# Beyond Validity: claiming the legacy of the artist-researcher

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## Introduction

Artistic research is becoming an increasingly established discipline. There has been research programs in music with a focus on the artistic practice of the researcher for more than thirty years in Sweden, and in the Anglo-Saxon countries for even longer than that. In Sweden, a number of theses have been produced, and there are regular admissions of new PhD students to the Music and performing arts academies in Stockholm, Malmö, Gothenburg and Piteå. Related qualitative research disciplines with a focus on practice have existed for much longer, primarily in the social sciences but also to some extent in medicine, although the methods may differ. In the present paper, we suggest that the development of artistic research is at a point where it is no longer productive to discuss it as a field in development in which methods and formats are in a constant flux but one where we need to discuss a set of defining frames and methods for researchers to use or depart from. This is not to say that a single method should (or could) be used for all artistic research but rather to state that there is a great need to establish workable methods that can serve as being departing points for future development.

Mika Hannula makes a similar diagnosis and argues that it is time for artistic research to adopt a bolder position in relation to the institutions:

Since artistic research has been accepted and established as credible research within art education and art institutions, we have to keep its possibilities open and move towards a vision of artistic research which is self-critical and self-reflexive. Put differently, we must have the courage to be anarchistic and experimental. (Hannula, 2011, p 70)

In this paper, we will argue for the need to approach artistic research from an experimental perspective, not as a stylistic measure but a quality in the artistic aims. A core value in artistic research is as far as we know it from our own work, the possibility to amplify artistic processes that aim at creating a change in ones own practice, a change that, when it is described and documented thoroughly, can effectively communicate new knowledge.

One criticism against artistic research is the lack of distance between the researcher and his or her object of research. Contemporary research epistemologies counter this doubt directed towards subjectivity, but we will return to this question below. A common argument against research methodologies and against academic writing among artistic researchers is the anxiety that the academic world will violate the dynamics of artistic processes, which is a relevant concern. According to Sarat Maharaj, if we want to hang on to its unorganized possibilities we should

avoid defining artistic research simply along institutional academic lines. This means focus on the singularity of how art practice-theory-history and other ‘disciplines’ intersect and coalesce in individual projects. As we cannot quite know beforehand what form this will take [...] we have to be wary about attempts to regulate artistic research, to knock it into shape of the academic disciplines. (Maharaj 2011, p. 39)

Helga Nowotny (2011) looks at the same issue and points at uncertainty as a vital property of research and finds that the need to oppose regulations, control and attempts to tame curiosity, so essential to experimentation, is shared also by scientific research:

Between society’s preference for the new and its attempts to gain or regain control over what is uncontrollable, since it is not known where curiosity and the ‘play of possibilities’ will lead or what consequences will result from it, a vast zone of uncertainty is emerging as the true breeding ground of creativity, be it scientific or artistic. The greater the desire for the unexpected and unforeseeable that research stimulates, the more the pressure of expectation grows to bring it under control and steer it in specific directions. (p. xviii)

The discussion concerning art and research and whether they can coexist and survive the relationship may be seen to rest on misconceptions of both topics. We argue that it is essential that this zone of uncertainty described by Novotny is properly sustained and that we are able to identify all attempts to diminish or restrict this space, not only those that academia may impose. Furthermore, there are many examples of what is now considered traditional research disciplines whose research objects rely on subjectivity and are as abstract as the research objects of artistic practices. Philosophy is but one.

Rather than being understood as a non-academic and independent research discipline we suggest that artistic research is situated in a multi-layered and multi-dimensional space defined by principally four non-conformal fields of gravitation: the subjective, the academic, the experimental and the field of the art world. These four fields are furthermore encompassed by the socio-political sphere and together they form the context for artistic research. In the following we will attempt to draw and describe the nature and impact of some of the connections between these entities.

## Artistic reflection and methods

During the formative years of artistic research in Scandinavia, we have seen recurring attempts to make artistic reflection the cornerstone of methodology for artistic research. We will in this section argue that this approach is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of artistic practice and a delimiting and confusing framework for method development for artistic research.

William Kinderman traces the intervallic pattern found in Beethoven’s late quartets back to an unfinished sonata for four hands and states that the sketch “reveals that the basic intervallic configuration so prominent in the last quartets arose during Beethoven’s *reflection*

on another project altogether, in a different key” (Kinderman, 1995, p. 295, our italics). The intertextual references between two or more works by the same artist is a typical kind of reflection but there is also the intrapersonal reflection so important for artistic creation, the impact and significance of which is well described by Stockhausen in his comment to the 1965 version of *Momente*:

My reflection is altered by Webern.

Webern’s music is transformed by my reflection.

