism. So, how to develop more autonomy over the technical infrastructures through which we conduct our research? In other words, how to develop alternative tools that emerge from the need to configure and maintain a more sustainable and equitable network, from sharing hosted services such as cloud and encrypted file-sharing to code distribution and version control systems?

Clearly the tools and practices we use for our writing shape collaborative content. As an alternative to teams or Google docs, for instance, Etherpad (pad, for short) is a customizable open-source online writing tool that flattens some of the inherent hierarchies of writing. It allows for a different model for the organization and development of projects, the making of publications and other related research tasks that tend to follow a prescribed social relation. Authors are identifiable through colors, usernames are optional with writing anonymous by default. Martino Morandi describes this as "organizational writing,"[83] quoting Michel Callon's description of "writing devices that put organization-in-action into words" and how writing in this way collectively "involves conflict and leads to intense negotiation;

82. See the online publication "Damaged Earth Catalog," a reference to Stewart Brand's Whole Earth Catalog, at http://damaged.bleu255.com/.

83. Martino Morandi, "Constant Padology," *MARCH* (January 2023), https://march.international/constant-padology/.

and such collective work is never concluded, for writing leads to endless rewriting."[84]

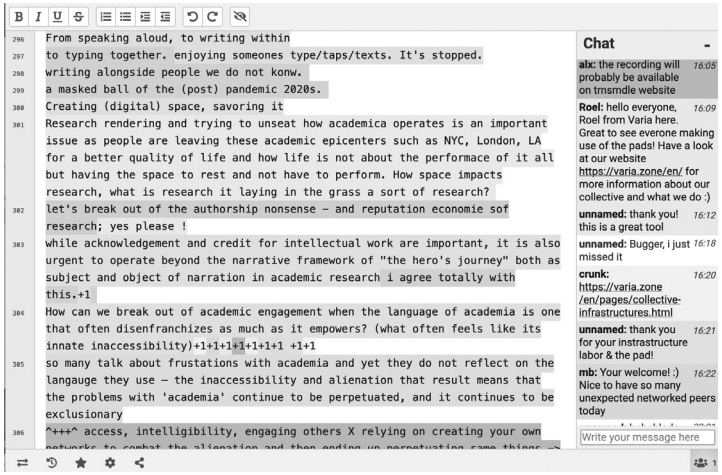


Figure 1: Screenshot of Pad from transmediale workshop (2022).

An important further principle here is that it helps to make the network infrastructure materially present, and the administration and affordance of the apparatus becomes a necessary object for critical reflection on the broader assemblage of parts.[85] In this sense, and by extension, activities such as supervision can be understood as one of care that extends beyond the prescribed relation of supervisor-supervisee to the broader socio-technical infrastructure through which that relation is constituted. This takes its parallel in the ethics of feminist servers that question the material

84. Morandi is quoting Michel Callon, "Writing and (Re)writing Devices as Tools for Managing Complexity," in *Complexities*, ed. John Law and Annemarie Mol (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 203.

85. Furthermore, Etherbox, developed by Michael Murtaugh, is a local and portable version of Etherpad that runs on a small computer that creates a local wireless network without the need for an internet connection, and allows for more autonomy over the way tools and practices shape collaborative content. See *Networks of One's Own*, a playful reference to Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own, at* https://networksofonesown.constantvzw.org/etherbox/manual.html, and https://networksofonesown.constantvzw.org/etherbox/manual.html#episode-1-etherbox.

conditions of serving information to counter the hegemonic server-client structures of big tech.[86] To further explain and quote, a feminist server "is a situated technology" and "autonomous in the sense that she decides for her own dependencies," and "treats network technology as part of a social reality."[87] In this way a server can become a relatively safe space of learning and exchange of knowledge to question the formation of the technology within which the system is made operational —and through which it *serves*. ServPub is another example in which CSNI is involved, a self-hosted decentralized platform for research and practice on computational publishing, run by artists, coders, activists, collectives, scholars, researchers to build shared knowledge and resources on alternative infrastructures to serve and publish as the name suggests.[88] Using small cheap computers, different services are provided to exert more autonomy over the process of working together, and to highlight how the infrastructures of research depend on maintenance, care, trust, understanding, and collective (un)learning.

Alternatives to the server-client model can also be found in the ongoing collaboration between Digital Aesthetics Research Center at Aarhus University, CSNI and transmediale festival for art and digital culture based in Berlin.[89]

86. For instance, see *A Traversal Network of Feminist Servers*, a collaborative project formed around intersectional, feminist, ecological servers, available at https://atnofs.constantvzw.org/.

87. For a fuller elaboration of Feminist servers, produced as a collective outcome of a Constant meeting in Brussels, December 2013, see https://esc.mur.at/en/werk/feminist-server.

88. ServPub is the name of a working group of researchers at CSNI, Slade School of Fine Art, Aarhus University, and the grassroots community art-tech networks of In-grid, Systerserver, and Varia/CC. See https://servpub.net/.

89. The workshop and associated publications are organized by Christian Ulrik Andersen and myself, with transmediale, and others. In brief, an annual open call is released based loosely on the festival theme of that year, targeting PhD students from a diverse spread of institutions as well as other artists and curators with a research practice. All accepted participants are asked to share a short essay of 1000 words, and upload it to a wiki, and respond online using a linked pad, as well as in person at a three-day research workshop, at which they offer feedback and reduce their texts to 500 words for publication in a "newspaper" that is presented and launched at the festival. Lastly, the participants are invited to submit full length articles of approximately 5000 words for the online open access

Some of the tools and collective practices described thus far have been put into action, including using online writing platforms such as pads and other experimental publishing tools to challenge some of the normative procedures of knowledge production, peer review and publication. Workshop participants not only engage with research questions and offer critical feedback to each other, but also with the conditions for producing and disseminating their research, as well as its institutional base, and the infrastructures in operation. In 2023, *Toward a Minor Tech* made this explicit, setting out to address alternatives to major (or big) tech, and taking inspiration from Deleuze and Guattari's essay "Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature,"[90] and the three main characteristics identified in the essay, namely deterritorialization, political immediacy, and collective value. As well as exploring our shared interests and understanding of minor tech in terms of content, the approach was to implement these political principles in practice.[91]

In other words, no Adobe products were used, and all tools are freely available through the git versioning system GitLab. Moreover, free and open-source software development is a collective practice that challenges the normative relations of production associated with commercial development, such as a narrow definition of authorship and copyright, and fixed divisions of labor, usefully extended to the question the reputation economy of academia and its distribution regimes. More to the point, the publishing

journal APRJA (see https://aprja.net/). The down/up scaling of the text is part of the pedagogy — condensing the argument to identify key arguments and then expanding it once more to substantiate claims. The final stage of the review process ensures that all articles adhere to conventional academic standards for scholarship such as double-blind review.

90. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka — Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, [1975] 1986).

91. Subsequent newspaper and journal publications have been produced iteratively in collaboration with Varia (an art and tech collective based in Rotterdam) using wiki-to-print tools, based on MediaWiki software, Paged Media CSS techniques and the JavaScript library Paged.js, which renders the PDF. See Christian Ulrik Andersen & Geoff Cox, eds., "Editorial: Toward a Minor Tech," *APRJA* vol 12, no. 1 (2023), https://doi.org/10.7146/aprja.v12i1.140431.

platform developed for the workshop takes on a pedagogic, if not supervisory, function allowing for an iterative approach to thinking and learning together as part of a network of connected material practices. In the latest workshop *Content/Form*, held in 2024, the relation between content and form were even more pronounced and extended using ServPub (mentioned above); portable small computers that acted as a server and ran the wiki-to-print software to allow for more autonomy over organizational processes.[92] Both technological and social forms are brought together as part of an affective infrastructure for collective research.

In contrast to the approaches described above, it remains an oddity that academic books in the arts/humanities and social sciences are still predominantly produced as fixed objects written by individual authors and traditional publishers.[93] Experimental practices on the other hand expand upon the processual character of research, and incorporate practices such as collaborative authorship, community peer review and annotation, updating and iterative processes of developing a set of versions over time. Versioning presents "an opportunity to reflect critically on the way the research and publishing workflow is currently (teleologically and hierarchically) set up, and how it has been fully integrated within certain institutional and commercial settings."[94] An iterative approach allows for other possibilities that draw publishing and research closer together in ways that have implications for supervision beyond recording meetings on a VLE, in ways that are more open and processual, as networked objects distributed across various other spaces and

92. More details on the *Content/Form* workshop and tools as well as the newspaper publication can be found at https://wiki4print.servpub.net/index.php?title=Content-Form.

93. See Janneke Adema's "The Processual Book How Can We Move Beyond the Printed Codex?" (2022), LSE blog, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsereviewofbooks/2022/01/21/the-processual-book-how-can-we-move-beyond-the-printed-codex/.

