

Position Papers on Practice-Based Research:

Circulated in advance of the symposium

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

NCAD 22nd of April 2005



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Disclaimer.

The opinions expressed here are those of the individual authors. These short texts are circulated in advance of the symposium in order to stimulate debate and to promote dialogue on these issues. If you wish to respond in writing to any of the material here please e-mail your responses, observations and comments to wilsonm(at)ncad.ie and they will be forwarded to the authors.

Research Questions: Schedule

09:30 *Registration*

09:45 Welcome Address: Colm O’ Briain, Director National College of Art and Design.

10:00 Panel # 1: Introductory Session:

“Why research? Which research? When research? How...?”

Participants will include Declan Long [NCAD], Margaret Lonergan [NCAD] and Mick Wilson [NCAD]

10:50 Short Break.

11:10 Keynote Speaker: "Questions, answers and audiences in practice-based research."

Dr. Michael Biggs [Univ. of Hert.]

The paper will consider the role of the prospective audience for research in determining whether research questions are regarded as meaningful, and whether practice-based responses or research answers are regarded as satisfying. Chair: Prof. Angela Woods [NCAD]

12:00 Panel #2: “What can the academy do for practitioner?”

Participants will include Dr. Maeve Connolly [IADT], Dr. Paula Gilligan [IADT], Dr. Niamh O’Malley [practitioner], SORCHA FOX [practitioner] & Donal O’Kelly [practitioner], Eamonn Crudden [student/practitioner].

13:00 Lunch.

14:00 Printed Project Panel #3: “Can research be a mode of practice?”

Participants will include Craig Smith [Goldsmiths] Catherine Fitzgerald [Artist] Prof. Timothy Emlyn Jones [Burren College of Art] Grant Watson [Project Arts] Dr. Siun Hanrahan [*Printed Project*/DIT]

www.printedproject.ie

15:25 Short Break.

15:30 Panel #4: “What is the role of the text in the practice-based PhD?”

Participants include: Kieran Corcoran [DIT], Helen McAllister [NCAD], Dr. Gearóid Ó Conchubhair [NCAD] Dr. Kieran Cashell [LIT/SAD] & Dr. Suzanne O’Shea [LIT/SAD]

16:30 Short Break.

17:00 Closing Roundtable: “What are the future questions for practice-based research?”

This session will begin with a short presentation by Anna Colford on the preliminary findings of her inquiry into arts-based research in Irish third-level institutions. Participants will include Dr. Eucharía Meehan [HEA], Dr. Gearóid Ó Conchubhair [NCAD], Dr. Siun Hanrahan [DIT], Dr. Michael Biggs [Univ. of Hert.], Craig Smith [Goldsmiths].

17:50 Closing Address: Prof. Brian Maguire, Faculty of Fine Art, NCAD.

18:00 Reception.

18:45 End.

Contributors & Participants

Dr. **Michael Biggs** (MA PhD FRSA ILTM) is Reader in Visual Communication and Associate Dean of Research in the School of Art and Design at the University of Hertfordshire [UH], UK. He has degrees in both Fine Art and Philosophy, and was Senior Research Fellow in Philosophy at the University of Bergen

Dr. **Kieran Cashell** is a Lecturer in The Dept. of Critical and Contextual Studies, Limerick School of Art & Design. He is a published critic and academic and has represented LSAD at conferences both nationally and internationally. He has supervised Masters students in the Dept. and holds a pivotal research role within the school

Anna Colford is currently completing PhD. by research at DIT, on *Education in the Museum of Modern Art: Encounter and Negotiation*. Anna was the first postgraduate student to pursue a PhD. in the School of Art, Design and Printing. She will submit later this summer. Anna is also a Lecturer in Visual Culture at IADT Dun Laoghaire.

Dr. **Maeve Connolly** lectures in film and visual culture at the Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dun Laoghaire. She exhibited at various venues (Project, EV+A, Context Gallery) and co-curated the exhibition *The Captains Road* (2002) before completing a PhD on film culture, funded by a Government of Ireland Scholarship. Her writing on art and film has appeared in journals such as *CIRCA*, *Contemporary*, *Afterimage* and *Variant* and she co-edited *The Glass Eye: Artists and Television* (Project Press, 2000).

Kieran Corcoran is Acting Head of the Department of Design in the School of Art, Design and Printing, Faculty of Applied Arts, DIT and was formerly Research Coordinator for the school with responsibility for promoting postgraduate research in Fine Art and Design. He is currently Treasurer of ELIA (European League of Institutes of the Arts) and Chairman of the board of the Galway Arts Festival.

Eamonn Crudden is a Media Production Teacher, Documentary Filmmaker and New Media Activist. His most recent films were 'We Are Not Warriors' (2001) and 'Berlusconi's Mousetrap' (2002). He is currently in the post-production stages of a new documentary film on Ireland's involvement in the War on Iraq and civil resistance to that involvement - to be titled 'Route Irish'. He is presently also studying for a PHD in the Film Studies Department at Queens University Belfast

Prof. **Timothy Emlyn Jones** is a Welsh artist who came to the Burren College of Art in January 2003 to take up the post of Dean and Graduate Director. Prior to joining Burren College of Art he was the Deputy Director of the Glasgow School of Art and before that the Assistant Principal (Academic Affairs) at Wimbledon School of Art, London. He has been involved in the development, supervision and examination of studio-based doctorates since 1987 and has lectured and acted as a consultant in this field in Belgium, China, the UK and the USA as well as having published a number of academic papers. His research interests are in drawing considered as a process of enquiry. As an artist he has exhibited internationally and he is represented in public collections in a number of countries, his most recent exhibitions having been in Beijing, Sydney, and Venice as well as a four venue solo exhibition in Galway in March 2005.

Catherine Fitzgerald is an artist using contemporary visual art to explore how new ideas in biological science are affecting how we think about ourselves and other living forms that make up our environment. She recently completed an Arts Council residency at the Dept. of Zoology, Trinity College Dublin, where her work is currently exhibited. Having originally trained in microbiology she went on to study fine art and is a graduate of NCAD's postgraduate programme in technology. Born in New Zealand, she left to live in Dublin ten years ago and now live near Borris, Co Carlow, Ireland. [See <http://www.seeartscience.com/index.html>]

Sorcha Fox From Ballinteer in Dublin, Sorcha trained in the Samuel Beckett Centre in Trinity graduating in 1994. She was co-founder of the theatre company Three Bags Full and the production company Hi-Ho with whom she produced 'The Marriage' - the award winning shortcuts film for the Irish Film Board and RTE. She played the part of Vanessa Barrett in TG4's soap *Ros na Run* since its inception. She is also a storyliner for *Ros na Run*. She co-starred with Donal O'Kelly in his play 'The Hand' which opened the Dublin Theatre Festival in October 2002. Last year she directed 'Jimmy Joyced' Donal's new play for the Joyce centenary year. She played Rosemary in 'Eccentricities of a Nightingale' at the Gate directed by Dominic Cooke in 2003. She is currently starring with Donal O'Kelly in his new play *The Cambria* at Liberty Hall, the story of escaped slave Frederick Douglass' voyage to Ireland in 1845.

Dr. **Paula Gilligan** teaches courses in Cultural Theory and Critical Practice (Gender, the Body, Class and Race, Audience), popular cultures and cinema studies in the Dept. of Humanities in the School of Business and Humanities at the Institute of Art,

Research Questions: Readings for a symposium on research in-and-through art and design practice. Design and Technology, Dun Laoghaire in Dublin. Her doctoral research, conducted at Trinity College Dublin, was entitled 'Dream Country: representations of Ireland in French Cinema 1937-1978'. She has recently contributed a chapter on right wing cultural elites, spatial politics and the Ireland text to a book on Irish cinema and media cultures, *Reel Ireland*, ed. Ruth Barton and Harvey O'Brien, (London: Wallflower Press, 2004) and is currently working on a book on cinema, spectacle and consumption. She is the co-ordinator for post-graduate course development for the Humanities at IADT and, with Mick Wilson, has secured funding for post-graduate research projects in the field of contemporary curatorship. She holds a B.A. in Drama, also at Trinity, studied Theatre and Cinema in Paris as part of the Erasmus Programme and has extensive experience of theatre production and film

Nuala Hunt has been active in art education since the 1980s. She has worked full-time as training co-ordinator of the 'Learning Wheel' an EU /*Arts Council* training for trainers project, developed by *CAFÉ*. Subsequently she worked as an accreditation advisor for 'Youthcert', an EU youth work project initiated by the *National Youth Federation* and also as Education officer for *CAFÉ*. This period of work was characterised by designing, and developing training programmes for adult learners, negotiating accreditation within mainstream education and policy development. Nuala re-joined the staff at NCAD in 2000, firstly as researcher and co-ordinator of continuing education and subsequently as Head of Centre for *Continuing Education in Art & Design (CEAD)*. Nuala is a member of the Board of *City Arts Centre*.

