

## Foreword

### About Knowledge and Realisation in Artistic Activities: *Knowing in Performing*

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Artistic research as it has developed in the last three decades is related to an increasing interest in epistemological issues, as well as with the question of how artistic practices initiate processes of knowledge production. In this way, art acts as both the subject and the medium of artistic research. Furthermore, via artistic research art participates in the discourse on knowledge regimes and research models. The anthology *Knowing in Performing* addresses these points in the development of artistic research.

The term 'knowledge' has a range of epistemological connotations. For example, knowledge can be gained through contemplation (e.g. in certain philosophical conceptions), by calculations and inductive or deductive reasoning (in natural sciences or medicine), through logical analysis and inference (in formal sciences and analytical philosophy), or through the interpretation of actions, events and artefacts in terms of their meaning and genealogy (in the humanities, cultural and social sciences). In such cases, knowledge takes on symbolic and propositional forms.

The meaning of 'knowing' differs from that of 'knowledge'. The suffix -ing points to a genuinely physical, sensual and practical accomplishment and thus to the fluid, process-like status of knowing "Knowing is literally something which we do", says John Dewey (1916, 331). Knowing in action does not depend on the previous learning of certain (contemplative, calculational, logical-analytical or interpretative) methods. Rather, it presupposes practical learning by doing in which knowing and mastery develop in parallel and completely overlap. In the case of repetitive activities, like learning to play a piece on the piano, we talk about processual knowledge which is learned

by previous practice. However, when creative action is related to particular situations and challenges – such as the creation of a new piece of work – one cannot simply fall back on existing or propositional knowledge and apply it. Experience may be helpful, but the transmission of experiences which do not constitute propositional knowledge requires a transmission to other, new cases. Via learning by doing, knowledge can be acquired which is implicit in the action itself. Mastering new challenges is thus accompanied by a knowledge which does not already exist, and which only arises in doing, in other words by trying things out and experimenting.

*Knowing in performing* refers to action in the performing arts as a specific form of the generation of knowledge. Among other things, this can be related to the emergence of new artistic skills. It is, as mentioned above, an artistic knowing that is fully incorporated into the performative process. This knowing is actually multidimensional. It comprises primarily an embodied knowing, a sensuous-situational knowing as well as an experience-bound knowing of the work process. However, art is more than just creating, and therefore the various forms of artistic-practical knowing do not stand alone. Rather, these forms of knowing are linked with other general and propositional forms of knowledge. The incommensurability of the various forms of knowledge and knowing does not preclude the possibility of their synergy. Performative artists thus act on the basis of a blend of competences and experiences (cf. Zembylas & Niederauer 2018, 80-110).

*Knowing in performing* is a prerequisite for artistic research; at the same time it is its obvious object of research. A plural concept of knowledge which includes artistic knowing and knowledge of the arts<sup>1</sup> must thus not only face up to the diversity of forms of expression, articulation and creation, but also to the entanglement in geohistorical, institutional and gender-specific epistemic conditioning and power relations. The contributions of this anthology explore these diverse, intertwining modes of knowledge and its production through artistic doing on the basis of examples from various artistic traditions and disciplines, and relate them to epistemological power structures, social norms and practices as well as institutional settings.

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1 Cf. the DFG Research Training Group *Knowledge of the Arts*, which represents a trend-setting initiative for artistic research in Germany. <https://www.udk-berlin.de/forschung/tempo-raere-forschungseinrichtungen/dfg-graduiertenkolleg-das-wissen-der-kuenste/>

The following contributions stem from the symposium *Knowing in Performing: Artistic Research as a Distinct Practice and Discourse in the Field of Performing Arts*, which took place on 4 April 2018 at the mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, as well as the lecture series of the same name. In recent years, the mdw has, with the participation of numerous dedicated colleagues, developed its institutional stance on artistic research into a remarkable dynamic process which in no way lacks critical opinions. In the meantime, the issue of artistic research is being reflected upon and evaluated intensively at the mdw at a wide range of levels and with the aid of different concepts (artistic research, arts-based research and research-based art).

