



# Artikel

What is at stake in ‘the Practice as Research initiative’?

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# What is at stake in ‘the Practice as Research initiative’?

By Robin Nelson

Much is at stake in ‘the practice as research initiative’<sup>1</sup>, the trajectory which over the past two decades has fought to have arts practices recognised as knowledge production in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Quite simply, if the initiative is not ultimately successful, the investigative inquiries and innovations of artists located in HEIs and beyond will not count as ‘research’, with all that entails in respect of academic status and funding. This would be a loss not only to the arts practitioner-researchers themselves and their departments, but, as this article will suggest, to the academic and arts communities as a whole.

## Acceptance

Advocacy of a new research methodology has implications for educationists, university regulators, politicians and philosophers as well as for artists. Perhaps because PaR also extends a fundamental epistemological challenge to traditional assumptions about knowledge, scepticism remains, even in the countries where PaR is most developed.<sup>2</sup> Acceptance of Practice as Research (PaR) has not proved an easy matter and resistances have been encountered from arts practitioners and more traditional arts scholars as well as from institutions. PaR is destined to unsettle institutional inertia as it mobilises a significant cultural change. It requires space, literally and metaphorically; it demands accommodation in the research curriculum. Whilst it draws on both, it cannot be constrained to library or on-line resources. Although it is typically accompanied by complementary writings, the dissemination of findings poses challenges when material practices beyond words are involved in *articulating and evidencing the PaR inquiry*.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, PaR increases competition for a finite pot of research funding resource and thus, from established standpoints, it might be perceived as an irritant.

The following key developments are required for the full acceptance of arts PaR:

- artists’ recognition that arts practices typically require a framing discourse to count as research, institutionally defined as ‘substantial new insights effectively shared’;<sup>4</sup>

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- 1) This article draws upon a recently published book-length study: Nelson, Robin, written and edited (2013) *Practice as Research in the Arts*. I am indebted to Palgrave for permission to reprint material such as the model itself and the bullet-points indicating the shift from practitioner to practitioner-researcher.
  - 2) Research based in arts practices is increasingly accepted worldwide. It is well established in the UK, Australia and the Nordic countries (notably Finland) and there are significant developments in many other countries. It is variously called ‘artistic research’ (Nordic countries/ continental Europe), ‘practice-led research’ (Australia) or ‘practice as research’ (UK). The last term will be used in this article since it clearly asserts what is implied in the other terms, namely that the method of research will be substantially through arts practice and the findings will be substantially presented in practice.
  - 3) Italics are used throughout this article to emphasise critical terms.
  - 4) Though this article is rooted in UK culture, its implications have resonances worldwide and similar challenges are being faced by the arts research communities of many countries.

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- institutional acceptance as valid of a new research methodology despite its divergence from 'the scientific method';
- an epistemic shift more fully to embrace experiential knowing;
- means of articulating – or making visible – in a research context proximal (insider) modes of knowing;<sup>5</sup>
- a methodological framework, flexible enough to take account of a wide range of projects, for bringing the various modes of evidence in a multi-mode inquiry into convincing convergence.

The scope of this article precludes full address of all these aspects but, by way of introduction to an approach to PaR which posits it as a new research methodology, the article seeks to clarify what is involved in PaR as distinct from either just arts practice or established (historical or theoretical) modes of research. It advocates a particular framework for multi-mode inquiries setting three inter-related modes of knowing (know-how, know-what and know-that) into dialogical engagement.

