

Artistic Research and Conditions of Experience

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Biography

Taneli Tuovinen earned his doctoral degree in the field of visual arts education in 2016 at Aalto University, Finland. His thesis argues how visual thinking is present in all art forms. He has studied also at UdK Berlin and at Art University Linz. At Aalto University he holds a tenure-track lectureship in interdisciplinary arts pedagogy and he works also as a lecture of art pedagogy in teacher education in dance and theater at the University of the Arts Helsinki. His research, international networks and publications are highly involved with the pedagogical debates of the higher teacher education in the arts.

Biography

Riikka Mäkikoscela finished her doctoral dissertation on artistic thinking in 2015 at Aalto University, Finland. She has worked as the executive director of the Finnish Association of Arts Schools for Children and Young People since 2018. At the moment, she is on leave from that position and serves in the Ministry of Education and Culture at the Academy of Finland as the secretary general of the theme year of research-based knowledge. As a visual artist, Mäkikoscela has made sculptures and environmental art concerning issues like material circulation and social and cultural sustainability. Her current research

topics are the possibilities of creative practice and artistic research methodology in the sustainable future and circular economy as a cultural change. Her art and research have been exhibited and published in a number of happenings, galleries, museums, congresses, and journals both in Finland and abroad.

Abstract

This article studies art practice as a place for conditioning experience in the context of artistic research¹. Our objective is to describe artistic research as a distinctive approach to multidisciplinary research of experience: The sources of criticalness and intersubjectivity in artistic research are human sensuousness, corporeality, and experientiality. First, we will examine the course of artistic research in the past 15 to 20 years; this was a period in which artistic research became academically legitimate and an institutionally supported research tradition. Next, we will position ourselves and our research material within this tradition. Our key material is multidisciplinary artistic research approached from an experiential angle and a intersecting theory. We will describe common themes within art practices and research as manifested in our material; we have entitled the themes ‘experiential democracy’, ‘sensory experience of the living body’, and ‘resistance’. These themes aim to summarise how the artist and researcher employing the methodology of artistic research applies one’s art practice as a method and location for research, while striving to maintain experientiality as an element of the methodical steering and content of research. The manifestations of the artist’s work discussed in this article – for example, making visual art, dancing, playing a musical instrument, performing, and writing – are primarily professional embodied relationships with the world in which the body is, for the practitioner, a place for recognis-

ing skill and knowledge. From the beginning, the debate on the methodology of artistic research has underlined that artistic research is not an alternative way of making art; instead, artistic research is required to explore the world and develop accurate methods in the same way as any other research tradition. The key significance of experientiality for artistic research is not in what it produces but in the conditioning of the area from which art and understanding can emerge.

Keywords

artistic research, experience, art practice, situationality, experiential democracy, sensory, body, resistance, skill

The Experience of Art Practice as a Research Attitude

In the context of contemporary art practices, the idea of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ sensing or experience has largely been abandoned. The focus is rather on all of the impulses that an act or work of art can prompt in the practitioner and the experiencer. The present focus is on exposing the phenomena to be experienced and recognising and challenging the norms and routines that direct this process (Muukka-Marjovu et al., 2015). Similar attitudes, which we already know from the context of art practice, can be considered the cause of artistic research (Kirkkopelto, 2007; Slager, 2012). In the context of art practice and research, the concept of experience can be defined broadly, for example, in the words of Tere Vadén (2001, p. 96), who is a philosopher and author of multiple articles on experience and artistic research: experience equals any exposure of anything. This article, however, emphasises that, in the context of professional artistic work and research, experience describes the common situational horizon of practice, agency, and thinking (see also Rauhala, 1995; Rouhiainen, 2015). Within professional practice, this

horizon is not entirely random; instead, it follows the embodied skill of the artist/researcher. This is proved by the fact that, when successful, the outcomes of art practice and thinking achieve concrete and perceptible results. The result of art practice is often a picture, a song, a performance, a poem, a text, a design, an act, or an event. But as this article wants to elaborate, the artistic thinking needed to achieve these results can also be applied as a research attitude. This implies that the key significance of experientiality is not in what it produces, but in the demarcation of the area about which art and understanding can exist. For example, environmental artist Leena Valkeapää (2011, p. 94) writes that she uses the experience of making art for conducting research.