94. The Community-led Open Publication Infrastructures for Monographs research project, of which Adema has been part, is an excellent resource in this respect, including a section of Versioning Books from which the quote is taken. See https://compendium.copim.ac.uk/.

temporalities. As such, and with these examples, the divisions of labor between writers, editors, designers, software developers are brought closer together in ways in a non-linear publishing workflow where form and content unfold at the same time, allowing one to shape the other.

These principles can also be found in my collaborative book *Aesthetic Programming*, co-written with Winnie Soon in 2021.[95] In a section on "open publishing," we emphasized that writing a book is necessarily a work in progress, necessarily "stuck in an endless loop of its own becoming."[96] If considered like software, and available in various forms including an online Git repository, encouraging new versions to be produced by others, we hoped to challenge commercial publishing conventions and illuminate our capacity to understand some of the infrastructures through which we encode our ideas and distribute them across networks. The provocation was to fork a book the way we fork software.[97] All contents are offered as an open resource, to encourage other researchers to fork a copy and customize their own versions, with different references, examples, reflections and new chapters open for further modification and re-use. This is common practice in software development of course, particularly in the case of free and open-source software, in which developers place versions of their programs in version-control repositories (such as GitLab) so that others can download, clone, and fork them.[98]

95. Winnie Soon and Geoff Cox, *Aesthetic Programming* (London: Open Humanities Press, 2021). Link to downloadable PDF and online version can be found at https://aesthetic-programming.net/; and Git repository at https://gitlab.com/aesthetic-programming/book.

96. Soon and Cox, 21.

97. To clarify, a fork is a copy of a repository. Forking a repository allows you to freely experiment with changes without affecting the original project. Whereas versioning is the provision of a time-stamped update under the same general provisions of the original text, forking is realised by a third party that is not identical with the original author.

98. In response to the invitation to fork a copy, Mark Marino and Sarah Ciston added their chapter 8 and a half (sandwiched between chapters 8 and 9), Sarah Ciston & Mark C. Marino, "How to Fork a Book: The Radical Transformation of Publishing," *Medium*, 2021, https://markcmarino.medium.com/how-to-fork-a-book-the-radical-transformation-of

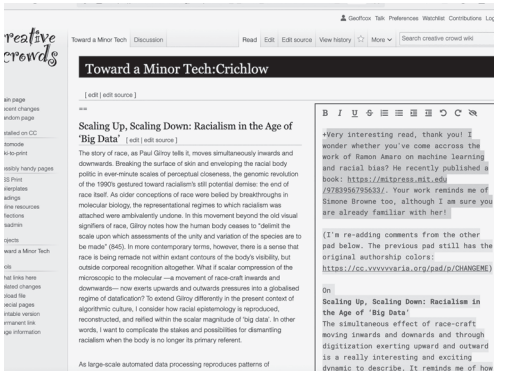
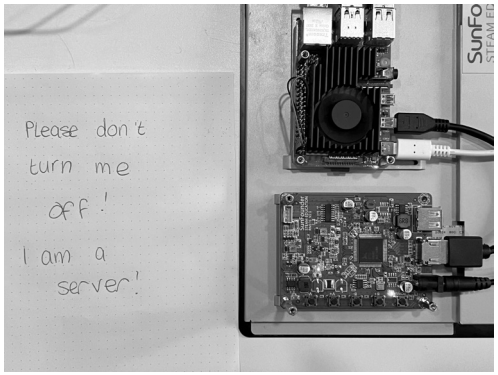


Figure 2: Screenshot of wiki and linked pad for comments
Figure 3: Using wiki-to-print tools for layout
Figure 4: Toward a Minor Tech newspaper (2023).



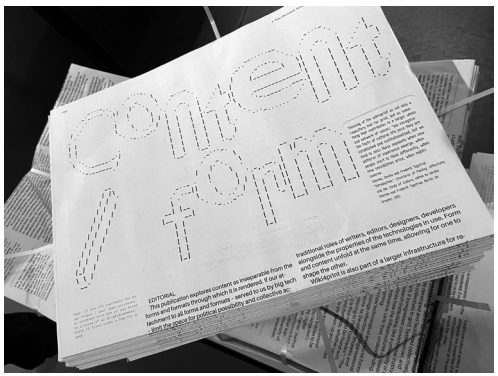


Figure 5: Raspberry pi portable server for Content/Form workshop, 2024.
Figure 6: Content/Form newspaper at transmediale festival, Berlin, February 2024.
Figure 7: *Content/Form* newspaper, launched at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, February 2024.

Put simply, the point is that by focussing on experimental publishing activities, the sharing of resources, modification of texts and versioning, other possibilities emerge for research supervision that break out of a model of supervision constituted by tired academic procedures (and tired academics) that assume knowledge to be produced and imparted in particular ways. In terms of supervision, peer learning is an important component of this, in which relations are distributed more horizontally. Indeed, it's an unfortunate phrase "super-vision," the prefix I mean, as it assumes one position is above or superior to the other rather, than in parallel or in reciprocal relation. It is hard not to simply associate research supervision with the managerialism that seems to pervade all current academic work. Better to turn to other possibilities suggested by affective infrastructures, and to artistic research with its potential to operate as institutional critique of established knowledge regimes and published forms, to offer more open and collaborative forms such as the examples discussed.

Importantly, the point is not to valorize free and open-source software as if the affordances are set in advance, but to stress how technological and social forms come together, and to encourage reflection on shared organizational processes and social relations. This is what Stevphen Shukaitis and Joanna Figiel argue, in "Publishing to Find Comrades" (a phrase which in turn they borrow from Andre Breton, and I borrow from them for this essay): "The openness of open publishing is thus not to be found with the properties of digital tools and methods, whether new or otherwise, but in how those tools are taken up and utilized within various social milieus."[99] The suggestion is not to publish pre-existing

-publishing-3e1f4a39a66c. In addition, we consider the book's translation into Chinese as a fork, on which we have been working closely with Taiwanese art and coding communities, and Taipei Arts Centre. See Shih-yu Hsu, Winnie Soon, Tzu-Tung Lee, Chia-Lin Lee, and Geoff Cox, "Collective Translation as Forking (分岔)" (2024).

99. Stevphen Shukaitis and Joanna Figiel, "Publishing to Find Comrades: Constructions of Temporality and Solidarity in Autonomous Print Cultures," *Lateral* no. 8.2 (Fall 2019), https://doi.org/10.25158/L8.2.3.

knowledge and communicate this to a fixed reader — as is the case with much academic publishing — but to work towards developing social conditions for the coproduction of meaning, to both make something public and make publics. As they express it, "publishing is not something that occurs at the end of a process of thought, a bringing forth of artistic and intellectual labor, but rather establishes a social process where this may further develop and unfold."[100]

That one publishes to establish new social relations might be transposed to supervision, informed by what Fred Moten and Stefano Harney have described as the "logisticality of the undercommons,"[101] in contrast to the proliferation of capitalist logics exercised through the management of pedagogy and research. In light of the undercommons, it would be tempting to argue for under-vision rather than *super*-vision here perhaps.

The further emphasis here is to insist that publishing can be part of an *undervision* process — to stick with the phrase — that is collectively organized, and that can help to rupture some of the traditional hierarchies associated with academic publishing and the logistics of research practice. This is to insist that to publish, and make things public, is to generate new social relations, forged through collaboration, theft and fugitivity (if we follow Moten and Harney). Academic publishing points to the reputation economy in which academics (and perhaps especially aspiring ones such as PhD students) provide free labour for pay-walled journals — and thereby are forced to pay for articles twice over rather than steal them back — and despite the clear trend towards open access in academic publishing, relatively little has changed in practice and scholars still seek to distribute their work through mainstream journals even when

100. Shukaitis and Figiel, "Publishing to Find Comrades: Constructions of Temporality and Solidarity in Autonomous Print Cultures."

101. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions, 2013).

more accessible and sustainable forms are available. Similarly, these tired workflows tend to follow a model that remains relatively unchanged since industrialism — and arguably supervision follows the same factory logic (if we take the word supervision at face value). Attention to logistics is at the core of this, and the rejection of commercial, outsourced software and hardware and their protocols goes some way to draw attention to questions around access and control over resources and how resources shape ideas.

Finally, I refer again to Moten and Harney who characterize the university as a site of work in which the lines between worker and management have become indistinguishable. In neoliberal institutions such as the university, the structure of supervision, which Moten and Harney understand to be a form of managerial discipline, pervades every aspect of work, and prepares students for supervision not study.

> First, students make the higher education system. Professors are primarily supervisory. Second, students working to become teachers, in any area, are — all of them — being groomed for management. Graduate students feel this contradiction and it hurts because they are moving from the shop floor to management. But the fact is that if you want to teach for money in our system, you're supposed to supervise. [...] Realizing that you have to supervise to teach for money, even lousy money, in our system can then lead to two forms of collective organization. We can take from the job our money and do something else together, or we can work to overturn a system that chains study to supervision because only this overturning is going to break that line.[102]

It is through recognition of our shared complicity in these logics, which necessarily implicates students and teachers

102. Harney & Moten, *All Incomplete*, 123-24.

alike, that undercommon sociality might develop. The need remains to challenge normative relations of supervision, to break away from inherent individualism and managerialism based as it is on sublimated factory logic, and open up conditions for the development of *under-vision*. We supervise to find comrades.

