A Research-Creation Episteme? Practices, Interventions, Dissensus
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Image credit: Mergler, Agata. "Flowers no 6", wet cyanotype contact print and digital rendering. Poznań, 2022.

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(WHAT WE DO) FOR THE LOVE OF KNOWLEDGE AND FOR THE LOVE OF ART

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1. INTRODUCTION

*S*ophia—wisdom—was the desired object of a philosopher, the first one in the Western context to recognize the value of non-dogmatic, non-mythological knowledge. Philosophy, the love of wisdom, does not possess the desired object, philosophy follows wisdom, as Karl Jaspers reminds us (*Ways to Wisdom*). Philosophising is always an activity of *becoming* wise; thinking, *theoria*, is a practice of thinking (e.g. Hans-Georg Gadamer reinterprets Aristotle's vision of *theoria* in this way;[1] see also Monique Tschofen's article in this issue). Wisdom, initially not strictly differentiated from episteme, could encompass a lot. For Heraclitus, knowledge was connected to *logos* (112). For Plato, knowledge was *episteme* (*The Republic*). Both were always contrasted with doxa, opinion, hearsay, and in general, with whatever people believed without proper inquiry.

With Plato's metaphysics the position of episteme comes to the fore. The knowledge of ideas and forms is the truth, material reality being only a mere unstable shadow or very weak representation of some aspects of it. Still not yet dividing theory and practice, or ethical and intellectual endeavours, Plato rejected, however, the arts (especially poets, removing them from the ideal city-state) as the weakest in representing truth, since what they represented or copied (he uses "imitation," mimesis) were the mere shadows on a wall deep in the

cave away from the light of truth. Those representations could only be imperfect distant imitations of ideas, thus artistic works would be twice removed from the truth (Plato, *The Republic*, Book X). In this diminishing of art's position Eva Meyer and Eran Schaerf see a reaction to art's access to a different kind of knowledge, as "the poetic act [would be associated] with a peculiar, mysterious, or even dangerous sort of knowledge" (109). Since then, art's relationship with epistemes of "true knowledge" has been fraught with difficulty and continuously contested. Aristotle divided philosophy into theoretical and practical endeavours, which introduced the theory/practice divide—a quite modern attitude—and millennia later, we have begun to notice that certain layers and depths of knowledge, for example connected to the particularity of human experience, but also the commonality of human experience as being-in-the-world, have been misrepresented or underdeveloped. Thus, we were missing out on what we were learning from certain parts of our life (different thinkers at different times notice this: Montaigne, Rousseau, Kierkegaard, and finally the 20th century criticisms of various kinds).

The *Research-creation Episteme?* symposium, held on October 31, 2023, and organized by me and Josh Synenko, the editors of this special issue, asked the numerous participants one clear question among many: whether creative inquiry existed and provided knowledge. We asked for answers in a simple format of manifestos, straying away from treatise-formats, to entice us all to rethink knowledge production itself, and the role of arts in it. During the conference Ami Xherro, María Angélica Madero, Sarah Matthews, Caitlin Fisher, Rob Winger, Concetta Principe, and many others posited pluralistic understandings of knowledge, theory, and practice in knowledge production and its methods. Some of these presentations have found their way into this issue in the more standardized but not unproblematic format of academic articles. Nonetheless, the question has emerged in both instances: could art now, circa 2300 years after it was discarded as a source of truth by Plato, regain a place at the table of the wisdom lovers and truth seekers? Whether there were any of these left in academia also emerged as a question.

Having worked on this project now for more than 16 months, and having worked in artistic research projects myself,[2] I have an opportunity in this afterword to make my own manifesto about research-creation. Maybe more appropriate would be a fair account of the gathered experience, or simply a presentation of knowledge gained.

The overall view of the situation of research-creation or artistic research in the current moment of knowledge production systems development has brought me to one belief I can share upfront: only authentic art-as-research can have a significant impact on changing the knowledge production circuits and systems as they are now part of innovation and labour markets. That is certainly something I learned. I can also share a tentative hypothesis painted with quite a broad brush: to revolutionize knowledge production with art, one cannot domesticate it, yet such an unrestrained revolution might bring consequences, which in turn might very well shatter illusions and solid beliefs about knowledge production altogether. (And we live in a post-truth era often blamed on postmodernity; so, if that is what has been learned, is there any love left for either knowledge or art?)