The purpose of this article is not to define experience or artistic research in general. Instead, we aim to present artistic research that uses experience as a research attitude in art practice. From this perspective, we have selected our cases: research settings in which, for example, a dancer explores bodily movement as the source for writing (Heimonen, 2009), a musician explores her involvement in the Western music culture through the corporeality of playing (Arho, 2003), and an environmental artist explores the relationship of nature in her environment and way of life (Valkeapää, 2011). With these cases, we illustrate how the instruments and objectives of artistic research can overlap with those of art practice and, as research, can be presented in a new context. The introduction of the new context proves that artistic research is not conducted in the sphere of the researcher's own experience and art practice only. Research involves challenging, changing, presenting in a new light, striving for clarity on the conceptual and phenomenological levels, and exposing new language and a new manner of reading. Hence, we emphasise the importance of artistic professionalism for artistic research (see also Varto, 2017). Art practice and exercising skills within it do not take place in a vacuum; instead, it is conducted through debates about the common traditions of education and evaluation.

In the context of artistic and research-oriented practice, the role of experience is not to be

a complete or documentary source of information for another practice. Within art practice, experience is under constant change; it is defined not only by what has been experienced (seen, heard, felt) but also by what can be experienced. The instruments and objectives of art practice can be applied to explore something that enables experiences but has not yet been presented in a perceptible form. Artist Jaana Erkkilä (2012, p. 162), for example, writes of her practice that, for her, it is a question of wanting to look for something that is still unknown. Common to various art disciplines, performance, exhibition, and other production practices often develop on a ground that is still looking for its shape, and whether the objectives will assume their experienced form in the final work or performance remains uncertain for a long time. All the same, many artists have described how the uncertainty and chance of failure make artistic work meaningful and worth practicing and researching (Mäkikoskela, 2015; Tuovinen, 2017; Weintraub, 2003a, 2003b). This ever-present but never fully predictable context of art practice will next be described through the concept of situationality.

Art Practice and Situationality

Descriptions of art practice as the place for the researcher are repeatedly mentioned in descriptions of artistic research. For example, dancer Isto Turpeinen (2012, p. 261) writes that artistic and practical sections in his research are places of encounter in which experiences and meanings exposed by practice are negotiated. Our discussion of art practice as a place for the study of conditions of experience refers to human situationality, which is a broader context than that of mere meanings related to personal history. Psychologist Lauri Rauhala (1989, 2005) has discussed situationality in the field of experience research. With the concept of situationality, Rauhala emphasises the historical structure of human consciousness, which is determined by the fact that the body and related actions are part of reality and the context and structures in which the human world materialises. Reality is a combination of all of the situations in which

a human being, during his or her life, establishes a relationship with another. Situationality involves concrete contacts with, for example, nature, objects, and people; relationships with nonmaterial ideas, such as values, norms, cultural systems and institutions; and how the human being's situation influences his or her embodied and conscious actions independent of how he or she has understood them in his or her cultural framework.

For Rauhala, situationality is not an abstract space which is independent of the experiencer; instead, it describes the relationships of experience in which individual presence as an element of a larger entity provides situational dimensions that can be experienced and understood. Vadén (2000, 2004) has also discussed a similar basis for the meaning of practices and skills for a particular operating culture. With the concept of local thinking, Vadén refers to a subjective skills and knowledge, which can form a basis for practice in a particular context. The structural factors of skills are not inherent only in a human being but in situationality that is broader than the context related to a particular cultural or personal history. Hence, skills based on conditions determined by locality are closely related to the rise of a culture, its viability, and conscious change in it.

The current debate about the enactivist theory of experience has also emphasised the nature of embodied action and skills, which goes beyond the meanings of personal histories. Alva Noë (2009, 2012, 2015), a philosopher and author of multiple articles about enactivist theory within the art context, is particularly interested in the reciprocal exploratory nature of skills and experiences. According to Noë, a particular skill reveals to the practitioner the elements of the skill's situationality which are humanly significant and can be seen, heard, touched, smelled, or tasted. Skills, techniques, and arts enact as bodily confronted representations and demonstrations of meanings.

With the above discussions of situationality and asubjectivity, we want to emphasise the intersubjective importance of skill, including experiential skill, for art practice and research.

