

Art of Research VII: Authorship and Responsibility

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Biography

Dr. **Harri Laakso** is Professor of Photography Research at Aalto University, Finland. He is an artist, researcher and curator interested in photographic images and theory, artistic research and word/image relations. His curatorial work includes co-curating Finnish and Nordic pavilions at Venice Biennale 2013. He has led many research projects (e.g. ‘Figures of Touch’, Academy of Finland, 2009-2012) and is currently senior researcher in ‘Floating Peripheries—Mediating the Sense of Place’ (Academy of Finland, 2017–2021).

Dr. **Sofia Pantouvaki** is a scenographer and Professor of Costume Design at Aalto University, Finland. She is an awarded practising designer for theatre, film, opera and dance productions in European venues and curator of many international projects. Chair of Critical Costume and a founding Editor of the international peer-reviewed journal *Studies in Costume and Performance*. She led the research project ‘Costume Methodologies’ (Academy of Finland, 2014-2018) and is lead editor of *Performance Costume: New Perspectives and Methods* (Bloomsbury, 2021).

Julia Valle-Noronha is a designer-researcher with a particular interest in the practices that take place between people and the clothes they wear. Holding a DA in Design (Aalto, 2019) and an MA in Visual Arts (UFRJ, 2014), she is currently Associate Professor in Fashion/Design at the Estonian Academy of Arts and Visiting Researcher in Design at Aalto University.

Over the past two decades, the Art of Research conferences have had a significant role in promoting continuous dialogue and fruitful convergence between art and design related research

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practices. The conferences have contributed to the development of the rapidly growing and spreading contemporary discourse on artistic and practice-led research—acknowledging and engaging in multiple notions of research where diverse modes of creative practice are used as context for enquiry.

The theme of the seventh Art of Research conference “Authorship and Responsibility”, which took place online on 3-4 December 2020 at Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, addressed the varied collaborative and individual working situations of researcher artists, designers and architects. The conference brought together researchers from a wide array of fields, representing diverse perspectives of praxis and research through art and design as well as different art forms, including contemporary art and curation, art education, film and photography, design, craft, media and architecture.

The concepts of “authorship” and “responsibility”, especially when examined side-by-side, connect with questions of singular authorship, shared authorship, lost authorship, invisible or uncredited authorship, participatory conditions, co-creation, inclusion and exclusion—that is, with the potentiality of one’s individual or shared praxis. These queries intertwine with the essential questions of power, control and responsibility, which accompany the acknowledgement that we inhabit this planet with other people, species and materials.

The conference enabled discussion on the potentiality of co-existence, understood as both among human actors, initiators and participants, as well as between human and non-human actors (e.g. materials), and on the relationship between collaborative and singular methods of working. Through these discussions, the main aim of the event was to engage in a shared exploration of bold and visionary thinking across different entangling practices. Historically, the Art of Research conference has been widely appreciated as an unconventional and interactive format for discussing, exhibiting and performing different modes of discourse.

The conference hosted presentations from the full spectrum of contemporary artistic, arts-

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based and practice-led research, representative of a diversity of perspectives and research orientations, and productive challenges to established ideas. The current issue of *Research in Arts and Education* intends to document these approaches by publishing the full papers presented at the event. These papers demonstrate how it is precisely an issue of authorship and of responsibility to find the appropriate language and register for each individual research outlook. Thereby these papers not only represent a range of perspectives but also a variety of research implementations in their writing choices, modes of address, or use of visuals.

‘Shared Authorship in Research through Art, Design, and Craft’ by Luis Vega, Bilge Merve Aktaş, Riikka Latva-Somppi, Priska Falin and Julia Valle-Noronha speaks to core questions of authorship that emerge when the collaborative nature of research is considered in the fields of art, design and craft. By considering the involvement of ‘other stakeholders’—participants, co-organizers and other informants of their research, as well as nonhuman entities such as material resources, artifacts and tools - the authors of this paper identify the contribution of such actors to the research process. The authors propose more inclusive research practices that acknowledge the multiple ways in which such collaborators influence the direction and conceptualization of the research, offering a certain level of co-authorship and holding part of the collective responsibility that the research entails.

In their paper, ‘Engaging Design—Empowering Beyond ‘Participation’ For Active Engagement’, Robert Phillips and Nicholas Gant examine ways to actively facilitate responsible change and sustainable behaviour through design engaging with communities and research participants. They investigate two design research projects as case studies focusing on how these enabled such facilitation. To build the discussion, the authors explore how ethical awareness towards issues of authorship and responsibility can be a driving force to mitigate unregulated relationships to material. The article contributes with methodological proposals for more resilient design interactions that enmesh the relationships between human and non-human matters.

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The paper ‘Warhol and me—Battle of the authors: From copying to sharing’ by Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen provides a nuanced consideration of the thin line between acquiring inspiration from and copying – both of which can find a legitimate place in the creative process as an encounter or a form of discussion. In this discussion Korolainen takes as one of her starting points the works of Andy Warhol, the quintessential copyist. Korolainen also reminds of the various ways in which most artistic processes are in some ways collaborative—even those that might look like the labour of a singular author.

Departing from the need of novel perspectives to face contemporary issues in their complexity, the paper ‘Creative exchange through joint responsibility—Designing performances in multidisciplinary teams in the educational context’ investigates two performances built from multidisciplinary collaboration across different academic institutions from a textiles and human computer interaction (HCI) viewpoint. Through a narrative of the collaboration experience shared by the authors, Inês Rodrigues Neves, Claudia Diaz Reyes, Ismini Pachi, Arife Dila Demir and Kristi Kuusk, this article discusses how multidisciplinary activities may expand students’ and researchers’ understanding on their own fields of practice, as they begin affecting the shape of disciplinary boundaries.

