

instrumental in developing a discourse around artistic research on an interdisciplinary basis, with a strong focus on artistic excellence and questions of a specifically artistic knowledge production. The conferences, as well as the related publication series, have had resonance far beyond the Nordic countries. Themes include: *Creating a Tradition* (2004), *Aesthetic Practice and Aesthetic Insight* (2005), *Developing a Discourse* (2006), *Context, Concept, Creativity* (2007), *Questioning Qualities* (2008), and *Reflection, Relevance, Responsibility* (2009).⁴¹ The discourse has represented what Henk Borgdorff has called the *sui generis* approach to artistic research, in contrast to both the central European understanding of artistic research as a critical intellectual practice and the British focus on academic criteria as in much *Practice as Research*.⁴²

Nordic Summer University in Sweden – developments in performing arts

Outside the academies and universities, Nordic Summer University,⁴³ based in Sweden with a structure of funded self-organized study circles, has provided an open forum for people interested in research in performing arts. In the proposal for the first study circle, *Practice-Based Research in the Performing Arts*, in 2006, the coordinators, Annika Sillander and Sidsel Pape, write:

The discipline is characterized by a continuous search for a current and convincing definition and investigation into feasible working methodologies. PBR is alternately also called Practice as Research, Practice-Led Research, Artistic Research or Art-Based Research . . . We advocate that PBR can be understood as a thoroughly integrated approach and set of strategies. This implies a constant, mutual, and reciprocal influence between the artistic practice and the research activities involved. It requires a different point of departure in terms of attitude and motivation for all involved – whether primarily as artists, researchers or as reflective-practitioners. In this context, both artistic practice and research are re-imagined from the outset – within a collaboratively determined set of objectives and processes.⁴⁴

Since the first study circle, which produced a publication,⁴⁵ the focus has shifted slightly; the current study circle is called 'Artistic Research – Strategies for Embodiment'. The topics addressed in the six sessions from 2010 to 2012 are language and discourse, documentation and dissemination. Referring to a meeting at the Centre for Practice as

Research in Theatre in Tampere,⁴⁶ the coordinators, Luisa Greenfield and Disa Kamula, write:

The last winter session made it clear that the discourse has moved and changed. This presents the need for making a new platform for investigating the implications of this redirection. Henk Borgdorff, a European authority within this context, has claimed that the most interesting turn in the field is presently happening in the Nordic countries (Borgdorff, 2009) . . . We need to investigate consequences and possibilities of Artistic Research. We have passed the stage of justifying the existence of the field itself. It actually exists. We are entering a new discourse, and we need to explore the outcomes of the ongoing research . . . We see an urgent need for investigating artistic research in a wider perspective than it is presently done at the Art Academies and Universities.⁴⁷

These two subsequent study circles exemplify collaborative developments within performing arts regardless of university regulations.

Publications and colloquia for artistic research in performing arts

Practice in some form is being increasingly incorporated into traditional theatre research and dance research contexts. NOFOD, Nordic Forum for Dance Research,⁴⁸ and the Theatre Research Society in Finland,⁴⁹ have included Practice as Research in their symposia and publications.⁵⁰ In an issue of *Nordic Theatre Studies* devoted to the artist as researcher, Rikard Hoogland tentatively suggests that we might be at the beginning of a paradigm, albeit with a long way to go.⁵¹ A Finnish journal of artistic research, *RUUKKU*, modelled on the international *JAR*, is in the making.⁵² CARPA (Colloquium on Artistic Research in Performing Arts) in Helsinki is gathering artistic and practice-led researchers on a post-doctoral level. In the first call the purpose was explained:

Artistic research, art-based research, practice-based research, practice-led research, performance as research – these are just some of the terms and approaches that have been developed to describe knowledge production originating from artistic concerns. This colloquium is the first in a series of biannual colloquia, organised by the Performing Arts Research Centre at the Theatre Academy of [sic] Helsinki, aimed at addressing the problems and possibilities