I DO NOT HAVE A PHD AND YET I SUPERVISE PHDS

LEE Wing Ki

Queering Identities

Subjectivity plays a vital role in the quest and thirst for knowledge in arts and humanities. It is however equally at risk to disclaim or essentialize the subjectivity of a researcher and research supervisor. Who am I? What am I? What and how does one's identities inform one's research and the research supervision? As the title suggests, "I Do Not Have a PhD and yet I Supervise PhDs." Such self-statement could be controversial as a PhD qualification may prescribe the ability to supervise PhDs. I would think otherwise; and I do otherwise. Nonetheless, the self-statement shall invite debate, criticism and at best sharing of pedagogical practices to weave the heterogeneous nature of research supervision in contemporary arts.

Queering Methodologies

Like many of our generation in academia, we learn on the fly. The sense of becoming, the expeditious pace, and the demand to immediately engage in research supervision in academia prescribe us to supervise artistic research, rather than first obtaining a qualification.

Two years ago, I started the journey of co-supervising PhD projects, also being appointed to a research administration position at my institution. I have been working at the institution about a decade. Secured external research grants. Published peer-review articles. Exhibited artworks. Curated exhibitions. At the very beginning, I did not realize these attempts are instrumental to PhD supervision. Frankly, these are skillsets that a PhD researcher should have, and that I can share my experience to. However, I can hardly conflate skillsets and knowledge in the realm of PhD training. One of

the PhD projects examines identity formation of LGBTQIA+ and diaspora and movement of people in the context of recent Hong Kong – a meaningful project in the thick of socio-political turbulence and transformation in the past decades in Hong Kong and worldwide. The PhD supervisory team, in principle, is composed of me, a media artist, an ethnographer, and a cultural theorist. The benefit of team supervision is expansive. If I were able to provoke, I would strongly encourage cross-institution supervision and therefore intellectual exchange. Meanwhile we need to be mindful in handling expectation and communication between the team supervisors, and between the PhD researcher and the supervisory team.

Queering Knowledge

Artistic research has been an emerging field, even more so outside higher education in Europe and North America. Would my experience suffice to scrutinize the making of artistic research, research supervision and the aggregated knowledge?

First and foremost, the product, in the institutional framework and regard. A typical practice-based and/or practice-led research deal composes of the making of creative artefact(s) and a dissertation evolved from the research question, and the two are not separable and always informing and reinforcing one another. The consent of two informing components as a graduation requirement is a legacy from the UK model. Certainly, there are resistance and misconception of the components: as the terminologies inform, traditional output (that you know what it is) versus non-traditional output (that you may not know what it is); text-based and non text-based work (and what if text is an artistic medium, a deliberate choice and a practice *per se*? Simply more to explore and question). I feel fortunate enough to be able to conduct and facilitate artistic research that may have been seen as "exceptional" and "queer" within the institution.

British's colonial legacy in Hong Kong's higher education and other parts of the world is influential: the power of English as language and medium of instruction for instance. The Research Assessment Exercise (and Research Excellence Framework in the future) is a prime example as PhD supervision is one of the aspects in measuring the performance of research environment of an institution. Academic tenure, even though it was removed in the UK through the Education Reform Act, is still a pursuit amongst early career academics and PhD researchers. The neoliberalist model in higher education is ubiquitous. I am ambivalent on future development, as it will and always have been a double colonization. Yet I see the in-between space, in a city that is not essentially Eastern nor Western, to create hybrid space for pedagogical approach and new knowledge, in formats that may not be measurable and unpredictable: of unknowing, not-knowing, of urge, desire and pleasure.

Desire and Pleasure

As much as compliance, obligation, pressure, and expectation we have been mentioning and observed, I would like to return to two operative words in governing my thinking and practice in artistic research: desire and pleasure.[103]

In the introduction to *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth Century French Hermaphodite*, Michel Foucault (1978) mentions "the happy limbo of a non-identity"[104] to describe the state of being of hermaphrodite, that best summarize my views and experiences on being queer, a queer researcher, a supervisor, and a supervisor without a PhD. The quest and thirst for knowledge is a desire, also a deliberate choice.

103. See Henk Slager, *The Pleasure of Research* (Østfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2015).

104. Michel Foucault, "Introduction," in Herculine Barbin, *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth century French Hermaphrodite* (Sussex: Harvester Press, [1978] 1980).

Being a PhD supervisor is a constructed identity. The lived experience and desire supersede, if not goes against, the socialization within academia and higher education. I would first advocate a non-binary state of being a supervisor, as teaching and learning informs one another. At best, a non-identity should be cultivated and achieved. Let's undo institutional straitjacket, exercise your power and courage to create new knowledge, navigate between spaces, create and authorize new spaces, your spaces and more spaces.

ON ACADEMIC KINSHIPS IN DOCTORAL STUDIES IN THE ARTS

Alexandra Toland

"How was the relationship with your doctoral father? Was it a relationship you'd seek to emulate?"

These were questions posed after a talk on academic kinships I gave at the *Utrecht Summer School on Supervising Artistic and Practice-based Research* in August 2023. In Germany, the doctoral supervisor is traditionally, informally referred to as *Doktor-Vater* or *Doktor-Mutter* (doctoral father or mother), indicating a hierarchical model of kinship based on reproductive divisions of labor in biological families that is often overtly patriarchal and reinforcing of institutional power dynamics. The doctoral father or mother is an "experienced master of a specific research area" with an esteemed reputation, broad professional network, and public standing.[105] At best, this person promotes and defends their PhD candidates and invests time and resources in helping them intellectually develop and successfully finish their studies. At worst, this person can be a manipulative or neglectful master who exploits or ignores the labor of their doctoral students at high emotional costs. While mentoring teams and supervisory boards are slowly replacing the "parental" model in Germany and beyond, the concept of kinship is still worthy of examining for purposes of community building in doctoral education. The concept of kinship in academia is furthermore aligned with anthropological developments in kinship studies, which have long moved away from references to biologically determined relationships towards what Janet Carsten has termed "cultures of

105. "Phase #02: Distinguishing the actors," Advancing Supervision for Artistic Research Doctorates, 2021, accessed May 1, 2023, https://advancingsupervision.eu/outputs/simulating-supervision-scenarios/.

relatedness."[106] As a model, academic kinship can be understood as a culture of relatedness that is based on concepts of relational mentoring, institutional care, extra-institutional engagement, and peer-based learning, which I will briefly sketch out below.[107]

"It was good, but not necessarily something I seek to emulate." After admitting to having had a mutually supportive and overwhelmingly positive relationship with my own doctoral father, soil physicist and arts advocate Prof. Dr. Gerd Wessolek, for which I am still very grateful, the discussions that occurred throughout the Utrecht Summer School confirmed my intuitions for an expanded model of academic kinship. The Summer School and similar events,[108] have explored doctoral programs in the arts as particularly fruitful places to develop alternative models of supervision. This is in part due to their transdisciplinary nature and open-ended, highly individualized methods for integrating practice and theory. Most doctoral programs in the arts require at least two mentors and encourage exchange with other universities either by legal necessity or common interest. The ideas presented here are thus rooted in developments in doctoral education in the arts but can be extended to other fields of post-graduate education. Academic kinship is by nature relational and not exhaustive or exclusive as it offers the possibility of kinship not only between students and their supervisors, but also between supervisors and other

106. Janet Carsten, *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

107. A longer version of these considerations, based on my first-hand experience as PhD Programme Director at the Bauhaus-Universität and second-hand knowledge of other third cycle doctoral programmes in the arts, as presented at the summer school in Utrecht, is available in Alexandra Toland, "Mother, Sister, Colleague, Friend: on Academic Kinships in PhD Mentoring Relationships," in *Value through Design: Beiträge zu Perspektiven Design-basierter Forschung im Kontext des Doktorats*, ed. Herbert Grüner (St. Pölten: New Design University, 2023).

108. These include "multiplier events" hosted by the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership for Advancing Supervision for Artistic Research Doctorates, the ELIA working group on Artistic Research, the Society for Artistic Research and EARN European Artistic Research Network.

supervisors, between supervisors and staff, and between students and other students and a host of other individuals inside and outside academia. From a feminist perspective, the concept of academic kinship is also useful in thinking about relationships as opportunities for community building and the cultivation of institutional care. As the common adage goes, it takes a village to raise a PhD.