My reflection is altered by my reflection on Webern’s music. (Wörner, 1963, p. 51)

It is hard to imagine any artistic practice that does not rest on the interplay between action and reflection. The connection between the two is perhaps best described in Gibson’s ecological psychology in which perception is inextricably linked to action (Gibson, 1986). Horacio Vaggione discusses the relation between action and perception in the compositional process with regard to the development of algorithmic composition:

[...] the meaning of any compositional technique, or any chunk of musical knowledge, arises from its function in support of a specific musical action, which in turn has a strong bearing on the question of how this action is perceived. Action and perception lie at the heart of musical processes, as these musical processes are created by successive operations of concretization having as a tuning tool—as a principle of reality— an action/perception feedback loop. (Vaggione 2001, p 61)

These action-perception feedback loops can then be understood as the basis for creative processes in which reflection constitutes the link between conscious and subconscious layers. In other words, reflection is an essential component in musical creation. For these reasons, we believe that the common reference to reflection as a ‘method’ for artistic research is a misconception. If reflection is a central component of any artistic practice and should also be understood as a fundamental method for artistic research, there would be no difference between art and research.

What then is the possible meaning of such a paradox? Is artistic research merely a social or economic construction within European universities? Is the only contribution of artistic research a shift of financial means for artistic production towards the educational institutions? Certainly not, though we would wish to emphasize the fact that the notion of research is indeed a social construction. We believe that an awareness of the politics of artistic research and the institutional structures behind it will enable artistic researchers to more actively turn the field into a developmental and experimental force in the art world. But what then is the nature of artistic research and its relation to artistic practice?

While reflection may be understood as a useful tool in artistic research, it is so because it is also essential to any artistic practice. Artistic practice and artistic research are obviously related, yet distinct activities, and whereas artistic practice can and will exist and continue to prosper without research, the opposite is unimaginable. We will argue below, in the section on knowledge that artistic research must produce knowledge of the same kind as artistic practice has always been doing. This is not to say that artistic research also may contribute new knowledge of kinds that we do not find in ordinary artistic practice. The possibility for novel contributions from the artistic researcher lies in the meeting point between artistic research and other disciplines. We find interdisciplinary research to be the future challenge and developmental potential for the artistic researcher. Again, we make this claim while still maintaining the necessity for the artistic researcher to first and foremost be an artist whose practice is solidly situated in the surrounding art world.

Although there are a number of ways in which artistic processes may and have been studied, one of the defining aspects of artistic research is that the researcher studies his or her own processes. Similar to how the anthropologists or ethnographers may be said to participate in the contexts that they study the artist engages in a systematic study of his or her own artistic processes. However, the inter-relation between an artist, the cultural tools (material and psychological) and the artistic output is in itself complex, and the interaction between artists is accordingly a complex matter of embodied processes and the resonance between the self, the other and material objects (Coessens 2011, Nancy 2007, Östersjö 2008; 2013). Hence, artistic research cannot simply be defined as a field of study of individual artistic processes but encompasses the full complexity of artistic thought and practice and does as we will argue below, also take shape both inside and outside of language. Although there are good reasons to distinguish between artistic methods and methods for artistic research, in this sense the artistic practice is essentially both object and method.

The research process has the potential not only to open the field of artistic knowledge production to other disciplines and other fields of interest but also to open up the artistic practice under scrutiny to new and unexpected areas, which will guide the development of the artistic work. The closeness and feedback between the artistic work and the research makes it difficult, if not impossible, to identify the exact relation and order of precedence between the two. However, this is not to say that any act of art production involves artistic research. It is the consequences of the two practices that are closely connected, not the initial conditions. Philosopher Kathrin Busch states that:

Artistic appropriation of knowledge evokes different, independent forms of knowledge, in order to complement scientific research with artistic research. […] this implies that artistic practice is more than just an application of theory and that theory is more than a mere reflection on practice. (Busch, 2009)

Reflection is an intimate part of artistic practice as well as a natural aspect of artistic research, but cannot by itself constitute the research method. Any artistic research method may include reflection as a means to access the processes in artistic production, but should not be used as the single solution (or quick-fix) to the recurring question of methodology. A reflection without method remains trapped within the researcher and may become a manifestation of some of the very core elements that have aroused criticism against artistic research as a discipline. It is not difficult to see why in the first decades of its development it was necessary for artists to distance themselves from the confines of academic structures. Artistic research is interdisciplinary by nature and may lean on a number of related artistic fields, as well as research disciplines in the social and natural sciences. It is our belief, however that the field of artistic research is now stable enough to embrace qualitative research methods found in social sciences, and make use of hybrid methodologies that may also include artistic methods.

