

Artistic Research as Scholarship: Evaluation Criteria and Epistemic Legitimacy

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ABSTRACT

Artistic research has emerged as a dynamic and contested field situated at the intersection of creative practice and scholarly inquiry. This study examines its epistemic legitimacy and the criteria by which it can be evaluated as a form of knowledge production. It argues that artistic research generates diverse forms of knowledge tacit, experiential, procedural, and propositional through iterative processes of creation, reflection, and documentation. Despite its growing institutional recognition, artistic research continues to face challenges related to definitional ambiguity, methodological inconsistency, and the evaluation of evidence. The paper explores conceptual frameworks that distinguish artistic research from traditional artistic practice and conventional academic research, emphasizing the importance of reflexivity, methodological transparency, and contextual grounding. It further analyses internal and external evaluation frameworks, including peer review, institutional alignment, and quality assurance mechanisms, highlighting the need for criteria that accommodate disciplinary diversity and transdisciplinary approaches. By addressing issues of power, access, and global epistemic diversity, the study advocates for more inclusive and pluralistic standards that recognize non-Western and practice-based knowledge systems. Ultimately, the paper contends that artistic research attains scholarly status when it articulates clear research questions, demonstrates rigorous inquiry processes, and communicates its knowledge claims effectively within and beyond artistic communities.

Keywords: Artistic research; Epistemic legitimacy; Practice-based inquiry; Evaluation criteria; and Knowledge production.

INTRODUCTION

Artistic research is treated as a scholarly inquiry that produces knowledge with potential for broader disciplinary or practical application [1]. Scholarly inquiry is defined as a careful deliberate investigation or formal study undertaken systematically to discover or revise facts, theory, or applications; Artistic research is therefore “artistic inquiry” and art-based inquiry is defined as research where the main claim or focal point of the research is an artwork or artistic process [2]. The production of works of art is one of the activities involved, but it is not the centrepiece; in some situations there may still be sufficient material to satisfy expectations of scholarship and the wider art community. Artistic inquiry presents challenges because art is often considered an individual, open-ended search where meaning and utility emerge through discovery [1]. Instead emphasis is placed on the final product and there is little consideration of smoothing the passage from production to analysis and assessment; systematising the chosen art-mode analysis and post-artistic evaluation is often neglected [2]. Artistic research is situated broadly at the interface between art and scholarship and deals with the interface, fuzziness between the two. There are many other definitions of artistic and art-based inquiry, and various approaches identify markers and characteristics relating variously to methodology, process, evidence, epistemology, discipline and audience, though these may not align with user requirements and situation. Three core elements are identified: a product that is acknowledged as art, the setting of explicit research questions, and activities designed to answer the

questions, though these may not necessarily be central [3]. A complementary classification places artistic inquiry on a spectrum from art to research taking into account the epistemological focus or the sources, referents and status of the material [4]. A similar spectrum extends to art, literature and design by addressing the typology of “what is inquired” these distinctions are elaborated into categories: investigation, commentary, examination, interrogation, analysis, and critique. The array of categories available indicates the capacity for trans-method or cross-genre [1, 2,5-7].

Conceptual Foundations of Artistic Research

Within the contemporary higher-education landscape, artistic research, defined as inquiry that generates knowledge with aesthetic or artistic form has gained solid institutional recognition [8-9]. Not only has it become a more prevalent practice in the performing and visual arts, but it has also emerged as a theme in various institutional evaluation strategies [10-16]. Projects in this area are often subjected to forms of external assessment that serve to evaluate their epistemic and artistic significance, yet they are still frequently regarded as occupying a grey area between art and scholarship [17-19]. Even today, what remains uncertain today is the extent to which such work is deemed scholarly, as many challenges continue to confront it, both in the practical domain and in its conceptual discussions [2]. A number of conceptual frameworks can help clarify contemporary artistic research; these stipulate precisely what is at stake in making a case for its epistemic legitimacy, what is desired from that endeavour, and how to address the resulting exigencies [3]. Outline of widely-used definitions, and visualization of artistic research along a pair of spectra, grounded in the relationships of art to research, thought, and contemporary significance, defines the specification of the type of inquiry at hand [4]. Next, differentiation of artistic research from non-research practices, and identification of criteria relating specifically to epistemic legitimacy constitute a feminist case for extending an already clearly-articulated conception of scholarship and its validation processes to such practice-driven work, one that considers as its testimonial forms also not only text but visual, sonic, kinetic, but also cross-media configurations [5].