Liam Kelly is a Professor of Irish Visual Culture at the School of Art and Design, University of Ulster, Belfast. He is a writer and broadcaster on contemporary Irish art. He has also curated both solo and thematic exhibitions in Ireland, USA, France, Slovenia and Hong Kong. He took part in *L'imaginaire Irlandais*, as curator of Language Mapping and Power, exhibited in Paris in 1996. From 1986-1992 he was Director of the Orpheus Gallery, Belfast and from 1996-1999 Director of the Orchard Gallery, Derry. His publications include *Thinking Long*, Contemporary Art in the North of Ireland, 1996 and *The City as Art : Interrogating the Polis*, 1994. He is currently a vice-president of the International Association of Art Critics, Paris (AICA). In 1997 he organised their international annual congress, *Art and Centres of Conflict - Outer and Inner Realities* in Belfast and Derry.

Margaret Lonergan is Head of Department of Visual Communications at NCAD. Her work has been published regularly in the national press (most frequently in *The Irish Times*), and she shared in a Society of Newspaper Design Award for Excellence for illustration work with *The Sunday Tribune*. Margaret is engaged in a PhD in Design - *The Garden of Intelligence* - a visual research project at Dublin Zoo. She is currently undertaking research into practice-based postgraduate study in design, funded under the HEA Teaching and Learning Initiatives. Other areas of interest include: the development of collaborative design processes and design-led projects; and the relationship between the application of digital media and typography in visual communication and in the fine art disciplines.

Declan Long is a lecturer in the Faculty of History of Art, Design and Complementary Studies at the National College of Art and Design, Ireland. He has previously worked in the visual arts at Temple Bar Gallery & Studios and writes regularly on contemporary art practice.

Prof. **Brian Maguire** has worked in various media but mainly painting, both as a studio based artist and in collaboration with groups, in particular with prisoners over the past 15 years, working with both political and social prisoners in both parts of Ireland, USA, Canada, Brazil and Poland. He is represented by the Kerlin Gallery, Dublin. In 2002 he was appointed Head of the Faculty of Fine Art of the National College of Art and Design, Dublin as Professor of Fine Art and he is also a member of *Aosdána*, the Irish State's Artist Assembly honouring achievement in all forms.

Dr. **Eucharía Meehan** is Head of Research Programmes at the Higher Education Authority (HEA). She is the manager of the strategic research capability development initiative for higher education institutions, the *Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLl)*. She plays an important role within the HEA, which advises the Minister for Education and Science, and Government, on all matters pertaining to higher education and research.

Professor **Colm O'Briain** is Director of the National College of Art and Design. He was the founding Chairperson of Project Arts Centre and worked for several years as a theatre and television producer/director. As Director of the *Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon* he was the first Registrar of *Aosdána*. Between 1993 and 1997 he was Policy Advisor to the Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht. He has been Director of Arts Administration Studies at *UCD* and of *Cothú* – the Business Council for the Arts. He is a former member of the *Cultural Relations Committee* of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Irish National Commission for *UNESCO*. He is currently on the board of *Arts and Disability Ireland* and the committee for Ireland's participation in *PQ 07*, the International Exhibition of Scenography in Prague.

Research Questions: Readings for a symposium on research in-and-through art and design practice.

Dr. Gearóid Ó Conchubhair graduated with a first class honours degree in Industrial Design from the National College of Art and Design in 1982. Having worked in design consultancy for five years, he joined the NCAD as a lecturer in the department of Industrial Design in 1986. He has continued to work as a freelance designer and consultant with a specialist interest in furniture design. He was a co-founder and partner of OMOS Ltd, design consultancy (1994). He continues to combine an active roll in design practice with design teaching and research. He completed PhD studies in 2004. Has taught industrial design as a visiting lecturer in various institutes in Ireland and in Europe as part of the Erasmus programme. Has acted as course evaluator with the National Council for Educational Awards and is a current member of the HETAC, expert panel in Art and Design.

Donal O'Kelly is a writer and actor. His much-travelled solo plays include the award-winning *Catalpa*; *Bat The Father Rabbit The Son*; and most recently *Jimmy Joyced!* Other plays include *The Dogs*, *Hughie On The Wires*; *Trickledown Town*; *The Business Of Blood*; *Asylum! Asylum!*; *Farawayan*;; *Judas Of The Gallarus*; and *The Hand*. He has twice been awarded an Arts Council literature bursary, and in 1999 was awarded the Irish American Cultural Institute Butler Literary Award. For radio, he has written *Running Beast*, a play-with-music based on the life of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, as well as radio versions of *Catalpa*, *Bat The Father Rabbit The Son*, *The Dogs*, *Hughie On The Wires*, and *The Cambria*, all broadcast on RTE. As an actor, his movie roles include *Bimbo* in *Roddy Doyle's The Van*, and roles in Irish movies *Spin The Bottle* and *I Went Down*. On stage, he has played the Lincoln Centre New York with Beckett's *Act Without Words I*, Toronto Winter Garden as *Lucky* in *Waiting For Godot*, *Joxer* in the Abbey Theatre's *Juno And The Paycock*, *Sean O'Casey* in *Colm Toibin's Beauty In A Broken Place* at the Peacock, and he has toured to the UK, Europe, the US, Canada and Australia with his solo plays. He was a founder and for ten years a director of *Calypso Productions*, and also served as a director of the peace and justice organisation *Afri*.

Dr. Niamh O'Malley is a practicing artist, she has exhibited in group and solo exhibitions in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Europe and North America. In 2003/04 she was awarded the International Studio Residency at PS1, MoMa, New York. She completed a practice-led PhD at the University of Ulster, Belfast in 2003 titled 'Repositioning the Landscape Viewer; Investigating Models of Appreciation and Visual Representation'.

Helen McAllister has already completed a Masters through practice in embroidered textiles. At present she is finishing her third year of a practice-based PhD in textile fabrication. The title of her research is "Binary Oppositions: what constitutes a pair?" and the focus of her inquiry is the question: can an understanding of binary constructs be established through a practical and constructive exploration of shoe-derived forms?" Helen has lectured in education for art and design for more than a decade.

Printed Project is the journal published by the Sculptors' Society of Ireland. *Printed Project* is an ongoing collaboration amongst artists, critics and curators, writers and readers devoted to making sense of contemporary art and culture. *Printed Project* is published twice a year and is edited on a rotating basis by invited curatorial editors. It gathers and presents thought and opinion on issues and arguments that enliven dialogue and debate on art and the wider culture of our present day.

Craig Smith is a visual and performing artist. He writes and exhibits on topics including art pedagogy, sports and culture, and new media philosophy. He is currently a visiting tutor and researcher at Goldsmith's College, University of London.

Dr. Suzanne O'Shea has a doctorate in Fine Art Theory from the University of Ulster Belfast. She is Course Director of the Critical & Contextual Studies Dept. at Limerick School of Art& Design and is a published poet and art critic. She is Academic Supervisor of The Shinnor's Masters/Doctoral Scholarship in Curatorial Practice, a joint venture between LSAD and LCAG and has just completed academic supervision of the first Burren College of Art/UCG MFA cohort.

Grant Watson is curator at the *Project Arts Centre*, where he has developed one of the most innovative and experimental curatorial practices in the country. He works very closely with artists in developing exhibitions, seminars and off-site projects, and has developed collaborations with some of the most exciting younger contemporary Irish artists and independent curators. A graduate of Goldsmiths University, he is actively engaged in research, and has initiated several innovative projects that reflect the expanded conception of art practice available to contemporary practitioners.

Mick Wilson joined NCAD as Head of Research & Postgraduate Development in January 2005. Prior to this he initiated, developed and delivered the IADT's masters programme in visual arts practices based in Temple Bar. He is currently completing a research project entitled 'The Conflict of the Faculties?' which addresses interdisciplinarity, critical thinking and the contemporary conditions of the university. A writer and artist, he is a graduate of NCAD and Trinity College Dublin.

Prof. Angela Woods was appointed Head of Faculty of Design at NCAD in 1996. Since graduating from the Royal College of Art, Angela has combined design, consultancy and teaching, and plays an active role in the Institute of Designers in Ireland, the U.K.'s H.E.F.C. Research Assessment Council and the London Institute Quality Review Committee. Currently she is a member of the Council of the Institute of Designers in Ireland and external examiner on the MSc Multimedia Systems at the Department of Computer Science, Trinity College Dublin

Foreword

It is over a decade since Christopher Frayling at the Royal College of Art in London called for a clear differentiation between the three categories of:

- Research into art and design
- Research through art and design
- Research for art and design.

He also contended that artists have worked just as often in the cognitive idiom as the expressive, that some art counts as research (whatever the definition) and that some art doesn't.

The criteria subsequently used at the RCA in relation to supervision of design research are relevant to our concerns in this symposium. The work is required to be

- Purposive - based on identification of an issue or problem worthy and capable of investigation;
- Inquisitive – seeking to acquire new knowledge;
- Informed – conducted from an awareness of previous related research;
- Methodical – planned and carried out in a disciplined manner;
- Communicable – generating and reporting results which are testable and accessible by others.

The issues which surface in the papers for this symposium are not new. They address such questions as the prospective audience for research, the nature of practice and the parameters of practice-based research, the responsibility of the academy to the practitioner and the respective roles of the artefact and the text.

What is undisputed is that we in the art and design sector must collaborate to develop a shared understanding of the central principles which inform a coherent and rigorous approach to research in the sector. In this way, we will earn the trust of the practitioner and the confidence of research funding agencies.

