

Researching Art and Design* through Practice: A critical engagement with context

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Abstract: The paper discusses the structure of the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Digital Arts degree at the University of Malta, with particular focus on the converging methodologies of art and design research which reflect contemporary art and design production. Through discussing two students' works, it comments on the expectations of current academic art and design research.

Keywords: practice as research, converging methodologies, reflective practice

Introduction

The seemingly odd amalgamation of artistic practice and academic research on offer in many universities at graduate levels, has in recent history placed stringent but also rewarding challenges on visual artists and designers who, from their part, continually strive for their outcomes to be considered as novel contributions to knowledge by the academia. Indeed, the debate around visual art and design production and research is wide and multi-faceted. It spans from an open arms agreement to critical and creative investigation happening in studios, galleries, on the Internet, in community spaces and other places where creatives actively engage with their forms of research through their grounding in practice (Sullivan, 2005), to the opposite end of the spectrum where reasoning sustains that art and also design production as a research activity not only turns art into philosophy or literary criticism, but also can prove a pitfall to the pursuit of funding sources (Elkins, 2009).

* In this paper, the word design is taken to mean graphic and communications design

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Daichendt (2012) likens this endeavour to a legendary routine by Woody Allen who plays Virgil Starkwell in the film *Take the Money and Run* (1969), where Starkwell's love for cello playing constrains him to audaciously play in a marching band. This impossible ordeal necessitates the musician to run ahead of the marching band carrying a chair and his cello to gain enough ground to permit him to play some notes until the band catches up with him anew. This unnerving method of cello playing outside its natural circumstance, is likened to art making in a research context by Daichendt (2012, p. 19) who states that "[...] artists fundamentally change their process in order to accommodate the institutional expectations aligned with research". Perhaps there is more to this metaphor than meets the eye as Starkwell's zany behaviour, typical of his iconic, end-of-the-century anxiously ridden persona (Pinsker, 2006), can not only arguably reflect the process of artmaking within an academic context, albeit exaggeratedly; but also exemplify the apprehensive character of the artist/student particularly at the initial, turbulent phase of the academic journey when still struggling with the concept of *kneading* of theory and practice. Reflecting the "liquid times" (Bauman, 2007) of contemporary artistic production, the demanding expectations by art and design educational institutions on candidates today, further complicates this state of being as they are not only expected to be artists, designers and researchers, but in order to make their mark within the art and design world, also theorists, performers, producers, installers, writers, entertainers, and shamans (Sullivan, 2010); dexterous with the myriad of materials at their disposal which range from pencil, paint and stone to media, text and time.

The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Digital Arts

Within such a complex scenario, the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Digital Arts offered by the Department of Digital Arts of the Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences at the University of Malta aptly focuses on the precise juncture where practice meets theory, and uses a common research methodology based on the critical engagement with context for both art and design research strands. This taught, practice-based Master's degree, covers and crosses between areas of visual production and research, with students' outcomes sited within the digital arts, the plastic arts, visual communications, the moving image and photography. The relatively short history of this degree has shown that a good number of the artist/designer-practitioners who enrol, do so on the fact that although the programme is practice based, it offers them a strong theoretical platform which helps them to critically forge their next phase of production or alternately evaluate their creative position.

The individuals that the programme normally attracts come from diverse creative practices within art and design, and include fine artists,

photographers, art teachers, graphic designers, animators and film-makers amongst others. This variety of creative backgrounds poses a challenge to the evaluative structure of the degree, a fact that has been addressed through the formulation of a course that embraces research methodologies that cover both art and design components. Such a challenge is emphasised when candidate researchers, coming from both art and design backgrounds are experienced practitioners who expect their research to contribute directly to their ongoing practice and move it forward, and who perceive the research journey as purely an exercise in self development and an opportunity to produce more work worthy of exhibition.

