

The problem of writing in doctoral research and dissertation in arts and design

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Abstract

This paper aims to contribute to the analysis and problematization of a discourse which took shape in art schools and academies (over the last two decades) around theories, methods, terminologies and conceptions of academic research and writing (thesis, papers, etc.) in the creative fields of art and design. This discourse has been particularly visible since the last decade, in consequence of the Bologna reforms and the formation of a European Higher Arts Education Area. Framed by this discourse emerges the figure of the artist-researcher as writer, conducting his/her doctoral studies in the academy or university, and conceiving his/her central position in experiencing, materializing and personalizing (both theoretically and empirically) the ways in which art and design practices articulate with research-writing practices, and the conditions under which these practices are communicated and disseminated in the public sphere in the form of artifacts or products of knowledge (texts and images). This paper also provides a literature review and a comparative viewpoint on how articulations between research and writing, text-making and art-making, are being theorized, materialized and personalized in publications, conferences and curricular programmes of doctoral education in art and design offered by Finnish and Portuguese academic institutions.

KEYWORDS: postgraduate research, doctoral dissertation, academic writing, publication

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Introduction

The transformation of art academies into universities has created new kinds of connections between art and research resulting in the emergence of an “academic artworld” (...). A new type of Janus-faced researchers has come into being, that is, artist-researchers who are able to assume many positions in both spheres. However, there is a firmly established division in the structures of thinking and those of institutions. Seldom challenged, the assumption is that whereas a good researcher focus on the verbal, an experienced artist focuses on the nonverbal articulation of ideas. (Elo, 2009, p. 19)

Since the last decade, schools, academies and faculties of Fine Arts and Design in Europe have reformed their curriculums and education programmes in order to meet the guidelines and standards required by the Bologna Process (Lesage, 2009a; Rogoff, 2010; Wilson & van Ruiten, 2013). One of the major outcomes of its implementation consisted in the introduction of doctoral and post-doctoral programmes *Combining Art and Design Practice with Research*, and the concomitant universalization of the protocols for writing, defending and evaluating an academic thesis or dissertation. Since then, a generalized debate began to take shape in (and giving shape to) the European Higher Arts Education Area, concerning the theoretical, methodological and practical potentialities and limitations of the “academic notion of research” and concerning the implications and effects of the “new discourse of research” in the *scientification* of the modes of writing, publication and evaluation available for “the artists who were taking preliminary steps as researchers” (Lesage, 2009b, p.1.; Mäkelä et al., 2011, np; Levanto et al., 2007, p. 3).²

Since the early 1990’s, art schools and academies in Europe and the United States had already begun to adopt “research in the practical arts-doctorates”, “practice-based/practice-led research” or “studio-based research” as an “alternative approach” to traditional doctoral education, enabling art students and practitioners “to achieve their academic merits and to advance their professional skills” (Evans & Le Grice, 2001, p.1; Durling et al., 2002, p.7; Elkins, 2005: 7; Holert, 2009, p. 7; Nimkulrat, 2011, p.58). In recent years, international conferences and seminars have been gathering artists, researchers and teachers interested not only in furthering the contemporary discourse regarding notions of “art practice as research”, “research in and through the arts”, “practice-led research” and “research-led practice in the creative arts” (Piccini, 2004; Sullivan, 2005; Borgdorff, 2006; Smith & Dean, 2009) and in discovering “how

² *Combining Art and Design Practices with Research*, an international seminar held at the School of Design, University of Art and Design Helsinki (12-13 September 2005), resulted in a series of publications: *The Art of Research: Research Practices in Art and Design* (Mäkelä & Routarinne, 2006), and *Artist as Researcher: In between Arts and Research* (Levanto et al., 2007).

contemporary practitioners bring into play the relationship between their art and design practices and the emergence of new knowledge”, but also in creating platforms, networks, digital archives and on-line journals aiming “to encourage and facilitate discussions concerning the relationship between art and design practices and knowledge, in terms of both content and modes of knowledge production and exchange”.³ At this point, crucial questions emerge: “What counts as knowledge, particularly in ‘the academy’”? “How arts practices which constitute research differ from those which do not”? (Nelson, 2013, p.9).