In our article, art practice and professionalism based on experiential or other skills are not the same as personal talent, ability, or merit. The skills needed for art are not created out of thin air or by themselves. According to the dancer Leena Rouhiainen (2016, p. 111), practising art socialises the practitioner into a cultural tradition that is shared, and this applies to dancers as well: they survey and develop their way of dancing by relating their experiences and bodily practice to the surrounding reality. Professional practice refers to an investigative relationship with reality, which is provided by skills and which surpasses the goals of contextual and historical explanations (the subject) but never the situationality of experiencing. Skillful practice exposes experience, which provides the context for situationality and can thus be examined. In the context of artistic research experience is not a personal trait, interpretation, or universal abstraction; instead, it is a description of how an individual art practitioner has been conditioned according to his or her polygenetic cultural and social structure.

Background for Artistic Research

Artistic research methodology has developed during the last 15 to 20 years. The discipline has become academic and institutional, and doctoral schools all over the world are offering it with different emphases. The possibility of conducting artistic research has, in this short time, produced many schools and orientations (Elkins, 2013). Instead of a clear paradigm of artistic research, it is perhaps more accurate to talk about a new ground which still needs to be surveyed. The central question remains: To what extent, can art practice or an act or work of art involve research? This question has elicited passionate answers from researchers, which is, of course, an essential characteristic of a developing research field. It is obvious that a clearer path for artistic research and its justifications requires examination and development of widely different approaches.

Next, we will introduce research fields and methods that are in dialogue with artistic re-

search but embrace different goals. For example, art history and aesthetics have studied artists and their works extensively; this is art research. Artistic research includes similar features as other practice-based and practice-led research methods (Barrett Bolt, 2007; Candy, 2006; Mäkelä & O'Riley, 2012). Moreover, art/arts-based research is interested in defining research in relation to art practice (Leavy, 2009, 2017). A distinctive feature of art/arts-based research is that research is not necessarily conducted by an artist but by a practitioner of another field, who is obviously familiar with art practices but wants to apply them to other practices such as education, promoting well-being and justice, or sociological research. As a result, the significance of art within art/arts-based research is usually instrumental (Kallio, 2008). Art and research are also in a fruitful debate within, for example, design, media research, and art and science. Within these fields, technical innovations often go hand in hand and are combined with artistic goals. Artistic research, however, has – even in the middle of the practical applications described above – retained its distinctive identity based on the characteristic methods and attitudes within contemporary art.

Our description of the characteristics of artistic research does not intend to prove the diversity or superiority of research conducted by an artist as compared with other research traditions, even though artistic research has often been considered a rival tradition. Instead, we aim to demonstrate that artistic research is based on culturally established practice with a recognisable identity. Art practice is based on a shared, historical and professional insight of a tradition that is culturally, administratively, and financially independent of other traditions (Carroll, 1988; Kirkkoppelto, 2007; Varto, 2017; Weintraub, 2003a, 2003b). This does not, obviously, mean that all artists have the same goals or that they follow a uniform principle. The distinctive feature of art practice is rather its lack of predetermination and homogeneity; according to Turpeinen (2012, p. 281), a practice-oriented process does not decide its outcomes in advance. This is essentially related to professional skills: an individual artist's professional skills are not fore-

seeable. They essentially involve autonomy that allows the artist or researcher to challenge the practices and ideas of one's field (Kirkkopelto, 2007). Within art practice (for example, visual arts, dance, music, and performance), professional skill aims at challenging sensory reception, testing limited areas, pointing out new connections and views, and applying new discourses. While this is not the only way to practise art, the practice is often fuelled and identified by this attitude and potential (Varto, 2017).

Presenting artistic skills as the central element for research is not an attempt to make research more artistic or creative; nor is it an attempt to make art better. On the contrary, it is a question of achieving a more critical relationship to the requirements that determine everything else within research that is based on practices, skills, and experience. For example, Mäkikoskela (2015) writes that mere artistic work has not, despite her attempts, provided answers to her research questions. Also the formal definitions and representations of a research process are often a minor detail for research, and mainly used only to describe and evaluate research (Varto, 2017). Solving new issues within research currently seems to require delicate collaboration between courage and professional skill. Collaboration often involves re-questioning the justifications of the researcher and the research object. These developments are aptly illustrated by Hannula, Suoranta, and Vadén (2014, p. 62) in their description of the change in the researcher's position. We interpret their ideas using the following schema:

