Cahiers of Artistic Research 2

Premises for artistic research

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Presentation note

"*Cahiers of artistic research*" created through IMPAR[1] at the University of Aveiro/INET-md, respond to the responsibility and the need to offer - first and foremost to our students, but also to the broader academic community - consistent guidance to assist the conception, design and development of artistic research projects. The aim of this series of *Cahiers* is, therefore, to establish an alternative path for artistic research. Firmly grounded in the articulation between declarative and procedural knowledge, the first steps along this path constituted an effort to clearly define as to when research is artistic research. The second *Cahier* of the series establishes two premises for any artistic research: (i) *Artistic research produces knowledge in a narrative mode* and (ii) *Artistic research articulates two different modes of knowing*. We suggest that these premises are fundamental pillars for any artistic research project.

Forthcoming publications in this *Cahiers* series will include topics such as the prolegomena for any future artistic research (AR), in addition to the presentation of models discussing current misconceptions surrounding artistic research, including evaluation criteria and pedagogical implications.

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http://artisticresearch.web.ua.pt/

Prelude

In the *1st Cahier - When Research is Artistic Research?*[2] - we propose that artistic research happens when an explicit act of criticism both deconstructs an old mythopoetic configuration and constructs a new mythopoetic configuration. As recognised by Carter (2004), such a process produces *material thinking* - a singular type of artistic knowledge that articulates declarative and procedural knowledge in the materiality of artistic production. We hope to have established that material thinking cannot be shared without aesthetically experiencing the artistic production - presencially, or, in Erika Fischer-Lichte's (2011) terms, in co-presence, elaborating upon embedded and/or embodied meanings.

We are thus implying that, according to this alternative pathway for artistic research, the two fundamental academic requirements - namely, to produce and share knowledge (which are in fact transversal to research in all fields) - are both accomplished through material thinking. Material thinking, however, has the peculiarity of being an amalgam of declarative and embodied meanings. This amalgam of meaning is simultaneously and indistinctly represented and felt, thus demanding an interaction with the artistic production qualities and/or an active participation in the performance ritual in order to be understood. However, a long-standing academic tradition, based on classifying and archiving, privileges knowledge as represented information. In this case, *representation* is understood as an effort to conceptually elaborate the same meaning or the same reality to everyone, be it straight representations of the external world, manifestations of the speaking subject, or plain conceptual constructions (Deleuze, 1969).

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[2] http://artisticresearch.web.ua.pt/index.php/pt/2018/10/15/cahiers-of-artistic-research-1-2/

In fact, understanding *representation* strictly in this way is to exclude artistic communication, since embodied meanings - which are present both in the production and in the reception - do not fit into such a definition. More idealistic aesthetic approaches may still consider 'representation' in some art fields, especially in those in which, unequivocally*,* an art object is produced, like in painting or in sculpture. However, in other aesthetic approaches, such as Fischer-Lichte (2004) and many others, it is assumed that performance goes beyond the aesthetics of representation. We agree, but in our view, it is the concept of *representation* that should be rethought, reviewed and reformulated.

From an evolutionary perspective, the psychologist Donald (1991) proposes a clear distinction between *imitation* and *mimesis*. This distinction firstly introduces a foundational difference between animal and human behaviour, and secondly, clarifies the decisive role that mimesis played and continues to play in underlying and embedding language and culture: "Mimetic representation has characteristics that are considered essential to language and would thus have set the stage for the later emergence of speech" (Donald, 1991, p.171).

Mimesis is, in his view, the missing link that would have mediated the transition from ape to man. Donald (1991) opens and expands the concept of mimesis, including in it the capacity for representation, which is compared with the Piagetian concept of assimilation in the sensorimotor stage. The author argues that this new concept of representation

should improve our understanding of the difficult issue of the articulation between mimesis and culture (Donald, 1991). The novelty of Donald's view is the consideration of mimesis as an evolutionary factor that enables a higher level of cognitive development and would thus distinguish the first hominids from the apes. The innovative contribution is the description of the capacity for representation not as a passive attitude but as an active behaviour that intentionally produces meaning as representational acts:

> Mimetic skill or mimesis rests on the ability to produce conscious, self-initiated, representational acts that are intentional but not linguistic. These mimetic acts are defined primarily in terms of their representational function. (...) Mimesis is fundamentally different from imitation and mimicry in that it involves the invention of intentional representations (Donald, 1991, pp.168-169).