Professor Colm Ó Briain [Director NCAD]

Introduction

The term “practice-based” research has come to be used in relation to the pursuit of higher research degrees (MA and PhDs) in design and art. (The term is used in other disciplines such as clinical medicine.) The key issue is that unlike the humanities (history, literature, cultural studies, and so forth) a researcher in the art and design domain is not primarily producing a formal academic text although s/he may be doing this as well. (Currently the NUI requirement is that an MA through practice will entail the production of a 5,000 word submission, while a PhD through practice will include a 20,000 word minimum submission. The PhD programme organised through the Interface research centre at University of Ulster does not stipulate a specific written requirement.) Researchers in art and design are pursuing an enquiry through practical activity in the production of images, objects, events, networks or other practical interventions. This raises difficult questions, even a little controversy, and has done so for almost two decades now. The practice-based research debate has been especially vigorous in the UK and Northern Europe since the early 1990s.

For some the practice-based PhD is contradictory in its demands. It is seen as seeking to establish competencies that satisfy the demands of the university, and that also address “the non-academic structures” of art and design production. It is claimed that the specific criteria of competence for the practice-based PhD is not “immediately obvious.” This gives rise to difficult and complex questions:

[H]ow do you produce or examine a PhD? [...] Should the artwork be assessed in relation to contemporary art practice or should it be viewed as a thesis in images? Does the theoretical or intellectual investigation take place in relation to practice, or through the accompanying text? Does the artwork, like academic research, put forward a hypothesis and demonstrate a mastery of a canon or should the emphasis be placed upon technical ability and if so, how is technical ability judged? Should practice-based doctoral students be expected to write thesis of the same proficiency as conventional PhD students? (Candlin, 2000)

The debate has also evolved around design practice in a parallel, though not necessarily identical, manner. Marshall and Newton (2000) have argued “design inquiry must not simply represent an inferior form of conventional research.” For these authors the question has become one as to “how scholarly design inquiry might provide the paradigm for such an alternative form of research: an alternative form of research grounded in practice.” (ibid.) Marshall and Newton proceed to claim that the value of design inquiry is as “a contextual and situated engagement with practice.” Importantly they claim that “the validity of this engagement is *not* embodied in the rigour with

which a particular method is applied, but rather ... the facility of the research work to reframe or provoke further action.” (ibid.)

There has also been a strong questioning of the move to an emphasis on practice-based research in art and design. Tuomas Nevanlinna (2004) of the Helsinki School of Art, speaking at a conference on this topic in the Netherlands, claimed: “Transplanting the terminology of a science policy rife with ‘doctoral theses,’ ‘dissertations’ and ‘research’ is not and cannot be an innocent, value-free process.” (p.81) However, he also goes on to point out that: “Nevertheless, and this is the most important point, the idea of artistic research also opens up opportunities and possibilities.” (ibid.)

It should be pointed out that these concepts of “research” and “doctoral” work have historically been extended in their application through metaphorical transfer across domains, most notably from the domain of “philosophy” and “medicine” in the medieval university context to the domain of “science” (specifically the discipline of chemistry) in the early modern university, and again into the domain of the “humanities” in the later 19th century. Importantly, the modern notions of research, seminar, and doctoral studies emerged in tandem with the discipline divisions of the sciences and the humanities. The late-19th century was marked not only by the expansion of the “research university” ideal, with its departments and discipline-hierarchies, but also by the aggressive policing of all those other “knowledges” at the margins of academic legitimacy. The important point here is that these concepts of “discipline”, “research” and “doctorate” are variable across time, and across domains. This is well illustrated by the increasingly familiar phenomenon of the “taught doctoral programme” which would have been seen as an oxymoronic construct only a generation or two back.

The extension of these concepts to the domain of art and design is logically consistent with the restructuring of art and design education, since the 1960s, along university models in the wake of the Coldstream report. It is also consistent with the historical development of art and design education as an arena of intellectually ambitious, challenging and advanced inquiry. Furthermore, it coincides with the transformation of art and design practices, outside the academy, as sites of enquiry variously grounded in theoretical complexity, intense critical self-reflection, advanced technology and the drive for social renewal. There is therefore another vital and challenging range of perspectives here, and these are the perspectives from practice as opposed to academia.

Practice outside the academy, has so often had an intimate exchange and interaction with teaching - indeed this is consistently claimed as a key value by most art and design educators – it is important that these perspectives are shared and mutually informing. It may be that it is precisely by virtue of the intimacy of the exchange between practice and research in art and design education that the larger academic enterprise may find a renewal of its critical and pedagogical functions. The critical role of intellectual and cultural inquiry, claimed for the academy, now seems to stand in such tension with its instrumental economic role. Art and design practitioners and educators have negotiated this difficult interplay between the values of critical inquiry and the values of the market throughout the long history of art and design education and practice.

Importantly, we can learn from the field of practice that research is an integral value and inherent task for art and design, rather than an externally imposed requirement. Equally we can remain alert to the importance of not collapsing the distinction between research and practice.

Mick Wilson [NCAD]

Re:cerca

Re:search

Re:searche

Ri:cerca

Re:cherchieren

Re:search – in and through the arts

[This text provides a brief introduction to an international collaborative project that looks at research as a mode of artistic practice. MW]

Re:search is a two year project jointly led by the *European League of Institutes of the Arts* and the *Universitat der Kunste*, Berlin in cooperation with eight partner institutions from Ireland, Belgium, France, Holland, Slovakia, Poland, Spain and Great Britain. The project focuses on research as a mode of artistic practice and the integration of research within higher arts education institutions in Europe, involving different art disciplines such as architecture, dance, design, fine art new media and theatre.

The aims of the project are:

- to identify different and shared approaches to research definitions, methodology and outcome
- compare degree structures and research supervision in Europe
- gain recognition for the generation of new knowledge through the arts
- connect arts researchers and encourage joint research projects in Europe.

Project Activities.

The project is organized around five key areas. These are as follows:

1. National Profiles.

A national profile for nine EU countries has been prepared by the project partners. The profiles map research traditions and approaches in the arts and describe the current situation in each of the nine countries. The profiles were completed in early 2005 and are currently being integrated into a comparative analysis. The comparative analysis has three main aims and will be presented at the closing conference in Berlin. The aims are:

- (i)** A better understanding of cultural differences
- (ii)** A better understanding of how artistic knowledge is generated
- (iii)** An action plan for research in and through the arts

2. Video Documentation.

A video has been produced which interviews artists successfully engaged in research. The video discusses methods and results of the integration of research in their work. Amongst the participating artists are Christa Sommerer (Austria/ Japan), Ursula Biemann (Switzerland), Tim Etchells (UK) and Raoul Bunschoten (Netherlands) .

3. Group of Experts.

A group of specialist colleagues from different countries and disciplines will present recommendations to ELIA and the project . The expert group will prepare a reference paper encouraging an informed debate on the issues within the higher arts education community in Europe.

4. Teachers Academy Rotterdam.

Research supervision is one of the themes of the Teachers Academy and offers an opportunity to learn from experience in interactive group settings and practical workshops , organized and presented by colleagues. The Teachers Academy is being hosted by *Codarts* (formerly *University of Music and Dance*) Rotterdam April 13 -16, 2005.

5. Closing Conference Berlin.

The closing conference will take place at the *Universitat der Kunste Berlin*, Germany 14-16 October 2005. International speakers, presenters, and participants will discuss the role of research in Higher Arts Education from both artistic and educational perspectives. The conference will also focus on the development of a position paper on research in the arts and the role of the arts in European research. The results of the Comparative Analysis of National Profiles will be presented followed by working groups focusing on topics identified as important in the report. A representative from the EC will give a seminar on funding opportunities for research in the arts and the expert panel will report on their findings. The conference will be primarily organized around working groups with the main aim of formulating a strategy for putting research in and through the arts on the agenda of European and National innovation and research funding programmes. The conference will be accompanied by an exhibition of work which illustrates the conference theme and there will be a forum for the presentation of research projects (in video/dvd/film format as well as live theatre and music) which is open to all European higher arts institutions.

Kieran Corcoran [DIT/ELIA]

National Profile Commissioned by ELIA. [Summary]

1. Etymology and the use of the term ‘research’, of its synonyms and related terms.

Concurrent with emergent international trends over the last decade, the emphasis on research and the development of a research culture is gaining increasingly significant commitment in most institutions of higher education in Ireland. Historically, research within the broad framework of scholarship, has always been a central function of universities. However, in many professions it is no longer sufficient to have an undergraduate degree to qualify for employment, generally a Masters is sought and progressively, a PhD is deemed desirable. In other disciplines the doctorate has been the accepted terminal degree for centuries. The same cannot be said of the arts, although that climate is rapidly changing, in this country as elsewhere.

In the course of this survey the term ‘research’ in art practice has been broadly defined generating interesting discrepancies, which have a direct bearing on how ‘practice-based research’ is facilitated and evaluated in different institutions. In general terms there is consensus that ‘research’ constitutes a self-conscious and self-reflective process of inquiry both in the wider investigation of subject and in the specific original discovery senses. The generation of new knowledge or significant contribution to the domain of knowledge is the critical objective in each instance. The ‘what’ therefore, is not problematical.

