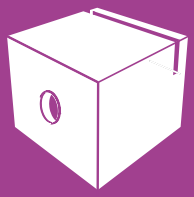

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MAINTAINING CREATIVITY AND ENSURING RESEARCH

TEACHING CREATIVE RESEARCH IN FILM AND MEDIA ARTS. A PERSONAL REFLECTION

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Abstract

The current article is a reflection of a personal journey of transitioning from being an artistic research track PhD student to a supervisor and lecturer helping others in navigating the confusing and promising seas of artistic research. In 2020, I was the first PhD student to defend my thesis on the audio-visual arts artistic research track of the Tallinn University Baltic Film and Media School and as soon as I had defended it, I was asked to serve in the position of the head of artistic research for the PhD track. As such, I experienced the trials and tribulations of the beginnings first hand and am now in a position to reflect upon the challenges we faced. The scope of the current article is not in building a cohesive framework or giving an overview of the state of the art in artistic research in audio-visual arts. Instead, the current article builds upon a personal experience, purposefully using first person in the reflections. My aim is not to synthesise diverse perspectives and already existing analysis of what artistic research is. This field is vast and much has already been written. Rather, inspired by Emanuele Bardone's approach (Bardone, 2014), I too aim to show how dealing with artistic research as a practitioner could look 'from the inside' (ibid.). Bardone's method has a specific aim: 'This means that we do not look at how learning should be, but how it actually happens in the actual and particular lives of learners. This means to adopt and retain a more ethnographic look, which resists the temptation to idealise or typify learning' (ibid). Hence, my current article's focus is on personal experiences in the process of teaching artistic research to audio-visual arts practitioners and reporting a work in progress in creating a usable blueprint for helping audio-visual arts practitioners at the beginning of their artistic research journey.

Keywords: *practice-based research, film and media arts, artistic research, audio-visual arts.*

Artistic research: the definition and structure in the Baltic Film and Media School

It is not common for film schools to have artistic research at all, even less PhD studies, thus the Baltic Film and Media School (BFM) has been at the forefront of artistic research in audio-visual media. When it started, the PhD programme facilitated two modes of doctoral studies – creative practice-based audio-visual arts research and empirical audio-visual media research. As I write this, the two separate tracks of research in BFM have been merged into one, but during the period I am reflecting upon in the current article, they were still separate. The curriculum focuses on contemporary forms and phenomena of media and audio-visual arts, first and foremost media content and media production research. The central idea behind the practice-based doctoral thesis is that creative work itself can be also a form of research, accomplished by using different means and modalities of artistic practice and reflection. In the context of this study programme, the research is carried out and/or reflected upon using different (above all, audio-visual) media, and not just written argumentation.

As with every good idea, the execution often comes down to practicalities. In the case of artistic research, the practicalities need to be both flexible and rigid in order to support a forward momentum while maintaining a clear structure. The completion of the study programme is assessed once during an academic year in a progress review after two semesters have passed since the last progress review or matriculation of the doctoral student. A regular progress review in BFM constitutes an assessment by the progress review committee of the doctoral student's advances both in terms of studies, research and creative work. A progress review is based on progress review criteria fulfilment and a journal of supervision that is filed at the end of each academic year with the progress review committee. In making a decision, the progress review committee follows the area-specific criteria established by the Tallinn University (TLU) Vice-Rector for Research appointed by the TLU Rector. The corresponding doctoral studies council submits a proposal for the establishment of area-specific criteria (in the case of TLU, there is no separate doctoral studies council for artistic research, thus it falls under the humanities doctoral studies council, which means that there is a need for regular advocacy of artistic

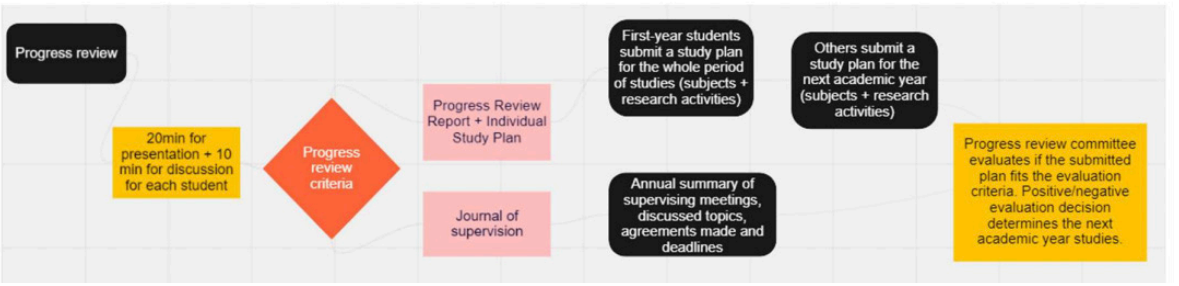

Fig. 1 Process flow of progress review at the Baltic Film and Media School.

