

Artistic Research in Cultural and Media Production:

A rapidly globalizing driving force for Europe growth

In 2018, a performance and design research network is in operation across the full span of European countries. It places special emphasis on linking performance and design researchers with researchers in the humanities and the sciences, with particular attention to questions of bodily cognition and comportment. Specific research projects emerge within the area of health, aging, transport, spatial and urban planning and rural re-development, funded through a combination of local state cultural and European research funding.

In 2018, artist-researchers based in Antwerp, Bologna, Copenhagen, Dakar, Granada, Hamburg and Istanbul, working in collaboration with migrant rights activist groups, organise a new form of online and virtual mass mobilisation, creating forums for public activism by unofficial migrants, displaced people and asylum seekers, systematically excluded from the public sphere except as objects of moral panic and political grandstanding. The project emerged from an informal network of artist-researchers working independently on research into artists' labour organisations and precarity.

In 2018, a major university in Northern Europe awards its second annual artistic research prize of 1 million Euro to a team of filmmakers and artist-researchers for their work on critical media literacy through socially engaged art practices.

Three of the eight future scenarios from chapter 9 of the 'Handbook for Artistic Research Education'

While arts & design research is increasingly gaining recognition within national research settings, an equal measure of acknowledgement is yet to happen at the European level. It should be noted, though, that some research projects, initiated by higher arts education institutes, have received European funding.

The European art universities engaged with research demand a major leap forward in establishing artistic research as an integral part of the diverse European research landscape and structures also including adequate funding bodies. The time is ripe. Artist-researchers, the art universities, graduate schools and arts research centers in Europe create incredible added-value in their societies but need the support and commitment from national education & research bodies and from the European Union.

Advancement of the arts and the cultural and creative sector

Increasingly research works as a catalyst for the innovation of the cultural and creative sector, consisting of: architecture, arts and crafts, cultural heritage, design, festivals, film, television, music, visual arts, performing arts, archives, libraries, publishing, radio, etc. Beyond their contribution to cultural diversity and stimulating social environments, creative industries represent economic and social innovative potential. Cultural and creative industries help to boost local economies, stimulate new activities, create new and sustainable jobs. They also have important spill-over effects on other industries and enhance the attractiveness of regions and cities. Creative quarters in cities alongside sectors, such as design, media entertainment, fashion, gaming and architecture, make cities attractive places for people to live and work. In order to take full advantage of this potential, arts, research and creativity is combined with entrepreneurship and innovation. This needs European exchange and co-creation of concepts and solutions.

An emerging generation of artist-researchers with high level skills

Young artist and design researchers are increasingly trained to work in complex environments that often require advanced technology skills. They are able to intervene and to come up with 'out-of-the-box' solutions that innovate products, processes and attitudes. In the context of knowledge-intensive and technology enabled industries and social and cultural environments, the artist/designer can no longer be construed as an isolated or emotive genius but rather must be viewed as a collaborative investigator, observer, mediator, innovator, producer and multi-disciplinary professional. In exploring and addressing advanced technological applications and complicated social issues through artistic means, the artist engages him or herself with a wider community of scientific experts and of new publics. Artist-researchers are often involved as experts and consultants in team-based research projects, which prioritise not only the question of an aesthetic output in the outcomes of a research project, but rather an integrated aesthetic dimension to problem setting and problem solving in the construction of the research project.

A dynamic research ecology and collaboration

An important contribution of research in the arts to the contemporary knowledge economy is the construction of a dynamic research ecology that fosters innovation in terms of individual and collective agency and in terms of overarching operational culture. Research activity across the arts and design increasingly gives rise to international collaborations between artists and the public/users/participants and connects artist-researchers with social and natural scientists, system developers, engineers, and scholars and theorists from across the humanities.

International competitiveness

The accelerated globalisation of art and media cultures constitutes an important element in the further development of artistic research. Increasingly, the research profiles of higher arts institutions and the research competencies of their graduates form a defining factor for highly talented art students in choosing an art university for study or for a research programme. In order to be able to compete on a world-class level, European art universities need to develop their research activities and PhD programmes at a high level of excellence, attracting the most talented artist-researchers from Europe and the rest of the world. In addition, high-level scholars capable of advancing practice and knowledge in their fields often pursue an international career. Ambitious innovation driven research in a European setting in interaction with other scientific disciplines and enterprise is crucially important to increase Europe's reputation within a global playing field.

A place for artistic research within the European Research Area

The arts – including artistic research — are generating new knowledge. They express and initiate changes relevant to our societies and to Europe as a whole. In the coming years, the art universities and art schools will develop their European frameworks for the further advancement of the research field in the form of: joint projects; joint approaches to supervision; quality assurance; together with the exchange, documentation and dissemination of experience. Therefore, art universities and art schools were collectively entitled to submit the following proposals for the 2020 HORIZON Programme and the creation of the European Research Area:

- A specific work programme for artistic research and development, also including a focus on collaboration between Arts and Science;
- A specific priority in artistic research within social-economic and humanities research;
- A specific priority in artistic research in new technology programmes;
- Support to set up knowledge triangles between art universities, research centers and innovative business and to widen opportunities for coherent and efficient joint programming;
- Opportunities for international mobility of artist-researchers through the Marie Curie Fellowships and similar programmes.