One of the most significant issues arising in publications that have been addressing the condition of the “artist as researcher” or “scholar” (Lesage, 2007; Levanto et al., 2007; Mäkelä & Routarinne, 2007; Elo, 2009; Wesseling, 2011; Sauzedde, 2012; Daichendt, 2012; Hannula et al., 2013) and the (im)potentialities and contradictions of the Art Academy or School in the 21st century (Rogoff, 2006; Madoff, 2009; Elkins, 2009; Slager & Fijen 2011; Chabot et al., 2013; Corcoran et al., 2014), is the problem of writing (thesis, dissertations, articles) and, namely, the possibility of “writing differently” (Borg, 2012) by developing a new “type of papers” – “explorative” – as *a distinctive form of writing and publication* that is specific of “practice-led”, “practice-based”, “art-led” modes and methods of “research”. What makes these “explorative papers” distinct from other forms of writing that are typical of academic disciplines which are not intrinsically “artistic”, is the fact that they are not “restricted to conventional paper presentation”: they “must be submitted together with creative artifacts and must contribute to the understanding of how the visual and the textual are unified in research”. They “must also include a separate description of the artifacts” and “visual material such as photographs or video (digital formats only)”.⁴

A growing number of on-line journals and electronic publications have been created with the aim to respond to an increasing demand and expectation (from artists, researchers, teachers, agencies and universities) for dissemination of results and knowledge exchange both in a local and a global scale. In the age of dematerialization and digitalization of research-communication, international journals such as *Studies in Material Thinking* introduce themselves as “a vehicle to support the communication and critique of artistic and design research from the vantage point of both the materiality and the poetics of creative research”.⁵ In general, all these publications aim “to contribute to

³ See: <http://designresearch.aalto.fi/events/aor2014/proceedings.html> and http://designresearch.aalto.fi/events/aor2014/call_for_papers.html

⁴ See: http://designresearch.aalto.fi/events/aor2014/call_for_papers.html

⁵ See: <http://www.materialthinking.org/smt-research-communication-platform> (*my italics*); See

the discourse on material thinking through shared understanding of the ontological, epistemological and methodological issues of artistic and design research”, by encouraging “design educators, designer and researchers to explore *a strongly visual form of argumentation*” and to “explore *experimental, innovative ways* of communicating the value and significance of speculative, pedagogical or applied design thinking”. Particular relevance is given to “film/video *documentation of processes and image cycles* used in a positive, active, *discursive manner*”. But the main question is still one: “How does an *exploratory approach* towards creative processes and materials contribute to the production of new knowledge?”⁶

Articulating knowledges: theoretical saturation and the poetics of experimentation and personalization in creative research

The problematic articulation between the “modes of practice/reflection” associated with “art-making” and “experiential knowledge”, and the practices of “text-making” associated with the more “traditional realm of knowledge in academic research” and the “written output”, is at the heart of the ongoing debates around the question of “the author’s experience as a practitioner” and the role of “creative processes”, “physical material”, “artistic expression” and “experimentation” in academic research (Nimkulrat & O’Riley, 2009; Elo, 2009; O’Riley, 2011; Nimkulrat: 2013; Schwab, 2013; Ferreira & Nolasco, 2014). Related to the problem of “the forms and structures” of “doctoral research projects” in art and design, specific problems of “terminology” arise due to “the lack of explicit clarification of the different terms” that mean “research” in various “creative fields” (fine art, design, music, performing arts): *research through practice, practice-led research, practice-based research, studio-based research, artistic research*. All these “flexible” terminologies have been used “interchangeably” to designate “research that includes artistic practice into the research process” (Nimkulrat, 2011, pp.58-60; Levanto et al., 2007, p.3).