In their paper, "A Relational Approach to Mentoring Women Doctoral Students," Jo Ann Gammel and Amy Rutstein-Riley posit relational mentoring as a process of intellectual and emotional development for both mentor and mentee alike.[109] According to Gammel and Rutstein-Riley, "the essence of relational mentoring is growth that moves both parties to a new place whether it is greater academic productivity, academic and professional collaborations, or a sharing of more personal and social aspects of each other's lives."[110] Drawing on feminist approaches to education, relational mentoring promotes things like "sense of worth, clarity, productivity, desire for more connection, and empowerment" in relationships focused on mutual care – of research topics, of actors and participants involved, and of the outcomes and impacts on a given community.[111] In reference to Anne Mulvey's account of mutuality and muse-ship in feminist research,[112] Gammel and Rutstein-Riley go on to describe "the nine sister goddesses" in Greek mythology.[113] These figures appear as alternatives to the singular and usually authoritarian mentor figure (traditionally the elder guiding Telemachus, son of Odysseus and Penelope) who

109. Jo Ann Gammel and Amy Rutstein-Riley, "A Relational Approach to Mentoring Women Doctoral Students," *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 2016, no. 147 (2016): 28, https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.20196.

110. Gammel and Rutstein-Riley, 28.

111. Gammel and Rutstein-Riley, 28.

112. Anne Mulvey, "Mentors, Muses, and Mutuality: Honoring Barbara Snell Dohrenwend," *Journal of Community Psychology* 40, no. 1 (2012), https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20507.

113. Gammel and Rutstein-Riley, "A Relational Approach to Mentoring Women Doctoral Students," 29.

sagely guides and oversees the journey of his protégé. In doctoral research programs in the arts the nine sisters appear as supportive figures with different functions who contribute to the journies of PhD students without much ado. These include program directors, career center advisors, grant coordinators, university IT admins, workshop technicians, librarians, college gallery curators, engaged alumnae and postdocs, visiting professors and guest researchers, and a host of university functionaries who all contribute in various pragmatic and meaningful ways towards an individual's attainment of a doctoral degree. The contributions of the nine sisters develop for the most part dyadically and are carried out as goodwill based on shared interests or skills, or as administrative duties in what could be called instances of institutional care. Despite the responsibilities of professors stipulated in study and exam regulations, the academic kinship model recognizes and celebrates the contributions and competencies of all members of a research community. Henry Rogers and Inês Bento-Coelho have similarly highlighted the shared accountability of research institutions "in which all members of academic staff in any given faculty, division, college, or school are recognized as having a responsibility for engaging in research and for generating new knowledge."[114]

In the interest of shared responsibility, additional identities emerge beyond mothers and fathers and (at least) nine-sisters: academic "aunts" acting outside direct supervisory relationships, cohorts of peers acting as "siblings" or "cousins," and alumni, emeriti, and established academics and community leaders who appear as "elders" or role models. Rogers and Bento-Coehlo emphasize the importance

114. Henry Rogers and Inês Bento-Coelho, "Situating Supervision in the Research Environment: Re-situating Supervision in a Peer-Learning Context," *Phase #03: Improving Practices, Situating Supervision in the Research Environment*, 2021, accessed May 1, 2023, https://advancingsupervision.eu/wp/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-VERSION-Situating-Supervision-in-the-Research-Environment.pdf.

Rogers and Bento-Coelho, 27.

of peer-based learning in doctoral programs in the arts, referring to David Boud and Alison Lee's definition of peer-based learning as a "reciprocal learning activity"[115] that "involves participants learning from and with each other in both formal and informal ways."[116] The camaraderie among PhD candidates as "siblings" or "cousins" often characterizes the heart of PhD programs. Structured PhD programs, compared to individual research tracks, recognize the value of peer-to-peer networking and support structures as something as integral to PhD education as good supervision. Beyond siblingship, Laura Ellingson and Patricia Sotirin propose the practice of "academic aunting" as a "generative alternative to mothering and sisterhood" in feminist approaches to teaching, advising and evaluating.[117] The aunt is posited as a "heuristic trope for contemporary feminist relations and political agency" in academic contexts; a role "not bound by the obligations of nuclear familial relationships, but instead can be entered into voluntarily or conferred on the basis of affection and respect rather than obligation or lineage."[118] In doctoral programs, the role of aunt is often assumed by program directors, coordinators, and instructors, external mentors and other figures who provide spaces for empowerment, reflection, connectivity and growth. In transdisciplinary research projects, further kinship roles emerge from extra-institutional engagement, with e.g. representatives from local governments, community groups, businesses, independent research institutes, museums and cultural centers, and audience members of all ages and kinds.

115. David Boud, "Making the Move to Peer Learning," in *Peer Learning in Higher Education: Learning From & With Each Other*, ed. David Boud, Ruth Cohen, and Jane Sampson (London: Kogan Page, 2001), 9.

116. David Boud, "Situating Academic Development in Professional Work: Using Peer Learning," *The International Journal for Academic Development* 4, no. 1 (1999): 6, https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144990040102.

117. Laura L. Ellingson and Patty Sotirin, "Academic Aunting: Reimaging Feminist (Wo)Mentoring, Teaching, and Relationships," *Women and Language* 31, no. 1 (2008): 35.

118. Ellingson and Sotirin, 36.

Kathleen McConnell makes a case for academic kinship "in part because the designation of kin affords relationships a certain weight and texture that terms such as coauthor, colleague, and mentor do not."[119] Despite critique, even doctoral father / doctoral mother relationships may fit into the kinship framing insofar as these are "based on developing and sustaining ongoing relationships that are mutually meaningful and involve different degrees of reciprocity, care and emotional investment."[120] As Donna Haraway suggests, "making kin and making kind (as in category, care, relatives without ties by birth) stretch the imagination and can change the story."[121] While some relationships (e.g. supervisor/student) are largely voluntary and others (e.g. program administrators) are not, the story here is about the intellectual care and emotional bonding that unfold in doctoral programs in the arts. This bonding occurs in conventional formats of interaction as well as spaces of designed conviviality: reading groups and seminars, skill sharing workshops, crits, co-curated exhibitions, co-organized symposia, conferences, informal and formal peer reviews, as well as dinners, field trips, and other social gatherings. According to the academic kinship model, a PhD is shaped by all the relationships that lead to learning and growth, cared and carried by myriad "relatives" who contribute their time and knowledge, emotional and intellectual support, and mutual interest in advancing research. Looking back on discussions at the *Utrecht Summer School,* I am grateful to all the other program directors, deans, mentors and advocates of artistic research who in their shared dedication to developing

119. Kathleen F. McConnell, "Connective Tissue, Critical Ties: Academic Collaboration as a Form and Ethics of Kinship," *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* 8, no. 5 (2012).

120. Hariz Halilovich, "The Ethnographer Unbared: Academic Kinship, Elective Affinities and (Re)Negotiating Researcher Positionality," *Forum, Qualitative Social Research* 23, no. 1 (2022), https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-23.1.3831.

121. Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 103.

new models of doctoral supervision and exploring spaces for relational interaction continue to cultivate kinship across institutions, disciplines, languages, and national educational norms. Through this work we become a village.

SUPERVISING ART RESEARCHERS AND PERFORMATIVITY: REVERSE MENTORING, ETHICS, ADJACENCY AND CONSILIENCE

Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes

The former Director of the UK's Secret Service (GCHQ), David Omand, recently outlined that the world has become more complex and less predictable. In order to be ready to fight the effects of climate change and general political volatility, it is important to cultivate (in my own terms) creative and lateral thinking.[122] The Dutch NATO Admiral Rob Bauer has similarly told the (Dutch) public to expect the unexpected.[123] He elaborated that, as a response, Western societies have to ready for war – not just in terms of budgetary priorities (which will of course diminish both arts and academic funding), but also in terms of attitude or "mentality." Military strategists through the ages have reiterated the truism that wars are won not on the battle field, but in classrooms – or, by extension, universities.

Advanced (PhD level) education of Art(istic) Research practitioners is the topic of this volume, and I would like to approach the question of what kind of knowing and doing (performativity) Art Research can contribute to the urgent questions of today through the lens of the supervision of

122. In his lecture "How Spies Think: Ten Lessons in Intelligence", David Omand was summarizing the findings of his book *How to Survive a Crisis: Lessons in Resilience and Avoiding Disaster*, in Amsterdam's Zuiderkerk, December 9, 2023. He advocates taking responsibility and thinking for oneself: "people cling to the rule book when they should be prepared to tear it up if necessary." "Surviving a crisis [...] is a form of spontaneous performance art in which the cast follow an outline script [...] but then improvise the details." https://www.g10vandeeconomie.nl/speakers-en/david-omand. When I asked him why it is then that governments seem so reluctant to value (and pay for) Art(istic) Researchers and their education, i.e. support precisely those who model and apply this kind of thinking, he said that I'd be surprised how neurodiverse the intelligence community is. He thus both agreed — and pathologized Art Research.