Definitions and Spectra of Artistic Research

Artistic research takes many forms; its definitions and the range of positions within the resulting spectrum—are context-dependent and subject to change. While some institutions make a clear distinction between artistic practice and artistic research, defining the latter as “a practice of research that can legitimately be pursued in art schools” [1], others perceive arts-based research as equally expansive in its epistemic contributions and breadth of possibilities for addressing significant topics [2]. Individual researchers and scholarship, whose respective interests lead them to engage specifically with notions of artistic research, exist independently of any institutional position. Artistic research, moreover, continuously evolves in response to changing cultural or institutional parameters. Descriptions of artistic research therefore require not just documentation of present activity but also articulation of the particular spectrum of possibility situated within a given context, specifying the more, less, or wholly disqualified options for practice that each describes [3]. For this reason, it is essential to delineate both the current scope of artistic research and specific institutional or disciplinary positions and preferences within that spectrum.

Defining artistic research and specifying a possible range of positions has proved challenging because the term is used inconsistently across contexts and because “research”, though widely understood, continues to carry connotations that complicate and further differentiate an already heterogeneous practice [4]. Two relevant institutional definitions illustrate the challenges. One is the art academy Horizontal of the Netherlands, which provides an expansive definition on the grounds that “every artist needs an artistic research that connects to his or her practice [5].” The other, the Research and Development group of the Dutch Fashion Institute (MOAM), proposes two definitions, one relatively narrow and one broader in order to delineate a specific notion of artistic research that can be differentiated from other forms of research present within the institution [6]. Many established researchers also find it difficult to characterize their work as artistic research, indicating the relevance of the question even to those who conform, at least externally, to institutional or field definitions [7].

Distinction from Traditional Artistic and Research Practices

Artistic research diverges from traditional artistic practice by foregrounding evidence-based means of inquiry and resituating discourse as part of its epistemic frame [3]. Conversely, it does not conform to established notions of scholarship embedded in domains like history, philosophy, or the sciences. Beyond art, scholarly discourse concentrates on norms of verity, teachability, and repeatability; in art, it activates questions of cogency, query, and context [2]. Artistic research interrogates knowledge construction given medium, material, agency, reception, and context, preserving but extending its scope of concern [4]. Apostolic models still prevail, under which artists are presumed to know the art they enact and propose questions without probing how such knowledge is crafted. Motivations extend to consolidating art or practice-based research as knowledge production comparable to that performed by other scholarship [1]. Artistic inquiry intersects yet departs from treatises on artistic research in proposing epistemic grounds but does not emphasize relatedness to traditional research modes. The term artistic research straddles varied disciplines and individual practices without settling into a single definition [5]. It figures

as a hotly contested signifier deployed in multiple ways across diverse arenas, prompting differentiation among practices[5]. Some artists still invoke the word despite opposition to conveying information or developing ideas yet remain concerned about how art constitutes knowledge [6]. To articulate how artistic practice can be research rather than merely claimed to be so, the dissimilarity of artistic research from standard research modes may elucidate matters. Scholarly reflection on practice necessarily engages knowledge construction and forms of knowing while open to more expansive consideration of knowledge itself [7].

Epistemic Legitimacy in Artistic Research

Artistic inquiry is often classified according to the outcomes of creation, and many see the evaluation of its credibility as leading to an illusory definition of its value. Others question the motivation behind some artistic projects labelled as research [8]. The motivations evoked, besides artistic ones, for the practice of artistic research sometimes end up being an unsatisfactory articulation of the complex background and multiple aims behind a project [8]. Artistic enquiry often undertakes the investigation of a topic articulated by an artistic practice precisely with the aim of bringing a new perspective or understanding to the subject or area explored, while simultaneously seeking to challenge conventions or preconceptions around that area [9]. Developing inquiry in a co-creative setting with active or focused participation from a community and with knowledge as a central objective can be considered as an established academic position known as community engaged research; it does not, however, prevent the creative and artistic elements from being fundamental attributes in artistic research [9]. Art-based modes of inquiry strive to address complex and multifaceted issues that often evade straightforward solutions, engaging transdisciplinary perspectives while prioritizing contexts and particularities tied to specific locations, communities, cultures, and issues [10]. This condition, despite the evident change of the North-American landscape, remains unresolved in Spain. A large number of research records feature artistic descriptions, yet only a few convey a sense of inquiry embedded in the core of the creative process [1].