### Misapprehensions

A key misapprehension on the part of some artists about PaR concerns whether or not arts practice is always research or has nothing at all to do with academic research. The view taken here is that some creative arts practices constitute research whilst others do not. Nicholas Till has recently illustrated that artistic practice historically might be research:

The Italian painters of the Quattrocento who investigated the artistic potential of the newly established geometry of perspective; the composers who around 1600 unwittingly invented opera as an outcome of scholarly research into the performance practices of Athenian drama; Stanislavsky's development of his 'Method' for acting; Braque and Picasso working alongside each other to forge Cubism; Schoenberg's development of Serialism: all were undoubtedly engaged in systematic projects of artistic research. (Till 2013). The problem with such an acknowledgement is that it can lead to the misunderstanding that all arts practices might be constructed as research. But, as Till properly notes, all his examples have in common a clear inter-relation between theory and practice and all demonstrably address 'research questions, issues or problems'.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, each example is 'highly aware of its own creative and discursive contexts' and each was 'driven by the need to find new methods for new problems'.<sup>7</sup>

The 'practice as research initiative' is concerned in part with distinguishing those arts practices which constitute research from those which do not in terms which resonate with Till's account of historical examples. In the more mundane context of today's HEI sector, "academic" research

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5) Polanyi writes of a movement from the proximal to the distal: "The transposition of bodily experiences into the perception of things outside may now appear, therefore, as an instance of the transposition of meaning away from us, which we have found to be present to some extent in all tacit knowing" (1983: 13-14).

6) Jacopo Peri: "how might the Greeks have sung their dramatic texts?"; Braque: "how can we paint the space between objects rather than the objects themselves?"; Schoenberg: "how can we reconstitute musical form on a non-harmonic basis?". 'Feature: Opus versus output', *Times Higher Education*. 7 March, 2013: 01.

7) Ibid.

requires an inquiry which produces and disseminates new knowledge. The aim of the 'PaR initiative' has been to get PaR understood and accepted as a valid methodology for staff research and for PhD students. If a continuum of research models is envisaged to range from the 'hard' sciences, through the 'softer' sciences, to such approaches as action research in education and participant observation in ethnography, the PaR methodology is the next point on the continuum. It extends the overall research paradigm to include practice based art experiments but only those properly framed as research inquiries.

Many artists perceive their approach to be a non-methodical, even chaotic, and iterative journey through a process, in contrast with the highly instrumental working-through of a research design in accordance with established methods which characterises the 'hard' sciences. It is perhaps understandable, then, that, from a traditional standpoint, artistic process might be perceived to be lacking in rigour. Accordingly, an important aim of the PaR community has been to establish criteria for rigour in the context of the PaR methodology to avoid it being inappropriately found wanting in respect of the criteria of 'the scientific method'.<sup>8</sup>

### Research evaluation

Although the PaR methodology and the rigour of its criteria remain in development, they are sufficiently established for reliable judgements of the validity of arts research to be made. Indeed, the published *Guidance on Submissions* for the forthcoming UK national research audit (REF, 2014), involving a process of peer review, allows that:

*(i)n addition to printed academic work, research outputs may include, but are not limited to: new materials, devices, images, artefacts, products and buildings; confidential or technical reports; intellectual property, whether in patents or other forms; performances, exhibits or events; work published in non-print media. (Para 2011, p. 22).*

In such contexts of research evaluation, it is important, however, to understand that what is being assessed is the validity of the research inquiry and its effectively shared findings. Thus, although creative arts practices may be submitted as indicated, it is vital to *articulate and evidence the research inquiry* (my PaR mantra).

A distinctive feature of arts PaR is that no two inquiries are the same. Unlike other subjects where a common set of research methods might be used to design cognate investigations, the field of arts practices and approaches to them is disparate. Accordingly, the PaR methodology advocated here (and set out in more detail below) is a framing methodology with sufficient common features to embrace sub-sets of methods for specific inquiries. It is incumbent upon the arts PaR researcher to set out the nature of her inquiry and the specific methods by which findings to constitute substantial new insights might be achieved. In more established corners of the academy, set research design models are afforded and, though it will take time, PaR is similarly establishing itself by way of case law.

There is a small, but highly important difference between presenting a creative practice in

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8) At the Sixth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Urbana-Champaign, IL, May 26-29, 2010, on qualitative research methodology, St Pierre drew attention to the amount of time she and colleagues were still spending, "tracking the effects of and resisting the "naïve and crude positivism" (Elliot, 2001, p. 555) of the scientifically based and evidence based research community, those who missed all the "turns," especially the postmodern".