research-specific issues). Passing the progress review is a prerequisite for continuing one's doctoral studies.

The defence of the doctoral thesis is public and takes place at a meeting of the defence committee in the form of an academic debate/discussion.

There are two dissertation/thesis models. A doctoral thesis can be formalised as: (a) a monograph or (b) an article-based dissertation.

A doctoral thesis is defined as an independent research work which offers a novel solution to a significant problem in a discipline related to the area of the study programme. In the case of a monograph, the prerequisites for the defence include at least one of the following: (a) at least one article related to the topic of the doctoral thesis that is defined by the Estonian Research Information System (ETIS), categories 1.1, 1.2. or 3.1 – published in a journal present in Clarivates' Web of Science Master Journal List, indexed by Scopus, or published at internationally recognised academic publishers (Oxford University Press, Palgrave, etc.) – or published in collections issued by Tallinn University Press; (b) a patent or a filed patent application; (c) in specialities falling in the field of arts, at least one public screening, a play, exhibition or any other internationally peer reviewed presentation open to an international audience. A monograph is a research work which constitutes a systemic and comprehensive treatment of a clearly defined research topic or problem. The principal part of the thesis includes an overview of the essence of the research problem, formulation of the research question, description of the methodology, the course of solving the research question and/or the proof thereof, conclusions and a summary. In the case of a creative doctoral thesis, recordings of related creative works or representations in other modalities which provide the most authentic overview of the creative work are annexed to the monograph. An article-based dissertation is defined as a series of research publications comprehensively addressing the research topic together with an analytical overview. In case of an artistic research doctoral thesis, a creative work that has been presented publicly at international level and internationally peer reviewed is added. In specific cases, the series of research publications may comprise at least two articles, supplemented by at least one of the following: (a) a creative work that has been presented publicly at international level reviewed by two independent internationally recognised experts selected by the university; (b) a patent or a patent application accompanied by a positive written opinion regarding the patentability of the invention from the patent office that performed the search; (c) another applicable solution reviewed by two independent internationally recognised experts selected by the university. The supervisor of a doctoral student may be a person who holds a PhD degree or an equivalent qualification and, at the date of his/her appointment as a supervisor, has published research publications equivalent in length to at least two doctoral theses in total – in addition to an original PhD, even if this also consists of 3-4 academic articles. Three publications defined by ETIS categories 1.1, 1.2 or 3.1 or one monograph defined by ETIS category 2.1 are regarded as equivalent to the amount of a doctoral thesis. In specialities falling in the field of arts, the supervisor may be an internationally recognised art professional. A doctoral student may have one supervisor and up to two co-supervisors. Where the supervisor is not a member of the university

staff, the council of the academic unit may, with the consent of the doctoral student, appoint a co-supervisor from among the academic employees of the university. An internationally recognised specialist in the field may also act as a consultant for the doctoral student.

The system that TLU-BFM has in place is not very rigid in academic standards and has many options for alternative solutions that artistic research often needs, but as I will argue later, in order to attract high profile professional filmmakers at the peak of their career into the artistic research in audio-visual arts, the same systems that work in traditional research might not suffice. In addition to the TLU guidelines, the artistic research track in BFM is also guided by higher, umbrella structures. One of these is the framework agreement on creative research in Estonia – drawn up by BFM, Estonian Art Academy and Estonian Music Academy for the purpose of defining and developing creative research and doctoral studies in creative research (Eesti loovuurimuse raamlepe). As part of the initiative of these three schools, a website was created (Loovuurimus) that describes artistic research and features best practice case studies, many of them in a very accessible short documentary film form. In addition, 'Create and research!', a guide for supporting the artistic research thinking in high schools was also created (Loo ja uuri). These initiatives serve both to raise awareness among creative professionals and for advocacy directed at relevant governmental and financing bodies. Thus, in recent years, both BFM and Estonian higher education institutions have made headway in making artistic research in audio-visual media structured, approachable and equal with other forms of research.