## Behind validity: subjectivity revisited

We find it essential for artistic research to relate to the discussion on the subjectivity of the researcher (Denzin et al., 2006). Not only do we find this debate to hold a series of possibilities for the artistic research field to contribute to the discourse, but it also appears to us to open up for a wider understanding of the politics of doing artistic research. Denzin, Lincoln and Giardina, addressing a specific political debate that emerged in the U.S.A. after 9/11, point to how the way we think of the epistemology of our research is never politically innocent:

For the post-pragmatist feminist there is no neutral stand-point, no objective God’s-eye view of the world. The meaning of a concept or a line of action or a representation lies in the practical, political, moral and social consequences it produces for an actor or collectivity. The meanings of these consequences are not objectively given. They are established through social interaction and the politics of representation. (ibid, p. 776)

Even in research grounded on empirical data, contrary to the common apprehension of the natural sciences, a ‘phenomenon’ discussed is not ‘reality’ but should rather be understood as a construction from within the research procedure: “Categories are concepts, derived from data, that stand for phenomena. [...] Phenomena are important analytic ideas that emerge from our data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 114). In Bruno Latour’s ground breaking sociological study on research in the natural sciences, *Laboratory Life* (Latour & Woolgar, 1986), the idea of objectivity in scientific research is questioned, and the notion of ’fact construction‘ is introduced as a mode of understanding the production of scientific facts. During two years, Latour made a quasi-anthropological study in *The Salk Institute,* a chemical laboratory in California, making observations, jointly analysed with social researcher Steve Woolgar. Their claim is that even the processes of scientific ‘logic’ and ‘reasoning’ are socially constructed.[1] They also provided examples of how these social processes, even in cases referring to a researcher's ’thought-processes‘ (X had an idea), are hidden in the final accounts of the research (e.g. Latour & Woolgar, 1986, pp. 168-170).

We suggest that the apparently logic character of reasoning is only part of a much more complex phenomenon that Augé (1975) calls “practices of interpretation” and which comprises local, tacit negotiations, constantly changing evaluations, and unconscious or institutionalized gestures. (Latour & Woolgar, 1986, p. 152)

On several levels, the myth of the researcher as an objective observer of nature-given facts has been put in doubt, also within the hard sciences. Facts are facts, but only within the specific framework in which they are produced (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 107). A growing literature of similar anthropological studies on laboratories and other production-sites within the hard sciences has followed over the years (Longino, 2002; Knorr-Cetina, 1980; 1991; Lynch, 1985). Knorr-Cetina emphasizes the selection process where it is the way in which previous results are incorporated into later research that constitutes the process of validation, rather than the assessment built on principles of logic (Knorr-Cetina 1981). Looking at the machinery of knowledge production in high energy physics and molecular biology, in her book *Epistemic Cultures* (2002) Knorr-Cetina brings out the disunity within the sciences in general and the multiplicity of ontologies and epistemologies also within the natural sciences.

In the broad field of epistemology and methodology for qualitative research, we have seen a series of approaches towards a deconstruction of the positivist concepts of validity and reliability.[2] Rather than focussing on how the methods and the results can be assessed according to positivist criteria, alternative viewpoints on knowledge production have been developed, sometimes exchanging the key words of validity and reliability with related concepts such as authenticity and credibility:

a) credibility (in preference to internal validity);

b) transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability);

c) dependability (in preference to reliability);

d) confirmability (in preference to objectivity) (Guba, 1981)

Many attempts at creating different responses to the question of validity have been made over the years, and the variety in terminology and the various typologies can indeed be confusing (Creswell & Miller, 2000). However, most of these directions share components. Three main strands are discussed by Kvale:

● Validity as craftsmanship

● Communicative validity

● Pragmatic validity (Kvale, 1995)

Common to all different strands is the conviction that credibility emerges from research strategies that make the subjectivity of the researcher visible in all stages of designing and carrying out the project. We believe that all these approaches have a strong bearing on artistic research. Pragmatic validity is perhaps particularly akin to much artistic practice. For the pragmatist, “truth is whatever assists us to take actions that produce the desired results” (Kvale, 1995, p. 32). The knowledge produced is identified through action or its workability.

However, explicit reference to questions of identity and subjectivity of the artist has not always been well received in contexts that accommodate artistic research in Scandinavia. A famous example is the dissertation of the female visual artist Riitta Nelimarkka, whose submission was rejected by the school’s research council. After a public date, and after she appealed to have it tried again, her dissertation was eventually approved. What interests us here is the fact that, methodologically, her approach was clearly autoethnographic while the research community at the time did not seem to acknowledge this approach (Biggs & Karlsson, 2010, p. 420).[3] Second, we believe that a feminist viewpoint may further contribute to an understanding of the dismissal of Nelimarkka’s dissertation. She is a successful visual artist who received the honorary title of professor from the Finnish president in 2008. The subjective stance in the dissertation and her refusal to turn to a generalisable viewpoint are properties assigned to female expressions that can easily become a threat in the hierarchic, male dominated academic world.