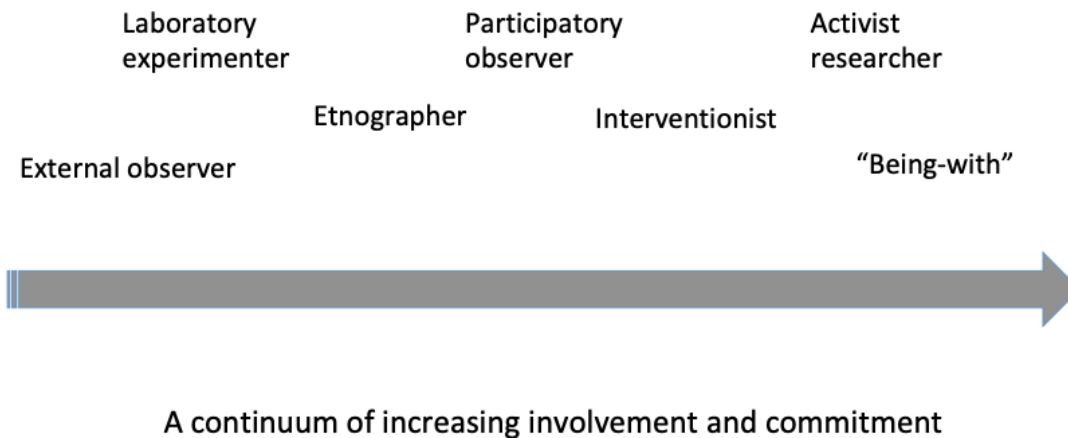


Figure 1. A continuum of change in research mindset and researcher's position.

The continuum presented above describes the last-century change in the research climate, which also involves the potential of artistic research; the ideas of knowing and tolerance for new ways of knowledge formation have increased. The ideas about the nature of knowledge formation have become relative; at the same time, it has become clearer that knowing, skills, and their study are dependent on time and the agent. It has also been noted that also other human efforts than academic research produce meaningful knowing, which earlier was excluded from knowledge. This has often been caused by the fact that other meaningful knowing has taken place in ways that have not been assigned solid and reliable criteria. An example of this is the generation of qualitative and practice-based methodologies (Anttila, 2006).

Of course, introducing new, meaningful ways of knowing into research is not in conflict with the fact that research requires basic features which cannot be ignored with the change of styles or introduction of new styles. According to philosopher Juha Varto (2017), the objective of research is to increase knowing and understanding of the conditions of human existence, which entails the need to inquire about them aptly and in all necessary ways. It is also important to answer in a way that allows others to understand how the understanding achieved through research was reached. Research results must be shared by, for example, joining them to the discourses within various disciplines, and transparent methods must be applied to be able to share the understanding reached through research results.

Today, the interests and habits of knowing of different people living in different traditions as well as those of various minorities are made common knowledge. It is no longer possible to think that knowledge and credibility are universal or that the reality that is studied is, in principle, fixed, and that it would be only a question of time before we are able to complete it (Vadén, 2017). Democratisation of knowledge can no longer mean creating a system with subordinate ways of knowing. It is appropriate to accept that they are different and re-examinable through research and case-specific approaches. All ways of asking, responding, and sharing are necessary, and all of them can find a seat in the current situation.

In the situation of research policy described above, sensuous, embodied, and experimental become central indicators of intersubjective connections; appropriately conditioned, they allow for an understanding of the researcher's questions, approaches, and solutions. On a large scale, this is nothing new: for the majority of human history, people have been presenting the results of their thinking through skills and action as well as experiences relayed by them.

Thematising the Research Material

Our research material consists of the following artistic doctoral dissertations and studies of the methodology of artistic research: Arho, 2003; Erkkilä, 2012; Hannula, Suoranta, & Vadén, 2003, 2014; Heimonen, 2009; Houessou, 2010; Mäkikoskela, 2015; Pitkänen-Walter, 2006; Rouhiainen, 2003; Tuovinen, 2016; Turpeinen, 2015; Valkeapää, 2011; Varto, 2009, 2017. The material originates from the 15-year-old artistic research tradition of Aalto University and University of the Arts Helsinki. Many of the above-mentioned studies have been conducted under the supervision of professor and philosopher Juha Varto. His main expertise lies in phenomenological philosophy. Varto has contributed extensively to the debate on artistic research in his publications and with his teaching and supervision, particularly from the angle of experientiality. His contribution is exceptional in that it has affected research practices within many disciplines – from visual arts to music, theatre, dance, writing, and autoethnography – while the articles of many other authors have remained more or less field-specific characterisations.