Practice-based and practice-led research

Although, when it comes to practice-based and practice-led research the terms *Art* and *Design* are many times bundled together, Scrivner (2000, 2002) has attempted to clarify the fundamental differences in undertaking by artists and designers, or better by 'fine arts research methods' and 'design research methods' at postgraduate level. As in our case, Scrivner was working with both art and design postgraduates, facing many of the same challenges of harbouring approaches from both ends of the research spectrum of art and design. Faced with students who propose a "creative-production project" and who "... do not wish to suspend their creative work or allow it to become separate from, or sub-ordinate to, the research activity" and whose "...primary interest is in producing artefacts, i.e., in creative production, [and] when their practice is closely associated with their self-identification as creators" (Scrivner, 2000, p. 2), creates a challenge for the candidate and also the supervisor to shape a rigorous research project which does not fall within a more straightforward, problem-solving ambit as, for example, in technological research projects. It is therefore through this viewpoint that Scrivner classifies the two major routes to artistic research as namely the "creative-production" and the "problem-solving". Although the two routes have no black-and-white distinction, the latter has a longer tradition, particularly within the third cycle degrees, and is endowed with well-established properties which can easily be classified and tested (Scrivner, 2000). The former's knowledge generation "is a by-product of the process rather than its primary objective" (Scrivner, 2000, p. 4) where knowledge is embedded in the artwork or product itself. This "creative-production" route may also incorporate some elements of problem solving and is invariably based on cultural, theoretical, historical and scientific research amongst other areas.

As each year's cohort present their Research Proposals, one notices that many shades of grey in the creative-production/problem-solving colour chart are touched upon, and the analogy of the eclectic cello player again takes on

different degrees of reality, where the framing of each problem and its relevant solution require a strategy which accommodates various levels of mediation and where the active responses to each proposal's concerns, issues and interests necessitates a propensity to flexibility and customised methodological intervention. Ultimately, as Scrivner (2000) suggests, the proposed project needs to be an "object of experience", surpassing its own embodied knowledge and ultimately contributing to human experience.

The Research Proposal phase, which is normally around the end of April of each year, heightens our awareness of this art/design intersection debate, as we encounter large dissimilarities in the design and methodologies of project proposals, "...and we find ourselves switching hats as we alternate between draft exegeses and consider, for example, the poetic goals of an installation artist one day and the pragmatic aims of an interaction designer the next" (Hamilton, J. G. & Jaaniste, L. O., 2009, p. 1). Although one finds a considerable amount of literature concerning art and design research, much of this material does not distinguish between the approaches of art and design. Hamilton and Jaaniste have tried to identify a way to characterize the differences in practice-led research across art and design through a spectrum which ranges from approaches which are described as *effective*, to ones that are termed as *evocative*. While both approaches point towards the process of making and experiencing of artefacts, it is argued that the two approaches are dissimilar in "...the contexts in which they arise; research intent; the research questions asked; the methods and processes of production; the role of the artefact in the resultant knowledge claims; and the explications of the value of the research in the exegesis". (Hamilton & Jaaniste, 2009, p. 2). Like Hamilton and Jaaniste, my intention is not to draw a clear distinction between practice-led research projects in art and design, but on the other hand, to establish successful research methodologies through the identification of the nature of each research and its inherent value in the art/design spectrum.

The establishing of such an effective-evocative spectrum is reliant on the identification of levels of human experience with the artefact and the dynamics at play in its relevant process; a procedure that ideally classifies the extent of the gamut - from the creation of a solution to an identified problem at one end, to the production of affect through evocation (Hamilton & Jaaniste, 2009), on the other. Within the realities of a digital arts course, where the digital component is invariably present albeit in varying degrees, such clear classifications are not always attainable, as outcomes may very well include varying measures of both ends of the spectrum, necessitating hybrid research methodologies and evaluation procedures. It becomes more clear and pertinent therefore, that the redeeming factor of such a situation is the common reliance on critical engagement with context.

Contrasting (and combining) Art and Design processes

Over the years, such a variety of projects proposed by the students continue to testify to the eclectic nature of the digital medium which has pervaded much of today's creative output, and which, through this same spread, touches with many areas of knowledge, using its knowledge base as framework for the work's foundation. Acknowledging the 'digital' as the guiding goal, each cohort's final outcomes vary considerably in utility and role, with each creative journey differentiating considerably in approach to its relevant research question.

Acknowledging the differences in the creative processes, Hamilton and Jaaniste (2009, p. 8) assume that "...the real distinction between *effective* and *evocative* research is between the *analytical* and *intuitive*", where,

...while analysis of the problem and context tends to come first in effective research, as in all research, it is intuition that leads to innovation. And, on the other hand, while evocative research may evolve intuitively through the interests, concerns and cultural preoccupations of the creative practitioner, it is rounded out and resolved by analytical insights.