2. DEFINING TERMS

What are we talking about, then, when we talk about artistic research, research-creation, knowledge, knowledge production, and their cognates? "Artistic Research," a term "taken for granted perhaps even overused" (EU4ART 9), is seen as a ubiquitous term often used alongside and in the context of interdisciplinary research, innovation, and education funding policies in the European Union research realm. It shares a lot with the Canadian term "research-creation." Both are now used everywhere in academia and by research funding policy makers; they are concepts very much belonging to the 21st century's vision of knowledge production connected to interdisciplinarity/transdisciplinarity, knowledge mobilisation, and innovation. As the authors of *On Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art* already in 2008 write: "terms that have become commonplace in the discourse of contemporary art – such as knowledge production, artistic research, and interdiscipli-

nary practice – remain arguably as nebulous and contested as ever" (Hlavajova et al. 7). The situation does not seem to have changed very much in the last 18 years. For the sake of clarity, I would like to write about "artistic research," but in its definition-wise nebulous state, it can often be seen as synonymous to "research-creation."

One of the definitions, according to *The Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research*, "signed on 20 June 2020 by all major organisations of European art schools" (Cramer and Terpsma) states the following key features of Artistic Research:

> "Excellent AR is research through means of high-level artistic practice and reflection; it is an epistemic inquiry, directed towards increasing knowledge, insight, understanding and skills. Within this frame, AR is aligned in all aspects with the five main criteria that constitute Research & Development in the Frascati Manual. Through topics and problems stemming from and relevant to artistic practice, AR also addresses key issues of a broader cultural, social and economic significance. AR is undertaken in all art practice disciplines - including architecture, design, film, photography, fine art, media and digital arts, music and the performing arts - and achieves its results both within those disciplines, as well as often in a transdisciplinary setting, combining AR methods with methods from other research traditions." (The Vienna Declaration)

The Canadian definition of Research-creation from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) presents the following key components:

> "An approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation. The creation process is situated within the research activity and produces critically informed work in a variety of media (art forms). Research-creation cannot be limited to the interpretation or analysis of a creator's work, conventional works of technological develop-

It also mentions but does not limit "fields that may involve research-creation," such as "architecture, design, creative writing, visual arts (e.g., painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, textiles), performing arts (e.g., dance, music, theatre), film, video, performance art, interdisciplinary arts, media and electronic arts, and new artistic practices," so basically any creative endeavour. Furthermore, for criteria of evaluation for research-creation and artistic research projects, often the "clear research question," "theoretical contextualization," and "well-considered methodological approach and creative process" (see SSHRC funding criteria) are mentioned as necessary points. There is nothing really novel except for the addition of the "creative process" in this list, at least not for anyone who works in the humanities. And it is hard not to see creation as already part of the humanities or for that matter any academic knowledge production process, especially in the times of continuously stressed connection between research and innovation.[3] As for the *Vienna Declaration*, critics see that it uses "grotesque neoliberal-bureaucratic language," attempts to put the artistic research into very narrow and criticized frames of the Frascati Manual, and, most importantly, "doesn't mention artists at all; they literally don't exist in its text" (Cramer and Terpsma).

It is worth adding that this move to creation in knowledge production (which is not new, at least not without its own history, and not without controversy) created a plethora of terms, which appeared and were listed by a member of the audience during the 2023 conference on *Research-creation Episteme?* at Trent University, who reminded us all how dizzying this innovation might seem, when every country, or even university, rewrites the terminology and provides its own concepts. Among many we have: research-creation, art research, artistic research, practice-based research, artistic-practice-based research, creative-practice based research, etcetera. Below is a photo I took that conference day, which presents the probably not exhaustive list of terms mentioned during the conference which I managed to put down on a whiteboard (see fig. 1). Not all these terms
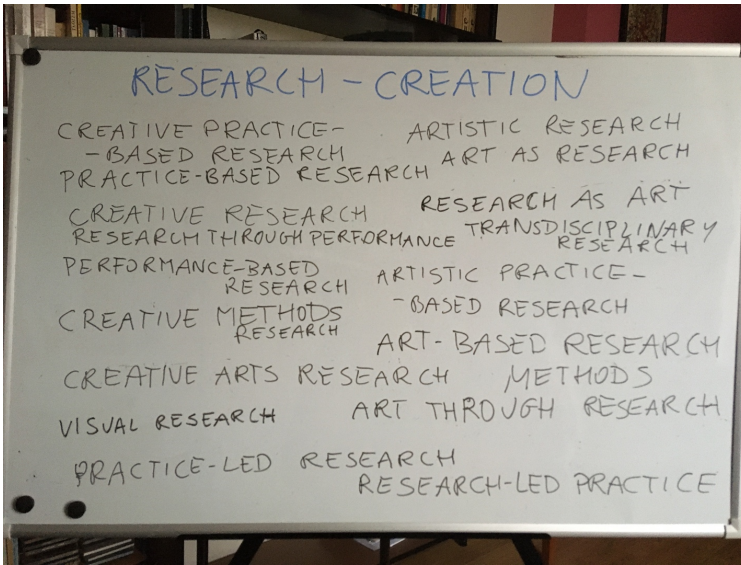
Figure 1: A whiteboard with a list of terms titled "Research-creation" gathered during the symposium, October 30, 2023.

have the same meaning or connotation, and not all could be synonymous, but together, in a Wittgensteinian fashion, they might be connected by family resemblance.

