



Research through practice: positioning the practitioner as researcher

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Introduction

The function of this paper is to create some clarity around the different definitions of research currently in use within Fine Art practice. The need for clarity arises from criticisms and confusions surrounding research and its relationship to Fine Art practice, evident within professional, academic and research contexts. It is suggested here that the confusion may be a direct result of the same terminology being applied indiscriminately within the discipline, to very different types of research situations.

The paper is co-authored and divided into two sections. The first develops the argument outlined above, by presenting a method by which to distinguish the different interpretations of research. This method introduces four crucial influencing factors, which create a dynamic that characterises the research approach. These factors are funding, research context, motives for doing the research and who the research addresses. By using this dynamic to look at a number of research situations in Fine Art, three different research routes have been identified: personal research, research as critical practice and formal research. This dynamic is a mechanism for handling the range of approaches in terms of where the research has most impact or literally, power (dunamis in Greek etymology means power) (Firth 1964). While the specific routes are not intended to be exhaustive, the dynamic allows a practitioner to anticipate what the requirements, limitations and impact of any one route might be, enabling them to position themselves within a complex research culture.

The second part of the paper focuses on formal research, through the experience of Karen Scopa, who critically evaluates her practice-led Ph.D. within the dynamic factors introduced, and with particular focus on the nature and function of practice within this research process. The formal approach undertaken in this project echoes the qualities for a discipline-specific approach to research outlined by Nigel Cross as purposive, inquisitive, informed, methodical, and communicable (Cross 2000).

The paper concludes that research in the field of Fine Art has different functions to which the different research routes are responsive. It is suggested that the three approaches defined in this paper present viable, yet different, alternatives - each of which impacts in different ways and to different degrees on the discipline. It is argued that clarity of different research terms and values, alongside an evaluation of the impact of different approaches, will enable the further development of research within the field of Fine Art practice.

Early debates on Fine Art practice and Research, such as those of the Matrix Conferences 1988 and 1993 organised by Central St Martins School of Art, the London Institute, were concerned with whether Fine Art should engage with research. As examples of research through practice emerge, these debates have shifted to how it should become engaged. In focusing the issue from an ontological to a methodological question, different approaches have emerged across academic institutions and within professional contexts. This suggests that what is actually occurring is a new process of conceptualisation. This process is engaged as much within the academy as within the professional arena, leading to different meanings for the words "research" and "research output".

The aim and outcome of the research process, in all its manifestations, is not to reach consensus on a single "correct" model of research - but to raise informed debates by locating and communicating research activities. The proposing and evaluating of different interpretations of the practice /research relationship becomes a vital characteristic of our research culture. In all of the three research interpretations, the research debate is evidenced in a number of ways; through the development of discussion platforms, publications and an increase in the numbers of projects identified as research projects. Within personal research for example, platforms for debate include exhibition openings, reviews in recognised art journals and networked interviews. Within critical practice, there are a number of seminal publications (Lacy 1995) and conferences such as the Littoral Conference in Ireland in 1998, co-ordinated by Projects Environment (Manchester) and The Inter-Society for the Electronic Arts (ISEA) symposia. Within formal research there has also been a significant increase in conferences. These include the Matrix Conferences hosted by the London Institute in 1988, 1993, 1995 and 1999, the Radical Conference in 1994 hosted by The Robert Gordon University, as well as the Research and the Artist Conference May 1999, hosted by the Laboratory, at the Ruskin School of Art, Oxford. There has been an increase in the number of Fine Art practitioners registering for higher degrees, in particular Ph.D. programmes, with a clear rationale for doing so (Gray 1998). There has been an increase in funding for research in Britain, through the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), as well as dedicated funding sources such as the newly formed Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB).

These new opportunities, while clearly advantageous to the development of a discipline in the process of formulating research practice, have fuelled the confusion. There are, for example, ambiguous definitions of research for Art and Design practice within the current RAE, a competitive means of awarding research monies within academic institutions in Britain. The exercise takes place approximately every five or six years with the updating of criteria at these intervals. The criteria for the assessment in 2001 defined by the Art and Design panel, acknowledges a practice based output as research output "when it can be shown to be firmly located within a research context, to be subject to interrogation and critical review and to impact on or influence the work of peers, policy and practice". The intention to do research (as opposed to the intention to realise an artwork) is an essential condition of a formal research project, evident through a clear statement of aims and

objectives linked to a methodology which is appropriate to the inquiry, and positioned within the field of knowledge, through the construction of argument. Intentionality in these terms is not necessarily an attribute of practice. A minority of individuals within Fine Art are equipped to engage in the formulation of intentional research. This inevitably results in questions about the definition of a "research context", and on the way in which "impact" or "influence" might be measured. Will these definitions and methods arise from the traditions and assumptions of practice or the rigours of academic research? .