It becomes clear, therefore, that to represent is not the same as to project a determined scene in our imagination. Indeed, Donald characterised representational acts as "creative, novel, expressive acts" (Donald, 1991, p.169). This characterisation constitutes an improvement on traditional theories regarding mimesis, which seemed to make no clear distinction between human and animal behaviour. It establishes a qualitative difference between the imitation of which apes are capable and the more creative imitation that can take place within human cultural settings. The difference between mimesis and imitation lies in the fact that the former involves the invention of intentional representations: monkeys and apes can imitate an action but they cannot represent it, i.e., they cannot (re)create internal models of the expressive act. To be able to represent an action (as children learn to do when playing and going through the process of assimilation) is to "parse one's own

motor actions into components and then recombine these components in various ways, to reproduce the essential features of an event" (Donald, 1991, p.171).

Combining and re-combining elementary actions into different sequences implies making choices; it is, thus, a question of enacting, that is, of generating intentional representations. These intentional choices imply and must be guided by a sense of narrativity, since constructions of meaning are, arguably, narratives:

> When it comes to explaining how it is that humans experience their world in ways that they can make sense of, there must be a central place for the notion of 'narrative unity'. Not only are we born into complex communal narratives, we also experience, understand, and order our lives as stories that we are living out. Whatever human rationality consists in, it is certainly tied up with narrative structure and the quest for narrative unity (Johnson, 1987, pp.171-172).

The sense of self emerges in the form of a narrative; it is a story we tell ourselves. This story begins as soon as we are physiologically able to produce a 'swift non-verbal account' of how a determinate object is affecting and changing our organism (Damásio, 1999). In Damásio's account of the birth of consciousness, we humans become conscious 'in the act of knowing'. Our consciousness is 'created in the narrative of the catching process' of representing an object:

> As the brain forms images of an object – such as a face, a melody, a toothache, the memory of an event – and as

the images of the object affect the state of the organism, yet another level of brain structure creates a swift non-verbal account of the events that are taking place in the varied brain regions activated as a consequence of the object- organism interaction. The mapping of the object-related consequences occurs in first order neural maps representing proto-self and object; the account of the causal relationship between object and organism can only be captured in second-order neural maps. Looking back, with the license of metaphor, one might say that the swift, second-order non- verbal account narrates a story: that of the organism caught in the act of representing its own changing state as it goes about representing something else. But the astonishing fact is that the knowable entity of the catcher has just been created in the narrative of the catching process (Damásio, 1999, p.170).

From an ontogenetic perspective, Trevarthen (1999) also stresses this primordial narrative capacity and calls it 'musicality'. When researching the dynamics of protoconversations and musical games with infants, this author gathered strong arguments in favour of a psychobiological source for music. His conception of musicality stresses how bodily motion is much more than just a side effect, accompanying musical meaning or expression. In his view, musical meaning is about bodily motion and musical communication happens mimetically; or, in his words, when 'listeners respond with instantaneous sympathy':

Emotions of anticipation, fear, excitement, joy, anxiety, interest, and the rest arise from one's anticipation in acting. They are conveyed to others by movements of our face, throat and hands, the same mobile sensors that prepare the selective application of our awareness for the reception of discrete experiences implicated in the main course action – the whole commitment of the body. Our posture and the way we step and turn also convey

feelings. Musicality is the coordination of this acting emotionally and its channelling into an imagined narrative of purposes with concern for their consequences. The moral and spiritual tone of music, or its festival vigor and passion, arises from the instantaneous sympathy of a listener's response to the action of making sounds with that tempo and in that way (Trevarthen, 1999, pp.161-162).

Observing mother-infant communication, Trevarthen (1999) found evidence that infants are capable of following and producing preverbal emotional narratives. Thus, he concludes, in consonance with Donald (1991) and Damásio (1999), that these narrative constructions are a decisive (if not an indispensable) contribution to the development of structures in language and thought (Trevarthen, 1999, p.195).