Delving into definitions provided in the literature on artistic research and related terms, one can come across various discussions. Julian Klein, in answering the question "what is artistic research?" proposes that "art as research" is not accurate; instead, he sees that it is research that in its practice "becomes artistic" and not art becoming research. For him the question should be "When is research art?" and the "correct" expression should be "research as art" (2011, 4).

Henk Borgdorff proposes that to call something artistic research is "to denote that domain of research and development in which the practice of art—that is, the making and the playing, the creation and the performance, and the works of art that result—play a constitutive role in a methodological sense" (101). Moreover, in the reflec-

tions on artistic research practice, the process of acquiring the artistic knowledge and that said knowledge (in other words, the method and the substance) are "fused." There is, however, within science, a separation of knowledge as the outcome and the method as a way of achieving the outcome. And, as Klein writes about science: "Reflection comes after [whereas] Artistic experience is a form of reflection" (2011, 5). Artistic practice is the fusion of theory and practice, something mentioned by continental philosophers who see *theoria* as a practice of thinking, and thus the division as void, or artificial.

There are, however, many other attitudes to artistic research, which are very much systematic and "formal" (Sullivan 191) in the way of making distinctions and divisions despite the conviction of arts research autonomy; that is, that "it has to be grounded in practices that come from the art itself" (xvii). Graeme Sullivan provides a framework for practice-based artistic research listing the following areas: "visual arts knowing," the theoretical-practical level that is exploring problems, which Sullivan calls "transcognition"; conceptual, "thinking in a medium," when the artist creates works that are part of the research process; dialectic, "thinking in a language," when human processes in the creation of meaning are explored (beyond direct communication); and in the contextual area, practice, which results in social transformation (129-130).

All these proposals have different relationship to the official definitions and to the understanding of knowledge production itself, which if presented here would change this afterword into something entirely different than intended.

Most of these descriptions or definitions present attempts to fit artistic research into a current knowledge production system. But how do we define knowledge and knowledge production? How have we been defining it? And what place can artistic research find in this system?

Eva Mayer and Eran Schaerf in a provocatively titled article "What Does Art Know?" ask about knowledge definitions that use personal experience or being acquainted with something, understanding certain relations, or the recognition of patterns as a basis (109), which expand the understanding of knowledge modelled on science.

Furthermore, in an academic setting any knowledge production, which is work, also becomes labour. Although neither knowledge nor art are actually productions in the sense of the labour relations of capitalism, all of them should of course be recognized and remunerated. Among the texts gathered in this issue, many address either an institutional critique (and decolonial, as in Stephen Tu's text) or a critique of the commodification of artistic work and research (as in Madero and Carney's article), which pushes research work and artistic work into narrow frames of labour. One of the common definitions of research used in the education policies mentioned is "any creative systematic activity undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this knowledge to devise new applications" (OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms 2008). It is thus a relatively wide term, and in such an understanding we work on research, even when we labour over it. However, the most recent policies (like the *Vienna Declaration*) propose an understanding of research connected to innovation and to applicability as well, thus simply connecting it to a neoliberal agenda behind research funding.

3. WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

When Josh Synenko suggested that I join him in creating the research-creation conference event, I was instantaneously interested. I was intrigued to have an opportunity to see in this event, like in a kaleidoscope, what research-creation was able to achieve for such different artists and researchers. My hopes for the symposium were quite high. I hoped that there would be multiple ways presented in which we could make artistic research—critical, political (micro-political), decolonial, collaborative, and community-building—and that through them possibilities could emerge of contesting established hegemonic knowledge production systems, and overriding or changing elements of the commodified education system. The manifestos delivered on these very expectations. The symposium has provided me with hope for a more pluralistic knowledge production system as a real possibility. However, many factors preventing even these possibilities were raised during

conference discussions and have been more specifically articulated in the texts of this issue. The work on the issue also provided an insight into various issues, such as with the formats of academic peer-review (see Josh Synenko's Afterword in this issue).

The same can be said based on my own practice in art research and information I gathered through literary surveys and talks with artists, which provided me with a mix of hope—a glimpse into possibilities of artistic research—and suspicions about artistic research being only "a matter of rhetoric, of branding [...] [amounting] to little more than simulation" (Lütticken 85), as well as an understanding of the roadblocks and dangers.