In ‘Children and design students practicing playful co-creation in a youth creativity lab’, Eva Liisa Kubinyi, Vera Naydenova and Kristi Kuusk explore the various dimensions of co-creation design practices actively involving children as co-designers. Developed in the frame of an educational setting, the project analyzed in this paper focuses on participatory practice for the design of an interior space through a non-hierarchical, child-centred approach. Driven by the concept of playfulness in a spirit of trust and free choice, the methodology employed in this project enabled children and adults to co-create through playful interactions and to propose open-ended possibilities and co-imagined design solutions.

As part of a wider collaborative and collective research process, the paper ‘Infernal learn-

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ing and the class clash’ co-authored by Anniina Suominen, Tiina Pusa, Minna Suoniemi, Eljas Suvanto and Elina Julin focuses on critical explorations of class through examining how experiences of class have influenced the authors’ experiences of education, academia and the arts. By elaborating on the themes of materiality, embodied and emotional responses to experiences of class, and exclusion, the researchers use narratives and artwork as research material analysed through writing, discussion, and informal sharing. Through this process, the paper articulates experiences and perspectives that are typically silenced in academic contexts, bringing forward problematic and challenging aspects of research, education, arts and society, and proposes that collective, alternative and inclusive solutions be encouraged to current academic and education practices.

In the paper titled ‘Facilitator’, Ingrid Cogne deeply explores the term ‘facilitator’ in its various dimensions in relation to the notions of authorship and responsibility, taking her personal artistic practice as informant to the discussion. To do so, she reaches to relational and ethics discussions articulated from an artistic viewpoint. In this way, the author expands the notion of facilitator beyond the role of actors, to that of tools for reaching new layers of knowledge in an engaged manner.

‘Erasing Memory? Toward the Decolonization of Performance Art in Lithuania’ presents an investigation into how performative works can become artistic acts of “decolonization” in the particular context of Lithuania during (or related to) the time of the Soviet regime. Through three case studies—a form of reflexive research using photographs—Marija Griniuk explores various forms of approach and engagement that vary depending on their historical timing and context. One of the case studies is Griniuk’s own performance *Construction*, which relates to the presence of Soviet monuments and in which Griniuk invites local inhabitants (under a fictional pretext) to become active and voice their concerns. The paper discusses such performative works especially under the terms of “memory”, “sites as palimpsests” and “erasing”, and the

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ways in which they engender inclusivity and participation.

‘Dissolving Orphan Collections in the Commons’ by Marina Valle Noronha is a speculative paper on redistributing cultural wealth, a sort of cultural new deal. It takes as its starting point the dire and current state of affairs, the impact of the global pandemic on museums—which could result in a large percentage of them never recovering and reopening their doors. Valle Noronha speculates on redistributing the resulting “orphan items” in society and within communities, thereby also generating new thinking about the role and definition of a museum, as it adjusts to a changing world.

In ‘Ceramic pebbles as sensory tools—exploring the quality of muteness in tactile experience’, Priska Falin and Pia Oksanen build a dialogue between arts and psychotherapy as they analyse a ceramics workshop where participants engage in a silent process of making pebble-like shapes from clay. The article works with the notion of ‘muteness’ in tactile experiences—such as that of shaping clay—to discuss self-reflection and embodied awareness. The importance of a collectively carried solo work is discussed. In concluding, the authors expose that such practices are found to elicit knowledge that precedes verbal expression.

Interdisciplinary, collaborative work is the frame of ‘Critical Textile Topologies X Planet City—The intersection of design practice and research’, which examines the tension between design practice and design research in completing a project that fulfilled its professional commitment towards making select costumes for a film, while also responding to the design research goals of the authors, fashion and textile design researchers Holly McQuillan, Kathryn Walters and Karin Peterson. By working collaboratively and employing an experimental design research methodology, the project developed multimorphic textile-based forms using whole garment weaving, based on the inseparability of textile and form. This approach offered interdisciplinary design practice situated at the borderline between practice and research to drive the research forward, while also presenting a design vision for the future.

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‘The Volumetric Diagram—Genealogy of a Drawing Type’ discusses “Volumetric Drawings” by first exploring the general nature of architectural drawings and then elaborating on its distinctive features and genealogy. Volumetric Diagram is seen as an image of the ‘solution’, where ‘requirements’ and ‘form’ coexist. The author, Tommy Kaj Lindgren, then contrasts these findings with architectural and theoretical approaches, reminding that the choice of tools always conveys an architect’s values and the kinds of architecture they advocate.

‘Kitchen Lab– Spilling One’s Guts / Deep Fry Together’ by Andrew Gryf Paterson relates to (art) practices developed around equipment available in the home kitchen, which might nevertheless evoke long cultural traditions. These practices include wild-plant foraging, fermentation, baking in ovens, and also actions like chopping with knives, boiling with water or frying with oil. These actions are, however, mostly on the background of Paterson’s paper. The paper can better be described as a sort of confessional first-person narrative in autoethnographic style, which focuses more on his personal experiences and the contexts of the actions—those of kitchens, homes and human relations.

The papers included in this volume provide evidence of the wide range of ways in which artist-researchers contribute to the discourse on authorship and responsibility through diverse actions, in different domains of praxes. As a result, they also potentially partake in creating new research environments and ways of coordinated action that help confront the complex contemporary and future issues that we face. What might this mean and what could it offer in relation to larger contexts and realms of art, politics, and society?

It must also be remembered that the Art of Research conference and this ensuing *Research in Arts and Education* issue took place at the very specific time of a pandemic. While the very fact that they happened attests to the feat of overcoming—at least to some degree—the difficulties of these circumstances, the impact of this time has surely also left a mark in many of these contributions, and has prompted at times vigorous rethinking.