In both evolutionary and ontogenetic terms, the capacity to produce narratives accompanies the very first manifestations of human cognition. Thus, it seems that sufficient evidence has been provided to support the existence of a non-verbal narrativity as well as the immediacy of its particular mode of communication. Bruner (1986) echoes this view, distinguishing two major modes of thought, which he names respectively the narrative and the paradigmatic. In the narrative mode of thought, stories and historical accounts of events are imaginatively constructed. In the paradigmatic mode of thought, logical truth is sought. Bruner points out another significant distinction between these two modes of thought. If narrative skill develops early and naturally in children, the logical-scientific skills that support paradigmatic thought emerge only after systematic education. Looking at our modern culture, Bruner suggests that narrative mode still predominates in the arts, while the paradigmatic predominates in the sciences

(Donald, 1991). Of course, the cultural issues surrounding Bruner's ideas have massive socio-cultural and educational implications, but one of the most significant here is that artistic activity is evolutionary and ontogenetically grounded, and it is, thus, essential. In summary, as Picasso and the Portuguese educator Agostinho da Silva used to say, *every child is an artist*. Thus, the question is, how one can remain an artist when grown up? It seems to us that established mythopoetic configurations and new mythopoetic configurations should be understood from this perspective, in this context and according to this conceptual framework.

Before the seventeenth century, only through mythical and/or philosophical discourse could knowledge be shared, if one does not consider more personal experiences (ritual and mimesis). At that stage, Arts - like literature, music or painting - and sciences - such as mathematics, geography or astronomy - had no autonomy whatsoever. It is often assumed that it was René Descartes who established the philosophical principles and the epistemological ground from which science could emerge and develop autonomously, illusively separating itself from philosophy, myth or art. Since then, scientific discourse has been expanding in all directions and has been applied progressively to all areas of knowledge, diversifying its methods and methodological procedures, and a new myth was created. In fact, science progressively gained the status of offering the only discourse that is able to produce and validate truthful knowledge, as opposed to subjective experience, speculative opinion or religious faith.

For many people, this status is unquestionable even today, in spite of the major challenges to its accuracy and truthfulness brought by three revolutionary theories which date back to the early twentieth century. We are referring to Marx, Nietzsche

and Freud, whose theories challenged scientific knowledge by relativising it on the basis of its social, corporeal and unconscious conditionings, respectively. By claiming to have rigorous methods and to produce truthful statements, most science devotees underestimated all the other ways of producing knowledge, considering them and their outcomes as subjective, vague, untrustworthy or suspicious.

These assumptions and claims were again questioned vigorously later in the twentieth century from within the science itself, with Einstein's Relativity Theory and with further developments in physics, and particularly in Quantum Physics. But the final stroke, which would be fatal to this scientific myth, came with the work of George Lakoff (a cognitive scientist and linguist) and his collaborator, philosopher Mark Johnson (Lakkof & Johnson, 1999). Lakkof and Johnson (1999) could answer the classic fundamental questions of 'How do we know?' and 'What is truth?' based on the well-established results of cognitive science. It has been shown empirically that: a) most thought is unconscious; b) we have no direct conscious access to the mechanisms of thought and language; c) our ideas go by too quickly and at too deep a level for us to observe them in any simple way; d) abstract concepts are mostly metaphorical and, thus, derived from bodily experience; and e) mind is embodied.

Thought requires a body - not in the trivial sense that one needs a physical brain with which to think, but in the profound sense that the very structure of our thoughts comes from the nature of the body. Nearly all of our unconscious metaphors are based on common bodily experiences. This affects how we conceive rationality, how we conceive language and, of course, how we conceive science. Eliminating metaphor would eliminate all abstract thought, especially science.

> Conceptual metaphor is what makes most abstract thought possible. Not only can it not be avoided, but it is not something to be lamented. On the contrary, it is the very means by which we are able to make sense of our experience. Conceptual metaphor is one of the greatest of our intellectual gifts (Lakkof & Johnson 1999, p. 129).

In this deeper sense,

> the arts and sciences are twin peaks in human cognition and neither should be privileged in research practices: while scientific ways of knowing involve the gathering of empirical data, testing hypotheses through specified methods, and validated representations of the human experience in the natural world, arts-based ways of knowing are no less empirical, no less dependent on methodologies, no less valid, no less representative of the human experience in the worlds we live in (Rolling, 2010, p. 105).

