Materials:
Artistic research and its applications in the second and third cycle of AFAM institutions.

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## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notes on artistic research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-year masters</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhDs</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of artistic research</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commentato [1]:
According to Word edition and printing
Notes on artistic research

The definition of artistic research field and features goes beyond the narrow borders of art and of those who make it as a profession. To speak about artistic research implies a redefinition of contemporary knowledge and of the concept of culture. In the past, similar situations have already been experienced. Some disciplines were considered as more qualified, from a scientific point of view, and more representative of knowledge in their ages. Thus, they granted access to PhDs and Masters, as well as to job opportunities. Kant wrote in favour of natural and human sciences, which, in his age, were thought of belonging to a lower level than law and medicine. Today, the same debate is taking place, with a focus on the nature of artistic research and the possibility of a third cycle of high art and music education.

The development of artistic research not only implies a reflection within the world of art and culture, but necessarily leads to a rethinking on the role that these play within society, generally speaking. The challenge is to get from a mentality which gives art and culture a marginal role to a more articulated dimension, in which arts return to play a central role, as a social driving force.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, who are mainly considered as the point of reference for a modern conception of artistic research, knowledge is divided into three main domains, philosophy, science and art. Philosophy must create concepts, science must develop functions, art must make “percepts”, objects of perception. Buildings, images, stories are elements that show to perception and denote an artistic and symbolic substratum, though unknown. The creative dimension unites all the domains. The development of a definition of research begins with a synthetic focus on the nature of the creative process, in general, and of the artistic process, in particular.

The creative process

The creative process consists in a group of operations that contribute to the creations of new approaches to material reality and the intellectual and spiritual dimension of man. It is about the combination of theoretical and practical skills. Compared to Deleuze and Guattari’s distinctions, art is overcoming philosophy, or better, they are progressively integrating with each other. Contemporary art is then “conceptual”, with the integration of philosophy in the process of making works of art, literary works, and cultural events.

Artistic research

Many times, researches have attempted to define the domain of artistic research, even as far as high art and musical education is concerned. This is the case of the European Joint Quality Initiative, which indicated the Dublin Descriptors (2005) as the points of reference for the third cycle of education.


2 Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Qu’est-ce la philosophie, Les édition de Minuit Paris 1991; trad. it. Che cos’è la filosofia, Einaudi, Torino 1996. The first international conference on the relation between artistic research and Deleuze and Guattari’s work will be held after the meeting in Catania: The Dark Precursors: International Conference on Deleuze and Artistic Research (DARE 2015), 9th-11th November, Orpheus Institute, Gent (Belgium).
The word ‘research’ is used to cover a wide variety of activities, with the context often related to a field of study; the term is used here to represent a careful study or investigation based on a systematic understanding and critical awareness of knowledge. The word is used in an inclusive way to accommodate the range of activities that support original and innovative work in the whole range of academic, professional and technological fields, including the humanities, and traditional, performing, and other creative arts. It is not used in any limited or restricted sense, or relating solely to a traditional ‘scientific method’.

The definition Henk Borgdorff, one of the major European experts on research methodology, suggested in 2006 conceptually follows the preceding one, but it precisely points out the different stages of research and the process of diffusion of its results.³

Art practice qualifies as research if its purpose is to expand our knowledge and understanding by conducting an original investigation in and through art objects and creative processes. Artistic research begins by addressing questions that are pertinent in the research context and in the art world. Researchers employ experimental and hermeneutic methods that reveal and articulate the tacit knowledge that is situated and embodied in specific artworks and artistic processes. Research processes and outcomes are documented and disseminated in an appropriated manner to the research community and the wider public.

³ Henk Borgdorff, The Conflict of the Faculties, cit. pag. 53.
Two-year masters

Masters within AFAM are still in a testing stage, though up to now results are not always been excellent, both in applicants and in relation to educational results. Thus, a new redefinition is required, in order to get a bigger impulse to artistic research: this is the way some European institutions, which have appeared to be at the forefront on innovation in high art-musical education, have been leading. Among those that may be an example for Italy, with the precious contribution of RAMI – Ricerca artistica Musicale in Italia – we have analysed the teaching of Minerva Art Academy in Groningen (Netherlands) and the Royal Conservatory in The Hague (Belgium).

**Minerva Art Academy**, with about 700 students, was founded in 1769 in Groningen and is part of the Hanze University, which even the Dance Academy Lucia Marthas and Prince Calus Conservatory belong to. Minerva courses focus on the field of visual arts and design. They consist of two two-year international masters. FMI Masters: MFA Painting and MFA Interactive Media & Environments.