At this point, we may return to the initial quote (Denzin et al., 2006, p. 776) and consider what the significance might be for artistic researchers to, following Denzin's et al. proposals, take the step from pragmatism to post-pragmatism; incorporating the political layers of all epistemologies of science. It is essential to acknowledge the political implications that, for instance, a feminist and post-colonial perspective contributes to contemporary research paradigms. Not only is it a way to situate the research in a context larger than the topics it studies, it also opens up towards ways in which the research may resonate with a social or political context. The diasporic subjectivity[4] of globalized society has shifted its focus towards *subject-position*, approaching formations of identity that are strategic, positional and constructed across different discourses (Hall, 2000, p. 17). The film-maker and feminist researcher Trinh Minh-ha discusses the nature of this shift of perspective and emphasizes the need not only to focus on the self-expression of the issues of the world, but to challenge the individual and the self by the production of “texts” that question the systems of domination:

[...] to begin revisioning we must examine the self from a new critical standpoint. Such a perspective, while it must insist on the self as the site for politicization, would equally insist that simply describing one’s experience of exploitation or oppression is not to become politicized. It is not sufficient to know the personal but to know-to speak in a different way. (Trinh, 1991, pp. 163-164)

The result may be that the impact of both the artistic work and the research is widened. In the process, the artistic research activity may break free from the individual perspective, sometimes criticised as the solipsistic consequence of practice based research, and widen the potential for knowledge production.

## Knowledge in artistic research

The subjective stance is an essential aspect of artistic research, but how can the knowledge produced within this sphere be understood in a wider context? Henk Borgdorff was one of the first to thoroughly discuss and argue for a position for artistic research within the art academies and his thinking on the topic has been very influential in Europe in the last decade. In his book “The Conflict of the Faculties” he finds artistic research to be distinct from other means of knowledge production:

[...] artistic research seeks not so much to make explicit the knowledge that art is said to produce, but rather to provide a specific articulation of the pre-reflective, non-conceptual content of art. It thereby invites unfinished thinking. Hence, it is not formal knowledge that is the subject matter of artistic research, but thinking in, through, and with art. (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 143, )

He continues by asserting that artistic research must also be understood as distinct from other research disciplines by the nature both of its methodologies and its results:

Artistic research therefore does not really involve theory building or knowledge production in the usual sense of those terms. Its primary importance lies not in explicating the implicit or non-implicit knowledge enclosed in art. It is more directed 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. (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 173)

However, we wonder if this movement towards the “unthought” and the unexpected is not, in fact, the driving force behind all research? Returning to the first quote, we now feel the need to more closely examine the notions of pre-reflective and non-conceptual contents of art. Are they the same or different things? Does not “pre-reflective” indicate that there is something unfinished in its trajectory? The category of non-conceptual knowing seems to us to be distinct from the unfinished. This appears to be a field too little discussed and theorized within artistic research, and still, it is the heart of the matter: in all artistic production, knowledge is created and passed on in ways most often distinct from the verbal domain, though this discourse-*in*-music can be enhanced by another discourse-*on*-music (Folkestad, 1996). In the field of music, performance practices have continuously been constructed and transmitted, and around them, at specific moments in history, analytic discourses have emerged. An important moment was when J.J. Quantz (1974/1752) and Leopold Mozart (1951/1776) wrote their instructions for correct performance on the flute and violin respectively; sources that in the scholarship of the musicians of the early music movement in the 20th Century became invaluable material. If we were to play with the idea of regarding these publications as research outcome (though hundreds of years before the social construction of artistic research), they relate to the development of performance practice in their own time first in the way that the relative value of the publications rest on the situatedness of the authors in the surrounding art world. Second, it is essential to see how their publications do not express or contain any new knowledge, but are merely different representations of knowledge that normally travels through non-conceptual forms of knowledge production in any musical culture.

The non-conceptual knowledge production in the arts can indeed be independent of any analytic discourse and should rightly be considered as a primary outcome of any piece of artistic research. It has always been communicated through the art itself and will not be in need of any other forms to be made available to the outside world. However, we wish to contest the notion that knowledge production in artistic research should be understood as pre-reflective and expressive of ‘unfinished thinking’. On the contrary, we believe that the artistic field can be enhanced by also embracing any number of methodologies and venturing into any kind of cross-disciplinary research.

## The development of documentation and assessment of artistic research

There is a growing discussion concerning bibliometrics and assessment of artistic research in Sweden and Europe. The most ambitious attempt at addressing the needs for documentation and representation of artistic works so far is the development of the online publication Journal of Artistic Research (JAR)[5]. However successful JAR or any other initiative may be many general issues are still unresolved, and some of the big questions concerning documentation of practice and thinking in artistic research are still unanswered. Even after decades of artistic research there is a striking lack of inter-field communication, and references to other artistic research projects are still sparse. One of the recurring threads in these discussions is the relation between the art object and its representations, and the relation between academic assessment and assessment by the art world. These relations are still far from stable, and we believe that much work and effort need to go into supporting dynamic forms of documentation of artistic work, the intention of which is to allow both the object and the further discussion around its contexts, to be part of an assessment made by both the academies and the art world at large.