These findings have profound consequences for our understanding of the concepts of knowledge, validation and truth. All meaning is embodied - if it has meaning, it has meaning for someone whose understanding, reason and conceptual structure is shaped by their body. There is no correlation between theory and truth, since metaphorical concepts are inconsistent with a view of the world as a unique, absolutely objective structure of which we can have absolutely correct, objective knowledge. Science is, thus, the result of our physical engagement with an environment in an ongoing series of interactions.

There is a level of physical interaction in the world at which we have evolved to function very successfully, and an important part of our conceptual system is attuned to such functioning. The existence of such basic-level concepts - characterized in terms of Gestalt perception, mental imagery, and motor interaction – is one of the central discoveries of embodied cognitive science (Lakkof & Johnson, 1999, p. 90).

As Khun (1970) pointed out, the history of science yields cases of scientific revolutions. These revolutions are cases in which new metaphors replace old ones. Successful sciences fields are those for which there is broader and deeper converging evidence. Evidence for a scientific theory is 'convergent' when the results prove the same explanatory hypothesis. The same goes for our sense of self, our understanding of the world, the permanent reconstruction of the past and the continuous changing of future planning and envisionment. All are narratives in constant reconfiguration and recreation, enabling us to act as social, living human beings, but also embedding and grounding all scientific metaphors and explanatory hypotheses. One can not escape narrative: the very possibility of thinking and of representing implies narrative construction. It becomes crystal clear how relevant it is to exercise imagination - even before the acquisition of language, creating preverbal emotional narratives and, subsequently, in the constant engagement in games of make-believe (Walton, 1990) - since all understanding of the world and of our lives depends on it.

Now, in parallel with scientific revolutions and general scientific progresses, which, as Khun (1970) has explained, are cases in which new metaphors are replacing old ones, we believe that the ultimate goal of artistic productions is to deconstruct old narrative/mythopoetic constructions and formulate new ones.

According to our alternative path for artistic research, the clarification of the intrinsic act of criticism, implied by this replacement of old narrative/mythopoetic constructions for new ones, is required. When produced according to this perspective we can undoubtedly say that artistic research is research, creates art, produces and shares knowledge.

Premises for Artistic Research

Claiming that artistic research produces knowledge may sound redundant, not only because of all the perspectives presented in the 1st *Cahier*, but also because of the amount of books and articles written by those who have been promoting artistic research in recent decades. However, the body of existing literature could not avoid the emergence of some disbelief in recognising artistic research as a genuine mode of knowledge production. Such scepticism provoked a counter-reaction that motivated some authors to 'prove' the legitimacy of artistic research on the basis of the robustness of its methodological framework (Stevánce & Lacasse, 2018). While these opinions have somewhat contributed to the popularity of artistic research, it is not the specific knowledge produced in this field that has been validated. In fact, validation seems to be the main issue here. As it will be argued, artistic research should be validated on the basis of the relevance of its results and not on the basis of the robustness of its methodological procedures. How we understand 'research' is crucial here: research is not an *end* in itself, but a *means* to acquire knowledge. In fact, it has been a trend in the current debate on artistic research to forget the purpose of this practice.

The word research is derived from the Middle French "*recherche*", which means "to seek about something" (Shuttelworth, 2008). If we consider the creative processes behind composition and performance we can argue that "to seek about something" is exactly what artists normally do. Thus, there would be no reason, to reject the argument often

defended by practical musicians concerning artistic research by saying that they have already conducted research in creating their artistic products. However, the point is when *new* knowledge is generated. An empiricist notion of research, which hegemonically influences all research issues and questions across disciplines, supports a reductive view that holds such creative phenomena separate to the production of knowledge, so that invention remains outside academic discourse. Although some initiatives have been proposed in order to bring invention back, there are still some aspects that constrain this process (Carter, 2004).

The first is an existing trend to keep the institutionalised disciplinary separation alive; it is not uncommon to see proposals of "artistic research in music" or of "artistic research in painting" which do not contribute to the consolidation of a unified voice on behalf of the specificities of artistic research concerning knowledge production. Most of these proposals tumble in the pitfall of separating as a means to survive within the scope of conceptual scrutiny and delimitation proposed by paradigmatic thinkers, who seem to find nothing else to consolidate artistic research rather than the robustness of the methodological framework (Stevánce & Lacasse, 2018).