Opinions begin to diverge in relation to the distinction between academic notions of research as applied to arts practice and a research context, which enables critical engagement with arts practice. Some believe that practice, if part of research, should be grounded in clear research intentions. Dr. Siun Hanrahan of the *Dublin Institute of Technology* identifies an equivalence between art practice and research practice but maintains that they are not the same thing and that it is dangerous to conflate the two. The result, she believes, is the inevitable undermining of art practice because art practice does not need to be called research in order to have validity. If you call it ‘research’ then ultimately the implication is that art practice is less, that it has to claim this other banner when in fact it does not need to be a research practice. Professor Timothy Emlyn Jones of the *Burren College of Art* maintains that the term ‘research’ is often used in the narrow sense, “uncritically and unreflectively, to denote a process with rational qualities that are thought to be

scientific. But often such usage indicates a poor understanding of creativity in scientific endeavour and a constricted paradigm of rationality”.

The synonyms and related terms are consistent, variously: systematic investigation; rigorous inquiry, denoting a devotion to criticality; implied notions of transparency and accountability; valid judgement; contextualised cogent persuasion; originating ideas. These might be said to characterise the qualities required of any research within the framework of a higher degree. Art practice that is executed as research, either independently or within the structures of education, may be said to require similar competencies. Art practice, in and of itself, has no such requirements. Most art practitioners would acknowledge that research, casually understood, is a normal part of the process of art making, in the sense of exploring ideas or gathering preparatory information, but that research in the conventional academic sense does not dominate their concerns.

Generally speaking, within ‘the national situation’, traditional concepts of research adhere to rationalist philosophies proceeding from Descartes’ celebrated ‘method of doubt’ to Kant’s a priori epistemic conditions to Popper’s criterion of ‘falsifiability’, though not strictly in that order of merit. Modes of research practice such as theory-building, experimentation, the reporting of empirical results, have well defined methodologies depending on whether the research is qualitative or quantitative, within the applied sciences, social sciences or humanities disciplines. Exclusively research degrees, MPhil and PhD, comprise students working independently on research projects with a supervisor or supervisors, concluding with a written thesis. Research in the arts, more specifically in design and the performing arts, resulting in professional degrees such as DMus. or MDes, tend to be largely taught courses with some element of independent research requiring a written submission and/or demonstration of competency in the given area of practice. Fine Art research has mostly taken the form of philosophical or historical inquiry. The awarding of higher degrees for studio-based or practice-based research resulting in a body of work, has been, until very recently, non-existent. The issues of what and how the work is being asked to communicate in the context of research and the different purposes that might be expected of an accompanying written text provide much food for thought regarding the possible interactive relationships between work and text as agencies knowledge production and dissemination. Conventional methodological positions and philosophical attitudes are open to contest in a wider poststructuralist embrace of what is being pursued, that is, what constitutes knowledge, not being a singular truth.

2. Academic tradition and the current situation of research in higher arts education in all disciplines.

The current landscape of research in academic institutions is, as previously mentioned, rapidly changing. In the last five years there has been a significant increase in the amount of research happening through practice and the forerunners in Irish visual arts education particularly, now offer higher degrees in practice based research. Philosophical approaches differ from one institution to another, as does the range of theoretical positions in each cognate discipline. Some claim to explicitly engage art practice as a mode of research incorporating the conventional process of posing a question, pointing to how the answer is reached, persuading others of the validity of judgement and of the contribution to knowledge that the body of work makes. Some believe research as a mode of artistic practice is usually seen as a crypto-scientific activity that is remote from creative activity and therefore remote from art. Part of the problem as one contributor sees it is the use of the term practice, “as if we were all country doctors or lawyers for whom practice is well established and governed by professional bodies. Since art is transgressive such usage should be abandoned”. Once a new research paradigm is clearly articulated he believes the term will be dropped by consensus.

Endnotes.

[1] Paraphrased from interview conducted on 26/05/04 with Siun Hanrahan of *Dublin Institute of Technology*.

[2] Professor Timothy Emlyn Jones, *Burren College of Art*, National Profile Survey, 04/06/04.

[3] Ibid

Anna Colford [DIT/IADT]

Art Practice, Peer-Review and the Audience for Academic Research

The panel, “What Can the Academy Do for the Artist?”, convened for the forthcoming symposium on *Research Questions*, is specifically concerned with the role and responsibility of the academy in relation to the development of practice-based research. Bringing together a number of practitioners from the fields of art, film and theatre, its function is to critically examine existing and possible structures. My interest in these issues is informed by my experience (shared with my colleague and fellow-convenor, Paula Gilligan) of both practice and academic research. My paper reflects upon this experience, situating it within the context of developments in art education and practice.

In her contribution to the *Working Papers in Art and Design*, Fiona Candlin has suggested that practice-based PhDs are often fraught with anxiety for candidates and their supervisors, because they are “institutionally uneasy”. [1] This uneasiness is linked to the fact that practice-based research (in the visual arts) “potentially demands at least two sets of incompatible competencies, one that satisfies the demands of the university, and one that looks to the non-academic structures of art production”. The academic emphasis on specialisation as a foundation for ‘competency’, enshrined in the peer-review system, can be seen to echo an earlier moment in *aesthetic* discourse. Candlin points out, for example, that the rigid separation of aesthetic and academic spheres (which persisted in many educational institutions until well after the 1960s) was exemplified by Greenbergian modernism:

For Greenberg, the delineation of art’s boundaries mutually ensured artistic competence and his own competence as an art critic. [...] Greenberg can only argue for the superiority of modernist art, if the ground upon which excellence is judged is kept clear, so competence is necessarily tied to an insistence on maintaining the boundaries of aesthetic criteria.

More recently, however, a different paradigm for the construction of competence has been advanced in the work of Foucault – shifting attention towards the institutional structures (such as peer-review) through which art and academic enquiry acquire recognition. In keeping with Foucault’s critique of

power, Candlin suggests that the “institutional uneasiness” that characterises the practice-based PhD may provide an “opportunity to critically reappraise academic territory”. In this respect, parallels may exist between practice-based research and feminist and conceptual art in the 1970s. But with the establishment of institutional precedents, such as the obligatory written component, opportunities for critical reappraisal may be limited. Candlin is not alone in suggesting that the privileging of the text has already worked against the acceptance of art practice as a valid mode of intellectual enquiry on its own terms. The text effectively serves to justify or validate investigation through practice, reducing practice to the status of scientific ‘data’. [2]

Candlin’s analysis is persuasive, but by focusing explicitly on questions of anxiety and “unease”, she seems to obscure moments of convergence between the academy and art practice, which would have been particularly significant in visual art education during the 1980s. During that period, my own practice was informed by the work of several practitioner-theorists working within the sphere of contemporary art, including Victor Burgin, Martha Rosler and Mary Kelly. Their approaches to practice would have been instrumental in the formation of academic disciplines such as visual culture. [3] Parallel points of convergence between practice and the academy have also been identified by Hal Foster and Jean Fisher, from a different perspective. Both note the prevalence of ethnographic models in art practice, with Fisher in particular arguing that these roles can be institutionally circumscribed, functioning to limit the scope of artistic practice and exchange. [4]

Candlin seems to suggest that the privileging of the written commentary within the practice-based PhD is largely a consequence of *academic* anxiety, a by-product of the process of institutionalisation. Yet the institutional emphasis placed on the text may also be partly linked to the critical prominence (during a formative period) of art practices incorporating the production of texts and images. I am thinking here particularly of Burgin, Rosler and Kelly, and also of the earlier work of Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen. These practitioner-theorists were all feted within the academy at one time or another, and may have occupied a far more “uneasy” position within the spheres of artistic production. It is possible that the institutional reception of their work helped to establish a template for artistic practice within the academy. This is not to undermine the critical significance of Burgin et al. – these artists consciously exploited connections between practice and academia – often seeking to counter the foundational tenets of modernist art criticism. But it is worth emphasising that the institutionalisation of practice-based research has been shaped by artistic production, as well as by academic convention.

The fraught relationship between art criticism and the academy may also have shaped the “uneasy” development of practice-based research. Although art criticism would appear to link practice with academia, many of its most prominent exponents seem intent on preserving careful distinctions between separate spheres. Critic and curator Dave Hickey has provided a brief but useful distinction between criticism and scholarship, in a short interview currently posted on the website of the New York Foundation for the Arts. [5] He states that, within the art world, “critics are interested observers who document their interests, as distinct from scholars and journalists, who are purportedly disinterested observers”. Hickey’s alignment of scholarship with disinterestedness is deliberately flippant, neatly bypassing decades of fraught poststructuralist debate and claiming for the critic the position of self-conscious (and by implication self-reflexive) commentator.

Yet, in theorising his own activity as a critic, Hickey blurs the boundaries between “interested” and “disinterested” observation. He clearly envisions the critic as an intermediary between the art world and the world beyond - to the extent that “most of what a critic writes about art is not written for the art world at all but for people who are interested in the art world.” So the critic acts as a conduit for other “interested” parties, who remain outside yet linked to the discursive formation of the art world. These interested parties include the buyers and sellers who place their trust in the critic’s “reputation”, and Hickey seems prepared to acknowledge the relationship between criticism and the marketplace. He is, however, far less direct about the ties that bind criticism to the academy - despite the fact that he actually adheres to some very traditional ‘academic’ notions of detachment.