For the mdw, the symposium and the lecture series were important steps in the development of its institutional stance on artistic research. The variety of the contributions makes it abundantly clear that the phenomenon of artistic research should not be defined *a priori*, as a definition in its original meaning as demarcating territory contradicts the essence of artistic research. Nevertheless, the contributions highlight various characteristics which are conducive to understanding the phenomenon.

In her essay *The Pot Calling the Kettle Black* at the beginning of this volume, Efva Lilja carries out a manifesto-like positioning of art and artists towards the system of artistic research on the basis of her own practice since the 1990s. In her view, this positioning can not only support the further development of innovative artistic methods, but also contribute towards the relevance of artistic work in an increasingly complex and diverse society. At the same time, however, this development is accompanied by institutional, academic and commercial constraints which are ultimately linked to a conservative concept of knowledge. By contrast, the aim is to cultivate institutional disobedience, to break down conventions and to push boundaries. In tangible terms, these thoughts are also linked to Lilja's critical reflections on new forms of artistic/academic education for artists at Master's and PhD levels.

As a cross-disciplinary practice, music research exhibits some similarities and differences to artistic research. This is the topic of the critical piece by Georgina Born, in which she uses a comparative analysis to focus on the epistemological aspirations, the respective understandings of interdisciplinarity and the institutional conditions of both fields. Born criticises the “unconsolidated terrain of a[rtistic] r[esearch] epistemology” and the “subordination service’ mode of interdisciplinarity”, which she attributes to

many music research projects, the apparent ahistoricism of the discourse on artistic research, and the neoliberal transformation of those (mostly academic) institutions which organise and carry out music research and artistic research.

*Meta Hodos* – Kathleen Coessens invites us to take part in a journey going beyond well-trodden paths in order to query the methods of artistic research. As stops on the journey she presents five activities which illuminate the opportunities and challenges of practices of artistic insight. Using the metaphor of baking bread, she illustrates that describing how to bake bread in recipes and showing the individual steps in how-to videos can only partially communicate this activity as long as the qualia of feeling the dough is lacking. In another example, this time in relation to hammering, she elucidates the situatedness of artistic knowledge practices in a complex network of relationships between humans, ideas and objects in which a path has to be constantly followed for it to be created *meta hodos*. She then takes Wittgenstein's thoughts on games as bundles of practices as a vehicle to show how research practices which might have initially been ignited by the specifics of individual research projects are then – due to their more or less pronounced similarities – condensed into 'rules' which become paradigmatic for a distinct field of research. Coessens focuses on (self-) perception and reflexivity on the part of artistic researchers using Leonardo da Vinci's mirrors in an octagonal chamber, where they reveal new relationships between the views, outlooks and insights of the researchers. A drawing by Maurits Cornelis Escher (in which one can see a hand drawing another hand, which in turn is drawing the first hand) and a portrait by René Magritte of a man in front of a mirror (whose face should be visible in the mirror, but which cannot be 'reproduced' there and is thus replaced by a view of the back of his head) both finally direct the attention of the reader to the role of artistic researchers. As observers and observed, they fulfil – as the subject and object at the same time – a complex participatory function in the 'inside' and 'outside' of the knowledge process.

Proceeding from a silk scarf or veil metaphor, Darla M. Crispin is interested in specific epistemic issues, such as the range, embedding and limitations of our ability to experience and realise things. To this end she focuses on the three terms of reflection, self-reflexivity and autoethnography, which she views as being closely connected with the practice and discourse of artistic research. This takes place along a time axis: initially looking back at the

emergence of artistic research projects and corresponding PhD programmes in Europe, then referring to current approaches in Norway, where Crispin works, and finally prospectively to the relationship of these three terms to artistic research. Whereas reflection is the expression of relational thinking (as the creation and analysis of relationships), self-reflexivity is a form of personal affirmation and self-examination. As a method in artistic research projects, however, autoethnography is reflective and self-reflective at the same time, given that it views the researching artists as an integral part of the research process.