Even before the large scale implementation of artistic and practice based research in Europe began, attempts were made to solve the difficult issues of documenting evolving, changeable and collaborative works of art. IRCAM, one of the leading centres for electronic music in Europe today, has had a few projects centered on the documentation and preservation of volatile musical works where the elements of the performance are not easily defined, nor stable. Launched in 2003 the *Mustica* project, hosted by the international *interPARES* project[6], was an initiative to attack the difficulties to reliably conserve accurate copies of digital art. The *CASPAR* project (Cultural, Artistic and Scientific knowledge for Preservation, Access and Retrieval) co-financed by the European Union within the Sixth Framework Programme[7] is clearly in the tradition of the *Mustica* project and, as IRCAM states:

[...] this platform will make possible the conservation and dissemination of the information and digital elements necessary for the performance of an interactive piece (e.g. Max patches, sound files, elements from the score, etc.) in a structured format. It also aims to move ahead in the formalization of the musical descriptions of the pieces, independent of any technical implementation, in order to prepare their conservation long-term.[8]

All of these documentation projects have in common the wish to preserve and archive musical practice and production. The artistic research field should make clearer connections to the documentation platforms developed outside of academia. By creating collaborations with institutions such as IRCAM and with the CASPAR project, we believe that the question of bibliometry within the artistic research field can be turned into a new meeting point between the demands of the contemporary art world and academia. The institutions that are developing the artistic research field now has a possibility to make a larger contribution to the art world. On the other hand, the experience contained in these projects outside of the field of artistic research can be an essential component in establishing workable modes of documentation and assessment of artistic research output. We find this to be one of the essential components in the further development of methodologies for artistic research.

# Method development in artistic research: approaches to the subjective, the experimental, the academic and the art world

1. As stated in the introduction, in Sweden a large number of artistic PhD projects have been produced and many are currently under production.[9] If we include Finland, Norway, UK, Belgium and the Netherlands we can easily see that there is no shortage of examples of artistic research projects, but where has the method development been situated in this period when the discipline has become established, in academia or the surrounding art world? How has the important relation between theory and practice been dealt with? These questions are clearly related to each other, and in order to continue a strong and healthy development of the field of artistic research there is a need to study and develop the practical as well as theoretical implementation and assessment of the advancement of these issues. We are convinced that the method development must be situated also in the art world and not merely within academia. Also, as we suggest above, the ways in which dynamic forms of documentation can contribute to the development of methods for artistic research can be seen as a further link between the specific interests of the academic institutions, the artist and the art world.
2. In order to address these issues we will turn to an overview of some of the artistic research that we have been engaged in during the past 14 years, looking specifically at the relation between theory, analysis and artistic practice in these projects. While a broader overview of artistic research practices in Europe indeed would be called for, the purpose of the present text is also to consider the relation between artistic practice and research from a subjective viewpoint. Hence, we will have to restrain the overview to works in which we have ourselves been involved as artists. Several of these projects have featured a strong element of method development in different areas: *Music and movement* engages a social and political element as a means to reflect on the artistic practice. Interdisciplinarity is an essential element in *Integra* as well as in *Music in Movement*: The former approaching human sciences in music psychology and the latter combines scientifically oriented music technology in close collaboration with artistic practices. The study of interactions between musicians is at the heart of many of the projects either with the focus on improvising musicians in different cultures, such as in *(Re)thinking improvisation* or in collaborations between composers and performers. What we find most pertinent to the present inquiry in this overview is whether one can identify a clear interaction between artistic production and the various research methodologies.

### Repetition Repeats all other Repetitions

1. *Repetition Repeats all other Repetitions* is an open form composition for 10-stringed guitar and electronics by Henrik Frisk.[10] The piece emerged out of a collaboration between the two of us, a project in which interaction in the widest sense was allowed to play a principal part already at the outset. As a research project, it focussed on early stages of interaction between composer and performer and was part of our respective PhD-projects. The preparatory work on the piece involved an extended artistic research process that included an analysis of video documentation from Stefan’s collaboration with another Swedish composer. For this purpose, we developed a method for analyzing the composer-performer interaction. Before starting work on the piece itself the results of that study, as well as the method itself, provided topic for several papers and conference presentations (Frisk & Östersjö, 2006; 2007). During this period, the casual discussions of how the new piece might take shape were also significant, some of which were also documented. The resulting work employed a radically open form in which the collaborative interactions between composer and performer were situated at the centre of the practice.
3. Henceforth three different versions have been produced: in the first two, the structure was settled prior to the performance, and for the third version the choices were made interactively in real time. The preparatory work also involved improvisation sessions that were recorded on audio and video and later transcribed by Henrik to become part of the score. In the process that followed the first performance in Beijing in 2006 several initiatives were taken to force the development of the piece in a different direction. Some of the work in this process is clearly leaning towards more research oriented activities and some of the work quite naturally belong to the artistic process. In practice, however, it is very difficult to discriminate between research and the artistic practice. *Repetition repeats all other Repetitions* is an example of how artistic research can resonate in the artistic work and output, as well as how specifically artistic and aesthetic concepts may fuel the research and force it into unforeseen areas (Frisk, 2008; Östersjö 2008).