123. "NAVO-admiraal: 'Samenleving moet het onverwachte gaan verwachten'," *NOS Nieuws*, January 17, 2024, 18:47, https://nos.nl/artikel/2505275-navo-admiraal-samenleving-moet-het-onverwachte-gaan-verwachten.

researchers who investigate such projects, or through welcoming them into academic institutions, advocating for their work in university bureaucracies, ideally shaping these structures to suit them, and creating cohorts of Art Researchers, who can be active in and beyond the academy. Can there be — or can we perform — a sense of joint purpose, a unity, in all the necessary, pragmatic and programmatic diversity that Art Research constitutes? And does that contribution to our institutions, to academic work and to society have anything to do with the mentioned threat of unpredictability and complexity?

I cannot begin without acknowledging "my" past PhD researchers, many of whose projects include a practice element to the submission.[124] They have taught (or at least tried to teach) me both what they need and what they can impart; and I have spent (too much?) time trying to advocate for that in my institutions, often abandoning (as it surely appeared) their immediate requirements in the process (and coming close to burn-out myself). An institutional perspective is also what I elaborated in a chapter dealing with (Creative) Writing and its (belated) entrance into Artistic Research debates.[125] There, my point was that joining the field about a decade ago should not be an occasion for celebrating certainties, but an expression of solidarity in the margins. I then attempted to establish Art Research as a "minor" field in Deleuze and Guattari's sense (where writing is deterritorialized in relation to art,

124. At Ulster University, Belfast, National College of Art and Design, Dublin, and the University of Amsterdam they were: Julie Louise Bacon, Áine Phillips, Marion Dowdican-McGarry, Jeannie McCollum, Helen Sharpe, Jill Strauss, Catherine Devlin, Lyn Gallagher, Sandra Johnston, Robert Huber, Aoife MacNamara, Emma Dwan O'Reilly, Amanda Coogan, Andrew McClelland, Dave Loder, Martin Krenn, Megan Johnston, Maite van Dijk, Gregory Sholette, Janice McNab, Florian Göttke, Timea Lelik, Melissa Rombout, Aga Wielocha, Erdem Çolak, Francesca Verga, Barbara Cueto, Stacey Vorster, Matisse Huiskens. I dedicate this chapter to them and to those who currently trust me with their supervision.

125. Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes, "Minor Literature in and of Artistic Research," in *Artistic Research and Literature*, ed. Corina Caduff and Tan Wälchli (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2019).

not literature).[126] In the following, I will continue developing such thoughts – as the criteria for the minor include political immediacy and communal enunciation – on the question of a joint purpose just posed. But I also want to deviate from this earlier work: solidarity now sounds too triumphalist and potentially essentialist, too similarly to the use of terms like "democracy" by people like Rob Bauer. Instead, Tina M. Campt's concept of *adjacency* will serve better – and consilience as a belief in (the need to pursue) the unity (not universality!) of enquiry across disciplines demands to be (re)claimed as the purview of Art Research.[127]

Following Barbara Bolt's important essay on the performativity of artistic research and its place in the academic field,[128] it is vital, indeed, to stress that small gestures and ritualized behaviours in our everyday lives have the better capacity to break the habit of norms and effect (societal) change; and that art is where unique situations and the unpredictable (as above), rather than repeatable experiments, are foregrounded. If, on this basis, shifting the focus to the supervision of Art Research projects, much space opens for newly thinking through and acting in academic bureaucracies.[129]

126. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka — Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

127. Tina M. Campt, *A Black Gaze: Artists Changing How We See* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2021). – I will follow scholars like Sarat Maharaj in using "art research", rather than "artistic research" to refer to the field at stake, except for where I paraphrase the work of others, who choose the latter term.

128. Barbara Bolt, "Artistic Research: A Performative Paradigm?," *PARSE Journal*, no. 3 (Summer 2016), https://parsejournal.com/article/artistic-research-a-performative-paradigm/. Bolt points me – for the present chapter – towards art researchers "reverse mentoring" their (academic) institutions, engaging with the ethical and other conventions they find there, as well as are particularly well placed to aim towards a unity of inquiry: consilience. These thoughts also explain to me why, in art history, Aby Warburg, who focused on the "travelling" or repetition of small, "misfired" gestures (traces of affect) carried the "afterlife" of ghostly pasts better than "great" works of art — and why his work is so interesting to art researchers.

129. This shift is in line with my previous work on indirect efficacies in and of art that complement also at times necessary directness. This differentiation echoes the positions of Claire Bishop and Grant Kester in canonical social practice discourse, and I want to clarify that indirectness is, in line with Bolt, the preference on account of it achieving, where possible, more sustained change. In some situations that is not possible: what Tania Bruguera calls "political timing specificity" is necessary to bear in mind. Claire Bishop, "Rise to the Occasion: The Art of Political Timing," *ARTFORUM* 57, no. 9 (May 2019).

One clear institutional role that Art Researchers and their supervisors can arguably aim to assume in the academy is what the museum sector already practices: Reverse Mentoring. Some museums have paid members of marginalized communities to give feedback on their exhibitions and all aspects of the visitor experience.[130] If institutions wish to know where they could improve, there are means and ways of achieving that. Especially if PhD researchers are funded (and that is a big "if" in many countries), it is (in my view) a justified hope or expectation that, in addition to being mentored (or supervised), they will engage in imparting their perspective and ways of knowing on the university.[131] They are more likely than others, who fit more seamlessly into this institutional frame to have made experiences that reveal where the university is less than the thoughtful, caring place that it wants to be (and says it is). They may also belong to communities that are not as yet adequately represented among the institution's staff. To find ways to listen and take seriously such feedback is important on a number of levels, of course, but not least because, as the truism goes, doing what one says and saying what one does (i.e. cognitive coherence) enhances (academic) credibility – and is a basic ingredient of leadership at all levels.[132] Art Researchers arguably lead

130. Laura Raicovich, "A Unique Program Pays you to Visit Museums as a Guest Critic," *Hyperallergic* (June 27, 2019), https://hyperallergic.com/505841/laagp/.

131. This has an art history in the Artist Placement Group of John Latham and Barbara Steveni and, similarly from the early 1970s, the Free International University for Inter-disciplinary Research of Joseph Beuys and others. See: Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes, "Beuys's Legacy in Artist-led University Projects," *Tate Papers*, no. 31 (Spring 2019), https://www.tate.org.uk/research/tate-papers/31/beuys-legacy-artist-led-university-projects.

132. What Achille Mbembe says about Europe can and should, in my view, be applied also to the university: Decoloniality "invites us to an alternative reading of our modernity. It calls on Europe to responsibly live what it says are its origins, future, and promise. If, as Europe has always claimed, the goal of this promise really is the future of all of humanity, then postcolonial thought calls on Europe to constantly open and restart this future, in a

when they observe,
as they tend to do, the ways in which infrastructures are used, how resources are distributed, where current habits and norms point to surviving hierarchies and injustices that are incommensurable with current institutional mission statements, policies and best intentions. They often have an uncannily failsafe way of gauging calcifications, as Andrea Philips calls them in this volume, and that Jalal Toufic has termed a "shit detector."[133] They can make institutions, including their supervisors, see – and should, of course, be valued for it. Barbara Bolt elaborates:

> If, as I have argued, the aim of a performative paradigm is not to find correspondences but rather to recognise and "map2 the ruptures and movements that are created by artistic research, then isn't that the same as for science? Here the work of art is not just the artwork/performance or event and science is not just the reduction of the world to data as immutable mobile. It *is* the effect of the work in the material, affective and discursive domains.[134]

One domain, where this can be the case, is the university itself in all its breadth. To its unity, consilience, I will turn later. Let us for the moment, though, turn to a prime location or target of reverse mentoring: ethics.

Ethics procedures are key to how universities mind their coherence between aspirations for excellence and what happens in individual research projects. The reverse mentoring impetus can thus particularly include a two-way assessment of who or what is served, e.g. when insistence

singular manner, responsible for itself, for the Other, and before the Other. That having been said, Europe is no longer the center of the world." Achille Mbembe, *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021), 76.

133. Jalal Toufic, "Jalal Toufic's Notification / Notice de Jalal Toufic," ALBA website https://alba.edu.lb/english/school-of-visual-arts-Directors-Statement.

134. Bolt, "Artistic Research: A Performative Paradigm?".

on good practice becomes gatekeeping. Assumptions that the institution is the rightful arbiter in all cases cannot be left unquestioned. In many institutions, ethics reviewers are open for conversations and do appreciate the fact that the university (like the museum) has been shaped in the likeness of colonial modernity. They may even undertake steps to mitigate this. The *Johannesburg Principles for Migration Research* spell out actions for research design to begin to address inequality and precarity.[135]

In many cases, institutions, however, have a tendency to apply norms and "manage" diversity with metrics, which is surprising, as one of the basic tenets of academic work is to focus on what is said (the most persuasive argument), not on the identity (or position) of a human being, i.e. the academic. Adjacency, as introduced earlier, is one way of pushing against identity politics and find modes of being with others and not to be silent in the face of their plight. This again is part of that Art Research process of learning to
see, as well as showing and imparting that seeing in the face of what Ann Laura Stoler has called colonial aphasia.[136] The humility and often "as if" indirectness of the showing and affective evidencing that art can achieve is important in light of the feeling that we may communicate too many uncomfortable truths.