also: *Journal for Artistic Research* (JAR), “an inter-national, online, Open Access and peer-reviewed journal for the identification, publication and dissemination of artistic research and its methodologies, from all arts disciplines. With the aim of displaying practice in a manner that respects artists’ modes of presentation, JAR abandons the traditional journal article format and offers its contributors a dynamic online canvas where text can be woven together with image, audio and video. These research documents called ‘expositions’ provide a unique reading experience while fulfilling the expectations of scholarly dissemination. <http://www.jar-online.net/>

⁶ See: http://designresearch.aalto.fi/events/aor2014/SMT16_CFP.pdf (*my italics*)

The “new discourse of research” in artistic fields has its foundations in a “shift in terminology” (taking place since the early 2000s), and in an “attempt to anchor a theory-derived and practice-based concept of art within an academic curriculum” as “a response to a changed notion of art” resulting from the fact that “art and theory have become interwoven in multiple ways”. According to this discourse, both “theory-derived art” and “research based on practice” constitute a response to a trend in contemporary art that focus “on the production of knowledge” and “on the production of values other than those inherent in the artworks.” In the contemporary artworld, “the explicit recourse to philosophical or sociological theories” and “the integration of scientific research methods” in artistic practice, is part of a wider process of critical analyses of “artworks” (both as “commodity” and “purely aesthetic impact”), and “the power structures of the art world”. This also means that, on one hand, “art productions are characterized by interdisciplinary procedural method, in which artworks are created within a broader, theoretically informed framework” and, on the other, “the art world” has itself become “a field of possibilities, of exchange and comparative analysis” and “outcomes” in which “different modes of perception, thinking, and making” are “investigated” and “recognized for their unique potential” (Mäkelä et al., 2011; Busch, 2009).⁷

From the perspective of an educational “concern” on “how artists production is assimilated into academic research”, “when art is seen or expressed as research, *its apparent subjectivity – defying or resisting verbal description* – can be problematic” (Nimkulrat & O’Riley, 2009, p.7, *my italics*). As a matter of fact, even though “the inclusion of artistic part in doctoral research or practice-based dissertations has been possible since de 1990’s” (in Europe and North America), and “the theoretical development of practice-based art and design research” has been “demonstrated” and “clearly recognized” in an “outstanding number” of publications⁸, a closer examination suggests that “the approach itself is not well accepted within academic research communities”.⁹ Furthermore, it has been recognized that the “major problem” affecting

⁷ The shift towards the social and interdisciplinary production of knowledge is at the heart of what has been called “the educational turn” (O’Neill & Wilson, 2010; Jaschk & Sternfeld, 2012).

⁸ See the vast bibliography and “overview of publications and conferences” as listed in the website of *ShareNetwork*: <http://www.sharenetwork.eu/artistic-research-overview/bibliography>

⁹ In 2011, Nithikul Nimkulrat (textile artist, designer and researcher working as a lecturer at the Loughborough University’s School of the Arts, UK), examined “the forms of practice-based doctoral dissertations accepted in five Finnish art universities”, in order to “identify the problems that hinder the progress” of the “practice-based” approach to “doctoral education” and “research training activities” offered by the Aalto University School of Art and Design (former name: University of Art and Design Helsinki, Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, Sibelius Academy, Theatre Academy Helsinki, and University of Lapland’s Faculty of Art and Design). Based upon

the establishment of “practice-based doctorates in art and design in a larger academic context” is “the unconvincing argument that practice as such is a form of research inquiry without need for further validation and explanation” (Nimkulrat, 2011, p.58). On the other hand, definitions of “practice-led research” tend to emphasize the “instrumental part” played by “the professional and/or creative practices of art, design or architecture” in an “inquiry”. This means that “creative practice” is less equated with “research in itself” than with “a vehicle for an inquiry which adds to knowledge or understanding” (Levanto et al., 2007: 3).