Fine Art has a very particular approach to education and training. Within critical practice, the notion of Fine Art as having cultural resonance, a degree of responsibility and reflectivity is increasingly influencing a discipline whose dominant pedagogical approach has been, and in some institutions still is, the development of individual creativity. Much of what is currently claimed to be research within Fine Art would not be recognised as such by other disciplines within an academic framework, particularly where research content is expressed in terms of the individual's intention and personal rationale for a specific artwork or project.

The RAE is one research context and funding body. The formation of the AHRB with multiple funding strands has opened up new research opportunities within Fine Art and Design practice, in which projects have to be articulated in classic research terms; i.e. through a clear objectives, the contextualisation of those objectives, an articulation of methodology and projected outcomes. Whilst the development of a dedicated research board for Fine Art and Design in relationship to the Humanities is extremely welcome, it has raised questions in the mind of the formal researcher and the professional practitioner alike around the very different kinds of practices grouped under the umbrella of "research". What we currently have is a cacophony of different practices all claiming the same (or higher status) as Research, with no means to recognise the relativity of each type of research practice and its particular functionality. What is lacking is a clear method for defining where a particular research project is located and how it should be evaluated. It is too simplistic to conceive of selecting one research model to follow at the expense of all others. This appears a particularly absurd solution in a discipline that celebrates individualism, whose lifeblood is innovation, if not anarchy, and where there is a real fear of inappropriate rationalisation and the academicising of practice.

The Dynamic of Fine Art Research Practice

A method of defining different interpretations of research in relationship to Fine Art practice is formulated here. Each "scenario" or "route" expresses a different configuration of the four crucial attributes; funding source, research context, research motives and who the research addresses. Once the practitioner-researcher is located in relationship to the four, other qualities follow, such as the nature and degree of rigour of the research process, the outcomes, and the manner in which it is communicated to the discipline. The dynamic is measured here in terms of the impact of each route on the building of a shared body of knowledge, both within and outside the discipline boundaries. The three scenarios are as follows; personal research, critical practice and formal research.

This is a personal, private and often unpublished investigation of the development of a specific piece of work or project undertaken by the individual practitioner. Equivalent to research and development (R&D) in Design, the outcomes of the research process are often not published, but evidenced (or not) within the final product or project. In cases where this developmental research process is exposed independently of the artwork, it is

done so through professional rather than research based conventions e.g. sketch books, story boards, published or networked interviews as opposed to argument within a thesis or academic paper. Practice is the "subject" of discussion and the inquiry. A historic example of a published exposure of process, which predates this particular research debate, is the thorough and celebratory documentation of the project *Surrounded Islands* by the artist Christo (Pavese 1986). In this publication the final and transient outcome of surrounding the islands of Biscayne Bay, Greater Miami, in Florida is unpacked more visually than through text, giving a permanent record of and some insight into the process of achieving this complex and temporary intervention. Within this route of personal research, research content has one of two possible positions. It is either implicit within a second more dominant process, professional practice and occasionally made explicit through the conventions of that profession as described above, or it is embodied and therefore implicit within the artwork itself. Funding sources for personal research currently span dedicated practice-based sources such as Arts Council research grants, as well as RAE funding within academic contexts. The lack of separation of research funds and professional practice funds legitimises the fusion of research and practice as synonymous activities with the consequent evaluation of research outputs in both research and professional terms. The research is located within professional contexts of exhibiting. The main motive for personal research is the exploration and carrying out of a professionally based project or product. The research addresses, in the first place, the practitioner him or herself and where the process is taken into publication, other interested practitioners or members of the audience. The discussion is a constructivist exercise, operating at the level of personal intention for the particular artwork through anecdote and documentation of development, resulting in varying degrees of rigour. The dynamic involved here places knowledge in the hands of the individual practitioner, and not necessarily within a body of practising artists. Knowledge is either embodied or discursive/descriptive on the basis of how it can be done, rather than why it should be done that way. In this case, it is difficult to trace the impact of the research activity on the discipline as a whole, i.e. beyond the individuals directly involved in the process, as there are few mechanisms for doing so. Embodied knowledge within the artwork relies on the ability of a research community to understand the particular artwork and the research within it. Traditionally it has been art critics, theorists and historians, who have located art practice and individual artworks within academic and theoretical debates. In research terms the impact of any new knowledge is therefore limited within this route.