Focus of the current article

Yet, while progressing through my own studies and supporting others in theirs, I have seen and faced quite specific challenges. In the current article I will not focus on the most well-known challenge of artistic research: its nebulous nature and the lack of it being taken seriously as a form of research in the general scientific community. The first is already demonstrated by the sheer number of different names it has been given (e.g. artistic research, practice based research, practice-led research, research-creation, art-based research, research-through-design, creative research, practice as research, ArtScience, art practice-based research etc.) and the second has been addressed by many authors who have comprehensively written about the topic. My current aim is very bottom-up: to reflect upon specific challenges that me and my students and supervisees have experienced and expressed throughout their entrance into the field of artistic research.

But still, just to get the possible question of whether artistic research in the field of audio-visual media is even needed, off the table, I would like to use the words of Yuri Lotman and Yuri Tsivjan in their seminal book *Dialogue with the Screen* (Lotman, Tsivjan 1994):

> Art is not a secondary and arbitrary element in human culture, but one of its most important and irreplaceable parts. Culture as a whole is the organ of collective consciousness, the brain of society. It collects and stores information. But its second characteristic is even more important: the ability to increase

> the amount of information. Culture acts as a 'thinking device'. And within it, art is the most active centre for the generation of new meanings. And if within culture art is the creator of new meanings, within art itself this role is increasingly fulfilled by film. Today, when the task of creating artificial intelligence has become an actual and actively studied problem for science, the analysis of new information generation processes is becoming more and more important. (Lotman, Tsivjan 1994)

What Lotman and Tsivjan are arguing, in addition to the central position of art as an information generation process is that it is important to study how this new information generation process happens in art and especially in film art. If we are talking about the generation of new information, it is important to study how the information is generated from the perspective of the receiver, but in order to have the full picture, it is imperative to also study how it is conceived, what the agency of the creators of this information generator is. Artistic research opens up the creators' perspective and thus gives an important view on these new information generation processes.

I embarked on my own artistic research path out of curiosity and then I began to teach it based on a felt personal need to open a door I had carved for myself to others. Thus, when I designed my first artistic research in audio-visual arts course, I approached it as something that I felt I had needed myself during my studies. The course that I base my reflection upon, was called Audiovisual Arts Special Seminar I and it took place during the autumn semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. Twelve students enrolled on the course (some of them also from other schools, like the Estonian Art Academy and Tartu University, which for me demonstrated the lack of and need for such courses). The voluntary TLU feedback form had three respondents (25% response rate). Average satisfaction with the course was high, on the 5-point scale (average value on scale: 1 - don´t agree ... 5 – agree).

The participants on the course had very varied research topics. Audio-visual arts topics were all practice-based (including, for example, directing point of view in film, teaching editing, documentary as a form of representation of memory etc.), as were the other research endeavours (e.g., anthropological study of nightlife using artistic research methods as part of academic work; food fandom through participatory research; interactive games; using AI models in artistic research etc.). The students represented varied experience levels; some of them were in their first year of PhD studies and some nearing graduation. This cohort of students allowed me to informally gauge the general issues that they were facing during their study.

Some of the open feedback from TLU course feedback forms expresses the needs felt by my students. For example: 'Lectures teach the foundations for artistic research', 'The lecturer is very open-minded, listens to students, and gives great feedback with interesting and new perspectives,' 'Intuitive approach to artistic research supported by Elen's own experience. A lot of good examples and systematisation of the artistic research methods. Extremely relevant and well-designed course.'

It needs to be pointed out that it was not only the first time I had given lectures like this, but also the first time a course like this was offered at BFM, so I had no-one to take the course over from who had established an existing framework. I believe the feedback indicates how much artistic research is connected to practice and how important it is that the people teaching artistic research methods also engage in not only artistic research but also regular, normal, artistic practice on a daily basis as this gives the teacher empathy and understanding the realities of the challenges faced in the field.

Difficulties and solutions

In the following I aim to reflect upon the difficulties I observed that my students faced and also some of the solutions I envisioned.