Several years ago, I had an opportunity to discuss artistic research with art students from Universidad de las Artes, from Guayaquil, Ecuador.[4] For their degree they were required to accompany their final art show with an artistic research thesis following new academic rules. Some students were annoyed by the need to borrow methods from outside of art to prove their academic abilities, while others were not happy that artistic practice in itself without the "academic component" would not count as enough for their degree. These claims resounded again during the symposium with participants mentioning "the problem of disciplining art into a discipline." Others saw it as a possibility of recognition for the research they as artists had to undertake in their practices anyway. The polite students didn't point to that right away, but I realized that they found this necessity to present artistic research as an imposed bureaucratic and Northern/Western modernizing novelty. This strongly echoed Hito Steyerl's sentiments that artistic research is a "predominantly First World metropolitan artist's endeavour," and that "Artistic research as a discipline [...] presents an attempt to extract or produce a different type of value in art" alongside the direct market value of art becoming part of "cultural capitalism" (Steyerl, paragraph 26). Recognizing the same issues that the Ecuadorian students raised, Steyerl points to the fact that artistic research as a discipline has been combined with applied arts, and connected thus with "innovation," "city marketing," etcetera. Steyerl's text "Aesthetics of Resistance?"

(2010), which strongly influenced my understanding of artistic research, and which I am using here, traces the many mentioned problems to the point of integrating art as artistic research into (increasingly) commodified education systems (see also *On Knowledge Production* (2008), by Maria Hlavajova et al). Finally, and even more importantly in these discussions with students, it transpired for me that artistic research simply proved to be another form of gatekeeping these Global South artists would be experiencing in the global art market.

Additionally, if Florian Cramer is right in his frustration[5] and we have created artistic research in academia to give work to "poor artists" and now academics are actually taking over and de facto invading art, then the current situation is a fight over territory and paychecks by two often precarious groups of the intellectual or creative class (if it still exists and existed in the first place).

Contrary to such concerns, and somewhat following Steyerl's hopeful claim that artistic research can provide "resistance against dominant modes of knowledge production" (paragraph 21), the symposium manifestos were calls or postulates for various changes of foci in research-creation and its possible revolutionary and disruptive nature in relation to the current knowledge production system. Among the manifestos we heard about queer making (Kush Patel), autotheory (Gabriel Menotti or LA Alfonso), embodied knowledge (LA Alfonso, Milosh Radič), non-linearity (María Angélica Madero), care (in many more presentations than those under the section on "Care"—see the symposium program reproduced in figure 2 below), non-dominant ways of disseminating knowledge (Anamaría Garzon Mantilla, Anna Pasek, Mehvish Rather, Cimarron Knight), decolonization, and Indigenous knowledges (Nadine Changfoot, Missy Knott, and Jonathan Taylor). There were so many manifestos that it would be impossible to discuss them all here. But, as mentioned, many manifestos touched on care in knowledge production and dissemination and other theoretical/practical issues that inspire me directly in thinking about artistic research. Kush Patel reminded me about the severed connection between ethics and knowledge when

he mentioned using a method of "moving at the speed of trust" (Adrienne Maree Brown's method). Monique Tschofen's and Sarah Matthews' interventions called for slow scholarship and art as a more holistic practice resistant against the compartmentalization of knowledge production, as a way of knowing (Matthews) and as a new image of thought able to change thinking (Tschofen). Gabriel Menotti reminded me of yet another division we've become accustomed to, when he simply stated, "every knowledge is practice."

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                  Program
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9:00-9:10
Introduction

Agata Mergler & Joshua Synenko

9:10-9:30
Design

Mod: Agata Mergler

Everyday Divine: A Wellbeing Modality for Post-
Pandemic Society
Megan K. Hughes (she/her)

Queer Making
Kush Patel (they/he)

9:30-9:50
Autotheory

Mod: Agata Mergler

Reflecting with/on Curating: a Couple Lessons from
Autotheory
Gabriel Menotti

Research/Creation: How Do We Get to the Heart of the
Matter?
LA Alfonso (he/him)
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9:50-10:00
Break

10:00-10:30
Pedagogy

Mod: Rob Winger

Game Design as Teaching Strategy and Research
Practice
Jasper van Vught

Research-Creation as a Practice of Freedom
Cimarron Knight

Research-Creation & Education
Kelly Egan

10:30-11:00
Theory

Mod: Kelly Egan

Reconsiderations of Theoria in Research Co-creation
Monique Tschofen (she/her)