Research as critical practice

The route of Research as Critical Practice is closely allied with the development of critical practice itself, a prerequisite of most successful contemporary art practice. Research in this area has emerged in at least two forms; as a means of developing new innovative ways of working and as a means of negotiating new relationships with audience through project based initiatives, both within and outside conventions of exhibiting. An example of the latter is "New Genre Public Art" in which practitioners discuss and evolve a shared philosophy with which to position a "socially engaged" model of practice (Lacy 1995). The former creates "time out" from the pressures of professional performance to explore new territory by the accessing of discrete and dedicated funds. The projects are often experiments in interdisciplinary ways of working such as the SCI ART project funded by the Wellcome Trust (Cohen 1998), or the programme of Artist's Research Fellowships curated by Visual Arts Projects Glasgow (edited Brind 1999).

The motive underpinning these types of project is to challenge the profession to adopt fresh approaches to creativity, which are critical and experimental in nature. Both types cited emerge out of the need to develop appropriate ways of working within a culture of change and reassessing of its systems of value. This changing culture forms the context in which critical issues are identified, framed and modelled within projects through a self-conscious and negotiated process. The research content is evidenced through the practitioner's own explicit articulation of these issues and the way in which they underpin their practice. As with personal research, research as critical practice, is both embodied in individual examples of practice and carried across professional platforms for debate around practice, such as artist's talks, discussion platforms and publications. (Not all examples of critical practice however, e.g. the practices of Hans Haacke and Richard Hamilton, claim to be research. These artists present their work as art practice.) Funding for research projects within this route tends to be drawn from sources which support practice rather than research, such as the National Lottery (in the case of Visual Arts Projects Glasgow), professional bodies (the Wellcome Trust in the SCI ART project) and the RAE in academic contexts. The research addresses practitioners of Fine Art or other individual collaborators who are engaged in the specific set of issues involved.

The impact of this route on the discipline can be analysed more clearly than that of personal research, since the processes engaged in are more traceable and accountable. This route mirrors personal research in as far as it contributes to the subject of Fine Art practice through the activities of individual practitioners, who are engaged with that subject matter in discrete projects. It also mirrors formal research in locating the research activity within a clearly articulated critical and contextual framework, which is often published as part of the evaluation of the activity. However, there are fundamental differences. In research as critical practice, the research content is presented through the practice itself, and within the conventions of exhibition and publication located within practice. In contrast, formal research is presented through structured and evidenced argument, itself a product of rigorous analysis, in which artworks or art projects may have a specific and clearly articulated role.

Formal Research in the Practice of Fine Art

The main context for this research area is the academic environment; although the research projects often occur within "live" professional situations. The research responds to cultural changes that impact on practice and addresses ways in which new practitioners are trained, and experienced practitioners retrained, as part of the process of redefining roles for practice within culture and of progressing the discipline. This locus is therefore different from the previous two examples in that a degree of validation has to be reached for knowledge to be recognised by the academic context, and to be passed on through teaching. It is an area of some experimentation and debate in an effort to develop models of research practice that function like those of Science and Technology, but are not necessarily the same. Funding sources for full time studentships can be accessed from traditional sources such as the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and the Economic and Social Science Research Council (ESRC), where the research is based in technological or social questions. For research questions centred within Fine Art issues, funding has been problematic until the recent formation of the AHRB. Early Ph.D.s have often been funded from within the particular Art Schools in which the research is located, in itself a significant gesture towards developing this particular route on behalf of the discipline itself.

The research addresses other practitioners of Fine Art within both academic and professional contexts as well as academics across disciplines. Motives for engaging in this research are firstly the acquisition of recognisable and relevant research skills as a means of being able to make a contribution to a shared body of knowledge through a recognised and generic process- i.e. statement of research aims and objectives, contextualisation of these through a literature review, identification and description of appropriate methodology for addressing the stated aims, analysis and conclusions. A useful contribution to knowledge is thereby not assumed as automatic. Other motives include the clarification of existing forms of professional practice from an informed perspective, as well as the definition of new frames of reference for the profession, which inform both teaching and professional performance.