The violinist Mieko Kanno presents an experimental approach to artistic research. Her experiment consists of playing the same piece – in this case Salvatore Sciarrino's *Violin Caprice in G* – with two different designs: first as a standard performance standing in front of the audience, and then another sitting among them. With the listeners directly alongside her she feels the space less, and thus the second rendering takes less time, and she also plays more quietly. There is a potential here: that which is presented quietly can open doors and stimulate a flow which moves the listeners to allow music to be made in their heads from what they perceive. However, not every sound is suited to being transformed into music by the listeners. Soft and quiet sound offers its own types of poetry. With her performance experiments, Kanno wants to investigate under which conditions quiet sounds or even silence can provoke music in the heads of listeners. The softer the sounds, the more active listening becomes. At the same time, silence requires a grain of complicity with the player. A musician who plays quietly passes the responsibility for what they hear on to the listeners, and makes listening intersubjective and politicises sound, because the modes via which the subject interacts with the work form a part of the meaning: by creating a collision between the work and its perception, Kanno makes sounds expressive and communicative.

A different but nevertheless related approach to sound is followed by the contribution *voicing the auralist* by Till Bovermann, Thomas Grill, Tobias Leibeseder and Almut Schilling: *Rotting Sounds* is an artistic research project funded by the programme for arts-based research of the Austrian Science Fund (PEEK-FWF) which examines the temporal deterioration of digital audio. It also experiments – in the sense of cognition in doing – with the musical knowledge which arises through digital data and its physical erosion. The written contribution not only describes an experiment; at the same time it is an experiment. The authors try to approach experimentation at several le-

velds: numerous expressions in brackets offer readers the opportunity to write the text themselves while reading it, to create their own understanding of what sound, but also “error correction” on digital recording media can mean.

In their contribution, the electroacoustic composer Johannes Kretz and the violist and ethnomusicologist Wei-Ya Lin present their PEEK-FWF project *Creative (Mis)Understandings*, which was started in 2018. The project is dedicated to the search for methods of transcultural inspiration. Its research partners include the Tao community of Taiwan. The Tao do not differentiate between performing artists and the audience, and trying this and other attitudes out also in other contexts is intended to help the project to strengthen the solidarity between artistic minorities in a heavily commercialised world of culture. What is being tested here is multidirectional inspiration with the goal of egalitarian interaction. Kretz and Lin contrast visualisation and the written form as academic (Western) paradigms of knowledge production with procedures that – like implicit knowledge – use other sensory realms than vision and text. In this way, the production of knowledge also occurs via listening, and sound creations can be understood as knowledge production. In their search for answers to the question of how research methods can be transformed into processes of artistic creation, Kretz and Lin are developing trans-disciplinary methods which combine ethnomusicological and compositional approaches. The artistic output of the project includes individual and collective compositions, improvisation, installations and new performance practices. The method of presenting the players with a “piece” in various forms of representation and expression is used to determine the extent to which certain cultural traditions and subject-specifics are central or peripheral to the respective product. The state of the project as presented in the book is January 2019. Shortly after the project began, new questions arose, including the issue of in which way social changes affect the aesthetics, significance and functions of music or sound in general.

In his contribution *Schallnamen*, Johannes Kreidler shares his reflections on listening. While he emphasises the significance of language as a prerequisite for listening, his works also show how insights and knowledge can be generated by a work of art. His composition *Einleitung in die Musiksoziologie* functions as a piece of conceptual art as well as a work of art which creates insights and a new perspective of a cultural and social phenomenon.

“Can we develop communities of individuals who are participants of an ongoing dialogue?” (Bogart 2014, 2). Jörg Holkenbrink places this question by

the director and professor Anne Bogart at the beginning of his article *Risking sovereignty: Transdisciplinary research, context-oriented performance practices and the work of the Theater of Assemblage*.<sup>2</sup> A suggestion. In the light of the changes occurring in forms of knowledge due to globalisation and individualisation, he investigates contemporary research and the embedding of current social issues in the performing arts. The focus here is on the productivity which can be generated by unfamiliarity. Jörg Holkenbrink was the founder of the research theatre located in the Performance Studies at the University of Bremen, situated between education, science and art – he was, because Jörg Holkenbrink succumbed to his serious illness shortly before this anthology was completed. We mourn for him. But his Theater of Assemblage lives on and continues to focus on the networking of different knowledge cultures. The pressing questions for Holkenbrink in this context were: Which settings, formats and dramaturgy support this aspiration? Which methods and practices are available for interventions and investigations? What needs to be considered, and which processes are required? Based on graphic examples, such as the culture of self-optimisation in *Brecht for Managers – Training for the Soul* and the click performance C COPY A, VERSCHLÜSSELT, which evokes different themes and questions in different contexts, he offers insights into the concepts and working methods of his Theater of Assemblage and encourages thinking to perhaps risk its own sovereignty at some point.