One of the first, most striking things that I was faced with was the overwhelming insecurity and fear of the academic world that artistic research track students expressed. At first it felt strange, as many of them are internationally lauded and incredibly experienced in their fields, not only as practitioners, but many of them also as teachers. For example, among my students, I had filmmakers who were Oscar-nominees, EFTA – National Estonian Film and Television Awards winners, Estonian Cultural Endowment film of the year laureates etc., and also film practice teachers on both MA and BA levels with 10+ years of experience. Yet, with all these laurels, they all expressed feeling a crushing insecurity at the beginning of their artistic research. Some of them were less aware of their own insecurity, but it shone through the questions they asked during our discussion sessions. I find this phenomenon so striking, that it warrants more future research and possibly in-depth interviews with artistic researchers in order to find out how the academic system can support the knowledge transmission from direct practice to reflexive practice.

Until further research is available, my own gut feeling is that this insecurity is caused by many different things, among them the realities of creative practice which often mean leaving academia for decades. Many of my filmmaker-students had graduated from their MA more than 10 years before and also, while in their BA and MA studies, had mostly been studying skills in filmmaking curriculums that feature very little academic writing. This gives them a feeling that only academic writing is proper research (a skill and practice that they lack) and they are not aware of other forms of research that would make them aware of the value of their tacit knowledge. In my classes I spoke a lot about tacit knowledge and its value, but also, I have repeatedly been in a position where I have had to remind my own PhD supervisees of it.

One of the solutions I employed was to demonstrate that research is and has always been part of creation. T, that artists have always engaged in research, whether consciously or not, and that any kind of creation has an element of research in it. One of the examples that I brought was Thomas Eakins' almost 'scientific' approach to painting. Wichita Art Museum describes one of his paintings:

> Meticulous perspective and precise reflections characterize Thomas Eakins's depiction of sails and sea in his painting Starting Out After Rail. Eakins approached painting with the eye of a scientist and

> discovered his personal aesthetic in clinical objectivity. He stated: 'There is so much beauty in reflections that it is generally worthwhile to try and get them right. Everyone must have noticed on the sides of boats and wharves or rocks, when the sun is shining and the water in motion, never-ending processions of bright points and lines. These points and lines are the reflections of the sun from the concave parts of the waves acting towards the sun as concave mirrors, focusing his rays now here, now there, according to the shifting concavities.' (Wichita Art Museum)

This kind of rigour, usually seen in research, is actually often visible also in the practice rigour that artists employ, be it like in Eakins's case by painting multiple versions of the same work (Eakins painted two other versions of the same composition, both in oil. One of them was titled the same and was nearly identical to the watercolour; the other, was titled 'Sailing' and featured the same scene but was more generalised and eliminated some details) or working with the same motif throughout years on several paintings, like Edvard Munch on the motif of his dying sister (After painting 'The Sick Child', Edvard Munch later wrote 'It was a breakthrough in my art' /…/ 'Most of what I have done since had its birth in this picture' -– Tate Modern) or practice-based development and refining of a repeated object and 'analysing' its form through progression from realism to abstraction, like Pablo Picasso's versions of a bull.

These examples are followed by discussions where I prompt my students to think about their practice before they started artistic research and how the elements of research were already there. Through demonstrating that they as artists are already doing research, even if they don't know that they have been doing it, I aim to create a bridge and show that the artistic world and academic world are not so different after all. I demonstrate to them that it is possible to look at someone's artistic practice as a set of evolving research questions (even if the person oneself does not define it as research). For example, I show them Chris Milk's reflection about his various projects, which can be considered a study through practice of how modern technologies generate maximum empathy (TED, 2015). His work is guided by an evolving question, that incorporates the knowledge he gains through different artistic works – I feel that this is very clearly something that 'traditional' researchers do throughout their careers.

The parallel of Eakins having an 'eye of a scientist' refers to attentional habits, a deep focus on something that grows out of certain curiosity, often not worded as a clear research question, but rather following a tacit, intuitive pattern of activity until the artist or scientists arrives to a sense of fulfilment of this curiosity.