The formal route through research mirrors personal research and research as critical practice in that the practice is at the centre of the process, though in a very different sense. In the formal research model, the role of practice is part of the methodology of the research and is therefore relative and heuristic. In this sense art works and projects have a partial and functional role within the final "argument" - in some projects as evidence in support of that argument and in others as a means of embodying knowledge more efficiently and appropriately than through text alone. The precise role is determined in relationship to the specific question or set of issues, which the particular research project aims to address. The proportion and role of artwork in relationship to text is or should be therefore negotiated discretely and in relationship to the research questions.

The formal route mirrors critical practice in terms of the transparency and accountability of the research process. However it is distinct from these other routes in the structure of the research process described above and its requirement for training. Research praxis within the academic context, is generic to all academic disciplines, and therefore recognisable as a language across different disciplines, although the specific methodologies will inevitably alter in relationship to the questions posed. This route therefore impacts on the profession through raising and modelling issues of that profession. It impacts on the discipline in as far as the formal research process develops a reliable and shared body of knowledge within the discipline. The discipline straddles both the learning and academic environment and the professional environment. The process of the inquiry within formal research can also be communicated and defended to others irrespective of whether they are involved in the specific issues or content of the particular research project. The successful defence of a structured argument, leads to a contribution to knowledge not just at the level of how, but also at the level of why. This process and outcome will be demonstrated through the example.

Case Example of a Practice-led Ph.D. Research Process

Title: "The Development of Strategies for Interdisciplinary Collaboration in the Visual Arts"

The research content addresses both current cultural shifts influencing collaboration from the perspective of the visual arts, and the ways in which collaborative processes implicate the development of alternative models of practice. The research was carried out within the context of a practice-led Ph.D. at the Centre for Research in Art and Design (CRiAD) in Aberdeen. It has been funded through a three year research studentship by Gray's School of Art. Unlike most professional funding resources, specific research projects (i.e. practice) are not funded. Instead, funding provides an annual stipend to support my engagement with the research process.

The initial motive for undertaking research into collaboration in the visual arts stemmed from knowledge built up through previous research at CRiAD. Complimenting this, my personal motives, or "rationale", stemmed from critical concerns arising from an interest in developing interdisciplinary, collaborative projects through my own practice. As a visual art practitioner, my assumptions were that collaboration might create new roles for artists, new ways of working and present possible new contexts for practice - issues closely linked to notions of sustainability and professionalism. This research is primarily intended to address visual arts practitioners, since it is undertaken from the perspective of a visual art practitioner, and also intends to benefit other professionals who either already work with artists, or who might wish to do so.

Research Aims

To identify and describe the qualities of collaborative processes (as distinct from other shared working processes and individual models of practice) - since the term "collaboration" in contemporary arts practices was found to be ill-defined and often contradictory.

To present informed strategies for collaboration through visual art practice - since the qualities of collaborative processes were not visible in artworks conceived in collaboration little evidence existed from which to develop collaborative strategies.

To address the potential impact of collaboration on visual arts practice - since there was little critical information on collaboration available from which to evaluate its impact.

Methods

Developing exploratory collaborative projects to generate the primary research data.

Describing qualities of collaboration (in contrast with other shared working processes - such as participation, cooperation, etc.) through analyses of the research projects, selected case examples of shared working and relevant literature (across disciplines)

Identifying core characteristics (main influencing factors e.g. context, timescale, common ground, trust, etc.) through comparative analyses of project data.

From these core characteristics and qualities, developing an analytical framework for evaluating the implications of collaboration as an alternative to individual practice.

Findings were substantiated by determining corresponding evidence between the projects, case examples of collaboration, relevant literature, and the experiences of other practitioners (through interviews).

The Projects (Practice)

Project 1 Collaborative Drawing

Project 2 "Parklife"

Public art project

Project 3 "IdEntities" 1:

The Contract Book

Project 4 "IdEntities" 2:

The Kissing Card Game

Project 5 "Revisions"

interdisciplinary research

[Main PhD project]

Research Aims

(To explore...)

Methods of drawing as a collaborative tool in different environments.

Collaboration and participation in a public context through an interactive "event".

Collaboration as both content and process of practice - metaphor of "inter-subjective space".

Collaboration as content, process and product of practice - through game product.

Collaborative and interdisciplinary research methods of visualization.

Project structure

Tightly structured. Experimental.

Structured event.

Negotiated structure.

Evolving structure.

Negotiated structure.