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the artsworld and submitting it in an established PaR context. The criteria of evaluation in the artsworld, though they may overlap with some research criteria such as innovation, are not co-terminous with research criteria. This is the case, even where a PaR methodology – including the submission of a practice as substantial evidence of the findings of a research inquiry – is fully accepted. Complex performance practices, for example, may involve several potential lines of research inquiry – technological, choreographical, musicological, philosophical and so on. The assessor, whether it be for a PhD or national research audit, needs to be clear about what the researcher identifies as the core research inquiry. Since the key criterion for research in the academy is the production of new knowledge or substantial new insights, a grasp of existing knowledge in the research domain – and, in many instances, a demonstration of that grasp – is expected. To put it as a blunt question: 'how do you know that your work has produced new insights if you do not know what is already established?'

### Misunderstandings

There have been misunderstandings in this context on a number of fronts. First, the word 'research' in everyday usage carries a range of accents: personal research – involving finding out, and sifting, what is known; professional research – networking, finding sources and collating information; academic research – conducting a research inquiry to establish new knowledge or substantial new insights. Only the last of these accents requires the production of new knowledge. Furthermore, the very idea that the findings of research must be 'original' has also led to misunderstandings. There is sometimes a misplaced sense that, because all devised pieces of art are 'original' (in the sense of fresh articulations), they meet the criterion for new knowledge. But they may not be original in terms of research insight. It is potentially confusing because a paradigm shifting practice might evidently be original in a way which would satisfy research criteria, whereas a fresh iteration of an established approach and formula would not.<sup>9</sup> To repeat, it is the research inquiry which is being assessed not the professionalism or creativity of the artwork as such, though the latter might on occasion be a factor in its research originality. A 'practice review' (see below) becomes even more important than a literature review in this light.

Another cause for confusion is a misplaced assumption that the maker's investigation is always self-evident in the product. Quite frequently, a practitioner-researcher can become immersed in her research inquiry through practice and be so personally aware of insights being produced that she assumes they are visible to all. But, as noted above, an experience of a complex arts event, whilst allowing that creativity and innovation might be in play, may not be clear about the specific line of research inquiry to be assessed. Artists may well not like what seems an instrumental approach to their creativity but it is, perhaps, a cost of moving across from the artsworld into the academy and presenting the work in a research context. There is, of course, no obligation on artists to make this move but it is recognised that institutional and financial pressures of various kinds have drawn, sometimes reluctant, artists into 'the academy'.

Finally in this section, a word about PhD versus professional doctorate (DCA, DDance, DFA, DMus. etc). Though, for example, in Finland, it appears that the Doctorate of the Arts has afforded flexibility in the development of PaR,<sup>10</sup> in the UK the aim has typically been to promote a PaR

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9) The situation is made even more complex by poststructuralist assertions that there is no such thing as an 'original' since all utterances are fresh iterations of the always already said.

10) See Arlander in Nelson, 2013.

PhD to emphasise that research undertaken in accordance with a PaR methodology produces knowledge equivalent in status to that in any other subject domain. A tendency remains to sustain the binary noted at the outset privileging artistic innovation and excellence over academic research in situations where professional doctorates are awarded in the arts whilst PhDs are awarded in other subject domains. This approach can lead to professional doctorates being perceived to be second rate in respect of lacking full critical rigour. Furthermore, the achievement of high artistic merit in some countries appears to get confused with – and even displaces – academic rigour in the drawing up of evaluation criteria even by institutionalised bodies.<sup>11</sup> However, the UK's Quality Assurance Agency clearly defines doctorate-ness as follows:

*Doctoral degrees are qualifications rooted in original research: the creation of new knowledge or originality in the application of knowledge. The doctorate is therefore unique in the array of qualifications offered by higher education providers.*