In the Finnish discourse on experience research the dancers have been active writing about the complex nature of experience in artistic research practice, for example Turpeinen (2012) and Rouhiainen (2016). Our article can be also seen as a contribution to the discussion they have started. With their reflections on the experience of art practice, Turpeinen and Rouhiainen have looked for an understanding of art practice from the point of view of research work. For example, by dancing, Turpeinen (2012) opens up ways of examining individual experiences that are shared, and, thus, allow for pedagogic relationships. In turn, Rouhiainen (2016) develops the concept of corporeality derived from the tradition of experience research so that she can perceive the bodily phenomena associated with dancing, including bodily learning and skills and the wordless significance conveyed by the dancer. Both Rouhiainen and Turpeinen see corporeality, especially in its movements and sensuousness, the basis for human interaction and

research. With this article, we will expand the discussion from dance towards a common ground for various art disciplines.

Below, we present themes arising from our research material that artistic research based on/led by experience and its conditions seems to emphasise. The themes aim to analyse how the artist/researcher employing the methodology of artistic research applies his or her art practice as a method and location for research, while striving to maintain and introduce experientiality as an element of the methodological steering and content of research. We do not, however, aim to draft a universal simplification; instead, we want to demonstrate that the concepts needed for describing and reflecting on the corporeal and sensory also serve to explain and describe how the situationality is experientially given.

Experiential Democracy

Art practice, whether or not it involves research, includes a lot to experience: rational reflections, random emotions, and glimpses of a more indiscernible nature. Our experiences are filled more or less the same matters, but, for each of us, they are positioned differently depending on the features introduced by, for example, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, family, habits, income level, political activity, or education, and by how the daily recurring desires to eat, drink, have sex, move, defecate, write, paint, and dance regulates them (Varto, 2017; see also Weintraub, 2003a, 2003b; Tuovinen, 2016). The success of both art practice and research is largely based on knowing what to include and what not to – what is central, what is necessary, and what is not. In her research, Mäkikoskela (2015, p. 165) illustrates how her professional orientation intertwines experiences from different spheres of life:

I continue drawing my hands and, on the side, playing with candy laces. In order to transport myself back to my childhood memories, I need the laces themselves and the physical act of handling them. I do the very same things with them that I did

along my sister back then, but I also try something new. As a sculptor, I want to make some forms with them; now nicely curled or twisted laces, which back then as kids helped us to get more candy into our mouths at the time, are not enough anymore.



Figure 2. Working with strawberry-flavoured candy laces. Photo: Riikka Mäkikoskela.



Figure 3. Working with strawberry-flavoured candy laces. Photo: Riikka Mäkikoskela.



Figure 4. Working with strawberry-flavoured candy laces towards the sculpture: From Hand to Mouth, 2011, strawberry flavoured candy laces, tape, glue, glycerol, acrylic varnish and glass cake stand, 18 x 29 x 29 cm. Sculpture and photo: Riikka Mäkikoskela.

Vadén (2000, 2001, 2004, 2017) underlines that pure, unmixed, and genuine experience cannot be isolated at any time. Here experience and art practice resemble each other: they never start from a void. Instead, they are always individually, socially, historically, and culturally motivated (Bishop, 2005; Carroll, 1988). According to Vadén (2004), this impurity refers to the uniqueness of experience, which is not universal or eternal but unique. The unique nature of experiences is an indication of the democracy of experiences. All experiences affect one another, and no experience or experiential area is better or more important than any other. Nor has any one experiential area been shut out of reach from the other areas.

These features and reflections that are inherent in all research describe the democracy of experience in that, for example, a religious experience can challenge a scientific experience, a scientific experience can challenge an artistic experience, and an artistic experience can challenge a religious experience. This is corroborated by, for example, the fact that mistakes in logical argumentation would otherwise not be possible. In any goal-oriented practice, interfering factors may interrupt the chosen model of logic. (Vadén, 2017.) A practice may produce unexplainable questions of value, objectives, and the proper ways of acting (Varto, 2010). The different areas of experience affect one another in unforeseen manners.