In reality, the successful integration of the analytical and the intuitive drawing on bodies of theory, and overlaid by consistent personal reflection, augurs for a successful framing of an iterative development process (Hamilton & Jaaniste, 2009). To enable this process, the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Digital Arts has been founded on a combination of practical and theoretical modules, where, in order to foster this balance of the analytical and the intuitive, many of the modules require outcomes which integrate theory and practice, where both artefact and written reflection based on theoretical underpinning is required. While *making* is central to the research process, the development of skills is coupled with a solid foundation in traditional and new media theory, together with a historical understanding of the discipline's ongoing development, framed within the context of the interdependence of culture and technology.

A good example of graduate art research that involves both the *analytical* and the *intuitive* is Darren Tanti's research "Heightening the Visual Experience of Dimension in Hyperrealist Painting, p. Investigating the simulation of space, form and dimension in Hyperrealist painting through the aid of stereoscopic methods and technology" (2011 - 2013). The candidate investigated whether through the study of the fields of knowledge of neurology, stereography, painting techniques and theory; stereoscopic methods and technology could be applied to Hyperrealist painting in the attempt to create a working method to enhance pictorially the sense of space, form and dimension. The research was sited within a contemporary art context, merging together stereoscopic technology and painting techniques (Tanti, 2013).

The study involved the exploration and understanding of three main fields of study; the artistic and historical fields, the biology of perception and stereoscopy. Harmoniously integrating art and science, the study shows that the researcher was able to create "... anaglyph paintings that when viewed through the appropriate filtered glasses, 3D images 'pop up' or are 'dug in' into space" (Tanti, 2013:144). The study proves the hypothesis that stereoscopy can indeed be applied to the painting process, where the results of the research are not only theoretically confirmed but are physically manifested into successful anaglyph painting. The study also takes into account the factor of scale, where the delta of anaglyph images is varied according to the size of the picture and the viewing distance (Mendiburu, 2009).

The research looks at both the scientific and the artistic, analysing and deconstructing Hyperrealism as well as the biology of seeing, real space and fabricated illusion, and stereoscopy and 3D imaging; but perhaps the biggest challenge of this dissertation is the research into the translation of spectral colour to physical pigment. The success of an anaglyph image depends on colour as much as on the perfect alignment of stereo pairs (chips), and on the perfect calculation of the stereo base and the correction of excessive delta for the brain to fuse two flat images into an illusion of one 3D space (Tanti, 2013). Knowing that the eye is capable of distinguishing about 10 million colours (Judd & Wyszecki, 1975), and colour is composed out of different wavelengths, a minimal change in wavelength will be perceived as a 'different' colour (hue) from another quasi identical colour. It is therefore important for one to note that "...any slight colour changes in Red and Cyan (or in any other 3D colour combination) would result into 'ghosting'. Ideally the wavelengths of the colours used in the printed image (in the case of this project the painted image) should match as much as possible the wavelength of the colours used for the filters of the 3D glasses" (Tanti, 2013, p. 91). The researcher therefore had to research ways of translating the colour values of RGB emitted light into the reflected light values of oil paints, that is translating an additive colour (emitted through the process of luminescence from monitors, LCDs, Plasma screens and other digital/electronic devices) into a subtractive one (where paint reflects light).

The researcher did this through an analysis of the nature of colour in both its spectral form and also in its physical, printed form, understanding the mechanics behind the transition process from emitted colour, as displayed on a screen, to its reproduction as printed material. Once the CMYK process was studied he was able to identify specific paints that contain the appropriate chemicals that reflect light to a very similar wavelength to that of their spectral colour counterpart. (Tanti, 2013).



Tanti, D. (2013). *Shrine*,
Anaglyph painting, Oil on Panel, 56cm x 39cm

While this research benefitted immensely from the candidate's already quite mature studio practice, others who come to the degree with little or no practice to show, tend to focus heavily on the development of theorisation and the forming of a contextual framework and find it difficult to upgrade their practice in order to take the research lead. On the contrary, other candidates who already have a formed practice, and who even maybe have been producing work for a long number of years but have not at any point questioned or evaluated the foundations of that practice, find the theoretical component of the course eye-opening although overwhelming, even to the point of failing to identify the contextual links of theory to their present practice and falling short of clearly outlining a relevant research question.