*All UK doctorates require the main focus of the candidate's work to be their contribution to knowledge in their discipline or field, through original research, or the original application of existing knowledge or understanding. (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Sept. 2011, pp. 12-13)*

### **From Practitioner to Practitioner-Researcher**

A good way to understand what is involved in *articulating and evidencing the research inquiry* is to consider what an arts practitioner – one perhaps educated primarily by means of practice, or one who has attained professional status and experience – would need to do differently to engage in academic research. For conducting a PaR project, it is necessary to:

- specify a research inquiry at the outset;
- set a time-line for the overall project including the various activities involved in a multi-mode inquiry;
- build moments of critical reflection into the time-line, frequently checking that the research inquiry remains engaged and evidence is being collected;
- in documenting process, capture moments of insight;
- locate your praxis in a lineage of similar practices;
- relate the specific inquiry to broader contemporary debate (through reading and exposition of ideas with references).

Most artists engage in many of the above in their practice. They frequently document process and product in a variety of ways, if only to have illustrations or a show-reel to present to funding bodies in seeking future support for their work. A small adjustment of approach is necessary, however, to ensure that the research inquiry and key insights are being captured in this process, and this is difficult if an inquiry is not identified at the outset.

Artists often find the institutional requirement for a research proposal to be challenging and

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11) For a perspective from the Nordic countries and New Zealand in this context, see Arlander and Little respectively, in Nelson, 2013.

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they contend that they will not know the particular trajectory of investigation until the work gets under way. This is understandable but adjustments of direction are common in research projects of all kinds, not only the arts. It may be the case that other subject domains have more established methods to draw upon in setting out their proposal. But, a range of methods involved in multi-mode PaR inquiries is now established. Studio practice is itself a method (the specific approach in the practice to be identified); documentation involves a range of methods to suit the purpose in hand (sketchbook, photographs, audio-video recordings, objects of material culture, etc); a plan to experience the work of other artists leading to a practice review entails a method; book-based research (as in traditional Humanities research) is also likely to be involved. As will become evident in the model below, different kinds of evidence adduced by these differing methods might be correlated and their convergence will point to the insights required of academic research.

Professional arts projects – and, indeed, those planned in an educational context – typically have an end-point which may be the final exhibition or showing of work, or the time(s) when outsiders, perhaps professional peers, are invited to experience what has been produced. A research inquiry may share this time-line, or it might be, for example, that two or three moments of showing over the three years of a full-time PhD inquiry will serve as iterations of practice in an overall PaR PhD inquiry. In the latter example, it might even be clearer how the practice constitutes evidence but that its showing is not simply co-terminous with the findings of the inquiry. Either way, it is important to have a strategy to bring the research inquiry to a culmination and to build in to the time-line all the activities (reflecting the range of methods) involved. Sound research supervision by an experienced PaR PhD tutor can be of great assistance here.

Critical reflection is key in all research inquiry but particularly in PaR projects in which the logistics of the practice may be time- and energy-consuming as well as deeply absorbing. In a performance project, for example, scheduling rehearsal times with other participants, booking spaces and organising equipment and technical support can itself be a challenge before thinking about research documentation and other related activities. A book-based research project resulting in a written outcome (article or thesis) might at times seem an easier alternative to PaR. But, if your inquiry can only be conducted through practice and its findings be made manifest in practice, then, knowing that it draws upon your strengths and genuine interests, you will consider if worth all the effort. However, it is then crucial that you literally build in times when you will step out of the studio and reflect critically on what you are achieving. You must frequently ask yourself whether the inquiry is still on track and whether you are pulling together the different kinds of evidence to attest to the research insights as well as making an engaging piece of artwork. This may well involve a process of making the ‘tacit’ explicit (see below).