The second aspect that contributes to the limitations of existing initiatives for consolidating knowledge production in artistic research is the lack of clarity concerning the role of discourse. Artists often believe that they can only describe what they do if they leave out invention. Based on such a belief, auto-ethnographies have started to be advocated as a means of guaranteeing a conceptual and discursive knowledge associated with artistic practice. This strategy, although widely

mentioned in artistic research manuals (e.g., Lopez-Cano & Opazo, 2014), fails in its purpose because it keeps artistic production out of the validation process. Researchers defend their discursive arguments, but not the pertinence of the artistic output or even its articulation with those arguments. Auto-ethnographies deviate the focus from the artistic production itself, bringing to light details related to the life of the artists, their beliefs and their cultural values. It is a type of discourse and approach that elucidates and describes the cultural identity of the intervenients and, eventually, the context of the process, but does not illuminate the artistic production nor clarify its relevance.

The limitations behind the trends described above all result from a perspective that insists on presenting artistic research as a possible means of producing knowledge in a paradigmatic mode. This is the case for all artistic researchers who do not realise that they are utterly missing the point when writing about what they do by rationalizing the formal elements of their practice, rather than assessing their social effects. As Carter (2004) wrote: "rather than account for the work as a structure for reinventing human relations, they explain the ideas behind the work" (Carter, 2004, p.10). It seems that this does not happen only because of the use of propositional reasoning too often associated with verbal discourse. In this respect, artists are right about the incompatibility between writing verbal conceptual/analytical descriptions and inventing. It is thus both a question of focus - artistic researchers should focus on creation - and a question of using the adequate discourse to convey embedded and embodied meaning - artistic researchers should clarify their mythopoetic constructions in a narrative mode.

In fact, artistic research produces knowledge in a narrative mode - which, as previously discussed, is a mode of thought where stories and historical accounts of the events are imaginatively constructed. Such mode does not aim to be a universal and reproducible knowledge, but an ingenious discourse that connects diverse and disparate things: 'The artist, through a capacity to perceive analogies existing between matters far apart and, apparently, most dissimilar, mythopoetically creates poetic wisdom' (Carter, 2004, p. 7). Or, to put it simply, it is as if dissimilar things become connected through a striking figure of speech.

Due to the stigmatisation of poetic wisdom, vigorously denounced by Nietzsche, mythopoetic invention was excluded from academic discourse, just as Dionysius was excluded from Apollonian cults. The difficulties for artistic researchers are, to a large extent, due to the need to bring invention back to academic artistic production and discourse. Invention is compatible with a narrative mode of thought that aspires to *intersubjectivity* (but not universality), *understanding* (but not rationalism), and *social applicability* (but not replicability). Mythopoetic constructions are elusive and slippery, since, after all, they depend on equivocation: the possibility that something might be something else. Embracing invention necessarily requires embracing equivocation. Thus, the mission of Artistic research is to bring these two fundamental generators of knowledge within the narrative mode, *invention* and *equivocation*, back to academia.

Obviously, this cannot be achieved by an artistic production supported by discourses based on ideas like "art speaks by itself"; or by a text on the life of the artist; or by an artistic

production reduced to the scrutiny of methods from the social sciences for data collection and analysis. Instead, the artistic researcher should deconstruct socio-emotional relations and present new possibilities to reconstruct them through new artistic outputs. The pertinence of such a new possibility must be documented and justified in the discursive mode in such a way that allows poetic wisdom to emerge. When this discourse successfully supports the artistic output, illuminating its pertinence and revealing hidden aspects that could not be grasped without it, then we can say that material thinking is at play and that artistic research is producing knowledge, of course, not in a paradigmatic, but in a narrative mode.