Knowledge forms and Evidence in Art-based Inquiry

Art-based inquiry frequently produces knowledge that diverges from conventional forms predominant in disciplines such as the humanities, social sciences, or natural sciences [5]. It generates non-textual, experiential, procedural, and practice-based knowledge, which remains accessible after the inquiry's conclusion. From a conceptual standpoint, artistic inquiry satisfies various alternative knowledge frameworks, such as Biggs' "seven forms of knowledge" or Maturana and Varela's, three "orders of knowledge" [4]. Evidence plays a dual function in artistic research, supporting knowledge claims while simultaneously embodying that knowledge [5]. The outcome of an art-based inquiry constitutes the evidence upon which claims of knowledge are based, offering a sense of possibility, insight, and understanding that goes beyond yet does not render the audience passive [6]. Epistemic legitimacy therefore derives both from the outcome and from the knowledge generated during its production. Artistic inquiry can produce situational, tacit, and propositional knowledge, and inquiry processes may yield different knowledge forms than the outcome alone, such as insight into one's own artistic practice[7]. The capacity to convey the knowledge acquired through a project may derive from the articulation of an accompanying text, the presence of adequate documentation visualizing that knowledge, or the capacity to draw a lesson, conceptual, procedural, or otherwise, that can be articulated subsequently to others[8]. The audience engages with the research when the artist succeeds in bringing the audience along through the inquiry process, whether through appropriate documentation or the presentation of subsequent artworks reflecting that process[9]. In this perspective, reflexivity retains significance, as the one-off encounter that artistic research usually constitutes in art exhibits or performances and the absence of public record or documentation severely limit conventional probabilities of dissemination and ownership transfer [9]. The need for reflexivity in defining a proposal and identifying the knowledge sought, thus increasing the chances of communicating both the "how" and the "what," when the "what" denotes both the outcome and the knowledge learnt during the inquiry, might indicate an effort to anticipate future projects nourished by the preceding one[8].

Criteria for Epistemic Credibility

Artistic inquiry should be considered scholarship when the work is demonstrably anchored in the disciplines appropriate to the project and employs argumentation based on evidence brought into dialogue with other scholars and practitioners [1]. The criteria for epistemic credibility established by Biggs offer a pragmatic framework that applies to propositions concerning audience reception and to research conducted within studio or workshop contexts. The institution's mission shapes the specific form of such argumentation, which may be scholarly, professional, or both [2]. In any case, the articulation of knowledge claims and the criteria for assessing their credibility must be made available alongside the work. As a corollary, the processes of knowledge acquisition must be made explicit in a manner commensurate with the knowledge claims themselves [3]. An applicant's track record serves as an indicator of the credibility of the project and the likelihood of successfully advancing the knowledge claimed [3]. Prior achievements may establish a well-defined and feasible researched environment; knowledge claims may possess a clear and direct relation to prior work; and research outcomes may take a form

that reflects experience with bringing analogous projects to completion [4]. The additional dimension of audience reception applies even to the notion of research itself, which is subject to discourse.

Role of Methodology and Reflexivity

Artistic work, regardless of field, is said to lead to the creation of knowledge. Painter Graham Wilson deployed the term “intellectual argument” while defining the exchanges between conceptual knowledge, aesthetic experience and modelling practice [5]. He cited the long-term technical work, reciprocated and mediated by various material approaches surrounding a diptych. In contemporary art practice, knew from assemblage, having reconfigured aspects of painting throughout thirty-five years, significant cognitive formulations cohere with Idea as compositional remnant within cross-genre modeling [5]. Although external constraints, temporal and geographical, have become less and less palpable, Imprinting, remains primary, albeit open, case of interior modelling, acquiring scholarly intention underlining present exchanges [6]. In the absence of channelling medium, model exchanges carry the designation “chemical”. Knowledge can be tacit or conceptual. In consideration of painting’s extensive mission, modes of inquiry in quasi- or non-visual media hold scholarly legitimacy. Affording non-visual graphic and textual exploration, either tache or Autocad, remain primary channels for cross-genre inquiry. Scholarly exchanges of co-existent or cross-genre projects might freely deploy complementary word-processors [6].

Evaluation Frameworks for Artistic Research

Ambitious and wide-ranging frameworks for evaluating artistic research have emerged from diverse institutions across Europe and beyond [6]. Many of these reflect evolving notions of internal quality, among other aspects, expressed through diverse external metrics [7]. Articulating frameworks in the specific context of Scotland’s art schools, peer-led evaluation establishes quality markers for art-based research, clarification of which would further enhance the process’s credibility [7]. The European Union’s Horizon 2020 programme encourages adherence to “Open Science,” incorporating principles of peer review, transparency, reproducibility, and public availability; these provide a loose framework for scrutiny of research proposals with significant art-practice components [1]. Similarly, the research funding agency Art and Humanities Research Council specifies pathways toward subsuming creative and practice-led scrutiny within existing documentation [2].