### **Contextualising the process**

Most artists also regularly experience other practices in their domain so the two differences in locating work in a lineage for a PaR project are, first, the need to be slightly more systematic in the coverage of the field and, secondly, to make notes including specific dates and times such that you can reference the event in complementary writings. Just as a prime aim of the literature review in a traditional research project is to ensure that you know – and can show that you know – what has previously been established in the field, so with a practice review you need to demonstrate awareness of the state of play. More important, however, is the process of identifying the specific insights your own work brings by distinguishing it from what has already been done. If you reach a point at which you can indicate several innovative, cognate practices in your field, noting their

achievements, and can also point to what is unique in your approach, you will be well on the way to *articulating and evidencing your research inquiry*.

Reading of all kinds in relation to studio practice – such as many artists already engage in – will bring additionally into play a range of ideas and concepts. If your work is investigating an aspect of contemporary culture (as it is likely to be doing in pursuit of new insights), the concepts involved will almost certainly resonate with those circulating in other subject domains. Much arts PaR is inter-disciplinary and has the potential to inter-relate with a number of cognate domains. This is why, incidentally, a literature review might not be the best place to start because you may draw on several domains and cannot read exhaustively in all of them. In the process of wide and open reading (one of the methods in the multi-mode inquiry), it is likely that *resonances* (again the emphasis is to mark a key term in my PaR discourse) will particularly emerge in one or two cognate domains and it is these which you will mine more deeply as the research progresses. This does not entail grabbing at a weighty theory to underpin your practice, though there may well be an engagement with complex ideas. At worst, attempts to grab a theory to justify a practice (particularly after the event) have proved unhelpful. It is rather a matter of finding *resonances* and it may well be the case that your *praxis* (another key term) will help strengthen understanding of the ideas articulated in words just as well-expressed concepts might assist in crystallising the ideas you are exploring through practice in the studio.<sup>12</sup>

### Documentation

It should be noted that the arrows on the axes of the triangle in my diagram below point both ways and that the term *praxis* indicates “the imbrications of theory within practice” and vice-versa. I take research overall to be the pursuit of new knowledge and substantial new insights and I recognise a range of methodologies to achieve that aim. Some insights are best articulated in words and others in other material practices but all modes entail gestures at articulation in the process of achieving the greatest clarity. Writing itself is a practice of codes and convention, not a neutral conveyor of truths.

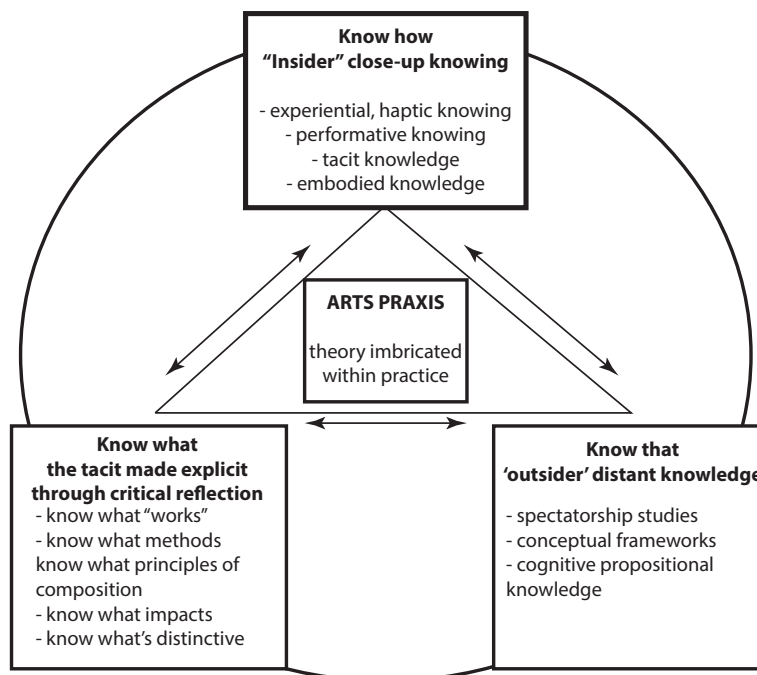
In exceptional circumstances the showing of arts practice may alone evidence a research inquiry. However, because the PaR inquiry is not quite the same thing as the creative practice, in most instances the *articulation and evidencing of the arts research inquiry* is assisted by *complementary writing* (another key term) and related documentation. The writing does not translate, transpose or otherwise explain the practice, it complements it in accordance with the idea of *resonance* indicated above. Moreover, the full range of modes of writing, from the traditional third-person passive voice purporting objectivity of traditional academic writing through to poetry might be deployed in complementary writing in pursuit of the principle of finding the best means of articulation of the research inquiry and its findings. In a PhD, the former mode might best be used for a conceptual framework chapter, the first person for an account of process, and free-verse poetry in an attempt to capture the intangibility of an arts experience.