For Hickey, the critic’s main function is to “stabilise” the continual flow of meaning that characterises the art world. (In contrast, the role of curators and artists is to create “instability”). This vision of criticism seems intimately tied to Hickey’s particular interest in art objects as “things” that stay “in the world”. Art objects, he emphasises, “survive as an ongoing critique” of the critic’s own activity of interpretation. This approach may seem attentive to the changing subjective experience of an artwork over time yet it accords the art object the status of unchanging “thing”, positioned outside history and so capable of functioning as a fixed point of reference. Hickey’s particular interest in the art object, as a “thing” that is distinct from the temporally constituted event of the exhibition, places him at odds with much postmodern art theory. He seems, for example, to dismiss the “theatricality” of the object encountered in its own time and space, as described in Michael Fried’s influential essay “Art and Objecthood”. [6]

Hickey's rejection of the artwork as event, coupled with his assertion of distinctions between criticism, scholarship and journalism, is in some ways oddly reminiscent of both Greenbergian aesthetics and academic convention. But it could also be seen to perform an interesting reversal of convention – by constituting the artwork as the subject (rather than object) of analysis. While Hickey claims criticism is primarily oriented towards an audience existing beyond the art world, he is personally interested in an ideal dialogue with artworks. This exchange, in which the art object persists as an ongoing critique of the critic's interpretation, parallels the ideal free exchange of views between academic "peers".

My own approach to writing about art differs sharply from Hickey's, perhaps because it was directly shaped by my experience of practice. As an artist, I developed projects with very specific audiences and sites in mind, informed by the analysis of cultural and social structures developed by Foucault and Bourdieu, among others. I never consciously approached the artwork as an object to be abstracted from the flow of time and space. Instead I focused on the particular ways in which reception may be structured by local context, through reference to art historical discourse or popular culture. My experience of PhD research, however, and in particular the system of peer-review, forced me to reconsider this approach and my own relationship to practice.

My PhD project, an analysis of Irish and international avant-garde film during the late 1970s and early 80s, evolved gradually as an extension of my concerns as an artist. Given my interest in the work of Foucault, identifying an institutionally approved methodology (discourse analysis) was not difficult. While I was interested in the wider cultural, economic and political structures that had shaped the revival of avant-garde film practice, I soon become focused on interdependencies between theory and practice. As my research developed, my principal goal was to reassert the significance of critical practice, countering a tendency within cinema studies to obscure the agency of the filmmaker as activist and/or critic. In keeping with this project, my research was disseminated via academic publications and conference papers, and oriented towards an academic audience. So, while I was engaged in a relatively conventional academic project, I began to identify contradictions within the peer-review system. The PhD process re-directed my attention toward practice, which began to emerge as the most appropriate or "proper" [7] site for the exploration of my research interests.

Ultimately, although I circulated elements of my research within the sphere of art and film practice (in art publications and through the informal exchange of texts), my PhD project was assessed and validated exclusively by academics. The question of peer-review remains a fraught one,

however, even though my research was and is not explicitly “practice-based”. Professional academic advancement is generally linked to the formal mechanisms of peer-review that are well established in publishing. These mechanisms are less obviously formalised within artistic production and, even when they are in operation, they may not be recognised as such by the academy. Evidently, while artistic production and academic enquiry are structurally linked in many ways, both spheres have a vested interest in the illusion of separateness. Ideally, self-reflexive approaches to practice and research, taking many different forms, will continue to provide opportunities to explore interconnections between these spheres. But it seems important to emphasise that the tensions between practice and the academy pre-figured, and continue to extend beyond, the practice-based PhD.

Endnotes.

[1] Fiona Candlin, “A Proper Anxiety? Practice-based PhDs and Academic Unease”, *Working Papers in Art and Design*, volume 1, 2000 (accessed 22/3/05)
<http://www.herts.ac.uk/artdes1/research/papers/wpades/vol1/candlin2full.html>

[2] Tim Marshall and Sid Newton, “Scholarly Design as a Paradigm for Practice-based Research”, *Working Papers in Art and Design*, volume 1, 2000 (accessed 22/3/05)

[3] There are strong parallels between the work of practitioner-theorists such as Burgin and Kelly (and also Jo Spence) and the methodological approaches outlined in Gillian Rose’s *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Interpreting Visual Objects* (Sage, 2000), a common handbook for undergraduate art students.

[4] Hal Foster, “The Artist as Ethnographer”, *The Return of the Real*, Cambridge, Mas.: MIT Press, 1996: 171-204; Jean Fisher, “The Work Between Us (1997)” in *The Vampire in the Text: Narratives of Contemporary Art*, London: Institute of International Visual Arts (inIVA), 2003: 268.

[5] Dave Hickey, interviewed by Ilana Stanger, “Dave Hickey, Art Critic and Theorist”, NYFA Interactive, (accessed 20/3/05) <http://www.nyfa.org/level4.asp?id=118&fid=1&sid=51&tid=168> (Many thanks to Mark Garry for drawing my attention to this interview).

[6] Fried’s essay was originally published in *Artforum* in 1967 and is reprinted in *Art in Theory 1900-1990*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, Blackwell, Oxford, 1993

[7] Jean Fisher theorises art’s “proper” concerns and domain in “The Work between Us”, 269.

Dr. Maeve Connolly [IADT]

The Criminal in the Academy: Practice Based Research as a Form of Theft.

The panel (“What Can the Academy Do for the Artist?”) convened for the forthcoming symposium on *Research Questions*, is specifically concerned with the role and responsibility of the academy in relation to the development of practice-based research. Bringing together a number of practitioners from the fields of art, film and theatre, its function is to critically examine existing and possible structures. My fellow convenor, Maeve Connolly, has captured our motivations in participating in this conference: both of us have practice backgrounds and both of us are now lecturers and academics. My background and training are in theatre firstly and in then film, although I initially specialised in Art in first level education when I trained as a primary teacher in 1984. In the period 1986 to 2005, I went from an interest in amateur drama, directing school drama projects in the Liberties and doing stand-up comedy in the late 1980s; to studying drama in the Samuel Beckett Centre, Trinity College Dublin as a mature student in 1990; to writing, directing and acting in professional theatre productions and some films; and finally to a PhD in film, lecturing in critical theory and practice and publishing papers on cinema, performativity and cultures of consumption. In this paper I propose to raise a few points about the relationship between the academy and the artist/practitioner in the field of drama and my own particular story.

The relationship between theatre/drama and the Academy has a very long history. The particular definition of theatre is relevant here. The Academy’s interest in theatre privileged, and continues to privilege in some quarters, the text over the performance. The kind of theatre which became an object of enquiry for the Academy, was thus very narrowly defined; Eurocentric, canonical, classicist and so on. The popular theatre has also had a relationship with the Academy - firstly as a sort of ‘other’ against which ideologically driven notions of what constituted ‘great’ drama could be set, [1] and, secondly, as a space in which the ideas of those who had somehow fallen foul of the Academy (Machiavelli is one example) - could find a public. As a multidisciplinary form, Western theatre has always been a space for the communication of many different types of academy-based research - notably philosophy, but also architecture, theories of the body and science, communication theory, history, feminism etc. The theories of the Renaissance, in

Shakespeare's time, were communicated on stage to general audiences in popular form. Marxism, the product of academic and library-based research, also found a forum in the theatre 'for the people' of the Constructivists and of Bertolt Brecht. In the world of the Constructivists, driven by the principle that a new form must be fought for, both practice and research are inseparable: 'the putting on of a dramatic production is a class war in miniature'. [2] In his attempt to construct 'new forms', Brecht looked to the popular forms such as cabaret but in the end his work could not escape the 'state nobility'. Within a few years, Academics were his gatekeepers and the archaeologists of the popular cultures of the Weimar Republic which were his inspiration; he is now included in the classical canon.

For socially engaged practitioners, the relationship with the academy is worth examining. The radical element of the practice becomes appropriated by the academy and is removed from the domain of public cultures to be re-packaged in endless academic texts as art and high-culture for bourgeois spectator/student. The work thus becomes an instrument of the domination and symbolic violence the practitioner might have initially sought to resist. The function of the academy in relation to practice in the cultures of late-capitalism is even more complicated. Non-Western filmmakers, who come to the attention of Western critics, have found that their films, in spite of initially being conceived as local stories in local languages or as critiques of imperialism and colonisation (such as Sembene's *Fort Thoyard*) are only circulated on the Western cultural festival and art-house circuit. Their knowledge that their main audience is the Western academy, and not the local or national public, eventually becomes reflected in their practice. Aesthetic ideology, disseminated by both practitioners and academics/critics, is the key practice by which such work is converted from use-value to exchange value.