As Valerie Hoberg has noted:

> /…/ as scientific research is inevitably reliant on creative action, imagination, and serendipity. The philosopher of science Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, following the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, refers to a 'savage' thinking mode that is both preliminary and parallel to abstract thinking. He places this 'savage' thinking, characterized by experimentation in the unknown, at the core of his theory of

science (Rheinberger, H.-J. (2003)). In this view, research can even be likened to artistic work, which, as Lévi-Strauss posits, falls between science and handicrafts [bricolage], primarily involving the manual creation of objects that also serve as objects of knowledge (ibid., p. 38). (Hoberg, 2023)

This leads me to the next challenge my students face: lack of understanding of the difference between just creation and creative research. The examples I have given earlier are of artists who did not see themselves as researchers, although what they were doing had clear similarities with research. This is when we talk about reflexivity. Creating art, both audio-visual and other arts, usually have to result only in the

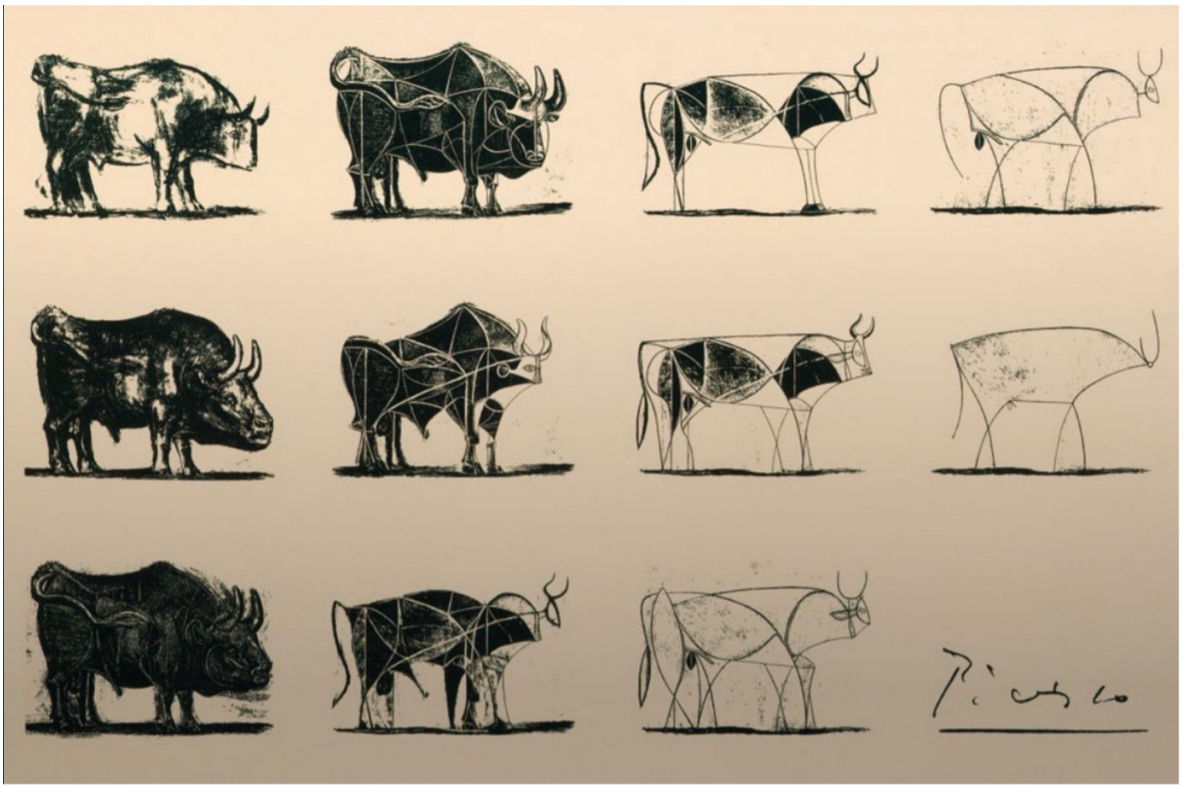

Fig. 2 Pablo Picasso's *The Bull*, a series of eleven lithographs created in 1945

artefact (and sometimes some financial reports to the funding bodies), while artistic research should give something more in addition to the artefact: a reflection. Herein is another similarity between art practice and science, elaborated by Hans-Jörg Rheinberger:

> Whether language games or writing games are involved, we will not grasp them other than through an unavoidable time lag. For artists as well as for scientists, it is therefore the case that, to the extent that they are busy 'doing', they cannot know what they are doing. This constitutive time lag coheres with the character of the trace, the grapheme. They must duplicate themselves in order to become what they have been. (Rheinberger, 2014)