In our research material, experiential democracy and the reciprocal effect of experiences have been raised to the level of a starting point or even an objective. Vadén (2017) suggests that if experiential democracy is recognised, it can be adopted for a starting point for researching experience and its conditions. However, he underlines that, because of the priorities that locate experience and restore it to the practitioner's body, experiential democracy does not lead to nothingness. We all know from experience that the potential of the various areas of experience to challenge one another does not entail lack of differences or qualities or uniformity of experience. Musician Anneli Arho (2003, p. 163) opines that, to approach the enigma of music, we should not examine listening in the same way as reading or watching but as dancing, which locates

music in the middle of embodied living: the embodied experience of music is an experience of a lived, moving body. Painter Jaana Houessou (2010, p. 169) writes that when she paints, she feels the weight of her flesh and her flesh resonates in the flesh of her lifeworld. Dancer Kirsi Heimonen's (2009, p. 264) description of her experiences as a dance workshop teacher supports what is said above:

Dancing provides an experience in flesh, a wave of sensuousness captivates the moving body [...] Corporeality takes the students towards themselves and away from the selves they have been accustomed to. When the movement is formed, when the dance takes place, something fleshes out that the students have not previously observed, understood [...] It is not mere words, it is lived in flesh, it is.

The artistic researchers in our research material consider body and flesh a more powerful feature of experience than incorporeality. Varto (e.g. 2010) has stated that one can abstract only what one have experienced bodily. Images and fantasies cannot produce a living body, they are always already part of it. Vadén (2017) conceptualises the idea: asubjectivity can produce subjectivity but not vice versa. Heimonen (2009, p. 22) writes that flesh provides the researcher with an angle in which writing does not emerge only from the self, even though it takes place as a channel in the self. A connection to the world and others, at its most concrete, it takes place in flesh. This phenomenon provides the art practitioner with clear priorities and conditions, which can be interpreted either phenomenologically or naturalistically. Artistic research that focuses on experience and its conditions prefers lived body over the abstract and rational.

Sensory Experience of the Living Body

Within art practice, the research object reveals itself to the researcher mainly through the body. Working with matter, movement, or sound, the artist's relationship to action is mainly experiential, sensory, and embodied. This situation involves the common and shared world, which

is an extensive and unfocused entity. The senses, however, bring together an understanding of the limited scope of experience and of the artist's role within the entity in which he or she lives and moves (Rouhiainen, 2016). Asubjectivity requires one's personal presence as part of an entity, it provides the proportions that can be experienced and understood. Valkeapää (2011, p. 95–96) describes this research context as follows:

As an artist and researcher, I examine events through my presence, staying in the experience. I examine my themes in a concrete relationship to them, as they appear to me. The themes I examine are not merely a research object; they are manifested to me in my everyday life. My research is not focused on the object, it is focused on my experience of the world.

The sensory and embodied reality has been presented in myriad theoretical models and explanations within psychology, philosophy, and political sciences. These theories do not, however, create sensory or lived embodied experiences; nor do they diminish the personal immediacy of sensory or lived experiences. An embodied skill involves the ability to follow action that has been determined by the senses, its goals, its proposals, and its suggestions. If necessary, this becomes assessed by one's own hands and movements (Varto, 2017). This requires sensory methods and produces sensory results. Contrary to the concepts and abstract knowledge formation traditions, these methods and results convince the experiencer through the senses. Based on different knowledge interests, the sensory and lived body can be articulated, for example, dancing as a field (Heimonen, 2009) or experiencing nature as a horizon (Valkeapää, 2011). Based on profession, it can be articulated as a world of music (Arho, 2003) or based on epistemology, it can be articulated as artistic episteme (Tuovinen, 2016).

Activating senses in different ways, in different times, and in different cultures has produced various cultural customs. Sensory-based action can strengthen, emphasise, and select certain features of experience as visual arts, music, theatre, dance, and so on. Sensory methods differ

from abstractions in their way of opening up the world through a concrete resistance to the action outside of the practitioner. In this way, experience attracts meanings which are based on sensory testing. These meanings can disengage from the experiences and become concepts or even values, goals, or knowledge. (Mäkikoskela, 2009, 2015, 2016; Tuovinen, 2014.) Within art practice, the corporeal and sensory are essential, they cannot function only inside the head. Skill is always connected to the environment's phenomena that are material, changing, and resistant and that show us what we can and cannot do (Varto, 2017).