Aesthetic(s) as an approach sets out to determine the transcendent and timeless aspects of beauty, and to discriminate against what is contingent and therefore 'not art'. [3] The comment that an artist is a 'craftsman' (note the gender) who "needs no theory and that academic discourse in some ways imposes a process that cannot be 'innocent, value-free process', (Nevanlinna, 2004, p.81), in my view, reflects an aesthetic ideology - it suggests that art as a practice is somehow both innocent and value-free and it misrecognises the function of the academy in the art-as-cultural-production process. It privileges the 'great man discourse'. Dr. Mark Bates of the Samuel Beckett Centre, in his PhD Thesis on the American theatre director Peter Sellers, summed up the relationship between art, particularly avant-garde art, thus: 'post-modernity has accomplished the avant-garde dream of

incorporating art with life - art has been commodified. In fact the whole discourse of the avant-garde has been appropriated by capital in the USA'. [4]

In Bates' view the term avant-garde has become a label of exclusivity and cultural currency, the avant-garde is almost exclusively patronized by the bourgeois audiences its European predecessors set out to attack. As American mass culture explodes around the world, so "increasingly the term 'avant-garde' has come to signify 'art' itself." [5] Hobbs argues that the neutralization of the avant-garde as art in America was compounded by institutionalization, by the academy. The massive growth in fine-arts programmes at Universities meant that artists had the opportunity to do their 'edgy' work and get paid for it. Almost every major avant-garde theatre director in the USA now has a teaching position in the Universities - while what remains of 'serious' theatre is impossible to imagine without the interest of university drama departments for whose digestion almost all avant-garde performance is positioned. As Bates comments: 'the fate of the avant-garde is now solely in the hand of the university, the gallery and the festival, keeping this precious flame alive for the delight of the intellectually curious and the impossibly chic'. [6] The focus of the artist within the institutions shifts away from the social and becomes individualized-fixated on questions of individual expression (censorship/funding) and self-fulfillment. [7] In the context of cultures of consumption, where all is 'seen as fashion, taste and style', there can be nothing for the aesthetic as a distinct realm and practice to detach itself from or connect with (Connor 1989: chap.2).

The view of Mark Bates in the above passage is interesting because, like me, he went through the drama degree programme in Trinity. We both did PhD by research at the Samuel Beckett Centre and we both moved field from the theatre to popular cultures and to media and film. [8] Four years of learning about the canon and the avant-garde theatre of the Western world and the first thing we did when we graduated was to abandon that world - Mark went further than me - he also abandoned the academy. This shift from avant-garde theatre to the popular was common among a number of our graduating class at the Samuel Beckett Centre. The source of my uncomfortable relationship with theatre as 'art practice' was my formation in critical theory. As for 'academic research', my continued interest in popular forms of performance such as cabaret and my work in comedy theatre was the biggest barrier to progress in the first four years of my PhD. Getting a job as a lecturer shifted the balance to the academic somewhat, although when the teaching was practice-

focused, as it was until recently, I went back to writing and to popular performance, this time in film. As I finished my PhD, my practice ceased for a while but I do not know if it is at an end.

My main arena is now the academic circuit which has its own rules of engagement and its own exclusive audiences. In my view, it is impossible to separate my practice from my academic research - the practice background is always present - it resonates oddly but consistently in my academic work, a factor frequently remarked on by those who describe themselves as 'pure academics'. The body, so central to performance, the repressed 'other' of logocentric academia, is always 'centre-stage' in my work. As a result, I am aware that, for me, neither research nor practice is ever pure – they are always in-between, composite, disruptive and ambiguous. In deference to Julia Kristeva, academic and writer of detective fiction, given that there is no language outside bourgeois ideology, the only possible rejoinder to the question of 'practice based research' is neither confrontation nor destruction but theft. [9] Fragment the old texts of academia - the PhD, the thesis, the masters - and change their features in according to formulae of disguise. The mask has always been a great tool in theatre and in everyday life.

Endnotes.

[1] An example of this academic discourse can be found in *Classic Theatre, the Humanities in Drama*: 'Drama comes from the Greek word meaning 'to do' or 'to act', and a drama shows us the people doing things-talking, walking, fighting and so on. But behind all these hundreds of actions that take about two hours on the stage, there is some unifying idea, one large action or doing. [...] In this sense our lives, though full of action, rarely have an action. Every day we do many things, of course, but most of these things are unconnected. [...] In a play, however, there is, in the vocabulary of the drama critics, an action-a unified story that is presented to us through all the details. Perhaps we can clarify the nature of this sort of action by contrasting it with (the television programme) *All in the Family*. [...]. There is good entertainment in *All in the Family*, but from a dramatist's point of view, there is no *action*'. The authors go on to describe plays awarded the label 'classic', including modernist plays, as 'enduring works of art'. The book lists the University of each Author on the title page. See Sylvan Barnet, *Tufts University*, Morton Berman, *Boston University*, William Burto, *University of Lowell, Classic Theatre, the Humanities in Drama*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1975).

[2] 'Aware that each of the artists, who works in this complex art, performs his particular creative, class-ideological part, we find, within the theatre, an intense class-struggle-a crossing and clashing of different class interests. A historian of the theatre will doubtless make the most interesting and important discoveries along this road. The reciprocal and inseparable influences of playwrighting on the theatre and of the theatre on playwrighting, for the mutual development of each

art, are necessary for the presentation of the new class-ideological contents'. Gvozdev quoted in Mordecai Gorelik, *New Theatres for Old*, (1940, reprinted New York: Octagon Books, 1975), p.367.

[3] See Eagleton, (1990), Connor (1989) for critiques of aesthetic ideology.

[4] Mark Bates, Peter Sellars and the Persistence of Modernity, (Phd. Thesis, Trinity College Dublin , 2000), p.171.

[5] Stuart Hobbs, *The End of the American Avant-Garde*, New York: New York Uni. Press, 1997. pp.125-38.

[6] op. cit.

[7] op cit.

[8] Mark works for the BBC as a director and producer and my own research is focused very strongly on popular cultures-cinema is my main field of exploration.

[9] Julia Kristeva, *The Sense and Nonsense of Revolt*, trans, Jeanine Herman, (New York: Colimbia Uni. Press, 2000, 1st pub. 1996. p.212.

Dr. Paula Gilligan [IADT]

The practice–based PhD in industrial design

[This is a text produced from reflection on the direct experience of research at PhD level, and it challenges some of the familiar positions already adopted in this debate. MW]

This short paper examines the philosophy, the process and the method employed in a practice-based PhD study - the design of seating for orchestral musicians - and outlines some considerations and recommendations for future research at PhD level in the Faculty of Design. It is timely to review the experience – particularly as this PhD was a first for the Department of Industrial Design and the Faculty of Design.

In the absence of clear guidelines on practice-based research within the Faculty, much of the original philosophy and approach to the research in this study was based on the results of a survey of practice-based PhD's carried out by the *UK Council for Graduate Education* (1997). [1] The findings stated that the guiding principle and the goal of a PhD study should be that the work makes a **recognisable contribution to knowledge and understanding** in the chosen field of study, which in my case was orchestral musicians seating.

The demonstration of 'doctorateness' [2] was understood as representing the mastery of existing techniques and knowledge-base of the subject, a critical and analytical attitude towards them, an ability to apply them with a view to originating new knowledge and that the contribution could be judged to be valid and significant.

The competencies of the practice-based PhD were to accord with the broad requirements of doctoral submissions:

- To undertake a systematic enquiry, creation or design;
- To apply methods and techniques appropriate to the subject, in self-critical and rigorous ways;
- To grasp contingent areas of knowledge, context and performance/production;

- In documenting the process of origination in a way which is communicable to peers in a permanent and reproducible form;
- In developing a sustained and logical argument contextualised to relevant discourse;
- In justifying actions and decisions relating to process and product;
- To produce work which is valid and original – arising out of the above and of a high quality.

The definition of the ‘problem’ to be solved was, in this case, to design a chair which would be suitable, acceptable and functional for musicians using the variety of instruments required by a full-scale orchestra. The hypothesis of the thesis centred on the application of a particular form of seating – forward-tilt – and the objective of the project was to assess its potential.

The best word to sum up the totality of the design approach would have to be ‘holistic’: meaning a synthesis of three elements:

- Usability - understanding and resolving all the ergonomic and postural factors; the relation between different performers and their individual instruments, which impose very different requirements on them;
- Mechanical and technical performance - understanding and resolving issues to do with stacking, adjustment mechanisms, materials and the production process;
- Aesthetics - exploring and identifying an appropriate and acceptable form and style.

In the search for a solution all three elements were tackled, to some degree separately, but each informing the other. The design process was stimulated by the logical and by the instinctive at the same time - some judgments were proven by reference to available data and tests and some, such as aesthetics, were subjective. The scholarly aspect in this study was seen to be the cross-fertilization and distillation of all knowledge generated in relation to these issues and the interpretation of this in a design solution.

The activity was one of empirical testing and literature review on the one hand balanced by activities such as sketching and drawing, modelling, conceptual thinking, experimentation with form, physical research of materials and construction.

While this was a design and not a scientific study, a great deal of the work was informed by the collation of facts, statistics, data and testimony. The marriage of the two was the thrust of the thesis: an integrated process interweaving the two strands, in which the facts guided the creative search, the ideas generated further questions that needed factual answers which, in turn, sparked further creative activity. This was understood to be at heart a practice-based doctoral thesis – in the belief that the facts and the knowledge alone, without the creative impulse, will rarely generate a novel interpretation.

With regard to the question of balance between the practice and the written component, the understanding was clear – the written thesis and the creative practice are of equal importance. The length of the thesis was 40,000 words – half the word-count for an ‘established’ doctoral submission. The amount of creative practice did not arise - it being a question of judgement by the supervisors as to the quality and capacity of the work to illustrate, without ambiguity, the originality of the design.

Overall the system adapted proved successful in the creative, intellectual and imaginative pursuit of a solution. A logical argument was communicated and the hypothesis / design proposal was proven to have made a positive contribution to the seating needs of performing musicians.