But then the question arises – how can a reflection in artistic research be anything more than a subjective diary of random thoughts and feelings? What makes it scientific? This brings me to a place where my next goal is to give my artistic research track students an awareness and appreciation of their existing knowledge and I delve into what tacit knowledge is. Many art practitioners, especially in the audio-visual field, experience their practice as something intuitive. They don't experience it as 'knowledge' but rather as 'feeling'. In everyday life (largely due to our schooling systems) we sense 'knowledge' and 'gut feeling' as opposites, but this does not reflect the reality of what an intuition is. Psychologist Daniel Kahneman has said: 'Intuition is simply another word for expertise,' because 'intuition is [pattern] recognition' (Kahneman in NYU Tandon School of Engineering, 2012). Steven Vidler, who has researched how expert screenwriters use tacit knowledge, expounds:

> By overlaying perceptual learning with the relaxation systems model of cognition, we gain a clear insight into how expert practitioners may possess skills that they are able to demonstrably apply, yet are unable to articulate. When an expert practitioner addresses a problem in their domain, multiple interacting brain and body systems each make their distinct contribution. Among them will be components of their perceptual systems, which are physiologically enhanced by experience to meet the demands of the practitioner's task. /…/ But because such perceptual learning is held and utilised in a cognitively impenetrable manner, the practitioner is unable to explain its use. The painter doesn't need to know why this selection of colours and shapes is most harmonious. She just needs to know that it is. The musician doesn't need to know why this level of attack and sustain on the glissando is most expressive. He just needs to know that it is. The screenwriter doesn't need to know why this particular combination of actions and words will most engage the audience. She just needs to know that it will. (Vidler, 2015, p. 36)

Vidler refers to philosopher Jerry Fodor iterating his stance that even if one is unaware of or unable to explain the processes behind actions, the process still exists and can be discovered (Vidler, 2015, p. 42). So, I encourage my students and supervisees in artistic research to understand that they can themselves discover the processes behind their own actions;

that they already possess valuable knowledge, but as it is stored 'in a cognitively impenetrable manner', they might not be able to explain what they do just through diary entries or memoirs of what they did. There needs to be a metacognitive awareness, a step removed, that they use to look at their own practice or their own works. And, as I point out to them, this in turn will start informing their research further.

Why? Because of the nature of artistic research itself. In more traditional research paradigms, it is very common to start a study with a literature review. 'A literature review is a survey of scholarly sources on a specific topic. It provides an overview of current knowledge, allowing you to identify relevant theories, methods, and gaps in the existing research that you can later apply to your paper, thesis, or dissertation topic.' (McCombes, 2023). But in artistic research we are more often than not dealing with topics that have not been researched before. Artistic research questions grow out of very idiosyncratic paths and are shaped by the unique experiences of each practitioner, often leading them to such specific research questions that the aim of literature review (to give an overview of current knowledge) cannot be met. At the same time, the practitioner him/herself possesses the 'current knowledge, relevant theories, methods, and gaps in the existing research', but 'in a cognitively impenetrable manner'. So, one of the things that I encourage my students to do (it might not end up in their final thesis or published article, but it serves as a starting point) is to write a kind of literature review based on their own practice. Let's call it a 'practice review'. It is a place where they reflect upon their previous work and analyse what they have been doing as a metacognitive reflection, in order to make them aware that some things that feel like a natural intuitive thing that everyone knows about are actually expert knowledge that only they possess. I have had many situations where during my supervision session I point out to my PhD student that something that they casually mention as a thing that they do is of value and they often respond with something like – 'no, this is not serious research, it is just something that I do'. I myself had a similar experience when I met my new supervisor (Dr. Pia Tikka) and she accidentally saw something in my computer that I did not even consider relevant for my thesis. When she asked me what it was, I mumbled something like, 'Oh, nothing, it's just something that I did out of curiosity for my film and just for myself' and she told me that this is the most interesting thing she had seen during our first meeting, encouraging me to incorporate it into my thesis. In the end, I defended my thesis with *laudatur* and I credit my supervisor for making me aware of the real treasure dome of knowledge I had in my possession: my practice. This approach allows artistic researchers to say who they are and appreciate themselves for what they are – practitioners – instead of trying to become something that they are not – academics – and losing in both races, as they have come to academia too late and cannot use the knowledge they have gained from practice. We don't need more PhD theses about artistic research methods or practitioners trying to rehash ideas already expressed by theorists. Instead, we need to make the implicit knowledge that practitioners have into explicit knowledge.