The courses require an admission procedure where students’ interests and their orientation to research and development of an original project are tested. Interdisciplinarity and “hybridation” of practices are openly encouraged. The features of the third cycle of education – artistic research and the development of original methods of reflection and integration between the different artistic and scientific disciplines – are significantly introduced in the two-year master. The cores of the courses are the *Hybrid Arts Lab* and the courses of *Research and Media Theory*. The first is about practical experimentation of different features of arts and media, even through seminars with intellectuals and workshops with professional artists. The second develop different approaches to research, prompting projects which may lead to a concrete contribution to social development, with the help of an *Art & Society Research Centre*, where students may debate within three research domains:

- Permanent Music Education
- Contextualisation of images and popular Culture
- Sustainability and Innovation

Students are followed by two tutors, one in the laboratory and one for research. The second year is particularly dedicated to a specific project each student has to develop, even in internships or abroad, within the big network of collaborations with other European art institutions. Here follows the curriculum of the painting Master, where “studio” means an experience in the laboratory.
The Royal Conservatory of The Hague (Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag) was founded by King William I in 1826 and is the eldest Dutch conservatory. It currently has about 1,000 applicants, whose 50% consists of foreigners. It is a leader research institution which stands as a point of reference not only of conservatories but even of all high art-musical education. The two-year master follows an integrated programme of teaching and research. Great attention is given to the encouragement of the development of student-chosen themes. However, this is not a wholly individual activity, but a cultural attitude driven by supervisors and brought about throughout a monthly confrontation with other students. The solution the Royal Conservatory has found is about the integration of professor teaching and research, coordinated by a supervisor in a series of stages which start at the beginning of the courses.

These are the yearly deadlines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First year</th>
<th>Second year</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic year start</td>
<td>Academic year start</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the first term of the first year, students attend a compulsory course of *Introduction to Artistic research*, whose lectures aim to drive students’ following activity, with an education in critical attitude and sources analysis. At the end of courses, students make their research proposals, in English, which is published in the Research Catalogue, the major international database of artistic research, which they have learnt to know during lectures.

The culture of artistic research is focused in cycles of Seminars (Master Electives), which students choose at the beginning of the Master and where they may apply the different research methods to specialisation subjects.

During the two years, students of each department or school meet once a month in Master Circles, under the lead of the department coordinator or an external expert. Here, research progress and problems faced are discussed. They are compulsory and only two absences per year are admitted. At least 30/40 credits of the total 120 are then given in periodical revisions of research activity. The thesis is articulated in a public presentation and an exam in front of the commission. Programmes develop in three main axis: what characterises student’s specialisation, professional integration (internships, portfolio, etc.) and revisions of research projects. Here follows the programme of the **Jazz course**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First year</th>
<th>Second year</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>introduction to the programme</td>
<td>2nd and 3rd September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application to Seminars (Master Electives)</td>
<td>14th September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Supervisor assignment</td>
<td>2nd/4th November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Research paper deadline</td>
<td>13th November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research proposal deadline</td>
<td>14th December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis delivery deadline</td>
<td>8th March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory assistance to thesis presentation</td>
<td>Master research symposium 4th/8th April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis analysis deadline</td>
<td>22nd April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis commission analysis</td>
<td>2nd/4th May</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compared to many AFAM Masters, Royal Conservatorium Curriculum remove related subjects, while students’ abilities are replaced by internships and the development of research projects. More time is dedicated to workshops conducted by external practitioners and to work internships. Moreover, students are given credits in revision activities, while in Italy revisions are usually linked to professor teaching and to specific credits. However, in Academies, the revision of research projects students develop is a consolidated practice, which is the main feature of education in most AFAM institutions. The adoption of a similar method might regulate and optimize a factual situation. This is true even concerning professional activities, which many AFAM students make contemporarily to their studies, often without an adequate insertion (in terms of credits) in their didactic curriculum.

According to the Italian patterns by the directors of academies and conservatories, 60% of credits (72) should be defined – as it is shown in the tables attached to the M.D. 30th September 2009 n. 123 on First level degree – within the scientific-disciplinary domains of base educational activities and characterising educational activities.

Student-chosen activities limit to 10% of credits (12), but in our hypothesis they are directed towards professional activities: exhibitions, concerts, shows, workshops and internships. Therefore such trend would be coherent with what is planned in the institutive decrees of the Italian system, which demand to the regulation of every institution the acknowledgement of possible credit activities (internal and external), usually relating to the domain of the educative offer, as well as to that of the artistic-professional experience.

Another concern is about the activities every single institution may choose, which correspond to remaining credits (30% in masters) and should be addressed to Research Projects, typical of every academy. The attendance of seminars concerning the Introduction to Artistic research is fundamental, which teaches students to create personal working projects led during the Master, to the final thesis.
In the domain of every institution’s autonomy, students’ research personal projects may be focused on Seminars of project orientation. Then, students meet with each other in moments of Collective or Individual Revisions, under the lead of supervisors of thesis projects. Credits may be given even throughout such activities supporting research projects, following the example of the European institutions analysed above.