Environment

1. studio 2. beach

Duthie Park, Aberdeen

Private environment

Private environment

Aberdeen Art Gallery

Timescale

2 days

1 week

6 months

7 months

7 months

Collaborators

Pernille Spence, Video Artist

Lauris Symmons, PhD student in Communications

Duncan Comrie, PhD student in Art History

Christian Zursiedel, non-art, languages student.

Professor Robin Webster, Architect; Roxane Permar, Artist; Dr. Mike Wood, Cartographer;

Dr. David Pearson, Psychologist; David Atherton, Cultural Services Education Officer

Data Retrieval Methods

Video & Photographic documentation. Taped Interview.

Photographic documentation, Observational Notes, Postcards with participant responses.

Written Contract, Collage, Photographic documentation, Transcribed Discussion.

Observational Notes, Descriptive game methods,

Photography.

Observational Notes, Workshop proposals, Documentation of motives and expectations,

Evaluation questionnaires, Documented evaluative discussion.

Figure 1.

The research projects provided the central role (or "practice-basis") of the research, by generating the primary data (see figure 1 above for a chronological overview of the projects). The nature of the projects can be distinguished from other forms of research involving practice, such as personal research and critical practice, since they do not privilege a resolved end product over the process of inquiry. Instead, the research

functions of each project have been defined in order to develop appropriate analyses (measured in research terms) of the practice. The projects have served three specific functions within the formal research process, by raising questions, acquiring primary data and developing appropriate methods of analysis:

They enabled me to heuristically construct Collaborative Processes.

Based on my understanding of collaboration at each stage of the research, projects were developed to explore specific aspects of collaboration. Findings from each project incrementally informed the development of subsequent projects, by enabling the identification of relevant issues and redressing the research questions accordingly.

They provided "live situations" for developing and evaluating appropriate Research Methods.

Unlike controlled experiments, the projects provided "live situations" in which to develop appropriate research methods. For example, in Projects 2-4, different metaphors were developed to describe the nature of the collaborative processes, since documentation alone did not provide appropriate data with which to sufficiently analyse the qualitative nature of collaboration.

They generated the Primary Data of the research.

Mechanisms for generating data (see Fig 1.) were built into the projects. A comparative analysis of data from Projects 1-4 identified and described core characteristics of collaboration (e.g. roles, trust, etc.), which were used to model Project 5 and which provided the basis for an analytic framework, with which to evaluate their influences on the quality of the collaboration.

Project 1 - "Collaborative Drawing"

This project explored the method of drawing as a tool to facilitate collaboration in different environments, under different conditions and with different drawing materials. Beginning with the assumption that "spontaneity" is a prerequisite of collaboration, it was discovered that achieving a spontaneous approach to shared working did not necessarily engage the qualities of "true" collaboration. Video and photographic documentation were used, but this alone did not evidence the "invisible" qualities of collaboration being sought, so Project 2 developed new methods of "framing" collaboration.

Project 2 - "Parklife"

This project explored different forms of collaboration and cooperation, (through participation and interaction) in a public art event. Different forms of shared working involving varied levels of engagement were identified, described and compared with "true" collaboration. A new method using metaphor as a conceptual framework for understanding the roles of the collaborators within the structure of the collaboration was developed. An initial metaphor of "people as sites" was developed from recognised constructs within public art (i.e. "site-specific" practice).

Project 3 - "IdEntities: The Contract Book"

This project revised and developed the metaphor of "people as sites" in order to specifically address the third, or shared, space that emerges between collaborators (i.e. "inter-subjective space" (Kester 1998)). The metaphor of "a contract" was developed as a framework for evolving and documenting the initial stages of collaboration. Questions emerged about the potential for developing structural processes for evolving and mediating collaboration.

Project 4 - "IdEntities: The Kissing Card Game"

In this project, structuring the "third" space created between collaborators became the central concern; addressed through the metaphor of "game strategy". Game strategies were developed with the intention of evolving a collaborative working process and producing an outcome that would facilitate collaboration between others. Therefore, the "game strategy" presented both a method and a product of practice. With this awareness, the research focus was redressed from exploring collaboration as a process within existing practices, to addressing it as a new process-model, enabling different forms of art product.

Project 5 - "Re-Visions"

This project engaged collaborative and interdisciplinary research processes to re-think the use and function of Aberdeen Art Gallery. Collaborative visual research methods were developed in order to "re-think" the role and function of the Gallery. Activities included architectural modelling, psychological testing, map making, a photographic portraiture project, and a memorial plaque sculpture project.