It is impossible, however, to take away that discomfort. Art Research is engaging in analysis and while that most often does not take the shape of the kinds of audits to which institutions are accustomed, the assessments that emerge are all too clear: the subject (society, its organisations and especially our academic institutions themselves) is found wanting in terms of that cognitive coherence. This is what even

135. The Johannesburg Principles Building Equitable and Effective Partnerships for Migration Research, https://www.migration.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/JHB-principles.pdf.

136. Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Aphasia: Race and Disabled Histories in France," *Public Culture* 23, no. 1 (2011): 121-26, https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-2010-018.

the most humbly presented artistic gesture communicates when it teaches (institutional) recipients to "see." (It was already Adorno's insight that all art shows how the world could be otherwise). Bolt writes: "The problem for artistic research is often recognising and mapping the transformations that have occurred [through] tacit and intuitive processes that make pattern-making difficult."[137] Yet a pattern arguably does emerge: that societies, as currently governed, are heading into climate emergency, war and discord, when all policy statements and institutional self-characterizations point into the opposite direction.

Scholars researching evaluations in the cultural field are advising that art itself, including Art Research, should be used to convey its value.[138] This takes art seriously as a mode of analysis. However, it doesn't account for ever more aggressive governmental demands that art justify itself – and especially its funding. When those governing feel criticized (as they have to be, given the status quo), they are less likely to fund their own – effective and most often impartial – interpreters or "auditors." Art is then subjected to unsuitable, numeric assessments the other way around, and of course devalued, its funding is denied. This may increasingly be out of a feeling of retribution, owing not to the failure, but to the stringency of the most often carefully and lovingly imparted feedback; the success of the reverse mentoring that those working in art and through its ecosystem have given.

What is to be done? Martin Warnke has cautioned that we tend to do with art what we do to one another: we should avoid pressing all detail into an (artificially) complete and hierarchical whole.[139] When – inevitably – working on

137. Bolt, "Artistic Research: A Performative Paradigm?": 141.

138. For the EU-funded project in which I am involved (see last note), Francesco Chiaravalloti developed such a position at a meeting of the consortium with the UvA's "Artistic Knowing" research group, September 21, 2023.

139. Martin Warnke, "Wissenschaft als Knechtungsakt," in *Stephan von Huene: What's wrong with Art?*, ed. Peter Weibel and Philipp Ziegler (Karlsruhe: ZKM, Hirmer, 2021), 53-63.

complex, always incompletely understood issues, tentative language, multiple pathways to partial "solutions", several voices, methods, and "styles" will need to suffice. For me, such ambitious worlds are connected to the literature of James Joyce, who taught me to bear and enjoy not knowing. Such an impasse is also what prompted Ariella Aïsha Azoulay to formulate her vision of art as a site of working to unlearn in *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*.[140] Elsewhere I have argued (on the basis of Luke Gibbons' 2023 book *Joyce and the Irish Revolution*) that the literature of James Joyce formulated an alternative to colonial or authoritarian thinking as part of a "thought collective" (Ludwik Fleck) that formed around 1916.[141] History may have substituted the Catholic Church for the British Empire in Ireland, but Joyce and others developed strategies that I likened to current thinking: attitudes conveyed by Azoulay's *Potential History* and Campt's concept of adjacency. They feature empathetic immersion (interior monologues of marginalized characters), manipulation of (non-linear) time, multiplicity of voices or styles, the use of sources in ways that privilege a repetition with a difference etc. I traced the effects of formatively reading Joyce in and through the art writers / art researchers / curators (Carola Giedion-Welcker, Leo Steinberg, Sarat Maharaj, James Elkins and the present author with recourse to Aby Warburg as a contemporary of Joyce's). What emerged (as just one example of a piece of research among many in our field) was a commonly felt necessity to transcend disciplinary boundaries and those

140. Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (London: Verso, 2019). Isabelle Stengers' preference is to follow and evaluate (not judge), before leveraging the arguments to effect change (unless there is a need to "make a fuss"). She rethinks the relationship between scientists and politicians, suggesting "inventing-thematizing" scientists as politicians. Isabelle Stengers, *The Invention of Modern Science* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 164–65.

141. Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes, "James Joyce and Art Writing: Indirect Efficacy, Potential (Art) History and Adjacency," in *Joyce and the Arts*, ed. Keith Williams and Cleo Hanaway-Oakley (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2024) (forthcoming).

between interpreting and doing, the need to take art seriously by in effect becoming (fellow) art researchers and embracing this field's performativity as a working with others (and since artists are often scapegoated, being with others, i.e. adjacency). In line with Joyce's dictum that his "war effort" in relation to WWI was to write *Ulysses*, we can today in and through Art Research establish and disseminate a discourse, where a (sharp) evaluation of society's current state is made with both humility and determination, but also transcended. Art can make one see and feel and act as a force of / for non-violence, when considering the performativity of seeing the "ungrievables" (in Judith Butler's expression).[142]

And why is it the university — and art researchers based there – that has a role to play here? The artist John Latham was convinced that society, including the field of art in the twentieth century, had failed to account for relativity and developments in science – except for James Joyce, he told me.[143] The university is maybe a space where disciplinary gate-keepers sit, but also where, among many colleagues in all faculties, those can be found who wish to join art researchers in bearing complexities, engage in ArtScience collaborations — and more: together aim towards a unity of enquiry, what E.O. Wilson has called consilience.[144] His cross-faculty erudition is both rich in detail and immense in its aim. I wonder what Wilson (who died in 2021) would have made of the mounting evidence in his "home" discipline of biology, of the Gaia hypothesis supplanting neo- and social Darwinism more thoroughly than he (who already pushed against it) knew. He would have been pleased with

142. Judith Butler, *The Force of Nonviolence: An Ethico-political Bind* (London: Verso, 2021).

143. In interview, London, April 2003. The reciprocal need for artists in universities and research in art is effectively outlined in: Tom Holert, "Artistic Research: Anatomy of an Ascent," *Texte zur Kunst* 82 (June 2011).

144. Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (London: Abacus, [1998] 2013). I thank James Elkins for mentioning this term in relation to the chapter from which I read in Utrecht.

my art research students and how they read across Faculty boundaries not necessarily with ease, but with vivid interest. Co-location and symbiotic exchange among different organisms, and a non-hierarchical, self-regulating equilibrium as enabler of higher forms of life: this does seem to point towards a workable, consilient understanding in more areas of investigation. In addition to Lynn Margulis and James Lovelock, Karen Barad, Donna Haraway and Isabelle Stengers are among the favourites of "my" art research students, who thus thoroughly think with and through science. Wilson wavers between according art (and its interpretation) a large and not so large a role in consilience. If he had already been informed about the last quarter of a century's developments in art research, ArtScience and social practice, I expect that he would have considered it as promising and exciting – if not a prime, expanding (and in itself diverse) site to find allies for consilient convergences. Such work in and on holistic fields of knowing and doing is there for others to further. I argue that entering consilience (whether it is called that or not) into discourses constitutes considerable part of the Reverse Mentoring that Art Research PhD candidates can (and also tend to) perform. They remind us that the university is a *uni*versity. Seeing consilient entanglements across the disciplines, a standing with those across divides created by colonial modernity — i.e. adjacency — appears as precisely the kind of approach that art researchers can muster.

This is also stringent as a matter of ethics bound up with art researchers' reverse mentoring of the university. According to Simon Critchley, "Ethics is anarchic metapolitics. It is the anarchic moment of democratic dissensus articulated around the experience of the ethical demand, the exorbitant demand at the heart of my subjectivity that defines that subjectivity by dividing it and opening it to otherness."[145]

145. Simon Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance* (London: Verso, 2012), 130.

Walead Beshty makes the step from here to art and social practice discourse. In his view, social practice (art) and art research are

> concerned with "learning to inhabit the world in a better way" [:] a notion which encapsulates in lay terms what the discourse of ethics is chiefly designed to discern, i.e. a description of a mode of inhabiting the world [...] Thus the evaluation of the aesthetic condition of ethics (a barometer by which we ascertain the value and quality of interpersonal relations) has become one possibility, if not the only possibility, for the discussion of the aesthetics of the social field.[146]

Linking the present argument to the point at which it began, i.e. the role of art in facing the (un)predictabilities of the current moment, I am referring to E.O. Wilson, who devotes to ethics (and religion) the culminating penultimate chapter of his 1998 book *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*.