### (Re)thinking Improvisation

1. (Re)thinking Improvisation was an international artistic research project on improvisation in different cultures, in which we both took part, that ran between 2009 and 2012. The project brought up several of the themes discussed in this article; notably the subjectivity of the research, the political and social spheres in artistic research as well as method development. In its early stages, there was an outspoken wish among some of the members of the group to more radically investigate the role of the researcher, both as performer and as writer. Within the group *The Six Tones* we furthered our engagement in an intercultural interaction on equal terms involving more musicians from different aesthetic traditions in Hanoi.
2. The project culminated in a festival and conference in November-December 2011 at *Inter Arts Center* in Malmö. This event hosted performers and researchers from three different continents and consisted of 19 public performances and seven lab-sessions in which both conceptual and non-conceptual approaches to improvisation were presented and discussed. For us, the strongest contribution from the research methodologies used was how already ongoing intercultural work was radicalized by the global and postcolonial perspective we adopted. The research combined qualitative research methods with philosophical writing inspired from cultural studies. A publication with CDs, a DVD and an edited book is forthcoming during 2013.

### Music in Movement

1. In a study on the German composer Rolf Riehm’s *Toccata Orpheus* (Riehm, 1990) for guitar solo, Stefan Östersjö identified an original approach to musical composition and performance. The bodily action of the performer is treated as an intentional compositional parameter in a way that makes an unusual kind of theatricality of the performance emerge as a result of the composed structure. In his analysis, Östersjö argued that the expressive units in the piece cannot be analysed merely as sonic events but that they are better understood as gestural-sonorous objects (Godøy, 2006; Östersjö, 2008). The further artistic quest, that emerged from the interpretation of the score, resulted in the making of several installation works - all drawing on material from the guitar piece - as well as artistic projects developing the concept of musical composition as the organization of gestural sonorous objects. This continued development has resulted in *Music in Movement* - an ongoing international artistic research project funded by the Swedish Research Council. This project is also clearly multi-disciplinary in terms of analytical methodologies (involving gesture researchers from musicology, linguistics and semiotics and both qualitative and quantitative data) and from an artistic viewpoint by exploring ways of merging the practices of choreography and musical composition. The terminology for, and analytical understanding of, musical gesture are in rapid development, and the major challenge appears to be the question of how to bring multiple perspectives together, like the 1st, 2nd and 3rd person perspectives (Leman 2010) as well as data ranging from autoethnography to motion tracking.
3. A recent premiere took place in October 2012 at the Cheo Theatre in Hanoi with a new installation and performance work titled *Inside/Outside*: a collaborative composition by the Vietnamese/Swedish group *The Six Tones*, the Swedish choreographer Marie Fahlin and the British laptop improviser Matt Wright. Based on a concept by Nguyen Thanh Thuy of *The Six Tones*, the piece wishes to discuss traditional Vietnamese music of today from a gender perspective, building on an analysis of gesture in the performance of traditional Vietnamese music in TV-shows. In the piece, dressed in traditional Vietnamese queen costumes, the three musicians of *The Six Tones* make a choreographed performance in glass boxes as if exhibited in a museum.[11] The way the series of works in *Music in Movement* are taking shape it seems it might become the most conceptually novel and explicitly political project that we have been involved in so far, taking a more decisive grip of issues concerning migration, identity and gender.

### Collaborative creativity and contemporary performance practice

1. Since 2002, Stefan Östersjö has been involved in a series of projects that address the interaction between performer and composer. He started out with the PhD project SHUT UP ‘N’ PLAY! (Östersjö, 2008), a study concerned with contemporary performance practices and specifically how these practices are created and transmitted in the interaction between composer and performer. Adding qualitative analysis of the social play between the parties the research methodology became the starting point for new projects explorating the possible dynamics of the relations between composer and performer further. A current example of this is the ongoing study within the CMPCP-project[12] in which the London-based composer David Gorton and Östersjö are carrying out a longitudinal study in collaboration with the music psychologist Eric Clarke within the frame of Clarke’s project titled “Creative Practice in Contemporary Concert Music”. This study constitutes an attempt to situate artistic research in a broader analytical frame in which the two participating artistic researchers make an independent analysis of their work which is eventually complemented with an analysis by Eric Clarke and his assistant as external observers. The usefulness of carrying out this work in the form of artistic research can be identified in two main fields: artistic development - sparked and enforced by the analysis of the interaction - and the need for documentation and analytical understandings of these emerging contemporary performance practices.