Doris Ingrisich uses her perspective as an “artistic-thinking academic who is responsible for the establishment of Cultural Gender Studies at the mdw – University of Music and the Performing Arts Vienna” to provide impulses in the discourse on the epistemes of a wide range of forms of knowledge in the arts and research. As an academic ‘inter’ viewer of artists, she has a wealth of experience in conducting “conversations in between”. This led her to the opinion that an ‘in between’ or ‘intra’ viewing is necessary in order to be able to “rethink the classical Western modes of knowledge assigned to the arts and sciences together with the hegemonic gender order” (Ingrisich 2020, 152) and thus to sharpen the awareness that the performative effect of world production is inherent in every kind of research. The potential to participate creatively at this point as a researcher arises from reflections on the epistemology of art-based research.

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2 See the website of the Theater of Assemblage: <https://www.tdv.uni-bremen.de/>

Maintaining a love of art AND philosophy was at the heart of the lecture performance by the actor Susanne Valerie [Granzer] and the philosopher Arno Böhler entitled *In Love with Art & Philosophy // Between Art & Philosophy*, whose scenes we are now able to experience again with the means offered by a book. The actor and the philosopher allow the audience to take part in their own joint artistic-philosophical journey of discovery, and breathe life into the field of artistic research. The inextricable nature of a sensuous lifeworld and thinking become perceptible in content and form. By admitting physical existence into the field of research, the traditional coordinates change. What does art have to be, and what does philosophy have to be? On the basis of interwoven insights into their own biographies and into the history of philosophy, their desire for both, for art AND philosophy, becomes comprehensible. Why separate them? The audience of this lecture performance is stimulated by words and play to take advantage of the opportunity to examine their own sets of values. An experimental interlude invites them to immerse themselves in sensuous experiences. What happens to us when we get a sense of the violence which lies in only being able to exist in one of the poles set by 'Western' culture and philosophy, art OR philosophy?

Whereas artistic research works fairly closely in connection with certain arts – from visual arts to composition, from design to film production – the field of interpretation and (not only) musical performance seems to be of particular interest for *knowing in performing* and for the future development of artistic research. This is one of the reasons for the relevance of the contribution by Barbara Lüneburg entitled *Worldmaking – Knowing through Performing*. The violin player and performance artist reflects on epistemological issues which appear in performance practice and addresses sources of knowledge, the type of knowledge which is produced by performers, and methodological tools. She also examines the presentation and dissemination of research results and considers the conditions and limits of the acquisition of knowledge through performance practice and artistic research in general, in a search for the epistemological potential of performing above and beyond musical activities themselves.

Last but not least, Anton Rey uses the example of two research projects to provide insights into the research paradigms and interdisciplinary work methods of the Institute for Performing Arts & Film (IPF) at the Zurich University of the Arts: *Analogue/ Digital* deploys qualitative and empirical methods to investigate the emotional effect on cinema audiences of analogue

filming techniques compared to digital ones. At the interface between philosophy, drama research and neurology, *Actor and Avatar* examines the difference between the art of acting and that which avatars can achieve in films. The assumption that this difference is diminishing could have fundamental effects on drama training. At the same time, these multi-perspective investigations show how artistic research can only ever take place with and in art as aesthetic epistemology, which cannot have any methodological limits and demands its own specific expression and readability.

We would like to thank all of the lecturers, moderators, organisers and all those who contribute towards the discourse on artistic research at the mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna – and to its critical continuation. This volume aims to be a source of inspiration and knowledge for this purpose.

Our thanks also go out to all those who were involved in the creation of the book. Above all we wish to thank Karoline Feyertag for her subject-related competence, her prudence, and her commitment to realising this project in the midst of one of the crises of our age.

*The publishers*

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## Literature

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