Figure 5. From a series of images of dance. Paintings and photos by Taneli Tuovinen. Dancer: Kirsi Heimonen.



Figure 6. From a series of images of dance. Paintings and photos by Taneli Tuovinen. Dancer: Kirsi Heimonen.

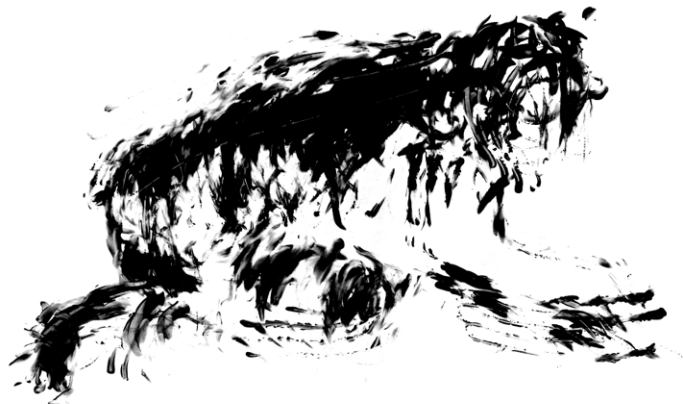


Figure 7. From a series of images of dance. Paintings and photos by Taneli Tuovinen. Dancer: Kirsi Heimonen.

Resistance

Many descriptions of artistic research speak for the importance of resistance in art practice. Resistance makes many artists start from materials, sounds, colours, movement, and other corresponding features. Professional skills are also a medium of resistance: skills can develop only against resistance (Tuovinen, 2016). Resistance inspires bodily credible experiments; it suggests directions that would not perhaps have emerged otherwise. The experience of the resistance changes the action, because it actually prevents the artist from moving only in the imaginary direction. For the experiencer, resistance is proof of working in a shared world: something is real and not only imagination when it resists.

Musicians know that all instruments provide a different experience of playing, which is caused by the fact that the player's relationship to each unique instrument is embodied (Arho, 2003). Dancers describe how a tolerable amount of pain in movement sharpens the senses and fine-tunes the contact to the floor (Heimonen, 2009). Sculptors describe how high-quality modelling clay invites them to work on ideas materially and spatially (Mäkikoskela, 2015).

The artists in our research material describe in different ways how important it is for the researcher to lean against resistance also when he or she aims to separate himself or herself from his or her practices. A critical distance to practice is also created in relationship to what resistance within art practice prepares for: openness to the new. Resistance provides an opportunity for testing practices and the self without having to stop practising or leave the practice completely aside. Painter Tarja Pitkänen-Walter (2006, p. 21) writes that the relationships and differences between things and their meanings are created in the painting process. They are not a pre-defined, ready-made language of representation. Valkeapää (2011, p. 26) says that a critical distance to one's practice is created by perpetually admitting being part of a whole. Mäkikoskela (2015) reflects on the numerous good ideas of an artist, which are valuable to

others only in relation to a reality which has been tested through resistance.

For artistic research, epistemes are material and experienced and not necessarily discursive at all. Experienced, they signify otherness and provide resistance to the researcher (Varto, 2017). For the sake of sharing the outcomes of artistic research, resistance must always be clearly presented and articulated as a criterion of reality. This way, the presentation of results can clearly define whether the artist/researchers are describing themselves or whether they are describing the shared world and the operating reality in question. This involves active materiality and entities, research objects and other agents. This is manifested not only in the materials, methods, and operating environments but also in concepts, terminology, and theories. They are not chosen by the artist at random, they are something tenable and decisive as such. For example, Mäkikoskela (2015) describes how the features of her practice that are dependent on resistance lead her from one stage to the next and compose her otherwise unorganised thinking. Discussing the world is always dependent on the resistance: the discussion hangs on something that does not yield but demands more and more new ways of discussing and action.

Artistic research always involves a level of resistance. Resistance immediately demonstrates how the researcher's methods, words, and concepts are positioned in reality. In this sense, our everyday lives are undefeated and, as such, an endless source of material and ideas for art practitioners. (De Certeau, 2013; Houessou, 2010; Mäkikoskela, 2015; Tuovinen, 2016; Valkeapää, 2011.) It seems that, for art professionals, experiencing resistance is a method of identifying the limits of their skills and also a method of pushing the limits further. Within the context of artistic research, the various manifestations of resistance can be understood as a method of questioning and justifying the purpose and consistency of research.