The focus on research stems from the fact that in academies and conservatories artistic research has been a consolidated practice for ages. On the basis of European examples, the most effective way of translating students’ research into credits must be found in every institution.

The project of research/thesis since the first months of the master would refine students’ research. Thus, student-chosen activities (exhibitions, concerts, shows, workshops, internships) would be steadily oriented from a cultural point of view. And, most of all, the revision activity with supervisors would be acknowledged from a didactic and artistic point of view. Here follows a general model of AFAM Master curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characterising and base</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tot. partial</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional activity (student-chosen)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exhibitions, concerts, shows, workshops, internships</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tot. partial</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research projects (institution-chosen)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars of Introduction to artistic research</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars of project orientation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective and Individual revisions</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis/final project</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tot. partial</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
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PhDs

Artistic research must be totally developed in PhDs. The debate on artistic research and on the necessary differences within scientific research has been developing internationally for years. There are several research patterns in the art community, as shown even by SHARE Handbook for Artistic Research Education, published in 2013 by a network of experts from 39 countries. This does not prevent research from being acknowledged internationally as a central element of high art-musical education.

In some countries, law prevents art and musical institutions from developing autonomously PhDs. In most of cases, partnerships with universities have been created, a solution that sometimes caused didactic and administrative problems. Although AFAM institutions are lagging behind the international situation, Italian regulations is in advance compared to the European average and would allow an easier development of PhDs. These would become necessary both in the progress of artistic research and as a main stage in the recruitment of new professors in AFAM, whose workforce lack people and will face many retirements in the future.

The case of the Accademia delle Belle Arti of Rome may be highlighted: in October 2014 the MIUR approved new regulations within the Accademia which contained a whole article dedicated to PhDs. This is mainly about the directions of 2011 CNAM report on the “guidelines for the course of research education” and introduce innovations concerning the simplification and effectiveness of the procedures for PhDs within AFAM. School of research education may be introduced in every department or school of the Accademia, with the establishment of three-year courses of Research Education, equated to University PhDs, coordinated by a supervisor. There are no indications on the specific research methods, but they might development what has been made within the second cycle.

Here follows the whole passage concerning PhDs.

Art. 9 – PhDs.

PhDs aim to give the necessary skills to plan, lead and make high-qualified research. The Department suggests the establishment of PhDs and coordinates research activities. The final qualification is equated to the University PhD. The Academy established, after ministerial approval, Schools of Research Education (then Schools), of three-year duration, on proposal by the Didactic facilities, according to the opinion of the Academic Council and the Evaluation Nucleus, upon BoD resolution. In the establishment of PhDs, the Academy establishes the courses of Research Education in single departments and in the schools that start them, lead and coordinate them, with the identification of courses supervisors. The Regulation of PhDs is approved by CA on proposal by single Departments. PhDs within the Academy may be established even in partnership with other Academies or Universities or similar Institutions, both Italian and foreign, throughout agreements with public and

5 See the recent AEC manual dedicated to an updated analysis of the 2nd cycle, developed according to a professionalising course, directed to lay the foundations of the 3rd cycle and PhD (as planned by Dublin Descriptors). Thus, such reflection conducted by AEC focuses on the structured implementation of research activities, from the Master courses, as a qualifying element in the curriculum of the Higher Artistic Education Area: AEC-Poligonia Handbook, Perspectives on 2nd cycle programmes in higher music education, combining a research orientation with professional relevance, april 2015, http://www.anvur.org/attachments/article/791/V150424%20Online%20EN%20WG2.pdf
private subjects, which have the condition of high cultural and scientific qualification. The Academy may sign deals of international cooperation and activate cotutelle thesis with research organisations or foreign universities.

In order to be admitted to a PhD, a II level Master is required (Laurea Magistrale or Laurea preceding the reforms n. 508/99 and 509/99). The admittance to PhDs is subject to an admission test, according to the regulation of PhDs.

The number of graduated that may be admitted and the number of scholarships are determined every year with directorial decrees, upon CA and BoD resolution.

The Regulation of PhD gives the name to the PhD, its didactic articulation, consisting of several curricula.

The duration cannot be less than three years.

Some of the educational activities within the PhD may be conducted abroad, in foreign Academies, Universities or equated institutes, even in the domain of European projects and international student mobility, and it may be recognised as part of the curriculum, according to regulation.

PhDs are established for three academic years and may be renewed for other three years, after positive evaluation by CA, Evaluation Nucleus and BoD. If they are modified in structure and educational offer, PhDs must be approved again by the Minister.