Particularly in respect of ephemeral performance work, documentation on video (downloaded to a DVD bound into the black book document) is necessary to provide a ‘permanent record’ as typically required by academic protocols or, indeed, university regulations. An edited visual account of process (again usually downloaded on to a DVD) is often most illuminating in respect

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12) For discussion of an example of this process working in practice, see Nelson, 2013, Chapter 4.





of insights. The problematics of documentation are well articulated elsewhere.<sup>13</sup> It is recognised that, because documentation itself is a creative process of construction, no document can simply stand in for thing itself. However, under the constraints of institutionalised academic research, documentation can prove very productive in respect of *articulating and evidencing the research inquiry*. The sceptic might consider if, given the chance to see a recording of a seminal performance from the past – perhaps a performance of a Shakespeare play at the Globe – they would decline rather than take the chance to gain some insights. Despite all the imperfections of recorded media, and given that we know they cannot replace the live experience itself, documentation of practice has proved very helpful in PaR where it is taken to be a record of the research inquiry not the arts practice itself as it would have been experienced ‘live’.

If arts practitioners are prepared to engage in the activities outlined, simply extending their customary practices, they might readily adjust from the role of practitioner to that of practitioner-researcher. What remains is pulling together the various kinds of evidence produced by a multi-mode inquiry in a framework which lends it rigour. The model below affords such a framework.

Fully to accept and appreciate PaR, it is necessary to be open to means of knowledge production – or, more precisely, modes of knowing – beyond that achieved by ‘the scientific method’. At stake in know-how – or proximal, insider, knowing – is the challenge to presumed objectivity in research by acknowledging that subjectivity – and indeed feelings – do not fundamentally compromise the attainment of new knowledge or substantial new insights. Indeed, since some kind of relationality is unavoidable in any research; the recognition and framing of subject-object inter-relationships contribute in themselves to a properly self-reflective presentation of findings.

Established hermeneutic models are helpful in PaR. The non-linear, circular or spiraling

13) See, for example, Rye, 2003, Reason, 2006; and Nelson, 2013.

networks, with many points of entry of hermeneutic-interpretative approaches better suit PaR than the traditional linear trajectories aiming at a finite conclusion.<sup>14</sup> Based in standpoint epistemologies which recognise that there is no completely objective position but that all observers bring with them what Gadamer (1989) calls a “horizon of expectation”, modern hermeneutic models see the relations between subject and object as encounters, moments at which insights might be generated. The pursuit of planned tasks at each stage affords an element of structure whilst critical reflection upon them (as built into the research timeline) captures any insights and gives a sounder basis for moving on – either along that path or taking another direction.

Hermeneutic models overall take account of changes of direction and what, from the outside of an arts research process, might seem very open, even intuitive-chaotic. The built-in circle (as in my diagram) or spiral (more difficult to represent graphically) mobilises a dynamic inter-relationship between the characteristic doing of a creative process and reflective thinking (informed as appropriate in my model by know that). In recognising also that the question asked ultimately determines the answer, hermeneutic models demand constant reflection upon, and refinement of the framing of questions, but accept the provisionality of findings, an insight into the part changing the whole. Findings are marked at a point of exit from the spiral, indicating how future research might take the investigation forward.