Despite “the practice turn in contemporary theory” (Schatzki et al., 2001), the different terminologies that designate *research* in the *creative* fields are symptomatic of different epistemologies that seem to converge into the generalized assumption or recognition that “contemporary art practice is now so highly saturated with theoretical knowledge that it is becoming a research practice in and of itself.” In recent years, in the course of restructuring art academies and establishing “artistic research” projects, artists have been taking up complex and paradoxical “negotiations” while attempting to “integrate research methods and scientific knowledge into their artistic process.” This tendency was not only reinforced by the growing “transfer of theoretical knowledge” (among traditionally contrasting, or even conflicting disciplines), it also developed into “an independent form of knowledge on its own” (Busch, 2009, p.1; Kaila, 2008: p.8). Namely: a sort of a *half-knowledge* which stands for *the poetics of material experimentation and personalization* toward *the unknown*, at the same time as it explores the ontological and epistemological potentialities of *visual forms of argumentation* in *documenting its own processes of knowing* and presentation of results.¹⁰

Since the Bologna reform and consequent implementation of “the new curriculum”, the blurring of the lines between art and theory and “the artistic appropriation of inquiry” has led to a changed concept of art and to new processes of art making that are now very different from those traditionally taught at art academies – and which used to focus, almost exclusively, on the “inherent” values of “the artwork” and on “the classical

“observations and documentations”, and also on “experience of completing her doctorate in textile art and design”, the author concluded that until the end of 2009, “the number of completed dissertation” which included “creative enterprise” was “70”, and that “the limited number of practice-based doctorates may imply the approach’s vulnerable position in the field of art and design and its unattractiveness for research funding” (2011, pp.58-59).

¹⁰ In W.J. Bate word’s: “Poetic truth, precisely because it is glimpsed only intuitively, can never be seen and known with a clarity and accuracy sufficient to satisfy the exacting demand of the logical faculty; there is always about it an air of ‘uncertainties, mysteries, doubts’ and ‘half-knowledge’” (O’Riley, 2011, p.5).

philosophical notion that art is ultimately a sensual form of truth”. Emphasis is now placed upon the development of processes and capabilities that justify the institutional anchorage between “work methods based on investigation or research” and different, independent forms of value that might be seen as complementing or standing as an “equivalent” to scientific results. However, the (im)possible equivalence between the “artistic” and the “scientific” in academic “research”, as well as the “spectrum of that which can be substantiated under the term artistic research”, is still an object of controversial discussions and debates (Busch, 2009; Mäkelä et al., 2011). It can only be said, with some amount of (un)certainty, that “the nature of research” in “art practice” ranges from “the simple integration of philosophical or scientific knowledge”, to the establishment of “artistic research as a form of institutionalized self-examination” and the “scientification of artistic practice”. From the standpoint of a discourse of “creativity”, “creative practice” and “creative production”, it’s not a matter of defining “a space for art to operate as research”, but quite the opposite: “research is an operating structure for the process and production of, among other things, art” (Busch, 2009; Nimkulrat & O’Riley, 2009; O’Riley, 2011).

Conceptions of research and academic writing in the arts: doctoral *education* and the *knowledge imperative*

As shown by Nithikul Nimkulrat in “Problems of practice-based Doctorates in Art and Design: a viewpoint from Finland” (2011), most programs of doctoral education that are currently offered by the main academic institutions of higher education in Fine Arts, Music, Theatre and Dance (in Finland)¹¹, tend to privilege a conception of “research” – also called “artistic” – that implies the generation of “new knowledge based on artistic work created by students who are already experienced and well-known artists”. In these cases, doctoral programmes do *not adopt any direct model from other well-established scientific fields* or from practice-based PhD programs, and the corresponding academic title is granted “when the artist’s knowledge and skills are demonstrated” through a “dissertation” composed in two parts: 1) the *production part*, which can be “an exhibition, an event, or other artistic acquisition that ought to be presented publicly”; 2) the *theoretical part*, which “comprises the student’s written analysis of his/her own