Although our 1st premise declares that artistic research disseminates knowledge in a narrative mode, that does not mean that interdisciplinarity is excluded, neither, consequently, is the juxtaposition with the paradigmatic mode of knowing excluded. Artistic research projects may include, in the earlier stages of their development processes, methodologies that are based on observation and analysis. Artistic researchers may collect data from historical sources, from interviews, from observation of classes, from action-research experiences, and so on, in order to inform their artistic research projects. In the last example presented in our 1st Cahier, the preliminary work of observing and analysing recordings, studying Bach's transcription techniques, exploring baroque expressive and technical resources, etc., was part of the preparation for the creative work: the interpretation/performance of the sonatas. Another example is an artistic research project conducted by a doctoral candidate from our doctoral programme in Music at the University of AVeiro, where an anthropological study is undertaken to collect data, through interviews, on the common (intersubjective) imagery that flutists share for three specific canonic pieces for solo flute, and upon this collected information the artist researcher creatively develops her performance using staging and multimedia resources.

The coexistence of these two modes of knowing cannot, however, be mistaken for a fusion, as the epistemological divergence between them results in an ineluctable divide. As detailed above, the inclusion of the arts in Academia implies a process of knowledge construction and correspondent evaluation/validation (appreciation) that is not compatible with

existing models emanating from the natural sciences or even from the social and human sciences. What is at stake here is the growing awareness that the narrative mode of thought is an alternative way of producing and communicating meaning, which escapes the conventional academic propositional verbal-language-based methodologies, and which is somehow claiming to be recognised within the Academia.

In the examples given above and in all structurally similar projects, artistic researchers operated in the early stages from the paradigmatic mode of thought and switched, in more advanced stages, to the narrative mode of thought in order to enter into the process of creating their artistic products (performances, compositions, etc.). In terms of what is specific to artistic research, whatever is produced in these early stages - be it historical information, score analysis results, sociological or psychological data, neuro-physiological findings, etc. - is not considered so much because of its scientific value but because of its potential to inspire new artistic productions. When it comes to artistic creation, one operates in a narrative mode connecting *doing* and *thinking*, *unconscious levels of embodied meaning* and *mythical thought*.

It is worth mentioning that this polarisation is only apparent since the distinction between these two modes of thought does not establish a balanced duality. At one of the poles - in the paradigmatic mode of thought - there is only one singular type of meanings, which are conceptually defined, resulting from abstract operations of thought, rigorous reasoning, mathematical operations, and logic. At the other pole - in the narrative mode of thought - there is a multiplicity of meanings, broad-ranging from embodied meanings (anchoring their roots

deep in unconscious levels) to symbolic meanings that open up to infinite chains of free imaginative semantic associations and combinations. The latter have one thing in common: all escape conceptualisation. Such variety makes them definable only in the negative, by being *non*-conceptual.

From the above, we may consider two dimensions in this multiplicity of meanings generated under the narrative mode of thought: the tacit (unconscious dimensions of meaning) and the symbolic (polysemic mythical associations).

Procedural knowledge is naturally associated to tacit dimensions since it has to do with gesture, which may be either embedded in the artistic object or embodied in the performer's bodily actions. These tacit dimensions are responsible for awakening mimetic actions and empathetic emotions. In an indissociable manner, meaning is always, consciously or unconsciously, enmeshed with and emerging from all physical activities, artistic *making* included. In addition, the tacit dimensions of meaning determine and condition the imaginative symbolic associations that constitute mythopoetic configurations. Only a discourse in narrative mode may account for the articulation of these two dimensions of meaning - tacit and symbolic. When this discourse, inextricably articulated with the artistic production, enhances our understanding of the artistic productions, it configures material thinking, as it is here proposed.

Material thinking is produced within a specific context and it corresponds to a non-linguistically formed content, although it may also emerge from speech. But it is a kind of speech that also vibrates and causes vibrations; it is a force, a movement,

an energy that disrupts the table of meanings. Meaning is constituted on trembling ground. There is no verbal meaning in material thinking without this set of vibrations and undulations present in the field of language, since deviation is possible and the word is a metaphor. Jean-François Lyotard asks if he is destroying the possibility of the true when he shows that there is in every discourse, inhabiting its subsoil, an energy making it not only *meaning* and *rationality* but also *expression* and *affection* (Lyotard, 1974). In our view, these affordances of expression and affection of the artistic materials and of the discourse itself make it possible for the authenticity of artistic communication, for knowledge production within artistic research, and for the consistency of material thinking.