The final submission consisted of a thesis, an exhibition of work and a *viva voce*. As part of the appendices in the written document a full record of exhibited work was included – giving access to the full body of knowledge in one document in a permanent and reproducible form. Computer models were presented in both hard copy and on CD form, and also appended.

Recommendations:

- The use of the term ‘practice-based’ is in many respects a difficulty. The question constantly arises regarding the nature of practice in the ‘practice-based’ PhD and the connection between the practice and the written components. They should be regarded as equal, as it is clear that the contribution to knowledge and understanding is equal.

- While the use of the practice-based PhD in art and design is on the one hand positive, lending reinforcement to the unique visual language element within these fields, it signifies that the practice of art and design is in some way different to all other professions. This is not the case – in the academic context all study is based on practice within a specific field, regardless of whether this happens to be medicine, engineering or English literature. All scholars practicing within their discipline are conducting practice-based study. An engineer must practice within his discipline in order to contribute original knowledge and understanding in the field of engineering. All research is contingent on practice within its profession - designers and artists are no different. The use of the term practice in design and art should be seen only as part of the research methodology – as techniques appropriate to the subject.
- The use of the term practice may imply that there is a vocational component and a theoretical component and that these are in some way separate. It is often accepted, that studio based work is practice and that written work is theoretical. This scenario must be strictly avoided – there must be a clear link and interweaving of the two activities otherwise neither is relevant. The novel interpretation is the result of a creative impulse which is informed by many elements, including facts knowledge.
- The term ‘practice-based’ should be dropped – designers and artists should study at PhD level without special reference to the purported ‘difference’ of practice. The NUI award is PhD *not* ‘practice-based’ PhD.
- The current arrangement of 40,000 word written document plus exhibition of work is a good system. It is important that the full exhibited work is recorded in hard copy and appended to the thesis so that a full record of the work is kept in a permanent and reproducible form.
- Design is generally seen as a solution-focused activity and therefore designers are often referred to as ‘problem solvers’. There is an emphasis on achieving a successful outcome – the requirement is to provide a solution, which solves the problem. In a PhD study however, it is the contribution to knowledge and understanding that is paramount. It is as important to

know and understand why something failed, as it is to know that a design proposal (hypothesis) works successfully.

- The selection and choice of supervisor is essential to the successful outcome of the study. The relationship between the supervisor and student and their joint understanding of the approach, methodology and process is crucial.

Endnotes.

[1] See <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/filesup/UKCGE%20Practice-based%20doctorates.doc>

[2] The term ‘*doctorateness*’ here refers to the qualities that warrant the award of a PhD, as used by the *UK Council for Graduate Education*.

The relationship between research in the ‘academy’ and practice in the ‘field.’

Time was when a BA would suffice. John Galliano’s degree collection in the early 1980’s was bought by *Browns* (one of the cutting edge boutiques in London) which eventually led him, but not without years of hardship, to the *House of Dior* in Paris. Then came the “MA Period”. Alexander McQueen’s MA degree collection was bought by Isabella Blow and though her introduction quickly led him to the *House of Givenchy*.

One could question: ‘what good would a PhD have done for them?’

However we all know of supremely talented design graduates who struggle to make their way in the ‘field’ post BA and indeed post MA, so there are undoubtedly valid and positive reasons for further academic support for our most innovative designers. Their ideas, concepts and prototypes may otherwise wither without the provision of a unique research environment that can enable them to develop and contribute to the aesthetic, technical, material, cultural and commercial application of design in its broadest sense.

In my mind a meaningful relationship between research in the ‘academy’ and practice in the ‘field’ can be achieved at post graduate level by including direct contact with host companies. Design, product development and marketing are we know the primary parties that feed new and strategic research that reveal pathways to innovation and success. As an educator I believe it is essential to discover techniques that sustain innovative thinking. Postgraduate students may know about research, but do they ultimately have the skills to be entrepreneurs?

Thus internships within a variety of top name international companies should be guaranteed for all design postgraduate students.

That is all very fine and dandy for the students but what about the staff who are supervising at postgraduate level? This leads me right back to my first question, what good would a PhD have done them?

We, the educators are the 'them' in this context. There is confusion about staff research activities. What counts as research versus what counts as professional practice? Can we somehow fuse the 'academy' with the 'field'? Staff need the opportunity and time to engage in 'accountable' research within the institution. Perhaps research fellowships that go hand in hand with staff development programmes, perhaps through key partnerships with other agencies that could eventually form the Research Centre of Design for Industry giving the 'value added' ring of confidence and of course benefits to all parties.

It is predictable that in the future the PhD will replace the MA as a requirement for teaching staff. A scary thought, but then 'we' the educators in the 'academy' may fair better in understanding the nature of the 'field'. Current creative enterprises articulate the value of a postgraduate educational experience and encourage multidisciplinary working. All insights that are crucial to develop and sustain truly innovative thinking that will go a long way in shaping the future roles of our designers and dare I say it educators. I'd better sign up for a PhD pronto!

Prof. Angela Woods [NCAD]

Research possibilities within an art and design context.

Traditionally research within an art and design third level college has been concerned with art history and critical theory. However research can and does mean different things at different times, also it involves various approaches to how a question or set of questions might be addressed.

In art and design education, the debate around research continues to raise critical issues for staff, in relation to their research interests and because new areas of provision are being developed at a post-graduate level. Issues arising include, examining the use of appropriate research methodologies, the place of text within art and design research, and whether all research should be instrumental in its focus. At a wider level this debate raises concerns that research through art, may not be recognised as a legitimate form of research. The question, as to whether a rigorous investigation of art-making or ideas underpinning art-making, can be recognised in its own right, without having to turn itself inside out, in order to fit research criteria developed at governmental level, that have more to do with advancing economic targets and less to do with developing lived culture, remains open ended. Furthermore as changes in policy at third level are signalled, one wonders if, research, art, design and economics, can be happy bedfellows?

At NCAD, the development of a research culture is recognised by staff as important to the future of the college. Since the college supports more than one approach to making art and design, then, varied methods and approaches to research are required. Consequently it should be possible to develop a coherent framework for research, which recognises multiple methodologies and perspectives, without canonising one over another.

In an effort to pursue an opening out of the debate around what we mean by research, and how it might be conducted within an art, design and educational context, I thought it useful to examine action-research as a methodology undergoing a revival at this time. Generally, I am in favour of increasing the range of qualitative research methodologies useful within an arts education and wider context.

Since the 1970's, there has been a revival of action-research, which is favoured as a research methodology in educational, nursing, and business contexts. Originally action research emerged in the US in the 1930's and is attributed to Kurt Lewin, who developed it as a means to address social concerns prevalent at that time. Action-research operates at a number of levels enabling the individual practitioner to focus on a problem related to their practice and plan actions leading to change and improvements in their own practice or in the context in which they work.

Often it is the individual practitioner who initiates the process, though regularly, action-research involves colleagues and/or other groups in the research processes. Action-research is a participatory and an applied form of research. Furthermore it can look to address issues of power and empowerment acting as a dynamic for change within a community setting or an organisation. Action research deals with practical problems that are of interest to practitioners. Initially the researcher identifies an issue or problem, often they investigate written sources related to the subject, undertake to gather data through observation, and or through survey/interview and then following analysis of the material, clarification of the issues, they can plan other actions, which is followed by; further analysis, critical reflection and documentation.

By focusing on practical problems, action research attempts to reduce the gap between research and practice, and encourages teachers, trainers and others to become active researchers who transform their practice. Action research like other forms of research is concerned with creating new knowledge (often practical) and understanding. The question of knowledge, what is new knowledge, how knowledge is generated, how it is valued, what is not valued, can provide powerful insights into the politics of knowledge and professional practice. The rigor of action research as a research method and concerns for the quality of qualitative research continue to be debated. However in uncertain and unpredictable contexts, the limitations of technical rationality as the principal theoretical mode of research have been challenged.

Action research is an approach to research, I am not advocating that all artists, educationalists or designers step up and take it on board. However increased exposure to a range of research possibilities (methodologies?) and more debate on research for art and design, is important in supporting increased diversity and critical reflection in professional practice.

[Extracts on research in art and design practices I]

Research is just another model?

Rather than taking research as a way of understanding or defining artistic practice, as a redefinition or reevaluation of artistic practice, I would propose considering research as a particular institutional structure, or framework in terms of a basis, setting, context or platform (institutional, physical, social, intellectual) which delineates as well as limits and excludes certain possibilities for artistic practices.

I think it is important to stress this last point. I want to explicitly step away from notions that would, intentionally or not, represent art as a field free from constraints, from paradigms, from power structures, and I know that we all slip too easily (probably with well intentioned attempts to defend what we care about, have an investment in, have a passion for) into a language naturalizing art as a domain that is given as free and open, and that must be protected from, or liberated from, claims seen as foreign to it. As if artists would be a species with either a natural breeding ground, or natural enemies, rather than situated social beings with hybrid identities just like the rest of us. Maybe one of the reasons I am not so fearful of the research model, is because I think it is no less enabling or limiting than the autonomous art paradigm. It is simply enabling and limiting in different ways. So I propose to look at “research” as an institutional framework in which artists may or may not decide to work...

Extracted from Anke Bangma, “Observations and Considerations” in Annette W. Balkema and Henk Slager (eds.) Artistic Research, Lier en Boog Vol. 18. 2004.

[*Extracts on research in art and design practices 2*]

The role of the artefact in the PhD.