Research Outcomes

As illustrated above, the research projects have served important functions in leading and directing the research process. The projects, case examples of collaboration and relevant literature underwent detailed analyses; and a research argument (i.e. thesis) has been constructed. This argument presents the following two main outcomes, which make relevant contributions to knowledge on collaboration in the visual arts:

A Critical Framework for Developing and Evaluating Collaboration in the Visual Arts.
An informed definition of collaboration, describing its specific qualities and characteristics, was deemed relevant and necessary for understanding the implications of collaboration in the visual arts, due to evident confusions surrounding collaboration in the professional field.

The Positioning of Collaboration as a Viable Alternative to Individual Practice.
To position collaboration as a viable alternative approach in the visual arts, it was necessary to compare and contrast it with the dominant individual models, since there was little previous research directly addressing collaboration within the visual arts, and since different values were found to underpin collaborative and individual models of visual art practice.

Currently in completion, the research has had a measurable, if modest, impact on both the undergraduate and postgraduate course philosophy and content within Gray's School of Art, and generated interest from practitioners within the field of visual arts and other disciplines.

Summary of the Practice-led Ph.D. Research Process

Whilst most of the research projects occurred within public and professional contexts, the research process has been grounded within CRiAD. This context, and the framework provided by the Ph.D. has provided a focused environment for developing formal research skills and debating the research content. The function of practice shifts from producing individual artworks, to developing exploratory projects that address specific issues and generate primary research data. Therefore, the function of practice in research (although specific to the object of inquiry), serves primarily to contribute to the construction of an informed and substantiated thesis. This thesis (argument) - manifest in whatever form - is the product of the research process and therefore, the practice does not stop at the production of the art work itself as is often the case in the other research routes (personal research and critical practice). Distinctions between the processes of evaluation and analysis highlight this difference, since developing appropriate methods of analysis has provided the most challenging element of this research. Processes of "analysis" are distinct from that of "evaluation", where the practitioner critically reflects on their experiences of practice. In comparison, "analysis" is a more distinctive and time-consuming process of exploring research data in order to "uncover" and "interpret" imbedded patterns and information. Therefore, the formal research route provides a complementary situation to the professional context; where products of practice are normally privileged over the research process, and where individual models of practice are implicitly valued. These aspects of the formal research route present a distinctive and relatively new development route for visual artists, enabling them to develop the knowledge base of the discipline from the perspective of the practitioner and to locate visual arts practice in relationship to other disciplines.

Conclusions

Through this paper we have proposed a method for recognising the differences between research practices in Fine Art. This method locates the different forces of research motives, context, funding, and who the research addresses, within a dynamic. Three types of research are identified, though these are not exhaustive; personal research, research through critical practice and formal research. We have suggested that whilst these approaches present viable alternatives, the distinctive opportunities which each present are lost where a lack of clarity prevents practitioners from making informed choices between them. It is argued here that clarity in research terminology and values will empower the individual practitioner to choose where to place themselves in relationship to the questions: Why is the research being undertaken? Where is the research located? Who is funding the project? Who is the research addressing? Lack of clarity aggravates confusion around the notion of research, to the point that, like Babel, no one can build because no one can communicate effectively with anyone else.

The research debate in Fine Art currently challenges the habits and mythologies surrounding notions of "the artist" and the unspoken and assumed values embedded in the profession. It has simultaneously challenged the wider academic research community and raised expectations of a recognisable "Science". If the ultimate aim of formal research is to contribute to a shared body of knowledge, then formal research approaches within Fine Art need to engage and ultimately inform academic and professional practice as part of the same community. This means understanding, respecting and adapting the research process to enable the discipline to raise appropriate questions and to address them through appropriate methodologies. The tradition of research in Science and Technology

over the past century and a half has arguably set out to achieve reliable processes of replication, which underpin industrial culture. However, Fine Art and Design research is located in a post industrial and diverse culture, and is subject to different but related complex cultural pressures, only some of which are industrial and technological in nature. There is therefore a correspondingly different set of functions for research in Art and Design which is emergent rather than established, i.e. that of reflecting on, questioning, and recreating systems of value in relationship to cultural change and new patterns of habitation and production. These inevitably include questioning the function of Art in Culture from the perspective of the practitioner.

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to cite this journal article:

Douglas, A., K. Scopa & C. Gray (2000) Research through practice: positioning the practitioner as researcher. Working Papers in Art and Design 1

ISSN 1466-4917