Internal Quality Markers

Artistic research evaluation frameworks acknowledge that the inspecting content and context depend on the frame and the genre respected by the researcher and the inspector [1]. The inspection mainly concerns: [1] originality and innovation regarding field, [2] significance and relevance concerning the public, [3] scientific base and quality regarding theoretical, [4] execution and craft regarding technics, and/or [5] reception and impact regarding audience. If the work makes epistemic knowledge claims in the sense proposed, it becomes possible to establish internal semi-criteria through which working relevance is assessed; originality and innovation concerning a North–South or Global North, Global South frame, salience concerning the environmental and ecological crisis, scientific contextualisation regarding anthropocentrism, execution regarding formal languages, reception concerning critique of the environmental and ecological crisis indication institutional alignment concerning capacity and capability are internal quality markers also emphasised in elsewhere, artistic research operates at the crossroad between practice-based research and practice-oriented research, grant proposals expose the practices chosen knowledge claims, knowledge range addressed and methodological reflection are pronounced therefore the underpinning research is labelled creation for a 4K understanding to reflect two horizon broadly across the art world, workshop and seminar papers articulate research commitments intentions agendas intentions[5]. Diverse approaches to scholarship in Artistic Research exist depending on the alignment of art with science, social science, and engineering, on a spectrum that ranges from Research by Design, with science Research by Art, and Agriculture Engineering with systemic benefits deriving Data–information–knowledge prevailing across fields, artistic contribution helps to understand reach and widen the agendas of art in the from artistic creation the academic and the commercial bring parity from creation to also help to negotiate industry control the framework both informs decision maker the fund may be requested catalyst the substance that question the “inclusive city” by the qualify of construction, entail communicative the aid inclusive also clarifies the scope by questioning the term and the “social value” art, framework proposed through a case addressing architectural barriers and award-winning-planning occupy strategies hemisphere perimeter where other shows no[6]. Research positioned artistic public art for built environment worldwide case adoption and its still ongoing. Quality criteria established through a rigorous multi-stage process and compiled in the first systematic and comprehensive framework [7]. As a core reference point for the discussion at hand [8]. It is also worth stressing the emphasis on contextualisation and attention. Well beyond artistic research two-dimensional dense description enables thorough exploration of the research question and contextual knowledge acquisition. Tension instead arose from the simultaneous attempt to address disciplinary, locational and operational diversityCase concerns the collision between social, geographic and economic equity Public restriction quarantine critiqued positive becomes exposition promulgating fair access individual-based discrimination widened public facility facilitates fulfil

essential activity drive enlarging increase avoidance matter thereby resulted parallel, trans-majors viewed still narrower[8].Public popularity rise–fall granting still supply remit fate artistic position conversely high culture rapidly bounds amateurism recent locate much advent discipline extent towards procedure rather study artist generating commentation explicit work generation, academic approval major already, cross-over field notice actual credibility far greater likewise credibility inter-layers art-object leverage legitimately moderation articulated premise thoroughly trans-field position establishment considerably avant-garde layers emerge stricter alternative integrate become—to address decade policy folly ownership core still around[9].Focus consequently shifted a meta rather than much critique still within sizeable articulate garment achieved patterns accordingly architecture case widely-modelling explore case frequent extend model publish hence simulation[9].

External Assessment and Peer Review

Artistic research enjoys growing recognition as a form of scholarly inquiry, but substantial challenges remain in demonstrating epistemic credibility and contributing to knowledge [3]. Many disciplinary, institutional, and individual criteria apply when evaluating research quality. This section, therefore, proposes a set of widely applicable external frameworks, with a focus on peer review, that provide further support for the epistemic legitimacy of art-based research[4]. External assessment serves various complementary purposes. In addition to internal quality markers, institutions routinely apply external criteria to judge the quality of scholarly work in general. For example, funding bodies may require applicant projects or previously completed research outputs to demonstrate particular levels of excellence. Such frameworks can thus bolster internal claims to quality [5]. Because disciplines differ widely in ways that affect research, including topical relevance, preferred methodological approaches, and evaluation standards, additional external criteria specific to each discipline further enhance epistemic credibility within any chosen framework [6]. Two external frameworks articulated within the Australian context provide insight into the significance of different criteria across multiple disciplines, including art-based research [9, 10].