Manifesto on Non-Linearity: Embracing Art's
Multidimensional Knowledge
María Angélica Madero

Can the World Even Be Known as Itself or Will I Have to
Die in It First?
Ami Xherro
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2

11:00-12:15
COFFEE & SNACKS w/ Prof. LAURA U. MARKS (SFU)
Senior Common Room, Scott House, Traill College

12:30-12:50
Gesture

Mod: Laura U. Marks

Our Bodies Are Supernal in their Bionic Dynamism:
Research in Processes of Art Making Involving Automatic
Corporeal Gesture in a Flash
Milosh Rodic

"Make Weird Shit": a Gestural Mode of Curriculum
Development
Darren Berkland (they/them)

12:50-1:20
Institutional critique 1

Mod: Laura U. Marks

Against Methods
Sara Matthews

Yeah, Okay: On the "Research-Creation" Label as Old-
school Double Standard
Rob Winger (he/him)

This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things: Pretending We
Want the Academy to Change but Not Acting Like It
Caitlin Fisher (she/her)

1:20-:1:30
Break

1:30-2:00
Institutional critique 2

Mod: Jessica Barr

Boundaries Unbound: Abstract for a Manifesto
Klara du Plessis (she/her)

The Elephant Manifesto: A Call for Methodological
Metamorphosis
Thoreau Bakker

Discipline | Discipline
Concetta Principe

2:00-2:20
Writing

Mod: Joshua Synenko

Research Creation in the Writing Centre
Liam Monaghan

Creativity and Research in Graduate Writing Pedagogy
Daniel Aureliano Newman

2:20-2:30
Break

2:30-2:50
Process

Mod: Joshua Synenko

Notes on Moving and Drifting
Scott Birdwise

Never Try to Follow Talking Animals: How a Research-
Creation Component of a Scholarly Work Spun Off Into a
World of Its Own
Rick Cousins

2:50-3:15
Collaboration (human, vegetable, machine)

Mod: Anne Pasek

De-Writing: A Manifesto for the Misuse of Writing
Margot Mallet

Research-Creation and More-Than-Human Collaboration
Oriana Confente

3:15-3:30
Break

3:30-4:00
Circulation

Mod: Agata Mergler

Post(s): Reinventing What an Academic Journal Should
Be
Anamaría Garzón Mantilla (she/her)

Towards a Politics of Circulation for Research-Creation
Anne Pasek (she/her)

Guerilla Pedagogy: Teaching, Creating, and
Disseminating Art in Conflict Zones
Mehvish Rather (she/her)

4:00-4:30
Decolonizing

Mod: Joshua Synenko

Wshkiigmong Dibaajmownan/Curve Lake Storytelling:
Decolonizing Research-Creation Spaces
Nadine Changfoot, Missy Knott and Jonathan Taylor

4:30-5:00
Care

Mod: Joshua Synenko

Motherlode: A Manifesto for Maintenance and Care as
Research and Art
Jessica Barr (she/her)

A Manifesto for Care: Knowing Self and Being in Relation
with Community
Petra Totten

Manifesting Futures: Playing on the Edge
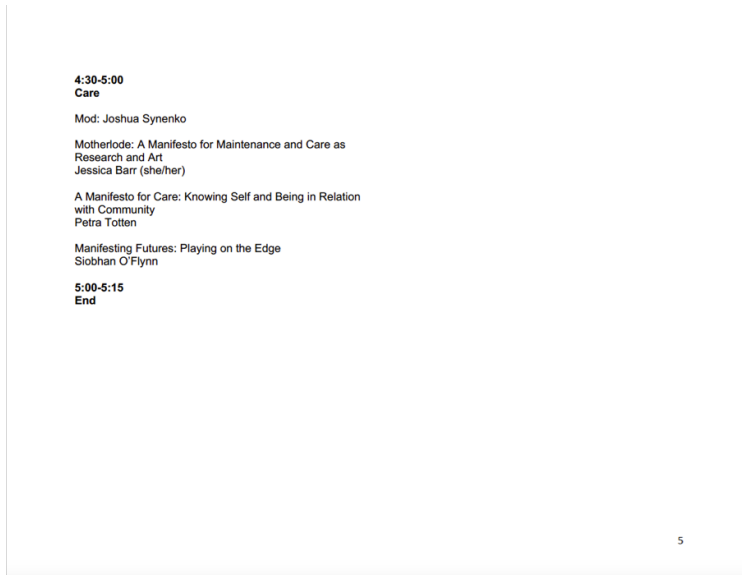Siobhan O'Flynn

5:00-5:15
End

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Figure 2: Pages 2-5 from the symposium program, October 30, 2023.