¹¹ The Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, Sibelius Academy (Music) and the Theatre Academy Helsinki.

creative work in relation to the chosen research topic.” The “structures” of the doctoral “study programs” (both in Fine Arts and Music), are “equivalent” and tend to emphasize “independent artistic work” and a conception of “research” in which the “written part” is strongly articulated with “a cohesive artistic component”. The “doctorate” in Theatre or Dance can be accomplished though either “a research-oriented study or artistic-oriented one”. In both cases, “the artistic-oriented study is the Academy’s research focus” and “it aims to stimulate students’ intellect to create groundbreaking pedagogical, practical and methodological connections in dance and theatre, mainly *through the student’s own expression and experimentation*.” The “structure of the study is similar to the artistic research programme” (in Fine Arts) and to the “art study programme” (in Music). Similarly to Fine Arts and Music, the “artistic work” in Theatre or Dance “includes public performances” and “*the written part is in the form of essays that reflect the student’s artistic productions and to some extent present new knowledge and understanding of the art of theatre and dance*” (Nimkulrat, 2011, p.59, *my italics*).

In general, the expression “artistic research” refers to “research projects” in which the predominant part “consists of art practices”. When these “projects” take “the form of a dissertation at the end of the process” they usually “contain elements that are also in *something other than linguistic form*”. However, in many of these dissertations “the relationship between practice and theory, and the manner of combining these two elements, varies” (Levanto et al., 2007. p. 3; *my italics*). Most significantly:

Although every artistic doctoral dissertation (...) is required to accompany a written component reflecting on the creative process, the written text does not necessarily meet academic requirements or undergo a scientific examination process. (...) The text can be considered as self-reflection. (Nimkulrat, 2011, p.59)

In contrast with this predominantly “artistic” or “art-led” conception of “research” in which *textual forms of writing* are regarded as a *self-reflection* (or even mirror) of art practices (Levanto et al., 2007, p.3; Kaila, 2008, pp.6-8), the Doctor of Arts degree (DA) provided in Aalto University School of Art and Design¹², “is comparable to a doctoral degree offered in other scientific fields.” Nevertheless, “the opportunity to include artistic creation as part of the dissertation is available” and “the inclusion of artistic work in doctoral research” is often the case in the field of photography and design (in particular, craft-based design such as textiles, ceramics, and glass. This “scientific” conception of research is commonly called “practice-led research”, and “regardless of the inclusion of

¹² The Aalto University (Finland) was established in 2010 in the merger of the Helsinki University of Technology, the Helsinki School of Economics, and the University of Art and Design Helsinki.

the artistic component, *the written part is expected to meet academic requirements* as all studies undergo *a scientific evaluation process*.” The “written thesis” is “submitted together with artistic productions” and “must demonstrate a dialogic and analytic connection to the artistic part” (Nimkulrat, 2011, p.59; *my italics*). The process of “scientific evaluation” (mainly supported by evidence contained in the written thesis), “is directed to the argumentation through both text and production” and “these are weighed by scholars and established artists within the specific fields”. Once that “the term practice-led research” is inevitably “double-bind to the academic and artistic traditions”, it seems to cover “research projects” of scientific “kinds” as well as “projects” that “tie to the discussions on artistic research topical in the Academy” (Fine Arts, Music ,Theatre). In both cases, “it seems evident that no clear-cut boundaries can be drawn between the terms practice-based, practice-led or artistic research”, and “the use of the terms and the focus of the studies vary not only in national and international discussion, but also between different institutions in one country” (Levanto et al., 2007, p.3).