> Because the success of an ethical code depends on how wisely it interprets the moral sentiments, those who frame it should know how the brain works, and how the mind develops. The success of ethics also depends on the accurate prediction of the consequences of particular actions as opposed to others, especially in cases of moral ambiguity. That too takes a great deal of knowledge consilient with the natural and social sciences. [He continues:] The future of [art research lies] in addressing the fundamental questions of human existence head on, without embarrassment or fear [...]. That of course is a very difficult task. [...] Competent people get on with them, because they need to be done.[147]

146. Walead Beshty, *Ethics*, Documents of Contemporary Art (London: Whitechapel Gallery, MIT Press, 2015), 18.

147. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*, 267 and 301. He wrote "liberal arts", not art(istic) research and yet, I think that this is what the current formulation would have been, accounting for Creative Humanities developments, as well as art research at PhD level.

From all this, we can infer that the infrastructures of academia and art, particularly art research and social practice, are connected, or better entangled, sites of consilient inquiry and performativity. Cohorts of PhD researchers with their different concerns, but strong links through art research discourses, themselves holistic, can reach across divides, keep ethics and consilient social performativity in mind and — in line with an attitude of adjacency — impart (or live) that bearing differences and complexities is not just possible, but a basis for synergetic leaps to better (even if unpredictable) futures.

The art sector can do that, too: e.g. documenta fifteen assembled social practice art, civil rights and ecological initiatives, including many Art Researchers (some of them with science-driven initiatives in e.g. the realm of biodiversity and waste). And it was overshadowed by identity politics hysteria.[148] At the time of writing, we still have spaces to do this important work again, maybe to fail better in combatting the identity politics-driven (self-)destruction underway: in both art and the university, which minds ethics and regularly and ritually assembles thought collectives-cum-"movement of movements" of art researchers at PhD-level, their supervisors and examiners. We have our work cut out for ourselves.[149] And yet, whenever there is a viva, a

148. In the context of the performativity of Artistic Research, guided by Butler, it is worth pointing out that Butler makes very clear that it (i.e. her work and the struggle of which it is an important part) was never distinctly about any one group: "It was always about equality and justice". Judith Butler, "Identity Politics and Culture Wars", *Holberg Prize Debate* 2021, https://holbergprize.org/en/2021-holberg-debate-identity-politics-and-culture-wars. On documenta fifteen see: *(Un)Common Grounds: Reflecting on Documenta Fifteen*, FramerFramed, KNAW, Amsterdam 23 September 2022, https://vimeo.com/showcase/9917537.

149. I mean "work" in Kevin Quashie's sense: "*work,* the craft or poiesis where what is being made is the self's project of inhabiting life rather than a product that confirms systems of capital. Kevin Everod Quashie, *Black Aliveness, Or a Poetics of Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 113. Work, for Quashie thus "constitutes an ethic of relation" (130), both with regard to the self and others.

conference, seminar, an opening or other academic or art ritual, there is an opportunity to practice, i.e. perform, the seeing of others that is central to the force of non-violence. In such a way, we can let art research-based consilience foster adjacency.

Writing this chapter has been enabled by the University of Amsterdam, where PhD supervision to completion attracts hours that are deducted from teaching, and the Horizon 2020 M*arie Skodowska-Curie Actions* (MSCA) Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE) project SPACEX (number 872561. H2020-MSCA-RISE-2019), which responds to populist nationalisms and conflict in the EU, and consists to a large extent of art researchers and social practitioners in both universities and art institutions.

AFTERWORD: INTO THE NEVER-NEVER

Barbara Bolt

I am taken by Geoff Cox's proposition that we supervise to find comrades. It is so very true. Doctoral supervision is a very lonely business. There are no blueprints for doing it or living it and neither the supervisor nor the graduate researcher know where the project is going till it is done and then (if its worth its salt) it is only just beginning *to do its work* in the world. That is the pain and the pleasure of doctoral research. I had a comrade Steven Haley who, at every orientation for new graduate researchers, would offer the same analogy in his welcoming speech: If you are doing honours, you are expected to be able to locate your practice within the field and be aware of who else is working with similar artistic concerns and methods. If you are doing a Masters project, you are required to locate your research within the field, map the field of practice (context of practice) and the theoretical and conceptual framework (context of theory) that informs your research, and articulate your methodology. In other word, you are required to lay out the field and build the framework (fences) that provide the context for your work. If, however, you are doing doctoral work, you are required to survey the field, climb over the fence and walk into the wilderness. The "truth" is that PhD is a journey into wilderness or the never-never.[150] It is, as Maria Hlavajova has observed in her preface to this volume, "thinking how things are, imagining them otherwise, and embodying that imagination as if it were — and until it is — possible." These are the stakes of doctoral research.

No wonder we need comrades!

150. The *Never-Never* is a figure of speech used to describe the vast remote area of the Australian Outback. It is a term found in literature (We of the Never Never by Jeannie Gunn (1908)), poetry (*Where Dead Men Lie* by Barcroft Boake (1889)) and in film (Baz Luhrmann's *Australia* (2008)).

So where do we start?

We — and here I am referring to the assemblage of the candidate and the supervisor — need some form of guide stick to take us into the wilderness of space of the research. Research *must* begin with a question. *Must* is a very strong word. It is an imperative. Many artist and practice-based researchers may find the necessity of a question an irksome concept and rail against the demand: What is your research question? A question requires an answer, they say. That is not what art is! Surely. Well, NO, actually. The purpose of a research question is not concerned with exacting an answer. In fact it is not about an answer at all. Call it a question, a hypothesis, propositional, shape shifting what ever you like. The function of the question is to open up a space and lend a hand in this enquiry rather than being understood as an instrument of enframing.

But the formulation of a question is the most difficult of things. Here I turn to Martin Heidegger's thinking on the question of the question. Heidegger is not concerned with establishing the validity of the instrument of knowledge which forms the basis of the discipline. He argues that the real "movement" in understanding must take place in the capacity of inquiry to put basic concepts in crisis, not to defend them:

> Whether or not the importance of the research always lies in such establishment of concepts, its true progress comes about not so much in collecting results and storing them in "handbooks" as in being forced to ask questions about the basic constitution of each area.[151]

Heidegger is concerned with the formulation of the question which may unsettle our preconceptions. For him, the effort to

151. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 8.

retrieve the question requires that, first of all, we adequately work out the formulation of the question.[152] He proposes that asking the question of the being of beings, is itself a mode of being. Thus, for example, Heidegger argues that the discipline of history's fundamental concern is not primarily concept formation, nor is it concerned with developing a theory of historical knowledge. Rather, the concern of history is with "the interpretation of genuinely historical beings with regard to their historicality."[153]

If history is fundamentally concerned with the interpretation of historical beings with regards to their historicality, what then is the proper concern of the work of art or philosophy any other "discipline" for that matter? In the epilogue to his essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1935–36), Heidegger offers the observation that his reflections on art "are concerned with the riddle that art itself is."[154] He concedes that his reflections do not come near to solving the problem. However, solving the problem is never the point. For Heidegger, the task involved is actually to see the riddle. By posing the question, he hopes we can take some steps towards understanding the essence of art.

This is an enigmatic elegiac offering, particularly one that is staring down the face of the realities of the supervisor who may rightly see themselves, as Mick Wilson has noted, "as the agent of the institutional imposition of unfreedom." But if we are to take up Andrea Phillip's proposition that we engage in "the radical politics of generative learning" this is the space we have to open up. It is not enough for us to just understand the "essence" of art or artistic or practice-based research in itself for that matter. In the face of the "urgencies of our current condition" it is beholden upon us to actually "do" something.

152. Heidegger, 3.

153. Heidegger, 9.

154. Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Basic Writings*, ed. D. Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977), 204.

And so I return to Heidegger's proposition about the "movement" in understanding that comes from the capacity of an inquiry to put basic concepts into crisis. Here I draw out a distinction between the artwork/design work and the work of art/design. The issue that remains for many researchers in the artistic and practice-based research is an adherence to the idea that new knowledge and innovation *is* the art/design work and that this should not have to be argued discursively. However, in artistic research, the novel form of the artwork is not sufficient *in itself* to articulate new knowledge and innovation.

If we are going to move beyond the production to the productivity of the work to a radical re-imagining, we need terminology that will enable us to distinguish between what the work *is* (ontological) and what it *does* (the performativity of the work of art) and it is here that I part company with Heidegger's ontological take on what art is in itself to what I might call an onto-performative understanding. Elsewhere, I have differentiated between the artwork and the work of art as a way of distinguishing the work in itself and its performative potential and, in the context of this afterword, it is valuable to return to this distinction.[155] Whilst the terms are often used interchangeably, *the artwork* is not the same thing as *the work of art*. In this context, the artwork can be defined as the production in itself—the choreography, assemblage, design, novel, poem, screenplay, performance, painting, film, installation, drawing or event that has emerged in and through practice—it is what is published or exhibited or performed. Its thingness, if you like. The work of art, on the other hand, is the work that the artwork *does*; it is the *movement* in concepts, understandings, methodologies, material practice, affect and sensorial experience that arises in and through the vehicle of the work. The work that art

155. Barbara Bolt, "Artistic Research: A Performative Paradigm?," *PARSE Journal*, no. 3 (Summer 2016), https://parsejournal.com/article/artistic-research-a-performative-paradigm/.

does is its performative quality. This can relate to the process of making the work and the effects for the artistic researcher and for the field, and/or to the effects that the work may generate in the world.