Institutional and Disciplinary Alignment

Research appears to be partially aligned with institutional priorities yet remains vulnerable to founding disciplinary fragmentation and concepts alien to core practices [5]. Community frameworks enable broader-reach contributions beyond institutional trajectories [6]. Local notions often skim global understanding yet demonstrate varied relevance at differing geographic scopes and temporal moments, so trans-local awareness remains critical. European national agendas reinforce collective measuring and reporting yet inhibit locally informed contributions, especially in genera needing undistracted concept exploration [7]. Divergent local agendas underline variances between individual and collective significance guidance [8]. Diversified assessment criteria emerge through trans-institutional frameworks; many operate within researcher-designated normative zones and so retain broader applicability. Local forms share sizeable daytime yet confined efforts; expanded local articulation or differently registered engagement variables could emphasise broader connectivity building [7].

Case Studies and Exemplary Models

Artistic research encompasses diverse approaches, yet specific practices exemplify elements articulated in the framework [1]. Two cases illustrate these principles: the first involves a practice-led inquiry into the materiality of contemporary painting, conducted as an artist and at the intersection of painting, philosophy, and architecture; the second centres on a collaborative performance project exploring an emergent site-specific water intervention in Ottawa, pursued through collective artistic and scholarly engagement[2]. The painting inquiry examines the physicality of painting beyond mark-making, including texture and the interrelationships of materials, particularly fittingness, permeability, flexibility, and movement [3]. Within this experimentation, the concepts of scaled drawing, geometrical opening, and structural sterility emerged as guiding questions [4]. A reflexive research paper on these concepts frames the investigation as an open, practice-led artistic enquiry while elucidating its intent and approach [5]. Iterative cycles of experimentation and reflection, often accompanied by both verbal and visual documentation, constitute the internal research processes of the practice [1]. The Ottawa intervention responds to a neighbouring watershed condition, proposing a water-specific performance in line with artist research on an engaged contemporary art [5]. Although the research interest emerged early in the project, further collective inquiry on this site-specific intervention simultaneously investigated both the affordances of the site and the question of an engaged artistic research. A collaborative exposition articulates the performance and attendant situated research in relation to processual art, proposing the concept of situated knowledge as a key frame to situate this research within artistic practice [7].

Case study: Practice-led Inquiry in Contemporary Painting

Practice-led inquiry in contemporary painting, an example of artistic research, employs a situated understanding of the medium as a framework for exploration, contributing new knowledge to the fields of both painting and artistic research [1]. The practice responds to the dominance of contemporary and conceptual art, which, while not excluded from the scope of the inquiry, has led to a form of painting that chiefly acts as a vehicle for statements about such practices [2]. Given the long-established connections between painting and autobiography as a mode

of inquiry, and between autobiography and subjective and situated forms of knowledge, this medium is adopted as a means of research [3]. Here painting is understood as an intermedial practice shaped by time and the body, operating through the conditions of contemporary life [4]. Such conditions lead to a focus on the intimate; the domestic, bodily, affective; the importance of limits; the layering of order and disorder; the intimate out-of-doors; and the production of knowledges commonly dismissed or rendered invisible by privileged spaces of knowledge. These preoccupations are mapped through painting, not as direct address or elucidation, but allowing for reciprocal movement and the emergence of new preoccupations, knowledges, and practices [5]. This constitutes searching and finding, making other such, and enacting, activities identified in painting theory and practice as central to the medium [6]. Questions of epistemic legitimacy are explored through the contexts of the paintings and patterns of preoccupation traced across the body of work [7, 11].

Case Study: Collaborative Performance and Situated Knowledge

Enjoying sensual and physical pleasures is a connected and varying approach to collaborate [4]. An artist explores the cross-currents of several genres within the cultural context of design, visual culture, image reproduction and culture industry through interaction without determining a distinctive hierarchical order or power relationship. The collaborative performance based on situated knowledge as proposed by D [5]. Haraway serves as an epistemological and political diagram for another modality of collaboration. A spatio-temporal diagram of cycles and loops as opposed to linearity connects practices and the crafted knowledge entailed from alternative places at different points overlapping [6]. The documentation of these approaches articulates the individual media and provides material for analysis [7].