This reality urges one to focus on and evaluate the effectiveness of the training that the students are being given in order to successfully arrive to the production of original work with a strong supporting thesis (and not the other way round, at an unimaginative work supported by an original thesis). Being a taught MFA programme, it is founded on the belief that contemporary visual art and design education has to be founded on a process that recognizes the importance of training in the practice of 'making' for the

refinement of artistic sensibility. It advocates however a systematic approach that promotes informed experimentation as a constantly evolving process that goes beyond craft, techniques and tools. This instruction, furthermore, not only considers the explosion of the artefact and its multitude of dissemination platforms as added tools of opportunity, but also endeavours to find alignment within an appropriate contextual, social and historical framework in order to create meaning. Students are therefore challenged to re-imagine and re-define their role and the relevance of their output in order to address the ever-widening chasm between past and present modes of how we perceive the artistic outcome in terms of its aesthetics, production and frame of reference. Such an approach mandates embracing new translations of form and content also due to multi-culturalism and its influence on cultural production. It also beckons us to ensure that the phenomenon of immediate universal access becomes a central node to consider in the students' artistic preparation for the future. (Briffa, 2011).

The focus on digital production is not a challenge of simple integration of the conventional with the new, but rather one of establishing innovative processes of homogenization, where these new creative tools become equally important to their more traditional counterparts, even developing strategies of seamless interfacing, and more importantly locating the vast amounts of creative opportunities they bring into being. The founding of a forward helical process of 'research-making-reflecting' at the outset, is set to deliver students' outcomes that revolve around issues which are relevant to contemporary artistic sensibilities, which steadily push the boundaries of creativity and innovation and most importantly are in the context of today's needs and realities. (Briffa, 2011).

Devising such a programme which not only incorporates, but also gives advantage to inconclusiveness and equivocal cross-disciplinarity, and which gives as much importance to open-ended process and work in progress as it does to the public display of finished artwork is a testing undertaking, but also one which rightly places the act of 'making' at the very core of the research process. Within this ambit, the research by James Moffett entitled "The Interrogation: Interacting in a real-time conversation with a pre-filmed subject" (2013), acted at the very experimental core of interactive filmmaking, and produced outcomes which mimicked real life situations, including ones embracing irrationality. The project allowed for the viewer to interact in real-time conversation with a pre-filmed actor in a crime interrogation film scenario exploring possibilities of real-virtual crossover of human agency and technology to provide fresh ways of experiencing the content, thus becoming part of the storytelling experience.

The research investigates the possibility of creating an interactive and immersive video, providing the viewer "...the ability to control the structure

and outcome of a narrative by means of a virtual conversation between a participant and a filmed subject” (Moffett, 2013, p. 1), where through intelligent agency, the work could ‘read’ the viewer’s bodily actions and voice prompts in order to drive the situation forward. The piece was devised to play out the scene narrative in a large number of permutations depending on the engagement patterns of the viewer, permitting the researcher to reflect on the actuality of immersion and on present-day practices of interactivity and engagement with a database of film, images and sound. Furthermore, through the unfolding of the story and the reliance on the choices of the viewer, the project brought closer the cinematic and gaming frameworks, amalgamating the film and the digital game in a single experience, thus blurring the line of demarcation between passive and active storytelling (Moffett, 2013).



Moffett, J. (2013). *The Interrogation*, Interactive Media Installation.

Although adequately resolved and successful as a black box artwork, when viewed as a slice of a potential feature film, this installation presents the ‘work in progress’ paradigm par excellence, as one would find it almost impossible to have the work return to the cinematic framework as we know it. Devising a fully interactive feature film on the same lines as the project would present a challenge to say the least, and would also prove to be financially exorbitant due to the voluminous needs of the production and the level of intelligence required by the system. In order to do this successfully would entail the viewer to not only experiencing a steady sense of flow of the entire work, rather than engage with a variety of separate clips, but also be able to take the acting lead. Furthermore, the reality that the work would need to factor in so many different narrative options acted between real and

virtual (previously filmed) actors, would make its factual realisation highly improbable. Nevertheless, very much like Darren Tanti's outcomes, the project frames a problem well and can be described as a response to a set of on-going issues which are rooted in the current cultural context (Scrivner, 2000). The two projects looked at the entire process as reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983), dealing with unique situations that presented precariousness, impermanence and required incongruous evaluative methods.