In conclusion, different terms reflect “the different modes of combination of artistic practice and research”, and the different forms of articulation between theory and practice, text and image. In fact, “practice-led research is the current term used in most universities in the Uk and in the design discipline, whereas artistic research is used more extensively in other European countries and in the field of fine arts”. A further distinction between “practice-led” and “practice-based” conceptions of “research” implies and supports the distinction between two different conceptions of “written thesis”, and two different forms of experiencing, materializing and personalizing *knowledge* or *insight*: 1) “practice-led research is concerned with *the nature of practice* and leads to results which have operational significance for that practice”, however, in a doctoral thesis, “the results” of research “may be fully described in text without the inclusion of a creative work”; 2) “practice-based research”, because it is “an original investigation undertaken partly by means of practice”, implies that in the “doctoral thesis” the “*claims of originality* and *contribution to knowledge* may be demonstrated through creative outcomes in the form of designs, music, digital products, performances, and exhibitions”, and “although the context and significance of claims are described in words, a richer experience can be obtained through the practical outcomes (artefacts) created”. Since 2007, a manifested preference for the term “practice-led” acknowledges “the change in emphasis *from the production of original artefacts to the integration of artistic practice into the research process*” (Nimkultat, 2013; Mäkelä et al., 2011, *my italics*).

The crucial task for each practice-led research project is, therefore, to give a voice to the artefact. (Mäkelä, 2007, p.163)

Instead of a reciprocal referencing of theory and practice, the call to put art on a scientific basis is asserted. The preparation and establishment of a theoretical basis for art education, now required for the academies, are rapidly developing into the questionable claim to have canonistic knowledge at one's disposal. It's now the turn of artistic research to respond to this knowledge imperative. (Busch, 2009, p.1)



Figure 1. “The Human Voice”. Library of the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lisbon: “its mission is to organize, process, and provide documentation and information for students, faculty teachers, researchers and staff, fostering academic and functional activities, regardless of the type of material in which documentation is supported”. Retrieved from <http://www.fba.ul.pt/informacao-institucional/biblioteca/>

The state of art in creative research: a viewpoint from Portugal

The first dissertation integrating “artistic production” was completed, at the University of Art and Design Helsinki, in 1998. In 2007, there were approximately 60 theses, nine of which could be described as significantly “art-led” or “drawn from art and design practices”. By the end of 2009, “the number of completed dissertations” which included “creative enterprise” amounted to 70, namely, 15 in the Aalto University School of Art and Design, and 43 in the Sibelius Academy (Levanto et al., 2007, p.3; Nimkulrat, 2011, p.59). In a similar way, the reformation of educational programmes according to the Bologna guidelines (systematically since 2004) allowed for the introduction, in 2009 – and for the first time in the history of the Portuguese institutions of higher education –, of doctoral degrees and post-doctoral investigation in the Faculties of Fine Arts (Universities of Lisbon and Oporto), in the departments of Design and Multimedia (Technical Universities of Aveiro and Coimbra, among others), as well as in many other

private or public institutions of higher arts education (such as Polytechnical Institutes).¹³ Until 1998-2009, Portuguese artists in search for post-graduate certification and qualification had to travel abroad (UK, France or the United States) in order to attend specialized institutions in these fields, or had to submit their dissertations for approval in national academic institutions not specialized in the artistic fields.¹⁴

Today, one of the main institutions of higher education and research in Portugal, the University of Lisbon (UL), offers, through the Faculty of Fine Arts (FBAUL), a Doctorate in Fine Arts (in branches such as: audiovisuals, multimedia, image theory, photography, painting, sculpture, public art, installation, artistic anatomy, geometry, drawing, equipment design, communication design, science of art, art education), and a Doctorate in Arts – Performing Arts and Moving Image (in partnership with the Polytechnical Institute of Lisbon).¹⁵ The study programme of the first doctoral course aims “to ensure advanced training” in order to “provide and stimulate” the “skills” for the development of “art projects and studies within the various *scientific fields*” of Fine Arts. Doctoral students must “be able to develop autonomous artistic and scientific careers” and “to integrate and coordinate work teams in multidisciplinary areas”. They must produce an “original thesis” within a specific “branch of knowledge or specialty”, followed by “its final discussion in a public assessment and approval”. The “thesis plan” consists in “identifying *the scientific basis of research*, the methodology used and the objectives to be achieved”.¹⁶ The study programme and the curriculum organization of the second doctoral course, combines “the specific nature of the various schools” in the “collaborate” (Art Studies, Humanities and Social Sciences), and “reconciles the theoretical aspect and artistic practice” by means of a “final work” which can be either a