### Integra

1. Integra was a pan-European inter-disciplinary project that approached specific artistic needs in music technology engaging programmers, theorists, music technology experts, musicians and composers that engaged in methods for increasing sustainability in the electronic music world. The research and development process for the *IntegraLive* software was conducted under the auspices of Integra, a 3 year EU-funded project led by Birmingham Conservatoire, following another 3-year EU-funded project, both supported by the Culture programme of the European Commission. One of the main goals of Integra was to develop a new software environment for the composition and performance of live electronic music that would facilitate the process for new music ensembles and chamber groups to play music with live electronics (Frisk & Bullock, 2011; Frisk, Bullock & Coccioli, 2008).
3. Even though *Integra* was not an artistic research project as such, it was to a large extent governed by some of the same principles, and it is an example of the potential power of artistic knowledge production and the ways in which it can inform neighbouring fields. Methodologically it used artistic knowledge and experience to guide the development of tools, the output of which would similarly be in the artistic domain, even if the tools themselves were constructed in a more scientifically oriented music technology context. Furthermore, *Integra* was a conscious attempt at dismantling the long standing, patriarchal and hierarchical structures in much electro-acoustic music by moving the artistic initiative from the studios and its technicians to the musicians performing the music.

# Discussion

In the development of artistic research in Sweden we have seen many attempts to distance the development of this new discipline, not only from the academic field, but also from artistic research programs in other countries and even, in some cases, from experiences in other artistic fields. Initially there may have been good reasons for this impelled isolation, and there is currently a multitude of available modes for artistic research, but as Mika Hannula points out, “there has not been enough internal scrutiny and definitely not enough fruitful comparison and constructive criticism among all the different approaches” (Hannula, 2011, p. 70). Common expressions of the worries related to the academic influence on artistic practice that do surface in various places is the fear that the research will have to be communicated in academically formatted text. To understand this fear we need to consider the complex web of power relations and special interests of artistic research, but as we have tried to show in this short paper, this is a mistake in at least two dimensions: Academic writing will always be an efficient means to communicate ideas and results, also in artistic research, but it is not the only one, nor is it in all cases the best representation of artistic knowledge.

However, the opposition against established research methodologies has been quite strong in various parts of the field. It should be said that the search for identity and the resistance against established research fields might in fact have contributed to the rather solid and fast formation of artistic research as a distinct discipline in Sweden. At certain stages of the development of a field, it may be necessary to prepare time and space for it to define its own vocabulary and its own methods. Reflection is such a term that has been used as a substitute for method, theory and representation. ‘Trial and error’, ‘silent knowledge’, ‘new knowledge’, ‘introspection’ and ‘narration’ are other examples.[13] It is our strong belief now that it is necessary to question these replacement terms and trust the power and efficiency of the artistic practice to be solid enough to to embrace the impact of established and hybrid qualitative research methods without losing its qualities as art. In our own experience, the fact that we have used academic writing techniques and research oriented methodologies has strengthened rather than dismantled the expressive and experimental qualities of our practice. It has provided us with information and data that in turn has helped us to further develop the artistic work in unforeseen ways. For these reasons, we do not see the need to develop alternative writing techniques specific to artistic research. While our primary claim in this paper is that artistic research is mature enough to trust the power of the knowledge innate to artistic practice, there is obviously much to do on the formal level concerning artistic research education and research institutions. An even greater challenge is the furthered development of the use of research in art institutions.

Though artistic research has a formidable potential to explore knowledge in art not all art is, nor should be, an object for artistic research. That artistic expressions such as music can manifest themselves in many different modes is clearly a strength rather than a weakness. Furthermore, there will be no danger of art becoming too academic so long as artistic research is focused on the artistic practice, and there will be no opposition between research credibility and artistic freedom as long as methods are explicit. Similarly, there will be no problem for the artistic research institutions to evaluate the artistic quality of their projects as long as a healthy and widespread collaboration exists between these academies and the surrounding art world. There is, however, a need for efficient documentation models and databases to which texts and descriptions can be linked and made available.

What then is the possible usefulness of research for the arts? When looking at the ramifications of various artistic projects in our own practices over the past fourteen years and their relations to artistic research projects and contexts we would like to draw the following conclusions:

● Artistic research can amplify the developmental aspects of experimental artistic projects and make possible more extensive explorations of a certain field.

● A successful research design should afford, not only time and space in which personal reflection is worked into the creative process, but also methodologies that allow for new understandings and new artistic directions to emerge.

As for the first point, we believe that the making of Henrik Frisk’s *Repetition Repeats All Other Repetitions* makes for a strong example of how this exploration of open form in human computer interaction can be highly supported by a multi-faceted research process. The multiplicity of approaches - qualitative analysis of our interaction, collective writing and analysis of these materials, further artistic experimentation and implementations of new versions - all these different phases contributed to the creative process.

Though some of the elements of the most recent versions of the piece were intuitively or conceptually a part of it already at the outset, the research process gave us the tools to include them. In other words, in this case the research made it possible to achieve the initial artistic goals. One may say that our collaboration tended to oscillate between the three poles of the academic, the experimental, and the subjective. These were articulated in different ways: the subjective and the academic aspects we produced were discussed in the writing while the experimental practice was expressed most clearly in the versions of the work displayed in the numerous performances of the piece in Europe, Asia and the USA, and in the recordings. In a somewhat similar way, but less clearly articulated and documented, the working process in the *Integra* project pointed to the usefulness of interaction between artistic practice and other disciplines and how artistic development can be the outcome in inter-disciplinary work. Some of the more technically oriented research in *Integra* also found its way into the method development in (re)thinking improvisation. We also believe that the trajectory from (re)thinking improvisation and our growing understanding of the implications of carrying out the work in the Vietnamese/Swedish *The Six Tones* in a postcolonial and multicultural context and specifically, the growing understanding of the political nature of this practice had not been possible without the research context in which we developed this work between 2009 and 2012. Further, in the recent developments of the work of the group in the context of *Music in Movement,* the first clearly articulated artistic outcomes of these political understandings are now being produced.