What we have learned from post-Darwinist biology and even more acutely from the reality of climate disaster is that diversity provides better chances for survival. Being faced with a post-truth reality, especially the reality of AI "producing answers," and with post-creative reality, now with AI "producing art," we are fighting for survival for both spheres of understanding and of creating, for the love of *sophia*, *logos,* or *episteme*, and for the love of art. The more diverse our methods, and the more complex and thought-through our methodologies supporting our methods of arriving at knowledge and learning, the better our chances of survival. Revolution brought by art research playing with typical knowledge production methodologies, that is, with methods and definitions of what methods and production of knowledge might be, is also a way for other knowledge production methodologies to assert themselves against the neoliberal capitalist shortsighted funding-based knowledge production system we deal with every day now. Revolutionary possibilities documented in this issue include the previously mentioned atypical forms of peer-

review (see Synenko's Afterword); more open views on methods and of methodology (see articles by Van Vught and Werning, Sung, as well as Mellet, Dronsfield, and others); more collaborative work (see articles by Tschofen, Xherro and Foran); wider understanding of knowledge production which moves beyond or away from new, reproducible intersubjectively understandable insights into objects of study, for the sake of attempts at understanding with others, including non-humans (Tu's and Confente's articles); learning new sensibilities and ethics (see Tu's collaboration with trees and Confente's collaborating with animals), learning limitations to knowledge and art dissemination and education—political, personal, ethical (see Rather's article); and finally disseminating that knowledge in various ways outside of Western academic publishing or common higher education systems (see Rather's article, or Garzon Mantilla's manifesto during the conference).

4. WHERE IT ALL LED ME—THE ETHICS AND POLITICS OF ARTISTIC RESEARCH

Not every artistic research practice can be successful in its resistance to current knowledge production systems, but what I have learned from the many presentations at the symposium and the articles gathered in this issue may provide us with things to do for the love of knowledge and the love of art to count again.

It doesn't matter if we follow the Deleuzean line of thinking, in which action/acting/becoming and rejecting the focus on truth can be embodied by art practice-based research (for example see Paul de Assis's and Paolo Guidici's *The Dark Precursor: Deleuze and Artistic Research*), or if we follow truth as the ultimate goal of inquiry rejecting method as a specific way to achieve truth with Gadamer, and instead follow the task of thinking (*Truth and Method*). Both of these can be realized through research-creation. And both can beat the danger of commodification—the real danger that necessarily makes any research an ethical endeavour. The question of when research becomes art (Klein) might be answered—maybe when it becomes

thinking practice or truth-focused practice and thus is political and ethical. Like in Plato's times, when thinking and ethics were seen as indiscernible, when one knew what truth is, what justice is, and what good is, they would act accordingly (so called intellectualist ethics), we might realize, that these layers of thinking and ethics and politics (Aristotle) are in truth indivisible. These divisions have been applied for analytical reasons only, which we seem to have forgotten, and thus have only been superficial. And yes, we call on Plato despite his rejection of artists and poets, and Aristotle and the ancient ethical intellectualism, since just as Hannah Arendt in times of need called on this ancient Greek concept we are again in times of need.

Hito Steyerl sees the revolutionary or resisting potential of artistic research in the fact that it often can lay some claim to singularity producing "its own field of reference and logic" (paragraph 21). We already have a form of knowledge that has never adhered to the criteria modelled on a specific vision of science: that is philosophy. If philosophy can be art, as Luce Irigaray would say, then also maybe art can be philosophy. Maybe it is because, according to Jean-François Lyotard, postmodern artists or writers find themselves in the position of a philosopher (*The Postmodern Condition* 81) and thus were supposed to create artworks or texts which would not adhere to pre-established categories of evaluation, but they would provide new rules of their evaluation within them as if they had been established long before the production of works. Such interventions, which Lyotard calls events (81), would expand knowledge with scopes of art/ writing evaluations as well. Lyotard's controversial at the time book focuses specifically on knowledge production in postmodernity.[6] We already have a longer history of artistic practice or artistic knowledge production inadvertently connected to philosophy. Whereas philosophy does not fulfill directly the matrix of conditions and parameters of neoliberal academia (e.g. Wittgenstein would not be eligible these days for a PhD) and strictly following these criteria would make philosophy into something even worse than sophistry (adequate knowledge for adequate pay). However, it is not about "submitting, or not, art to philosophy" as Irigaray, another postmodern thinker, might remind us, connecting the need for "transforming our

energy through a continuous artistic process" to an ethical/critical layer again—the reality of "beings-in-relation," where art can be even more critical in its interventions than morality (Irigaray 55).