Usually the next challenge is the methods. Once the budding artistic researchers became aware of their practice as a source of knowledge, the next question is – but what is the object of my research? Or what is my research question?

In order to explore myself and possibly facilitate helping others in this journey, I attempted to create an artistic research decision tree of a kind. It grew out of my observation of the similarities between research and artistic practice. Both of them usually (a) start with something (a question, and idea, an itch that needs to be scratched) which is followed by (b) a process of practice, which involves certain methods or ways of doing and both of them end with (c) some kind of result.

Looking at the second phase, we can observe that in the case of art, the method is often implicit, as it stems from practice (physical skills and intuition built from repeated exposure to patterns of practice), and in research the methods tend to be explicit, as traditional science by definition needs methods to be described in order for it to be repeatable. While these ways of practice are different, it does not mean that one is better than another.

Pia Tikka has proposed a distinction between *practice-based research* and *research-based practice* (Tikka, 2008, p. 18). Based on this approach and incorporating my observation of three similar phases in art and research, I created a sort of 'decision tree' in order to help my students navigate the process of trying to understand wherein lies their creation and wherein the research and which parts of which should be reflected upon.

It is a work in progress and the reason for sharing it here is to encourage dialogue, to develop it further or even to question it. It could be a useless thing that complicates the field more than needed. I used this table as a basis of discussion in the class, not as a formal measurement of any kind. The aim was to try to map different examples of artistic research that I had brought up in the class and the students' own research topics and to understand which parts of the process they should methodically reflect upon.

Other challenges that my students faced were much more practical. For example, publishing – some of the creative works that artistic researchers create are not independent works in their own right that can be submitted to international festivals in order to fulfil the progress review criteria. Especially if the person represents a certain specialisation, one's authorship might not extend to the whole work or one's

	1	2	3
Art	A1 idea	A2 practice (method) – implicit	A3 result (artifact) (what, how)
Research	R1 research question	R2 practice (method) – explicit	R3 result

Fig. 3 An artistic research decision tree

agency might not be enough to create an independent work on their own (e.g., sound designers, cinematographers, editors, whose work depends on the initiative of others, like directors and producers). One solution for this issue has recently been created by the FilmEU artistic research exhibition (ARE, 2023); I was part of the first edition of this and I welcomed with open arms the possibility for a junior artistic researcher to achieve a participation in an internationally peer-reviewed exhibition with their work.

Other issues that permeate artistic research in the field of audio-visual media are even more practical, like the lack of funding (recently the Estonian Ministry of Culture established a new funding scheme for artistic research, which is a very welcome solution, but already it is facing the common problem of expecting artistic research to walk and talk like 'hard science') and the larger challenge that not only budding artistic researchers face – the dreaded question of workload. In this sense, artistic fields are greatly different from traditional research fields – in traditional research, teaching and professional careers as a researcher are naturally intertwined and usually happen in the same institution (there are systems that are built to facilitate this progression, universities have tenure tracks and specific internal funding schemes that are not too competitive). This means that the individual researcher does not have to work extra to maintain two double parallel

How do I do my practice-based research?

	Research-based practice			**Practice-based research**			
	Research to develop an idea (A1)	**Research to develop practice (A2)**	**Research to create an artefact (A3)**	**Create to research an idea**	**Create to research a practice**	**Create to research your artefact's impact**	
R 1	R 1 is about A 1 (research question is about the the idea itself)	R 1 about the A 2 (research question is about the implicit practice)	R 1 about the A 3 (research question is about the resulting artefact)	A 1 is R 1 (your idea itself is a research question)	A 1 is about R 2 (your artistic idea is connected to the practice)	A 1 is R 3 (the resulting artefact itself is a research question)	A 1
R 2	R 2 method is what serves the A 1 the best (e.g. historical desk research or immersion with a societal phenomenon etc.)	R 2 is A 2 (research process is a reflection on the practice, making the implicit explicit)	R 2 is A 3 (research process incorporates different questions that need to be solved in order to create the artefact)	A 2 is R 1 (the way you practice is a way of answering the research question)	A 2 is R 2 (different iterations of the same process yield different results)	A 2 is R 3 (the process is intuitive and you research the impact of the artefact itself)	A 2
R 3	R 3 is A3 I (research result is the content of the final artefact)	R 3 is A 3 (research result is the final artefact itself and the reflection of how it was created)	R 3 A3 (research result is the artefact itself and reflection about how these questions were solved in order to create the artefact)	A 3 is R 3 + R 1 (your artefact is the research result, in the context of your research question)	A 3 is R 3 (your artefact or different artefacts or different versions of the artefact is the result)	A 3 is R 3 (the artefact and it's reflective analysis is the research result)	A3

