

Artistic Research, Knowledge and Music Education

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Abstract.

Artistic research is concentrated on the creative process resulting into an art work, challenging an artist to study his/her own creative process and to penetrate into the depths of this process. It is conducted in all artistic directions, and the process of achieving results may go beyond a separate discipline and move to the transdisciplinary field. Therefore, it is natural that often artistic research methods intersect with methods of other research traditions, contributing to accumulation of knowledge. Though, what is the nature of knowledge that is gained through artistic and not scientific research? Art and science form a single cultural space used for the development of humanity. This means that the research carried out by the artist in any case meets some scientific criteria, while maintaining artistic approaches. Thus, artistic research conducted by an artist not only reflects the nature of a work of art, but also contains to some extent the attributes characteristic of the art criticism. Therefore, in artistic research the researcher tries to answer the same questions as in scientific research. The paper discusses the similarities and differences of these two research forms, as well as the impact artistic research has on music education.

Keywords: artistic research; classical music; music education; creativity; knowledge.

1. Introduction

Artistic research is concentrated on the creative process resulting into an art work. As a rule, it challenges an artist to study his/her own creative process and thus allows him/her to penetrate into the depths of this process. It is conducted in all artistic directions, and the process of achieving results may go beyond a separate discipline and move to the transdisciplinary field. Therefore, it is natural that often artistic research methods intersect with methods of other research traditions. The co-authors of the present article, Nino Jvania and Tamar Zhvania write:

Artistic research shares the aim of any scientific research, contributing to accumulation of knowledge in a given field, though, it frees a researcher from excessive formalities such as obligatory research outcomes stated in a written form – this function could be taken over by a piece of art through which the knowledge is built upon the practice. (Jvania & Zhvania, 2019)

What is the significance of this type of research and the knowledge gained from it?

1.1 Artistic Research and Gained Knowledge

In the introduction to the book “Artistic Research - Theories, Methods and Practices”, the authors write:

We are about to forge a path through what may be unknown terrain, a path along which we will have to get used to the strange and demanding role of the pioneer. What we have set out to do and write about is something which until now did not exist, or at least as far as we know. (Hannula et al., 2005)

Though, how new is this form of the research?

The art, along with the science, has always been a way of studying, researching the world around us. Moreover, art and science are not separate fields. Emerging from two different dimensions, they form a single cultural space used for the development of humanity. This means that the research carried out by the artist in any case meets some scientific criteria, while maintaining artistic approaches. Thus, artistic research conducted by the artist not only resembles the nature of a work of art, but also contains to some extent the attributes characteristic of the art criticism. Therefore, in artistic research the researcher tries to answer the same questions as in scientific research. Conclusion vary depending on who answers the question, whether the scientist or the artist. The difference lies in the ways of finding the answers and the forms of expression.

The artistic researcher follows the path of his/her artistic experience. Artistic experience, in this new type of research, becomes the regulator of the research process and a form of reflection of the result. In addition, it is difficult to define the research method precisely because the research process often coincides with the process of creating a work of art, where the ways of accomplishing the set tasks are artistic, representing a cascade of rational and intuitive solutions. Therefore, as is characteristic of a work of art, the result of artistic research may be clear or vague, but it still embodies artistic knowledge. Thus, the knowledge that artistic research seeks is rather sensory, intuitive. A Finnish philosopher Juha Varto states, that

If we approach the issue from the point of view of the critique of knowledge, it is certain that the concentration on knowledge according to the programme of the Enlightenment has, to a certain extent, clarified, simplified crystallised our view of how everything works. At the same time, it has removed from our vision a great number of phenomena, only because they cannot, for some reason, be introduced as objects of knowledge or as their part, as our view of knowledge is exclusive and restrictive. (Hannula et al., 2014)

Consequently, art is a different form of not only expression, but knowledge. Artistic research gives us a new resource of knowledge and a new form of education.

There are two forms of artistic research:

- The research process uses an artistic resource for a result that produces new knowledge.
- The result of research is the art product itself which contains new knowledge.

What is the importance of artistic research and the knowledge gained from it? We are accustomed to explaining everything verbally. Artistic research, on the contrary, proves that art is able to provide information in such a way that it is not necessary to verbally explain the issue in order to make it perceivable. Consequently, this type of research brings humanity back to the natural state of understanding the thought, where knowledge is rather intuitive.

Intuitive knowledge means a higher degree of intellect when the human brain works in a natural way and it is able to solve logical tasks painlessly, without undue pressure.

Understanding does not mean just drawing conclusions verbally. If we can communicate and share opinions using our feelings, it does not mean that we forget how to talk. We just learn how to perceive each other much more easily.

Thus, artistic research is another way of producing both knowledge and art. Therefore, as Eka Chabashvili states in one of her articles, developing research methodology and establishing rules does not mean that the creative process should be framed. The artistic process is equal to the process of scientific research, but it must be free (Chabashvili, 2020). This privilege empowers art to do innovative and incredible things.

1.1.1 To write, or not to Write, that is the Question

The other question is, how we should record knowledge acquired through artistic research.

The problem of writing, or rather scientific writing, has been one of the most actively discussed issues since the birth of the artistic research. Reflection is an integral part of any research, and its written form (along with the scientific style) has become an integral part of scientific research. Artistic research has also embedded this essential attribute of scientific research, especially since writing about art is by no means unusual for the arts. However, in the wake of the development of artistic research, the question is often asked - how necessary is it to record the acquired knowledge and results in a written form when the work of art itself can clearly demonstrate the results? In case of music, for example, at present day “reflection is not only ontologised as a cognitive process, but also as a musical process with characteristics and qualities” (Georgii-Hemming et al., 2020). Artistic research has questioned the necessity of well-known forms of scientific writing and contributes to the establishment of unconventional forms of research reflection.