Since both candidates of the above-mentioned projects are practitioners with substantial experience in their respective fields, they are quite used to the reflection-in-action method of reshaping their project through experimentation and reflection while still working on the project. Such a methodology requires regular analysis and linking to the knowledge base while drawing out learning or new knowledge from the ongoing experience. The MFA programme advocates "... Thompson's (2010) notion of 'theorising practice' – that is, the process of beginning with practice and drawing on a professional knowledge (and value) base to make sense of it in order to be able to engage with the practice challenges involved." (Thompson & Pascal, 2012, p. 313)

It is interesting to note that these two candidates come from opposing sides of the art/design spectrum, one candidate being a fine artist, and the other being a communications designer. Our experience has shown that this variety of backgrounds has been the mainstay of the degree. Grounded in Fine Arts research methods which also includes the conceptualisation of design as a form of research and enquiry (Winters, 2003), the programme promotes the development of a critically reflective approach to the candidates' practice. This methodology has been adopted for the programme as it embraces the whole art/design spectrum under a common umbrella, as it develops in students a critically reflective disposition as it is based on qualitative, phenomenological research methods for the study and investigation of the candidate's individual experience (Marton & Booth, 1997).

The course's theoretical components concurrently point towards conceptualising art and design as a form of research and inquiry that reflects the contemporary condition of the field, in order to open up new ways of thinking for all practitioners of the art-design spectrum. This approach helps candidates identify phenomena and articulate how they are perceived through the individual's own reflection on his/her professional practice (Schön, 1983). It also conceptualises both fine art and design practices and puts them on par, particularly extending the design process beyond traditional problem-solving, client driven models and propelling it into a research and enquiry mode (Winters, 2003). All learning theory, from the historical to the conceptual and contextual is linked to this approach.

Such a standpoint respects the continually shifting and constantly thinning boundaries between art and design, and unpacks the debate on the similarities and differences between them. It also converges them at a conceptual level, applying a common approach that addresses the fact that “The boundaries of art and design have become increasingly blurred, and many disciplines within the subject have become generic and interdisciplinary but less singularly focused” (QAA, 2008. p. 4).

In the art and design world, exhibitions, conferences and symposia continue to scrutinize and investigate the relationships between art and design. Contemporary design activity continues to evolve its forms into the realms of fine arts through speculative, investigative and critically oriented methodologies (Winters, 2003). Glenn D. Lowry, Director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, in his Foreword to the exhibition ‘Talk to Me: Design and Communication between People and Objects’, curated by Paola Antonelli (2011), speaks of the new territories mapped out by design and art, particularly on the “... shift from the centrality of function, to that of meaning, a shift that has been brought about by cultural movements in the last hundred years and by the digital revolution at the turn of the century.” Curator Paola Antonelli in her catalogue essay for the same exhibition speaks of today’s design products as objects of “Ambiguity and ambivalence - [having] the ability to inhabit different environments and frames of mind at the same time - have become central to our cultural development” (2011. p. 5).

It is perhaps this axiom of ‘communication’ between the object, be it an art or design product, and the viewer that is at question here. Antonelli explains that such human traits as ambiguity and ambivalence when bestowed onto design objects are “... the qualities that embody the openness and flexibility necessary for embracing diversity, and they are critical to the questioning and imagining that are preferred methods of enquiry” (2011, p. 15).

It therefore becomes indicative that in the creative undertaking, apart from meaning making, “Communication is at the nexus” of the relationship between the human and the art or design object; with communication acting on many levels of human understanding and ability, where, like intelligent buildings and cities in the hands of visionary architects and designers since the 1960s, and particularly through the digital revolution, objects have been imbued with such physical faculties as breathing, walking and talking (Antonelli, 2011).

When analysing such an indispensable relationship between human and object in the light of Watzlawick’s five basic axioms of the pragmatics of communication between two individuals, Antonelli remarks that design objects in particular increasingly rely on the shift from the twentieth century centrality of function to that of meaning, and further to the twenty-first-

century focus on the need to communicate in order to exist (2011).