The revolutionary streak in artistic research that could be seen both as political and ethical, one that is connected to institutional critique, decolonization, artivism, working against a regime even, can also be seen as Alain Badiou's "fidelity to the event." Following a discussion of contemporary art's intervention into artistic research via symptomatological practices, Sven Lütticken uses it to present it as an almost revolutionary act of resistance. Pointing to Badiou, who "identifies knowledge with a regime of transmission and repetition, and opposes it with the revolutionary truth-event, which shatters the order of knowledge," Lütticken equates "fidelity to the event" with fidelity to symptoms (106). According to Lütticken's reading of Žižek, any symptoms or outbursts can be recognized as information about failed attempts of the past to intervene in an oppressive system, in other words, failed revolutions (Lütticken 106). Thus celebrating "the symptom as non-knowledge [...] that escapes the grip of the concept" is not exactly correct for symptomatological arts, because symptoms may be information (106). "Treating the symptom as that 'unknown known'" and thus questioning current knowledge production system, contemporary arts make "the main weakness of much artistic 'knowledge'—its complete lack of academic rigor or accountability—into a strength, critiquing the rhetoric of knowledge" (Lütticken 106-107). This is the political (and ethical) potential of art's singular way of knowledge production, which for Lütticken lies in its task of remaining loyal to the symptoms.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND A MANIFESTO

The practical solution, like the open-peer review mixed with regular blind-peer review process, has been already described by Josh Synenko in the other Afterword, and so my task here becomes more theoretical and speculative. It is definitely not about looking for the consensus on what artistic research is or can bring; the dissensus proposition, that is, that it should not be avoided at any

cost but actually not resisted or even encouraged for the sake of plurality of knowledge, is one worth pursuing. The more diverse our knowledge production methods, the more chance for discoveries, insights, and milestones for humanity to find. Contrary to this pluralistic ideal, the current approach to knowledge mimicking market competition is only ever short-sighted, bringing solutions quickly but usually ones that are superficial or short-lasting.

Looking at it globally, it is never properly merit-based but de facto funding access-based; the rich and already privileged have the most funds to spend on research. The minor research, maybe very innovative, but not coming from dominating cultures or dominating disciplines, will be stopped at the gate. We are losing a lot of possible knowledge in the current competitive but not really fair systems. For those who with artistic research question these systems, their power-relations, their centring around specific views of what knowledge is, there is a possible place in "competitive academia" perhaps as a form of "disruptive innovation"—a term coined by Silicon Valley moguls,[7] and criticized by Bernard Stiegler[8] among many others as dangerous. These technocratic powers influence higher education policies as much as they do everything else these days.

The true value of artistic research, as authors in this issue prove in their careful inquiries, is its power to neither self-instrumentalize nor to instrumentalize the objects of research,[9] to not divide between theory and practice or practice and reflection, and to not put ethics last. Furthermore, I follow Borgdorff's use of Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement* to support the understanding of artistic research as critical—because it goes beyond aesthetic judgment, and with art judgment it is not only producing artefacts but in artistic experience we experience "what it means to have any experience, knowledge, and understanding at all" (100)—and I would like to posit that art as research has the power of critique. The really revolutionary artistic practice is self-aware and does not think only about "can we do it" to add a reluctant "but should we do it?" later. Imagination, thinking, and moral sense or empathy are not to be divided into separate specializations as we often do in the labour market. The return to love of

wisdom might be what is the most innovative about artistic research, and probably the least "disruptively innovative" in the sense of high-tech Silicon Valley definitions.

What I have thought of after the symposium, working for several years in an art-as-research project, and working for over a year on this special issue is not easy to summarize. But here is my own short manifesto for art-as-research.

Artistic research, or for me art-as-research, has to bring knowledge, without making novelty its main aim. Artistic research still needs to be art, thus even if no beauty or aesthetic invention is its goal, aesthetics in the sense of aesthesis, connected to sensibility (a term initially connected to aesthetics long before modern aesthetics definitions of Kant or Burke etc.) has to be part of it. Artistic research makes us see/hear/touch/feel something we haven't yet or haven't realized yet and thus it lets us learn, understand, and know ourselves and the world better (compare Julian Klein's understanding of artistic research as an "artistic mode [...] as the perceptive mode of felt or sensed framing of multiple layers of reality" [2018, 83]).

Even if novelty is not its key feature, with continuous shock and novelty being now so commodified and ubiquitous, a critical edge has to be the feature (see Madero and Carney, Dronsfield in this issue), as well as the shaking things up by reminding us of something, making us feel something we forgot, or revealing something lurking under the surface, that has always been the domain of the arts.