Conclusions

Above, we have briefly introduced the constantly developing but already recognisable tradition of artistic research that employs the experience of art practice as a research attitude. An artist can see his or her professional practice as a place for researching experience and encountering its conditions. With this, we are referring to human situationality, which is a broad context for artistic research and which exceeds the scope of personal history or any modes of contextualism. By emphasising the situationality of art practice, we examine how artists from various arts has adopted, sensuous, experiential and living body as the sources of criticalness and intersubjectivity.

From our research material, we expose how a professional embodied relationship with the world – for example, making visual art, dancing, playing, performing, or writing – is, for the practitioner, a place for recognising skill, knowledge and criticism. Accordingly, we describe common themes within art practice and research as manifested in our material. We have entitled the themes ‘experiential democracy’, ‘sensory experience of the lived body’ and ‘resistance’. The themes aim to summarise how the artist and researcher employing the methodology of artistic research applies his or her art practice as a method and place and situation for research, while striving to maintain experientiality as an element of the methodological steering and content of research. According to our research material, this attitude and its applicability to research stems from the experience of art practice. This it is not simply chosen but rather learned and recognised by practising.

We have organised the themes of experiential democracy, sensory experience of the lived body and resistance to serve the needs of theoretical debate, but, within art practice, these themes and the features they describe intertwine constantly. For example, contemporary art practices demonstrate how no area of experience is closed to another, so all experiences affect

one another. We propose that, within professional art and artistic research, experiential democracy should be seen as a common horizon for practice, agency, and thinking which follows the artist/researcher's embodied skill in various contexts: materials, techniques, performance methods, debates, and dialogues with the recipients.

Embodied skill requires the ability to follow sensory practice. Criticality and intersubjectivity of the sensory experience of the lived body mean that phenomena of art and research are recognised, tested, implemented, described, contextualised, and analysed in a consistent manner which is familiar from the way the phenomena are experienced. Important source of consistency in the research material of this paper brings forth the method of testing one's research work against resistance. Experience, perception, and speech are all action and activity with resistance. Within a professional skill the resistance highlights the methodical way to proceed both physically and socially. Resistance challenges and shows for the practitioner how aptly chosen materials, methods, and concepts are positioned in the shared reality. For example, the dancer's knowledge often focuses on touching points: "the dancer's physical contact, the sensation of the other's weight and touch spreading throughout his or her body delivers him or her into a different kind of existence, to sense the passage of breathing through flesh in the touching point (Heimonen, 2007, p. 196)".

We aim to demonstrate that the concepts needed for describing and reflecting on the lived and sensory experience also serve to explain and describe how the situationality is experientially given. From this angle, the experience of art practice refers above all to the research attitude which doesn't concern only art. Arho (2003, p. 17), for example, describes this attitude as follows: "How to recognise and expose the attitude that allows phenomena to exist and emerge." In the context of experience research this is not only a methodological question, but a question of the researcher's responsibility. It involves a research area that is based on professional skills, but builds on the same experienced meanings recognised in our everyday lives.

In one's sensory and lived experience, something that becomes experienced, can make particular features of practice so distinctive that one sees them as worthy of research. According to our interdisciplinary sources in this paper, the difference between the interests of everyday and artistic research interest seems to be that the key relevance of experience in research is not what it produces, but in demarcation of the area from which art and understanding can emerge. As a consequence, many contemporary artists and artist/researchers want to keep the area to be experienced complex and incomplete as long as possible. Success in art practice and artistic research often requires that, in experience, what has not yet been experienced and fixed, can already have context or presence as art. This possibility entails that within artistic research practice, experience is not a mere personal observation, a random interpretation of a given situation, document, instrument for something else or a universal abstraction. Instead, experience is a convincing expression, for the experiencer, of the way in which a singular artist/researcher is part of the world in accordance with a polygenetic cultural and social structure. To experience this kind of a context for art and research means to see how one's professional skills are pointing, at the same time, towards practicing (how) and knowing (why) and recognising, within artistic work, methods which can be applied to other research traditions and disciplines.

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Notes

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