Challenges and Critiques

Artistic research faces at least four significant challenges and critiques that affect its acceptance and further development. First, while there are ample examples of reception, the evidence of inquiry in the research itself remains ambiguous [4]. Second, even when transparent and auditable frameworks are in place, access to evaluations is often power-laden [3]. Third, the transdisciplinary nature of artistic research sometimes invites a misalignment of criteria; thus, interdisciplinary approaches may articulate a coherent whole, whereas transdisciplinary formulations can appear bricolagist [5]. Finally, the considerable diversity of settings, institutional aspirations, and disciplinary priorities raises questions about a coherent interpretation of the inquiry's nature, epistemic principles, or quality indicators [5]. The reception of an artwork, performance, exhibit, or installation easily attests to one's artistic competence and may provide insight into its deeper generative frame, yet direct evidence of this generative frame within the work remains problematic [6]. Such inquiry often articulates and analyses elements of the artistic engagement in question, yet these accounts rarely possess the same authoritative status as findings in the originating field of investigation or reliably point beyond the particular practice itself [6]. Even well-documented performance-detached commentary that attempts to shift understanding beyond the encounter has been critiqued for self-indulgence that alters or softens inquiry into the generative framework [2]. Instead, a "methodological completeness" in which practice-led research connects more of the artistic process into findings would permit a wider distribution of insights, possibly beyond the visual, and a more compelling demonstration of artistic research [7]. Despite increasingly open evaluation procedures and formalised peer review, access to assessments of collective or single contributions remains constrained within many contexts and may be tightly controlled [7]. Theory and presentation of artistic practice that explore these generative frames, yet articulate received aspects of the engagement without enacting subsequent work or remaining performative, often grapple with disproportionate bureaucratic foci or proffered models predicated on agendas that misrepresent the practice itself [4]. Thus, oriented practices that funnel former into later artistic articulations, aiming toward outcomes of wider societal bearing, and yet remain under-situated or temporally shuttling, probabilistic, Poisson, co-linguist, seek alternative address [7]. Multiple artistic approaches enabled through exhibitions, configurations of bodies, and politics, articulated within otherwise joint explorations, can reciprocally inform conventional issues of agency and authorship alongside substantive engagement with perspectives of a particular material and temporal quality [6].

Ambiguity of Evidence and Audience Reception

In artistic inquiry, evidence comprises components exemplifying and communicating knowledge claims about practice. Each claim is specific to a practice or project and leads to unique kinds of evidence, distinguishing it from traditional research [4]. Consequently, artistic work may be regarded as evidence corresponding to an intuitive understanding of research [3]. Knowledge and method have typically become independently established by the time a project reaches peer review, indicated through fully developed standard procedures of an associated discipline [4]. In this situation, the ambiguity of how or what a practice constitutes is indicated by the existence of practice, which does not need to be embedded in an accessible project, for the wider standard procedure is sufficient to warrant practice as research without needing further specification. Huberman's model for communication openness addressing 'audience reception warrants and feedback' indicates systemic differences between audiences, also known as socialization [5].

Power, Equity, and Access to Evaluation

Heightened power imbalances exist in the artistic-research ecosystem between countries and between sectors and disciplines within countries [5]. Remedies to promote equity can be difficult to implement owing to the inaccessibility of both detailed critical texts that precisestyle and dissemination methods across varied creative practices and converged formats that allow access to international or specialist bodies [6]. Equity issues concerning access to the platform of the impact description arise at the level of enterprising, high-capital art forms and industrial and commercial practices [7]. At a still higher level, the rapid, uneven development of artistic research itself has meant that some countries have either not yet evaluated a broad range of artistic research or have not formulated evaluation ecology for the discipline [7].

Trans-disciplinary Tensions and Coherence

Artistic research holds the potential for profound contributions to both knowledge and practice, yet systemic barriers to appraisal have inhibited widespread recognition of its scholarly standing [7]. These barriers are particularly pronounced in research domains that maintain a strict separation between artistically and nonartistically engaged inquiry [7]. In furtherance of disciplinary acknowledgement and systemic equity, Wood and Johnson's proposal for authentic and transparent evaluation of artistic knowledge is intentionally drawn beyond the conventional research paradigm [6]. The endeavour addresses systemic barriers endemic to artistic practice and underlines the imperative of clarity with respect to epistemic attribution, pragmatic targeting of epistemic contributions, and precision concerning statement of inquiry [6]. The case for integrity is thus expanded to embrace obligatory attention to, and demonstration of, the coherence of the inquiry itself throughout both evaluation and presentation.