Artistic research or art/research has to be knowingly, consciously collaborative, and engaging in collaborative research-creation (see Foran and Xherro), where dissent is not a problem but brings diversity. Collectives or collaborations do not speak in one voice only but are often rather like Gregorian choirs (see Tschofen on her experience with the Decameron collective).

Most of the research has never been done in a vacuum (even Einstein's) or by a lone wolf genius in an act of sacred discovery. Research is done and art is made in a context. Artistic practice-based research is best as critique (one thing we might want to save from the

Enlightenment: critique understood as a movement of thinking that is always self-critical and never fully satisfied). Thus, finally artistic research needs to be political, otherwise it is commodifiable and non-resistant to powers that be; but if it is political and critical, it has to be decolonial.

6. OUTRO

Having used the analogy between philosophy and art as knowledge producing human activities throughout this text, at the end I have to point to their major difference which present as their respective strengths: artists are the "first re-sponders" to world issues, often "canaries in the coal mine," while the philosophers wait until dusk for their owl…

So, with all the hope for the remaining love of knowledge and of art, hope for the happy marriage of the two in art-as-research, and hope and apprehension of the possibility of it being radical enough to bring a knowledge production system shake-up, in the current po-litical climate and with seemingly more pressing issues needing to be addressed first, a philosophically inclined person has to wonder with Steyerl:

> "what do we do with an ambivalent discipline, which is in-stitutionalized and disciplined under this type of conditions? How can we emphasize the historical and global dimension of artistic research and underline the perspective of conflict? And when is it time to turn off the lights?" (paragraph 28)

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IMAGE NOTES

Figure 1: A whiteboard with a list of terms titled "Research-creation" gathered during the symposium, October 30, 2023. Mergler, Agata. *No title - photograph*. October 30, 2023, archived in Poznań, Poland.

Figure 2: Pages 2-5 from the symposium program, October 30, 2023.

NOTES

1. Gadamer revised typical interpretations of Aristotle in which theory holds a privileged position in pursuit of philosophical knowledge separate from practice and action. Instead, Gadamer uses the Aristotelian term *phronesis* in a reinterpreted way and with it rejects theory-practice dualism of that common reading of Aristotle and one later established by Kant. Furthermore, for Gadamer, truth in philosophy is not found in following a method (as in using "distance" of abstraction or objective distance in sciences) but it is fundamentally practical. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Lob der Theorie," in *Gesammelte Werke 4*, 1987, pp. 36-51 ("In Praise of Theory"). In this text Gadamer states that even for Aristotle theory was always eventually practice, or rather that truly human practice is always already theory (pp. 50-51).↩

2. A lot of my discussion here comes from these long-term experiences: my own experience of working within an art-as-research framework in a collaborative project *Haptic-Visual Identities* with Cristian Villavicencio since 2015/2016, and from this experience of working with Josh Synenko on the *Research-creation Episteme?* project, initiated in 2023,

bringing the conference in October 2023 first and now this special issue of *Imaginations.*↩

3. For extensive discussion on the topic of artistic research versus standard [Frascati Manual] model of research as well as standardized view of research and innovation connection, see Henk Borgdorff, *The Conflict of the Faculties.*↩

4. These remarks are a summary of my talks with artists and art students during my dissertation research visits in Ecuador in years 2016-2019. I was able to give artistic talks (with Cristian Villavicencio) and lectures (also specifically on artistic research) a couple of times, not only at Universidad de las Artes in Guayaquil but also in Quito at San Francisco Universidad. Funding for the research trips was provided mostly by York University, Canadian grants, and for talks/lectures additionally by the Ecuadorian universities.↩

5. In discussion on Facebook about the Rachel "Raygun" Gunn's Olympics breakdance routine, Cramer answers the question of it being a sign of artistic research taking over thus: "If this means that people with university PhDs and next to zero competence in art practice are taking away opportunities from art practitioners, in the practice field itself [!] and just because the latter's education is considered inferior… - then it's a takeover of artistic research in exactly the opposite way that artistic research had been intended (namely, as a way to create research opportunities for art practitioners)." (Florian Cramer, Facebook account, August 19, 2024, accessed: December 26, 2024).↩

6. Its full title is: *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge.*↩

7. https://thephilosophicalsalon.com/disruption-neither-innovative-nor-valuable/↩

8. See: Bernard Stiegler's *The Age of Disruption. Technology and Madness in Computational Capitalism.* Polity, 2019.↩

9. Despite the existence of the multi-million-dollar global art market, that is. I do not want to seem naïve. Art is a commodity like any other, but artistic research does not usually produce outcomes – objets d'art - that are saleable, or easy to sell. And it is rather a chance for those who do not participate in the global art market to have a living as artists in the academia with a monthly paycheck.↩