It is essential for artistic research to expand the space for subjectivity in the sciences. We believe that it is time to develop an epistemology for research that is responsive to the demands from modern society to move towards a decolonized and ethically grounded paradigm. The positivist belief in a value-free ‘objective’ science is a delusion and has already been decisively countered by a subjectivist turn. In this context, the artistic researcher can be a vanguard representative for the autoethnographic and politically considered counter-reaction. Returning to the discussion of the positivist concepts of validity and reliability, we believe that the development of methodologies in the qualitative sciences in this respect presents a framework for artistic researchers to develop. Validity then is fundamentally a matter of making the subjectivity of the artist visible in the research design. The need for creating a multi-layered understanding of subject-positions does come out clearly in studies of collaborative creativity, out of which, research into contemporary performance practices is but one important field[14]. Any possible generalisation at a later stage depends on artistic researchers being honest with the subjective nature of their practice.

We argue that the politics of making artistic research consists essentially of situating artistic practice in a wider discourse, but also in strengthening the aim of producing artistic work that in itself is shaped within this augmented space. We do not mean to promote ‘political art’ but rather encourage an expanded awareness among artists and researchers of the political implications of one’s practice. Political art has some problematic connotations, but what we are discussing here is a development beyond any specific modelling of the artistic output along political lines. The contextualization of art as artistic research is in itself a politicization, but it is in placing the artistic work in the light of a particular social, theoretical, cultural, or philosophical framework that causes the political dimension to surface. Such an awareness may constitute the foundation for an artistic production and research that is responsive to the four gravitational fields discussed above - the subjective, the experimental, the academic and the field of the art world - while solidly encompassed by the socio political context.

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[1] Latour’s and Woolgar’s study is a true classic, and not only due to the fact that they happened to study one of the two teams that received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1977, the study in itself still today remains one of the most powerful critiques of realist or positivist stance in science.

[2] The triad is of course, validity, reliability and generalizability, though in the context of the present article there is not space to discuss all these aspects of the positivist paradigm. We focus on the concept of validity since it is has greater relevance for qualitative research epistemologies than the other two. Also, it should be noted that artists are sometimes the more rigid believers in research as something that should adhere to the positivist paradigm.

[3] This was however pointed out already in 2002 by Henrik Karlsson in his book on artistic research education in Sweden: “Från en vetenskapsteoretisk ståndpunkt [...] kan *Self Portrait* ses som ett mönsterexempel på “självetnografi”. [...] Genren är alltså mest använd inom den s.k. reflexiva etnologin och antropologin men borde rimligen kunna prövas på andra fält.” (Karlsson, 2002)

[4] The ‘diaspora experience’ is here intended metaphorically, not referring to actually scattered tribes that at any cost must return to their homeland but, with reference to Stuart Hall’s discussion of diaspora it is defined, ‘not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a

[4]conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity.’ (Hall, 1993, p 235)

[5] [www.jar-online.net](http://www.jar-online.net/) For a further discussion of the implementation of the journal see the editorial of the first edition: http://www.jar-online.net/index.php/issues/editorial/483

[6] See [interPARES.org](http://www.interpares.org/) for more information

[7] See [www.casparpreserves.eu](http://www.casparpreserves.eu/index.html) for more information

[8] See [www.ircam.fr](http://www.ircam.fr/58.html?tx_ircam_pi1%5BshowUid%5D=33&ext=1&L=1)

[9] According to the Swedish Research Council ([www.vr.se](http://www.vr.se/)) in 2012 there were 38 PhD candidates in Sweden and 19 completed PhD in performing arts. In addition to these there are artistic PhD projects going on at KTH and one in a collaboration with the Sibelius Academy in Finland.

[10] There are two recordings published so far of highly distinct versions of the piece, the first is a live recording released on *Spanning* (Chamber Sound, 2010) and the second appears on Stefan Östersjö’s 2011 solo album *Strandlines*.

[11] Excerpts from the premiere can be viewed at<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WAbZHDr0oo> and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6DdIa5LYw0

[12]<http://www.cmpcp.ac.uk/>

[13] We owe these examples to Henrik Karlsson.

[14] See for instance the ongoing CMPCP project (<http://www.cmpcp.ac.uk/>) as an example of the development in performance studies as well as individual pieces of research into contemporary performance practices (Clarke, 2005; Roe, 2007; Östersjö, 2008)