Fig. 4 A more detailed iteration of an artistic research decision tree, refined through discussions with students

careers. In arts, and especially in such a competitive field as filmmaking, this is diametrically different. Most filmmakers are freelancers and have to be 'in the industry' on a daily basis to continue to be offered jobs. For example, cinematographers are rarely in a position where they can create artistic work for themselves; they are by definition in the hands of the producers and directors to offer them artistic work. Thus very often, when a cinematographer starts teaching or enters academia, there is an almost automatic 'out' from the film industry. No more calls. This puts a double burden on the person – in addition to teaching and research, if he/she wants to (and also has to, as it is stipulated in the university tenure track rules) keep on being active in his/her artistic practice, he/she has to basically run two parallel lives. Or, if we are truly realistic, it even means three parallel lives: that of a practitioner, that of a teacher and that of a researcher.

A crucial part of any practice is that it takes time. Practice unfolds in real time and thus it takes real time. Many film teachers face a workload issue, where practical courses are measured by credit points for the student, not the actual workload of the teacher. For example, in a group with a lot of practical exercises and individual work, a 3 ECT course can be such for a student, while for the teacher the actual workload can amount to this number multiplied by the number of students. This results in people, who would have potential as artistic researchers in the field of film, being drained out during their first steps into the university (which is usually teaching) and not even reaching the phase where they could consider artistic research.

Time is also an issue in the research progress of early-career artistic researchers. There needs to be an understanding from the supervisors' side that the problems artistic research track PhD students face are not caused by their lack of writing skills (which they themselves often think is an issue, as pointed out earlier when I discussed academic insecurities), but rather that the nature of artistic research demands more time, thus the actual process of practice should start earlier. Instead of guiding my PhD students to spend the first years of PhD studies reading scientific articles, I have started to encourage them to start *doing* as early as possible. Whatever it is that they are doing – and even if it does not end up as an explicit part of the final thesis – being immersed in practice helps them to connect to the reason they started the artistic research in the first place. They might not yet know *what* they are doing, but they should be *doing* anyway. Seeing their research question emerge in everything that they create helps them connect with their research motivation and experience how they create knowledge themselves. Some of my students have started to really understand the differences between just creation and creative research through creating something for the sake of research. And also, they have learned to see the value in it – because, as they have said, it gives them freedom that the constraints present in film industry realities would never allow. When you are creating a 'regular' film, you have so many practicalities and needs to keep in mind (one of them being the needs of the film itself), but when you are researching you are free to create a film that specifically addresses the questions you are curious about. Thus, it is important to have supervisors who are aware of these peculiarities of practice-based research in audio-visual arts. They are valuable not only to the students but also to the university, allowing it to achieve more successful PhD graduations and evolve its curricular practices for the better.

I also find that it is extremely important to have a safe environment to learn and to experiment. And not because it is a common thing to expect in a contemporary society where people have a need for individual self-fulfilment, but rather because of a more deeply felt understanding that in order to learn art, one has to have the courage or even the need – to fail. If failure is not punished through a grading or feedback system but rather encouraged and seen as something education theories call 'productive failure', an experimentation that will reveal *something* whichever way it plays out, the learning experience is much deeper and far-reaching than any rigorous and controlling framework system would ever provide.

If we are able to create and maintain a system for artistic research that inspires experimentation and exploration, exudes a sense of freedom of thought and is attractive to those who have acquired enough skills and practical experience in their fields, I believe artistic research in audio-visual arts can really start to realise its immense potential.

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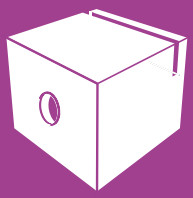

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