The didactic structure proposes every year the institution of PhDs to the CA, with a motivated resolution. Every proposal must consists of:

- The theme of research within the scientific-disciplinary areas detected by MIUR;
- Aims and scopes of courses, with educational programmes, didactic activities and timetables;
- Conditions of admittance;
- Any other academic places and university partners, and their contribution in the didactic, organisational and financial context;
- Any other public or private subjects with which make agreement, in order to establish courses;
- The formation of the Council of artistic PhD where there are at least 3 professors;
- A coherent denomination according to academic educational curricula;
- Availability of adequate resources and specific operative and scientific structures for studying and research activity, reported in a financial report;
- An in-charge director of organisation;
- A coordinator of every educational curriculum;
- Programmes of didactic and scientific activities, articulated in 60 credits per year, which may be given after the attendance to lectures and seminars, laboratory activities, work presentations (exhibitions, essays, projects), thesis drafting and other educational activities;
- Minimum number of admitted students to each course;
- Minimum number of scholarships, acquired even by external funding, not less than two for each cycle, save different CA decision;
- The presence of a number of reference professors proportioned to that of students, with a reported art and/or production in the last 5 year in their related courses;
- Reported and recognised collaboration with public and private, Italian and foreign, subjects;
- Ability of international projection, supported by deals with European and Extra European Research Institutions and Universities, which require the progress of parts of curriculum in several places and the acknowledgement of acquired credits;
There may be the articulation in educational diversified curricula (sections), related to the themes dealt with, so as to grant aggregation of skills, structures and resources, in compliance with the unity of educational scopes of PhD and with the aim of promote the fullest possible integration, both in didactic programmes and in research projects, among the different sections.

The Council of PhD consists of professors of Accademia delle Belle Arti of Rome and professors and external experts in the scientific areas related to course, even belonging to different organisations and Institutions.

The final test is an original research project in agreement with the Coordinator of the PhD and made as a theoretical and/or graphic, multimedia essay. The project is discussed in public in front of a Commission made of course professors. The contents and conditions of the test are defined within the course teaching.

The Coordinator of the course, chosen among the professors of the Institutions, must:

• Coordinate the research activity of doctorial candidates;
• Call the Board of the course and chair it;
• Communicate the resolution of the council to the Director of the Academy;
• Give students the authorisation to go to the partner Academies or to other Institutions or research centres, even abroad, to conducted their research as planned in their curricula;
• Report the development of PhD;
• Certificate the participation of candidates to planned activities. The Council, made of all the professors, must:
• Define candidates’ curricula, with the authorisation of research projects, setting time and modality of intermediate tests;
• Organise educational base and in-depth seminars on specific issues, even in partnership with external professors and experts;
• Periodically report the progress of research activities by every candidate, in the artistic, scientific and methodological fields;
• Promote collaborations with other academic institutions, Italian and foreign, and with public and private organisations, so as to improve the progress of research;
• Propose relations and conventions with Universities, public or private Organisations, to support educational courses, and the award of scholarships;
• Approve the annual report on research activities made by candidates for the admission to following years;
• Decide about any motivated exclusion from the continuation of the course.
Assessment of artistic research

The reflection on ways, forms and processes of evaluation and assurance of the quality of 3rd cycle Education is closely linked to the development of the reformation on an international scale. In European terms, such approach has been involving art for years, so that some foreign colleagues are going to experience a second cycle of national evaluation (or they have already experienced, as in the UK). Due to the complexity of art educational system and the differences from University, our scope is on the development of protocols suitable for properly measuring the specific dimension, in view of an equal comparison to the scientific domain.

The exercise of evaluation is meant as an essential way, in order to achieve the goals of the reformation, that is a means that, through the analysis of critical situations, through a trend of solutions and the development of good practices, leads to the improvement of performances within institutions. Thus, the analysis of the reconfiguration of studying programs and of research activities starts playing a central role.

In international terms, it may be seen that the consolidation of an evaluation culture has contributed to the thematization of research within art, prompting such domain to start a self-reflection, in order to legitimate and define its research statute, its protocols, its disciplinary fields, its actuating areas, its goals and specific methods. The debate on the plural nature of artistic research outputs enter as a highly interesting hot-topic the bigger debate on the paradigms of research assessment within University, currently dominated by bibliometric criteria. The progress on the development of artistic research may be a benefit even to academic disciplines. If the detection of an approach to traditional evaluation bound to improve estimation ability is the common goal, the art sector shows up as a laboratory where the refining of evaluating techniques, which are more performing than the solely bibliometrics, may be experimented.

ENQA qualified agencies all over Europe (in Italy ANVUR) act on this matter independently in their respective national areas. Within such evolving general frame, two new international subjects have recently appeared in the European scenario, made by the evaluating agencies respectively promoted by ELIA (EQart) and AEC (MusiQuE), emerged from the maturity of the debate on these themes within the Higher education community in arts and music, and conceived so as to offer multi-faceted support to a harmonic progress of this domain in international terms.