Material thinking includes, thus, sensory (visual and sonic), kinetic, intensive, affective and rhythmic modulation features. It is pre-structured meaning, where the singularities have not yet been submitted to the reductive operations of abstract thinking. Hence, translating meaning from a narrative to a paradigmatic mode is irredeemably reductive. That is why we advocate that artistic research projects should culminate in an artistic production. Instead of defining a territory for artistic research, we are proposing this distinctive trait: there is no artistic research without artistic production. Above, we cited Shuttelworth's definition of research - *to seek about something*. Artistic research implies artistic productions and it is, thus, about seeking empathetic reactions, about meaning constructions meant to affect, to challenge old meaning configurations and to provoke aesthetic experiences.

Postlude

We wish to clarify that our intention is not at all to decree what is and what is not artistic research, but rather to launch the foundations for an alternative future of artistic research in which the epistemological consequences - of juxtaposing two different modes of knowing - are not overlooked and are coherently drawn upon. It is a choice. A choice that has direct implications and determines many other choices in many different layers and fronts. We defend that our alternative path for artistic research should build upon the epistemological evidence that procedural knowledge corresponds to embodied (embedded) meaning, and that this type of meaning is gestural, amorphous, not structured and hence will never be the 'signifier' of a propositional/conceptual verbal discourse (otherwise it would become something else, betraying its embodied nature). Herewith, we are proposing a peculiar, specific mode of communication, which is characterised by being direct, not necessarily mediated by a linguistic system, and grounded on empathy, to enable the articulation and communication of both procedural and symbolic knowledge. In our terms, we are claiming that material thinking is communicable, or, better, shareable in the narrative mode.

However, within an artistic research project,

- o what if the artistic production is not meant to seek empathetic reactions?
- o what if an artistic production is not meant to challenge our old mythopoetic configurations?
- o what if the choice of a music composer is more focused on exploring selected materials, trying out different combinations under a formal game of self-imposed rules, than on taking on the responsibility of inscribing expressive gestures in a score?

- what if a music performer is more focused on displaying high level skills, uncritically reproducing and perpetuating a longtime institutionalised interpretation model, than on taking on the responsibility of interpreting the musical gestures inscribed in the score, developing an original emotional narrative, affecting the audiences and revealing new affordances of the music composition?
- what if the artistic researcher relies only on the experimentation of new technological apparatus or on the exploration of concepts, undervaluing the relevancy of the intervention in the respective artistic domain?

Somehow, we are going against a kind of mainstream approach that tries to circumscribe artistic research to declarative knowledge in terms of validation, or to associate it with purposeless experimentalism, whereby the pertinence of the innovation is not clarified, aesthetic judgments are avoided, and ethical choices are denied. We are arguing that the validation of artistic research projects should, to a large extent, include the appreciation of the artistic production; with the artist researchers having - within Academia - the responsibility of clarifying the relevance and the pertinence of their projects, in the first place.

In summary, artistic production is an indispensable part of artistic research results and outcomes; an artistic production, integrated in an artistic research project, should be appreciated on its own terms; and an artistic research project should reveal aspects, characteristics, new perspectives and readings that clarify and intensify the aesthetic experience, which, otherwise, would pass unnoticed.

We think that Academia, as a place of reflection, evaluation and discussion should not contribute to the general apathy regarding the inhibition of critical judgment in relation to artistic productions. There is a long tradition of ideological assumptions, which are visible in music competitions, music teaching models and Institutions for Arts and Culture that seem to have the main function of reassuring that:

- a formalist moral code is perpetuated, without criticism;
- experimentalism mainly searches for the unfamiliar, without reflecting on ethical or aesthetical issues;
- moral or even ethical engagement underestimate artistic qualities suspending aesthetic appreciation.

These ideological assumptions are often followed to exhaustion, serving primarily for the purpose of acquiring skills and diverting musicians' attention from criticism, reflection and creativity. We can remain at this puerile crossroads but we can no longer disguise our ignorance; we can continue to pretend that we are not aware, that we are very deeply immersed in this old outdated model, indulging in compliance like Robert Musil's "Man without Qualities" (1943), or, we can make a choice, cross the threshold and assume the very artistic and academic essence of critical irreverence.

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