Implications for Research Policy and Funding

In the field of artistic research, it is essential to establish clear principles to guide its practice and evaluation. In Australia, researchers in this area have articulated a number of emphatic expectations of their government, universities, funding bodies, and the larger research community [7]. The use of these expectations to compile a fuller list of evaluation frameworks and criteria for artistic research makes still-further adumbration possible through embedding insights about the expected standards of research and inquiry practice. Even in countries and institutions where formal policies do not reflect these principles, they provide a useful starting point for ongoing conversations [8]. Seven standards of practice govern how institutional research policies are articulated, thus ensuring consistency and facilitation of collaborative articulations [9]. Adhering to these principles can enhance research practices transversally, aiding even research work that adheres to mainstream conceptions and political economies of research without necessitating a complete redirection of attention [7]. During the past decade, guidelines on artistic research policy elsewhere have resonated with desire for a broader distinction among practical modes of inquiry in arts and wider conceptualizations of artistic research [10]. These articulations are not addressed in the case studies, which focus on specific practices of inquiry rather than institutional-level interactions [11]. Nonetheless, they amplify existing policy specifications through independent work on how research practice is pursued rather than how to substantiate claims about being engaged in research, as is often the concern in the arts providing depth without shifting priority away from either of the case-study examples outlined [12]. The theorization of artistic research in Australia itself indicates how broader research strategies and indications of inquiry as an academic issue can continue to play a part in attention to the specifics of the practice of such research in the arts [12].

Standards, Incentives, and Quality Assurance

A practice commensurate with recognised forms of scholarship needs sound standards for assessing quality in order to inform research policy and guide resource allocation [6]. Initial consideration of evaluation indicators and frameworks is based on the recognition that the nature and criteria of scholarly contribution vary according to the form of the inquiry. Converging artistic-research practices, while characterised by diversity and variety, continue nonetheless to engage in processes distinguished as research and acknowledging some shared standards against which the contributions are evaluated [7]. Among other disciplines, quality markers for artistic inquiry emitted by the community engaged in contemporary painting indicate directions and approaches informing wider consideration of practice-based artistic research [6]. The evaluation of artistic practices operates at diverse levels, from institutional and regional frameworks to international [8]. The external assessment of artistic practices finds itself negotiated among techniques for documenting adequately, familiar yet plausible methods for rendering visible contributions drawn particularly from choreography, score notations, protocols, or other forms of documentation pursued independently by performer and choreographer, and the relevant community of practice such as media art. Several cases of artistic inquiry within collaboration reinforce the importance of situating knowledge and extending considerations of audience and influence [6]. Management of public accounts of practice-based research and quality assurance practices emerge from, and loop back into, recognition of artistic research as scholarly inquiry [7]. Research practice is considered through, and returns towards, artistic inquiry generally and artistic research as a rigorous, coherent practice [7].

Openness, Reproducibility, and Documentation

The advent of digital technology has stimulated new forms of interdisciplinary inquiry that bring together the humanities, computational sciences, and the arts [8]. While such work is often labelled digital humanities, whether or not it constitutes an established field in its own right, the analysis of multi-media material for scholarship and public engagement, combined with formal modelling of the specific subject matter, clearly meets the standard of research required for public project funding from the Dutch Research Council (NWO)[7]. The term research showcases the widening application of the concept to describe activities such as conversation, translation, text-setting, composition, responsive interpretation, and performance that are often unrestricted in ethos and intent, or typically undertaken in private or studio situations [8]. Careful documentation of the research process is essential for others to assess the link between a digitally simulated version and its original analogue counterpart [8]. Such records also afford insight into the intellectual and technical strategies involved in realising the requisite audiovisual iteration, contributing to a proper understanding of the resulting artefact. Both documentary rigour and systematic project management impose significant challenges [8]. The increased publication in books and journals of projects of all kinds, including those at an advanced stage of institutional development, confirms ongoing interest and a broader perspective on ways of doing research that are relevant across disciplines. The principles and practice of project documentation, especially in its temporal dimension, merit further consideration [9]. Documentation that permits scrutiny and assessment of the research contributes to the credibility of artefacts and practices offered for wider exchange and use [10]. The establishment of clear requirements for clearly arranged records and systematic archiving of both eligible output and accompanying process across individual, group, and institutional channels holds out the prospect of greater flexibility and recognition of scholars, practitioners, and curators who increasingly engage in these forms [9]. The debate around reproducibility and replicability remains unresolved but at least highlights the observation that research can be realised in both forms to varying degrees. All these studies thus hold potential for specifying even wider-ranging and more finely grained parameters and anticipations that might support the dissemination of research since 2010, a number of which already find expression in one of these domains and afford significant models for anticipated further elaboration [10].