¹³ In 1836, two Academies of Fine Arts were created in Lisbon and Oporto. In 1950, they were called Superior Schools of Fine Arts and, in 1992, they were officially integrated in the Classic University. The first post-graduation courses (MA) were created in the Faculty of Fine Arts of Lisbon (FBAUL): Art Theory (1998), Painting (2000), Drawing (2001), Curatorship and Organization of Exhibitions/ Curatorial Studies (2001/ 2003), Museology and Museography (2002), Glass (2002), Artistic Education (2004), Public Art (2004), and many other MAs and PhDs in the fields of Fine Arts, Art Sciences, Design and Multimedia, since 2008-09. In 2013, FBAUL offered 8 Graduation courses, 14 Master courses and a Doctoral course within 15 specialties, covering 1,650 students. See: <http://www.fba.ul.pt/informacao-institucional/historia/>

¹⁴ According to documentation available at the on-line Repository of the University of Lisbon (UL), the first Doctoral thesis certified by FBAUL was concluded in 2004, in the field of Fine Arts (Theory of Image), by José António Santos Ramos. From 2004 until June 2014, the number of doctoral dissertations from FBAUL already amounts to 63 (as registered in the same data-base).

¹⁵ The Center for Research and Studies in Fine Arts (CIEBA), FBAUL, allows the integration of research in a structure organized for this purpose, enhancing its development and dissemination.

¹⁶ See: <http://www.fba.ul.pt/en/cursos/doutoramentos/plano-curricular/> (*my italics*)

“theoretical or speculative dissertation” or a “theoretical-practical work (including an artwork/ artistic creation)”. Created in 2013, “the spirit of this new doctorate is precisely to enable the harmonious integration of both *theoretical reflection about art* and *art-making* in the same investigation”.¹⁷

Universities in Portugal still consider the written research as mandatory in every doctoral dissertation, and this written artifact is evaluated by conventional academic criteria. In the faculties of Fine Arts and Design, the situation is not been very different. Even though the artist-researcher occupies a core position in an educational tradition that focuses on practice, the postgraduate programmes gradually introduced in the Faculties of Fine Arts of the Universities of Lisbon and Oporto since the end of the 1990’s did not primarily aim “to train researchers who make art, but rather artists” – and, most often, artists-teachers – “who also engage in reflection”. As a reading of the study programs shows, in the Portuguese Faculties of Fine Arts (such as in the Finnish institutions), “a doctoral demonstration of scholarship and skill” consists, mainly, in a theoretical component, necessarily in written form, and supposedly evaluated by “scientific criteria” (Elo, 2009, p.20). No further articulations between theory and practice, methodical and empirical knowledge, have been fully systematized or experimented in the field of artistic research (Quaresma et al., 2010 and 2011). There are clear signs in the present, however, indicating that a change is about to come within the next five years.



Figure 2. “Study Programme – PhD in Fine Arts”, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lisbon. Retrieved from <http://www.fba.ul.pt/en/cursos/doutoramentos/plano-curricular/>

¹⁷ See: <http://www.fba.ul.pt/cursos/doutoramentos/doutoramento-em-artes/> (*my italics*); The schools involved in the Doctorate in Arts are: Faculty of Fine Arts, Faculty of Letters, Institute of Social Sciences, Institute of Education (all integrated in the University of Lisbon), Superior School of Dance, Superior School of Music, Superior School of Theatre and Cinema (integrated in the Polytechnical Institute of Lisbon). See: <http://doutoramentoemartes.ul.pt/index.html>

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