Some universities in the UK and elsewhere are beginning to adapt their regulations in response to demands from the art and design community. One can now find regulations that specify that a PhD thesis should be 80000 words, but in art and design, and other areas that offer so-called practice-based research, the word count can be reduced to 40000 words when the thesis is accompanied by a submission of artefacts. This has an implication: the initial 80000 word requirement referred not to an arbitrary 800000 words but 80000 words of relevant content. Therefore if as much as 50% of the word count is remitted in the case of artefact-thesis submissions we must conclude that the University considers that 50% of the relevant content can be communicated via the artefact. These artefacts are not just illustrating the thesis, they can be up to half of the argument of the thesis and of meeting the criteria for the award of the doctoral degree. I think we should be clear as a community what kind of content do those artefacts contribute and how do they do it. Is it possible for us to identify the kind of content that those artefacts are contributing that is particular to art and design because these sorts of regulations tend to apply only to art and design and yet we are not the only areas that produce artefacts. After all, physics students make experiments and test-beds, but they do not have special doctoral submission regulations.

Extracted from Dr. **Michael Biggs**, “Introduction: the role of the artefact in art and design research”, Vol. 3 *Working Papers in Art and Design*, University of Hertfordshire, England
[<http://www.herts.ac.uk/artdes1/research/papers/wpades/vol3/mbintro.html>]

[Extracts on research in art and design practices 3]

The role of the text in the PhD.

If we re-trace the beleaguered history of practice based higher degrees in Art and Design, we know that the CNAA [Council for National Academic Awards, now defunct], for instance asserted that the thesis resided in the written text: in 1974 they opined that "creative work must be clearly presented in relation to the argument of a written thesis" which must be set in the "relevant theoretical, historical or critical context". More recently, Fiona Candlin has argued against the findings of the UK Council for Graduate Education which again presumed that the thesis is to be contained in a written text. Candlin writes in an article in the *Journal of Art and Design Education*, (Vol 19.1) that the UKCGE:

...draws a firm line between theory and practice, places academic research in opposition to practice generally and artwork specifically, and maintains the stereotype of art as anti-intellectual...

We can now assert that art is a theorising practice; it can produce the research thesis; it cannot be said to be simply an illustration of it. In this context, it might be appropriate to take up just one example of the study of art as theory: for instance, Daniel Herwitz's study of the theorising of the Constructivists in "Making Theory, Constructing Art: On the Authority of the Avant-Garde". Here Herwitz makes a case for the equivalent theoretical thesis of artwork to written manifesto. He also makes a case for the intellectual and theoretical clarity of exposition of Naum Gabo's work and draws a comparison of this to Descartes's thinking in his "Meditations". [...]

Contemporaneously, theory is seen to be the domain of cultural, critical or art historical theorists rather than to artist theorists. However, it is possible to maintain that higher degree research is precisely the domain of the artist theorist. This is theory which is not written; it is made or realised through artwork. This theory is the result of ideas worked through matter.[...] It may well be dependant upon the relationship between the written text and the artwork but it is demonstrative of the intellectuality of making, which is not the same as the intellectuality of writing.

[...] We could say that the demonstration of the intellectuality of making or realising artwork is effected (at the moment), through the combination of artwork and written text(s). It is certainly the case that we are seeing the re-emergence of the artist scholar. S/he was predicted by the first European Academy of Art in the sixteenth century and has been more-or-less undermined ever since simply because in art practice the theoretical premise is realised through artwork.

Extracted from Katy McLeod "The Functions of the Text in Practice Based PhD Submissions", Vol.1 Working Papers in Art and Design, University of Hertfordshire, England. [http://www.herts.ac.uk/artdes1/research/papers/wpades/vol1/macleod2.html]

[Extracts on research in art and design practices 4]

The supervisor's lot.

Research in the context of art and design is a much-debated and vexed subject. In some respects it is difficult to see the cause of this anxiety, as most art and design research is scientific, of the humanities, or technological and only troublesome, therefore, to the extent that research is seen as problematic in these disciplines. The debate becomes most intense when discussing what is sometimes called "practice-based research", and in particular when it is argued that art-making or design-making is research, and when the artefact is put forward as the goal of the research - the embodiment of new knowledge. The issues in this debate are political, conceptual and practical.

Here, I approach the conceptual and practical issues from a personal point of view - that of my experience as a supervisor and examiner of PhD students. Recently, I have found myself confronting distinctive practical problems when supervising some PhD students (i.e., those where art- or design-making is central to their "research" programmes) which I have not been able to resolve through the application of accumulated experience of past research projects. Of course, this might simply reflect my own supervisory shortcomings. Nevertheless, I have come to the conclusion that the ways of research familiar to me cannot provide the answers I need. Some art- and design-making "research" projects are different in ways that require me to go beyond the ways of research with which I am familiar if I am to be a useful supervisor and fair examiner.

Extracted from Stephen Scrivener, "Reflection in and on Action and Practice in Creative-Production Doctoral Projects in Art and Design", Vol.1 Working Papers in Art and Design, University of Hertfordshire, England.

[<http://www.herts.ac.uk/artdes1/research/papers/wpades/vol1/scrivener1.html>]

[*Extracts on research in art and design practices 5*]

Openness.

There is a very real need to argue for an expanded understanding of research methods and understandings of knowledge as they relate to areas of practice. This is particularly so for Design as it currently finds itself mis-fitting in traditional university knowledge and research structures. The article, by John Wood, "The culture of academic rigour: does design research really need it" raises many substantial issues for those of us involved in the development of graduate studies programmes in areas of practice-based academic research. In expanding our understanding of knowledge, we need to ensure that we are not inflating the centrality of one practice over another. We need to ensure, in our elaborations of Design ways of knowing and doing that we do not diminish our own arguments through a denial of the significance, to Design research, of other ways of knowing and doing.

Keith Russell, *Why the Culture of Academic Rigour Matters to Design Research: Or, Putting Your Foot into the Same Mouth Twice*, Vol. 2 *Working Papers in Art and Design*, University of Hertfordshire, England.

[<http://www.herts.ac.uk/artdes1/research/papers/wpades/vol2/russell.html>]

Appendix: The *Frascati Manual*

Definition of Research

The definition of research is a matter of some contention and debate internationally and across the various domains of knowledge, and not just in the context of art and design. The international standard reference tool in this context is the OECD *Frascati Manual* (first edition 1963) [1] which is designed to provide definitions which provide a basis for constructing surveys of research and development work, and which consequently inform policy development. The *Frascati Manual* establishes a framework of definition which uses the construct “Research & Development” – R&D – which arguably lends primacy to science and technology but which may also help provide a framework for developing an understanding of research which is informed by the specificity of the knowledge domain of art and design.

The definition asserted in the *Frascati Manual* (and repeated by *Forfas*) is that research and experimental development comprise:

creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.

A key strategy of definition in the *Frascati Manual* is to draw a distinction between research and

- Education and training
- Other related scientific and technological activities
- Other industrial activities
- Administration and other supporting activities

The basic criterion for distinguishing research from related activities is:

the presence [...] of an appreciable element of novelty and the resolution of scientific and/or technological uncertainty, i.e. when the solution to a problem is not readily apparent to someone familiar with the basic stock of common knowledge and techniques for the area concerned.

In applying the *Frascati* definition to practice in art and design, the following considerations are proposed:

- It is proposed to include the reflexive interrogation of the categories “research” and “knowledge” under the heading “creative work.” This means that the nature of research, and the nature of knowledge and related constructs are open to interrogation by the research process itself.
- It is proposed to interpret the term “undertaken on a systematic basis” to include the critical reflective processes typical of what Schön has termed “the reflective practitioner” and not to reduce this term simply to an ungrounded notion of “scientific method.” [2] What constitutes a “systematic basis” is a domain-specific construct, which will vary across knowledge domains and disciplines.
- It is proposed to interpret the term “new applications” as including works of art and design, treatises and related outcomes which have “an appreciable element of novelty” and which are not substantially reducible to “the basic stock of common knowledge and techniques for the area concerned.” It is important to note that in some degree there is a convergence of values inherent in contemporary art and design practices and in research culture with respect to “innovation.”
- It is proposed that the criterion of “critical reflection” and the criterion of “novelty” be understood as judgments based on domain expertise and peer assessment and evaluation, rather than on pre-specified canons.
- It is proposed in this way to allow the open-ended nature of the research enterprise to be accommodated appropriately, without loss of rigour or of domain-specificity (e.g. those particular qualities, discourses and contexts which make art & design practices different from other activities.) While at the same time it is proposed to accommodate in this way those research actions which seek to problematise the boundaries and make-up of the given knowledge domain.

Endnotes.

[1] [<http://www1.oecd.org/publications/e-book/9202081E.pdf>]

[2] Donald A. Schön (1987) *Educating The Reflective Practitioner*. Donald Alan Schön (1930-1997) trained as a philosopher, but it was his concern with the development of reflective practice and learning systems within organizations and communities for which he is remembered. Significantly, he was also an accomplished pianist and clarinetist – playing in both jazz and chamber groups. This interest in improvisation and structure was mirrored in his academic writing. A later publication, *Frame Reflection* (Schön and Rein 1994) is concerned with the ways in which intractable policy controversies can be reconciled, and may also be of value in the current debate.