This process is very evident also in art installations which are married to a variety of artificial intelligence mediation, where the creator in a sense creates the work as tool for further intervention by the viewer, where without this further level of intercession and dialogue the work does not fulfil its original function. Such is the situation with much of the work that requires physical human interaction, as in the case of work by artists such as the Mexican Canadian electronic artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer whose "...interactive installations are at the intersection of architecture and performance art" (<http://www.lozano-hemmer.com>). In his work 'Pulse Room' (2006), the artist presents a "...relational subjectobject intimacy and an all-encompassing immersive environment modulating continuously in real space-time" (Carlson & Schmidt, 2012, p. 1), where "biorhythms are transmitted from the pulsing energy of the visitor's beating heart to the flashing of a fragile light bulb, thereby transforming each light bulb into a register of individual life" (2012, p. 1), and where the participant in the architectural installation "is invited into a complex scenario that continuously oscillates between various aspects of signification" (2012). Carlson and Schmidt refer to the notion of representation in Lozano-Hemmer's work, where each light bulb represents the heartbeat of each individual participant, with the pulse itself standing for the symbolic "rhythm of life", and where "the complex orchestration of pulsation between signification and material modulation produces a multilayered sense of time and space that is central to the sensory experience of *Pulse Room* as a whole" (2012, p. 1).

"Artistic activity is a game, whose forms, patterns and functions develop and evolve according to periods and social contexts; it is not an immutable essence..." (Bourriaud, 1998, p. 11). Such involvement in contemporary art also results in experienced time, an opening of a dialogue that never ends (Bourriaud, 1998). This mutual interchange particularly relates to Watzlawick's fifth axiom of symmetric or complementary communication procedures, with the work and viewer addressing, and also in many cases switching the roles of differences or parity (1967). As in theatre, which Jerzy Grotowski essentially defines as "what takes place between spectator and actor" (Grotowski, 1991, p. 32), this channel becomes a two-way interaction bridge between a performer and an audience where many times the roles are switched, creating an ambiguity as to who actually is performing and who is spectating.

This relationship is clearly evident in James Moffett's interrogation piece, where the film and the viewer constantly play on the various layers of this game of power and submission, held tightly together by the terse ambiance of the installation's setup. Moffett's obvious interest in film is manifested in the theatrical look and feel of the work which resembles a film set, particularly through the harsh film noir aesthetic of the installation. The work's play on

the affinity between the movies and lived life further affirms Susan Bennett's definition of theatre, that of being a space which can never be "divorced from the culture which produces it and which it, in turn serves" (1990, p. 98-99). Both Moffett's and Tanti's projects relate to what Bourriaud writes on Gonzalez-Torres' participatory art pieces using mounds of candy. He states that the artwork

...gives pride of place to the negotiation and construction of a cohabitation. It also contains a beholder's ethic. As such, it is part of a specific history, a history of works prompting the onlooker to become aware of the setting he finds himself in (the happenings and environments of the sixties, and in situ installations). (Bourriaud, 1998, p. 26).

This construction of a shared habitat together with other values such as the ethics of the gaze, are strategies that question and challenge the limits of the artworks in order to create new contexts. Such critically oriented strategies undoubtedly make use of methods of inquiry from the Fine Arts and, especially in the case of Darren Tanti's project, which investigates a great number of areas in art, design, technology and science in order to nurture the development of the research, it is the candidate's critically reflective approach as a fine artist which successfully holds all these components together, which translates in an artwork that proves the research hypothesis that stereoscopy can indeed be applied to painting and that 3D information can be added to it.

The history of art and design testifies to many crossovers, overlapping and traverses. "They [art and design] have punctuated the phases of 'modern art': Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau, Jugendstil, Secession, Werkbund, De Stijl, Constructivism, the Bauhaus" (Greff, 2007, p. 6). Particularly through the proliferation of technology in artistic practice, Contemporary Art has not only followed suit, but also erased any boundaries between art and design, and the concept of the contemporary creative is very much focused on "... the researcher who is simultaneously an artist/designer, whose artistic process and production of artefacts is the target of the reflection" (Mäkelä & Nimkulrat, 2011, p. 1). After all,

The whole issue is ... about the self-reflective and selfcritical processes of a person taking part in the production of meaning within contemporary art, and in such a fashion that it communicates where it is coming from, where it stands at this precise moment, and where it wants to go (Hannula, Suoranta & Vaden 2005, p. 10).

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