



CASE STUDY

Copenhagen, Denmark, June, 2013

The case study visit involved two separate meetings: one with Henrik Oxvig (Head of Research for the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation - KADK¹); and one with Mikkel Bogh (Rector, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' Schools of Visual Arts). During these meetings we discussed the developmental debate on doctoral level studies in the arts and architecture in Denmark, where both dialogue partners have been extremely active in developing and advocating for the doctorate within the arts academies. As we had encountered elsewhere in Europe the debate on the doctorate was in some ways complicated by an overlapping process of institutional realignment and university policy reforms. In the case of Copenhagen, the re-alignment of the different divisions of the Royal Academy was an important background process, interacting with the development of different research strategies on the part of the different units within the Royal Academy. Both respondents indicated that the doctorate was a subject of anxiety for some colleagues because it seemed to threaten the established autonomy of the arts (vis-a-vis humanities, social science, and natural science) within the traditional academy system, but they were both advocates for developing the third cycle within the culture of the academies, rather than by imposition of structured norms from outside. Although there seemed to be a slight difference in emphasis between the two respondents on this point, with the former indicating a desire to avoid special pleading in favour of simply establishing equivalence for doctoral research in the arts and architecture.

In advance of the visit, we were provided with detailed information on a joint venture between was a the Aarhus School of Architecture, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture and the design schools in Copenhagen and Kolding, entitled "DKAD" (2006-2011).² This was a collaboration with the aim of developing a doctoral programme with particular relevance to institutions that have

¹ On 2 June 2011, the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture merged with the Danish Design School and The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Conservation to become the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation.

² <http://dk.dkad.dk>

traditionally exclusively had an intuitive, artistic approach to their subjects. Based on grants from The Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation (FI), DKAD made it possible to create a programme at international level which would help qualify the dialogue between art and science and help create a well-reflected understanding of the fact that a dialogue must be of mutual benefit: science conducted at an artistic institution must also be able to learn from architecture and design in order to inspire architects and designers in their continued creative involvement with life and the world. Interestingly, in the discussion of DKAD, the work of the American artist Robert Rauschenberg was cited as a paradigmatic reference for doctoral work: “Rauschenberg is a model for a PhD programme related to artistic institutions because he was able to work with and relate to not only concepts, categories and language, which make up the material of any PhD dissertation, but, furthermore, to reflect on and with language in dialogue with studies of specific, sense-related materials.”³ This balancing of the specificity of the doctorate with the specificity of the field is echoed in the formulation of the desire of the Doctoral School at KADK for the “programme to continue to be recognised on a par with the doctoral programmes at the universities. However, it should also be stressed that KA has had – and will continue to have – a special profile, a special task as a PhD school related to the fact that the School of Architecture's research articulates itself both as artistic research and as scientific research, and that it often involves both theory and practice in different combinations.” In explaining the development of this position, Oxvig explained that after many years working to build the acceptance and recognised legitimacy of artistic practices as potentially constituting research actions, the leadership in his school of architecture decided that they would invest in building research culture. They decided not to define artistic research as a special or exclusively differentiated area, but as something within the normal paradigm of research. The risk according to him of having a particular specialised and exclusive “artistic” position on a research definition, would be jeopardize achieving full legitimacy and visibility, and to become institutionally marginalized (for example to be potentially excluded from the research funding landscape.)

In terms of the formats and structures of learning, KADK employs the following since 2009. The Research Programme Council at KADK (the Council has been the Doctoral School's board composed of representatives from the institutes and from among the PhD students) requires that each year, teaching should be offered corresponding to 15 ECTS points, which would be split into 5 ECTS points for a subject-specific course, 5 ECTS points for a course that focuses on dissemination-related issues, and 5 ECTS points for a course that focuses on scientific theory. In addition – i.e. further to the 15 ECTS points – the Doctoral School has offered supervisor courses (with the participation of both supervisors and students), courses in Academic Writing, and various other *ad hoc* courses, such as the annually recurring Sandbjerg Seminar, which is offered in collaboration with Aarhus School of Architecture, the University of Copenhagen,

³ Henrik Oxvig, “THE NON-SITE ON THE EDUCATION OF RESEARCHERS AT ART COLLEGES”

Aalborg University and the University of Southern Denmark. During his/her study course, each PhD student must have course participation amounting to 30 ECTS points approved, and often, students will seek out special, relevant courses that are offered by other educational institutions in Denmark or abroad. The Doctoral School at KADK is, as it can be seen, part of a national collaboration, and the Doctoral School's courses have been offered so that students from other institutions – including from Denmark's universities – have also had the opportunity to attend them, just as KADK's students have attended courses at the universities.

The situation that applied in The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' Schools of Visual Arts was somewhat different, and marked by an earlier stage of development. This in itself was interesting in as much as that in other parts of Europe (e.g., Finland, UK, Ireland, Austria, Germany, Hungary) it seemed that the visual arts were earlier in the push for the development of specifically practical discipline-based doctoral studies. Working also as an advocate for artistic research, and part of the lobby that secured a national investment in artistic research. Bogh also expressed concern about the doctorate becoming the required norm for teaching in the academy. He indicated that he believed that this would be counter-productive and leading to an exclusion of the most important artist educators who were the traditional basis for the recruitment of professors in art educations.

An important issue that was identified was the degree of external debate within the national arts community on these questions. Bigh pointed to the very energetic and engaged debate that was ongoing. He noted that the discussions had already emerged in the academic networks many years previously, noting the work of KUNO in the mid-2000s and the emergence of the programme in nearby Malmö. But it was now notable that the discussion was also happening within the arts community beyond the academies, and this was a promising development, in that it would help to ensure that the development of third cycle would not be framed with an exclusive focus on “academic” frames of reference. He indicated that he believed that the next logical step in the development of the third cycle in the arts would be a clear funding pathway, and he anticipated that based on current advocacy work and collaborative lobbies there would be a development in the national funding landscape soon. He pointed to developments within the art museums, cultural history museums and libraries which has approached the ministry with the proposition that curatorial work could also be recognised clearly as an important form of research.