The Vision Statement of CARPA 7 (The Colloquium on Artistic Research in Performing Arts) – one of the leading platforms of the field, states that

When understood as a form of knowledge production, artistic research has both utilised and questioned the known forms of scientific writing in portraying the artistic undertakings inherent to it. Even the necessity to include any explanatory text in artistic research has been argued against in an effort to substantiate the arts’ own most aesthetic and epistemological qualities. In appreciating these qualities, artistic research appropriates forms of conventionalised writing by disputing, disrupting and playing with their institutionalised practice and creates completely new forms of reflective articulation.

Artist-researchers increasingly work with multi-media formats to creatively utilise, challenge and supplement words and written texts, and to integrate reflective appraisal into artworks themselves. The technologies of writing, including digital ones, offer opportunities for exploring the potentials and limits of the materials, media and approaches to writing in artistic research. (CARPA 7, 2021)

As a result, CARPA 7 organizers challenge artist-researchers “to examine together how to carve, tear, scratch, score, sketch, draw, trace, design and outline artistic research in performing arts” (CARPA 7, 2021).

What the artistic research results look like is strikingly evident in online artistic research journals. Placing research in the virtual world offers much richer opportunities for the researcher. For example, the leading journal in the field, the Journal of Artistic Research

(<http://www.jar-online.net>), “provides a digital platform where multiple methods, media and articulations may function together to generate insights in artistic research endeavours” (JAR, n.d.). It allows artists to create online expositions through which interested colleagues can browse the virtual spaces, explore the results recorded not only in written form, but also in the form of audio recordings and various visual materials (video, photos, graphics). Expositions for both JAR and a number of other leading journals in the field are created on the leading online platform for artistic research at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net> – “a non-commercial, collaboration and publishing platform for artistic research provided by the Society for Artistic Research” (Research Catalogue, n.d.), which allows researchers to not only submit applications for publication through the portal, but also independently publish their research projects, make expositions open to the public.

Though, the main question is: What does artistic research give to art education and what impact can it have on art in general, and music and music education in particular?

2. Artistic Research and Music Education

The creative process involves searching for something new in oneself, researching, finding non-standard ways of solving problems. It is a well-known example that in the Baroque era the main task of a musician was to search for novelties, to discover them. The notion of a musician from the Middle Ages onwards united a composer, a performer, perhaps even a poet and an actor. To paraphrase Tamar Zhvania, the gradual separation of professions has created musicians of different professions, developing in different educational ways. Performers pursue a rather training-oriented profession from an early age on. The search for novelty became the prerogative of composers, while research became the main task of music theorists (Zhvania, 2021). Quite precise standards have been established, and only following them it is possible to achieve success in these professions. In today's society, where consumption is the main driving force, all fields of art in general, including music and music education, have to establish their place within such a reality, which is not an easy task.

Classical music itself faces a crisis (although we cannot say that this crisis is only characteristic of this era). For music education, the concepts of "employment", "labor market", "success", which is measured by "selling" oneself (one's business) in this market, have become as relevant as, for example, for the field of business administration. The traditional ways and means by which "success" is achieved are also in crisis. If the formula for success is market-oriented, it turns out that this market dictates the direction of art development today. What does this "market" expect from music - fun, entertainment? Art music audience is diminishing step by step, losing young generations. Consequently, the "demand for the product" decreases, which lowers the "price" of music and music education in the same "market" of education. Yet the questions arise: What is art? What does it serve? What does it seek? What does it try to prove or deny?

This is where we need to get back to the issue of gained knowledge. Some phenomena that are important to humans may not be considered exactly as knowledge, but they cannot be ignored. Crucial events and characteristics may be those that do not fall directly into the focus of knowledge but remain forever on the periphery of knowledge. An architect and artistic researcher Johan Verbeke states that

The arts, design and architecture are not involved in an exact logical understanding of our world (as are the exact sciences), but they complement this with a knowledge field which builds on human experience and behavior and is interwoven with cultural and societal development. As with any other discipline, the arts, design and architecture build on their own specific positions in relation to reality. (Verbeke, 2013)

What art serves and researches is precisely what is left beyond the scientifically substantiated knowledge. Consequently, innovations in the field of art education, trends in knowledge measurement and evaluation have created new challenges in this direction. There has been a need to establish a new type of research that would be legitimate to "prove" the reality beyond knowledge; a study that's main result is not a theoretical work but a work of art itself, but not any work, but the one that generalizes and establishes new, legitimate knowledge for art.

Perhaps it is the research-oriented education system and this new form of art-based research that will become one of the main opportunities to overcome the crisis in art, and in music in particular?!

3. Conclusion

Reflection-based education allows the artist to pursue a personal mission, a purpose in the profession. Reflection can also form the basis of the ability to speak and explain musical ideas and performances. The development and stimulation of such skills in itself leads to the need to ask questions, identify problems and find ways to solve them, which is extremely important for the development of art music as a field. Today, in a developed society and educational system, there is an important trend related to the definition of human social function. Sustainable development of a society is inconceivable without fundamental values, humanistic ideals, freedom, considering human being as the main value. In this "market" music will not have a competitor. The research-oriented music education will inevitably raise this issue, and perhaps the emphasis will shift from the musician's employment and market presence to the very role of music and the musician; Music, the main purpose of which is to search and research those "most important issues" which remain beyond scientific knowledge and consciousness. Finally, the legitimacy of freedom and humanistic ideals, baptized as the core values by the civilized world, may be achieved through such "evidences" obtained within the language of art, and music in particular.

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