The effects of the performative in art are multi-dimensional—they may be discursive, material consequences and/or affective. How then do we assess these effects? Our task as researchers is to find ways to map the *movement* in concepts, understandings, methodologies, material practice, affect and sensorial experience that arises in and through the research experience. This leads us back to the question of the question:

– How did the research shift material practice in the field?
– What methodological shifts occurred through this process?
– What was revealed through the work? What did it do?
– What new concepts emerged through the research?
– How these new concepts shift understandings and practices in the field and/or in other discursive fields?
– How does the work a/effect its audience aesthetically, kinaesthetically or affectively?
– How the work shift the way we perceive the world?

The work must stand eloquently in its own way and if it doesn't it fails. However, through mapping what the research does, artistic researchers are able to demonstrate not only how art can be understood as research, but also how its inventions may be recognized and hence articulated.

Maureen de Jager, borrowing from Janneke Adema, tells us that texts are performative in that they are reality-shaping. She observes that in "praxis writing" (and here I am using it in its broadest sense), what emerges in and through artistic and practice-based research, constitutes writing *as*

passage. While there are many ways of thinking about the idea of "passage" in this context we may understand the performative aspect of praxis writing as an "action or process of passing from one place, condition, or stage to another."

The idea of a passageway, a transitional space of re-imagining-becoming-reality, is both an exciting space of possibility but also a dangerous space and this is the space that we as supervisors are required negotiate and support. Heidegger uses the analogy of the passageway arguing that the "artist remains inconsequential as compared to the work, almost like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge."[156] The artistic researcher as passageway acts as the conduit through which art emerges. And in the creative process this passageway destroys itself. Once we have passed from one state to another it is not possible to go back. Those are the stakes in this work that we engage in. It is both personal and it is also political. What is essential is this "willingness" to openness and in that there is the danger of dissolution altogether and here-in lies our ethical responsibility as carers and preservers.

It is the most difficult of tasks to keep our preconceptions at a distance. In order to stay with the truth that is happening in the work, we must restrain ourselves but also be there. We must let it be and not be cowered by institutional restraints nor be fear of what it may be becoming. This is the never-never of research and this is why this volume is so very important.

156. Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art": 166.

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BIOGRAPHIES

Alexandra Regan Toland is Dean of studies and junior professor for arts and research at the Bauhaus University Weimar, where she directs the PhD program in Art and Design. She earned her MFA from the Dutch Art Institute (DAI) and a doctorate degree in landscape planning from the TU-Berlin as a DFG fellow in the Perspectives of Urban Ecology Graduate Research Group.

Andrea Phillips is BALTIC Professor and Director of BxNU Research Institute, Northumbria University & BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art. She lectures and writes about the economic and social construction of public value within contemporary art, the manipulation of forms of participation and the potential of forms of political, architectural and social reorganization within artistic and curatorial culture.

Barbara Bolt is a Professorial Fellow at The University of Melbourne. She is a practicing artist and art theorist. She has co-published *The Meeting of Aesthetics and Ethics in the Academy: Challenges for Creative Practice Researchers in Higher Education* (2019), *Material Inventions: Applying Creative Arts Research* (2014) and *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry* (2007).

Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes is Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History, University of Amsterdam. Until 2014, she was Professor of Iconology in Belfast. Her books include: *W.G. Sebald's Artistic Legacies: Memory, Word and Image* (co-ed 2023); *Brian O'Doherty/Patrick Ireland: Word, Image and Institutional Critique* (ed. 2018); *Post-War Germany and "Objective Chance": W.G. Sebald, Joseph Beuys and Tacita Dean* (Steidl 2011), and *Joyce in Art* (2004). She has curated internationally.

Geoff Cox is Professor of Art and Computational Culture and co-Director of Centre for the Study of the Networked Image at London South Bank University, and Adjunct at Aarhus University. Further info at www.anti-thesis.net.

Glenn Loughran is an artist, lecturer, and researcher at the TU Dublin School of Creative Arts. Since 2015 he has been the course leader of the B.A in Visual Art on Sherkin Island and in 2020 he set up the archipelagic MA in Art and Environment in West Cork. Recently he has also acted as Head of Artistic Research in GradCAM and he is currently joint Research Co-ordinator in the TU Dublin School of Creative Arts.

Henk Slager co-initiated the European Artistic Research Network (EARN), a network that investigates the impact of artistic research on current art education through symposia, expert meetings, and presentations. Departing from a similar focus on research, he has also (co-) produced various curatorial projects, a.o. Research Pavilion (Venice Biennale), 7th Shanghai Biennale, 5th Guangzhou Triennial, and 9th Bucharest Biennale. Henk Slager works at HKU University of the Arts Utrecht.

Iris van der Tuin is Professor of Theory of Cultural Inquiry at Utrecht University, where she is also university-wide Dean for Interdisciplinary Education. In 2021-22 Iris was Novo Nordisk Foundation guest professor in Art and Art History in between The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and Aarhus University. She wrote *Critical Concepts for the Creative Humanities* (2022) with Nanna Verhoeff.

Jacob Lund is Associate Professor in the Department of Art History, Aesthetics & Culture, and Museology at Aarhus University where he directs Centre for Research in Artistic Practice under Contemporary Conditions. His most recent book is *The Changing Constitution of the Present: Essays on the Work of Art in Times of Contemporaneity* (Sternberg, 2022).

Laura Guy is a Reader in Critical and Cultural Studies at Glasgow School of Art. She is editor of Phyllis Christopher's artist monograph *Dark Room: San Francisco Sex and Protest, 1988–2003* (Book Works, 2022) and co-editor with Glyn Davis of *Queer Print in Europe* (Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2022).

LEE Wing Ki is an artist-researcher based in Hong Kong. His research and practice focus on contemporary photography, archival research, and informed by queer theory and experience. He is currently an Associate Professor at the Academy of Visual Arts, and Associate Dean at the School of Creative Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University. He found L♡VE, a curatorial platform for queer-friendly artists in Hong Kong.

Maibritt Borgen is Associate Professor of Art Theory and Head of the Laboratory for Arts Research at the Royal Danish Academy of Art, School of Visual Arts.

Mari Mäkiranta, Associate Professor, is a visual culture scholar and a photography artist with a background in feminist research, socially engaged art and art activism. Currently, she is taking "artivist" actions considering gendered violence and large-scale destruction of the ecosystems in Arctic contexts. She is a long-term member of the board of RUUKKU — Studies in Artistic Research.

Maureen de Jager is an artist-researcher with an interest in writing-as-praxis. She obtained her Fine Art PhD through Kingston University, London, harnessing archival research, book-arts and performance-lectures to reflect on South Africa's traumatic history. De Jager is Fine Art HoD and Deputy Dean of the Humanities Faculty at Rhodes University.

Mick Wilson is Professor of Art, Director of Doctoral Studies, at HDK-Valand, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, and co-chair of the Centre for Art and Political Imaginary (2024–28).

PEN = 1,1,1,30, WEIGHT = 74, SLANT = 0, SUPERNESS = 0.72

The typeface used to set this series is called Meta-the-difference-between-the-two-Font (MTDBT2F), designed by Dexter Sinister in 2010 after MetaFont, a digital typography system originally programmed by computer scientist Donald Kunth in 1979.

Unlike more common digital outline fonts formats such as TrueType or Postscript, a MetaFont is constructed of strokes drawn with set-width pens. Instead of describing each of the individual shapes that make up a family of related characters, a MetaFont file describes only the basic pen path or *skeleton* letter. Perhaps better imagined as the ghost that comes in advance of a particular letterform, a MetaFont character is defined only by a set of equations. It is then possible to tweak various parameters such as weight, slant, and superness (more or less bold, italic, and a form of chutzpah) in order to generate endless variations on the same bare bones.

Meta-the-difference-between-the-two-Font is essentially the same as MetaFont, abiding the obvious fact that it swallows its predecessor. Although the result may look the same, it clearly can't be, because in addition to the software, the new version embeds its own backstory. In this sense, MTDBT2F is not only a tool to generate countless PostScript fonts, but *at least equally* a tool to think about and around MetaFont. Mathematician Douglas Hofstadter once noted that one of the best things MetaFont might do is inspire readers to chase after the intelligence of an alphabet, and "yield new insights into the elusive 'spirits' that flit about so tantalizingly behind those lovely shapes we call 'letters.'"

For instance, each volume in The Contemporary Condition is set in a new MTDBT2F, generated at the time of publication, which is to say *now.*

Dexter Sinister, 10/05/24, 11:16 AM