### Embodied knowledge

The idea of intelligent practice, or what I call a *doing-knowing*, is not, of course, new. Phenomenology has a century of history, and more than half a century ago Heidegger famously remarked that ‘*thinking* may be “something like building a *cabinet*”. At any rate, it is a handi-work [*Handwerk*]’ (Heidegger 1976, p. 16). Modern philosophers, coming at the issue by different routes, affirm the notions of “enactive perception” and “embodied knowledge”. Neuroscientists, Francisco Varela and colleagues explain that:

*[b]y using the term embodied we mean to highlight two points: first that cognition depends upon the kind of experience that comes from having a body with various sensorimotor capacities, and, second, that these individual sensorimotor capacities are themselves embedded in a more encompassing biological, psychological and cultural context. (1993, pp 172-173)*

Building upon the work of Varela, Alva Nöe presses the case for “enactive” perception in positing that “perception and perceptual consciousness are types of thoughtful, knowledgeable activity” (Nöe 2004, p 03).

In this light, the model above proposes three inter-related modes of knowing: know-how, know-what and know-that, the circle indicating a hermeneutic process embracing dynamic inter-relationships between the three modes. The term *knowing* is ultimately preferred to ‘knowledge’ to indicate a dynamic, iterative process rather the ‘source-path-goal’ schema model in which conclusive findings, based upon instrumental data, appear to have answered a question once and for all. Following Varela, Nöe and others, it is to indicate a departure from propositional discourse articulated in writing as the sole means to knowledge and its effective sharing, and to allow the possibility of a practical embodied knowing before or beyond words. Nöe posits that ‘[t]o have an experience is to be confronted with a possible way the world is. For this reason, the experiences

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14) For a discussion and an example of the application of hermeneutics to arts research, see Tringham, 2002.

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themselves, although not judgments, are thoroughly *thoughtful*. Perception is *a way of thinking about the world*' (Nöe 2004, p. 189).

A distinction between 'knowing how and knowing that' was established by Gilbert Ryle in his seminal essay (1949) of that name. Challenging Cartesian body/mind dualism, Ryle argued that:

*(t)he combination of the two assumptions that theorizing is the primary activity of minds and that theorizing is intrinsically a private, silent, or internal operation remains one of the main supports of the dogma of the ghost in the machine. (Ryle 1949, p. 28)*

Since Ryle's conclusion that, "overt intelligent performances are not clues to the workings of the minds; they are those workings," (Ryle 1949, p. 27) know-how has been constructed as "procedural knowledge" in contrast with the "propositional knowledge" of know-that.

In the context of research, the 'know-how' artists generate – being a matter of experience and perhaps literally embodied (as in, for example, the shaping of the body by way of dance techniques) – remains largely tacit. The means of dissemination of such knowing in the professional context is from body to body by means of workshops, but this is inevitably a limited means of "effective sharing". Historically most commentary on the arts has been in the mode of "outsider" knowledge from the point of view of the experiencer, in what Susan Melrose (2006) dubs "spectatorship studies". It is useful in the first instance to correlate such "outsider" knowledge with the "insider" knowledge of those making the work. For example, if makers think their work is likely to have a particular kind of impact, it is informative to discover whether or not their anticipations are borne out in response (and any subsequent critical commentary). Some practitioners may even wish to mobilise audience surveys.

However, because insider and outsider knowing may be in different modes, the axis of my model between know-how and know-what marks the attempt to make the tacit more explicit such that it might be more widely disseminated. Though it may be that some know-how cannot be readily transposed into propositional discourse, a range of means of articulating the findings of critical reflection are proposed. Thus my additional 'know-what' category is comprised of the range of 'know-how' artists might have, but made more visible primarily by means of critical reflection articulated by the variety of means of documentation noted above and in resonance with ideas in circulation in writings. It must be emphasised that the arrows between modes of knowing on the diagram point both ways since it is not simply a matter of theory underpinning practice but of setting the three modes of knowing in dialogical inter-relation.<sup>15</sup> It is processual in the manner of hermeneutics, not reductive. The evidence adduced by each of the modes gains strength from its correlation with that adduced at the others. It is a model of convergence in respect of *articulating and evidencing the research inquiry*.