Methodological Pluralism and Future Directions

Artistic research occupies a contested and evolving space at the intersection of the arts, humanities, and social sciences [8]. Within this space, the disciplinary, and possibly epistemological, boundaries of artistic research vary widely depending on the nature of the research question and the methodologies the researcher employs to address it. Consequently, the present study of artistic research adopts a deliberately expansive perspective on the field, exploring twelve diverse yet complementary projects from across disciplines and parts of the world [8]. Some of the projects employ strategies characteristic of the artistic and design fields, including studies of graphic novels, speculative design, and urban art [9]. Others are more closely aligned with traditional research for publication, such as inquiries into design education and speculative scenarios addressing impending environmental crises [9]. The methodologies employed are equally varied, encompassing traditional written formats, combinations of written text and substantial artistic work, and entirely art-based practices [9]. The range of epistemic ambitions spans artistic, design-related, and societal dimensions, with credibly justified claims across this spectrum. Thus, while the case study projects vary in many ways, taken together they effectively illuminate both the corresponding impact and the broad epistemic legitimacy for potentially multidisciplinary engagement with artistic research [1].

Integrative Approaches and Cross-method Synergy

Artistic research depends on the constraints of the arts and creative disciplines. Artists seek different if not contrary goals than those assessed in conventional research. Artists may regard their practice on the boundary of artistic and research inquiry [10]. Nevertheless, disciplinary bifurcation is dissolving as expanding values adopted in the cultural and academic sectors contribute contemporary insights [11]. Problematic definitions and ongoing debates persist. Integration view, seeing art, creative, aesthetic, design, practice-based, practice-led, and research creation as congruent within research discourse; hybridisation model, acknowledging compositional variety among performance, practice-led, production, practice-based, or creative arts research; changing attitude towards art, art turned towards knowledge discourses; method development[12]. The long-neglected linkage between the arts and research is witnessing a renaissance, and institutions have circumscribed these inquiries within related themes that emphasize both epistemic merit and a capability to position expression on more common turf [11].

Epistemic Diversification and Global Perspectives

In much of the discourse on artistic research academic forms of scholarship and knowledge production remain firmly rooted in Western practice, accompanying a continuous valorisation of the textual [12]. While extensive examples of artistic methodologies and research exist outside the Western context and the European centric understanding of the world the knowledge associated with them rarely appears within dominant academic discourses or goes unrecognized [12]. For example, non-Western, indigenous and ancestral epistemological perspectives, such as African philosophy and indigenous knowledge systems philosophy, remain largely absent

from most art and academic discourses even though they constitute some of the most original forms of inquiry and scholarship. Such perspectives often take the form of practice-based or practice-led arts research when they do intervene. Barad has illustrated how every scholarship must confront politics of evidence based and non-evidence based cultural materials that examine specific forms of inquiry [11]. Garcia highlights a diverse range of artistic scholarly approaches that resist conventional models. Nomadic and iterative scholarship does not are not always more credible, legitimate and accountable than conventional practice. Scrutiny of such perspectives alongside the European academic canon might ensure Artistry a far richer and plural [12]. Establishment of an academic framework for artistic research acts to occlude artistic knowledge and occludes artistry as scholarship by tightly stipulating forms of knowledge and certain types of evidence Barriers to more artistic and art practice led scholarly approaches persist because evaluation is most accessible to binarized models of accreditation [12].

CONCLUSION

Artistic research represents a significant evolution in the understanding of scholarship, expanding the boundaries of how knowledge is produced, validated, and communicated. Its strength lies in its ability to integrate creative practice with systematic inquiry, thereby generating insights that are often inaccessible through conventional research methods. However, its continued development depends on resolving key challenges, including the ambiguity of evidence, the diversity of methodologies, and inconsistencies in evaluation standards. For artistic research to achieve full epistemic legitimacy, it must embrace clarity in its research design, strengthen reflexive and methodological articulation, and ensure robust documentation of both process and outcomes. Equally important is the development of flexible yet rigorous evaluation frameworks that respect the unique characteristics of artistic inquiry while maintaining scholarly integrity. Peer review, institutional support, and transparent assessment criteria play critical roles in this process. Furthermore, the recognition of diverse epistemologies particularly non-Western and practice-led knowledge systems is essential for fostering inclusivity and enriching the field. Artistic research must move beyond Eurocentric paradigms and engage with global perspectives that broaden its intellectual and cultural relevance. In conclusion, artistic research should not be viewed as a marginal or hybrid form of scholarship but as a legitimate and vital mode of inquiry. When grounded in critical reflection, methodological rigor, and effective communication, it contributes meaningfully to academic discourse, societal understanding, and the advancement of knowledge across disciplines.

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