### Sharing the findings

There is much to be shared, within the arts community and beyond, about methods of working, principles of composition, the relation between texture and affect and so on. The interactive process marked by my model does require that artists are willing to examine what they do and how they do it, and share their findings. To those artists who believe such a process will douse the creative spark, suppress intuition and betray the magic of their art, I can only say they

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15) Vygotsky noted, 'a reciprocal material-ideal engagement "from action to thought" (1986, p. xlv).

might be better suited to remain practitioners and not make the move to become practitioner-researchers in the academy. Because, to repeat, academic research is concerned with substantial new insights effectively shared. To those, in contrast, who are excited by the journey and, indeed, by the opportunity to travel freely between the artsworld and the academy with a clearer understanding of the requirements of each, I commend the multi-mode engagements entailed by my model which locates arts praxis at its centre as a key locus of evidence. Not only might research insights be achieved and artistic research take its proper place in the academy, creative practices might also be refreshed and enhanced by the process of *doing-thinking* and extended critical reflection upon it.

The new PaR methodology extends the trajectory of the spectrum of established methodologies noted above but develops its own criteria for credibility and rigour. Rigour lies more in the syncretism of a hermeneutic model than the depth-mining of other methodologies. One notion of 'rigour' in PaR is the worked-through-ness of ideas in process. In an account of her company's working process, practitioner-researcher, Anna Fenemore, has recently enumerated the stages as: '1. anticipation, imagination, and projection 2. playing, pretence and pleasure, 3. direction, repetition and/or insistence, 4. editing, *mise-en-scène* and composition. In devised performance work, a rigour may (or may not) be applied at each of the stages of the process: selection of materials; sifting (perhaps of found objects); documentation; augmenting with additional materials; developing principles of composition for the construction into a performed piece.

Another dimension of PaR rigour lies in the establishing of resonances (at times mapping praxis on to propositional discourse) in the effort both to make explicit what is tacitly known (perhaps through documentation of the process) and in seeking a verbal correlate (in complementary writing). The process of a praxis may well interrogate a conceptual framework articulated in words in analytic propositions. Indeed, Carter notes a "double articulation" in play:

*[t]he condition of invention – the state of being that allows a state of becoming to emerge – is a perception, or recognition, of the ambiguity of appearances. Invention begins when what signifies exceeds its signification – when what means one thing, or conventionally functions in one role, discloses other possibilities.... In general a double movement occurs, in which the found elements are rendered strange, and of recontextualisation, in which new families of association and structures of meaning are established (Carter in Barrett, Estelle and Bolt, Barbara (eds), 2010, pp. 15-16)*

Assessment of PaR may depend substantially on peer review but that is, after all, the historical basis of the assessment of rigour across all disciplines.

Some artists – particularly in the remaining independent artschools – wish to argue that the symbolic languages of the arts do not need a supplement of the symbolic codes and conventions of writing.<sup>16</sup> In short, they believe the artwork might speak for itself in a research context. Though this may be possible in exceptional cases, for the most part, in my view, a mixed-mode approach to *articulating and evidencing the research inquiry* is more secure. Much has now been written on PaR and there are patently a number of possible approaches.<sup>17</sup> The didactic tone of this article, though arising from a conviction based in experience that my model has worked well for colleagues and PhD students over a decade, should not be misread as an assertion that

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16) See, for example, Lesage in Nelson, 2013.

17) See bibliography in Nelson, 2013.

## What is at stake in 'the Practice as Research initiative'?

it is the only possible model. The model itself has been through several iterations and remains in development as does my thinking overall. However, without belief in the validity of a PaR methodology and its advocacy, arts practitioner-researchers will remain marginalised in the academy and possibly even excluded from the research domain on unjustifiable grounds.

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