University of New England

Ariella Van Luyn

James Cook University

Robyn Glade-Wright

Changing tertiary landscapes for the artist-academic: towards a framework for nurturing creative arts research beyond the PhD

Abstract:

In changing research climates in Australia, as elsewhere, non-traditional research outputs are increasingly incorporated into the scope of recognised intellectual activities beyond the PhD. While practice-led research has a relatively recent history in Australian universities, increasing numbers of academics hold doctoral level degrees with a creative practice component. In addition, a new focus in ERA on impact, and connections with communities outside academia, represents both challenges and potential for creative writing research. In these changing tertiary landscapes, early career artist-academics navigate complex institutional hierarchies and imperatives. Following Josie Arnold (2012, 2015), this paper takes an autoethnographic, 'mystory' approach to addressing these possible tensions and practical imperatives in a changing academic climate, proposing an initial framework for nurturing practice-led research in Australian universities.

Biographical notes:

Ariella Van Luyn is a writer, researcher and teacher of creative writing. Van Luyn is the author of a novel, *Treading Air* (2016), and several short stories. She co-edited, with Susan Gair, *Sharing Qualitative Research: Showing Lived Experiences and Community Narratives* (2017). Her research interests include practice-led research, historical fiction, oral history and community narratives.

Robyn Glade-Wright is an environmental artist and arts educator. Glade-Wright's creative works aim to communicate her ecological anxieties and concern for all life forms and the sustainability of the Earth's systems that support life on this small planet. Her research interests include Aesthetics, beauty and the eco-sublime.

Introduction

Over the past three decades, tertiary institutions in Australia have recognised the production of creative outputs – including, but not limited to, short stories, novels, paintings, sculptures, installations, films, exhibitions, scripts, music, plays, performance pieces – as an acceptable component of research work (Arnold 2012; Nelson 2013). A large and sophisticated body of literature usefully offers guidance for postgraduate research students engaging in practice-led research (see, for example, Milech and Schilo 2004; Haseman 2006; Haseman and Mafe 2009; Smith and Dean 2009; Webb and Brien 2012; Arnold 2012; Hawkins and Wilson 2017; *TEXT* 44 2017). Fewer studies provide advice for early career researchers working in tertiary institutions who are practicing artists, variously called 'artist-academics' (Bloom, Bennett and Wright 2008), 'author-academics' (Kroll 2004), 'practitioner academics' (Arnold 2015), or 'artists in the university' (Wilson 2017). As the two practice-led researchers' narratives at the centre of this paper demonstrate, the practice-led PhD model of exegesis plus creative work does not translate easily into the demands of academic life. Early career researchers operating in this newly emergent, and often volatile, area face challenges because of the ways institutions and governments value and measure artistic activity in universities. Early career artistic researchers must navigate complex institutional hierarchies and multiple roles as artist, researcher, teacher and administrator in order to be able to design practice-led research projects beyond the PhD.

This paper, drawing on a 'mystory approach', proposes some pragmatic ways early career researchers can navigate these tensions. Suggestions include encouraging researchers to consider how their work challenges institutional hierarchies of knowledge that privilege an oft-times mythological notion of objective, scientific research; developing their capacity to design projects where traditional research outputs support solving the problems of creative practice; and understanding that developing creative and academic work in tandem can take longer than other modes of research.

For early career researchers, the current tertiary climate – which is influenced by both university management, government policy, and wider cultural attitudes – holds both peril and increasing promise. While the introduction of the 'art school into university is a relatively recent move', it has resulted in more liberal way of assessing research (Butt 2017: 53). Tertiary institutions can support a mode of aesthetic production that 'seeks a deeper truth … interrogating the conditions that make representation possible' (Butt 2017:). Jenny Wilson argues that locating the artist as researcher has given artists voices to describe their intentions and processes (2017: 149). On a more practical level, artist-academics cite the stability of academic life compared to professional practice (Wilson 2017). Further, the accessibility and pleasure of artistic practice invites student and community engagement. While the exact number of practicing artists in universities in Australia is difficult to determine (Wilson 2017: 43), student demand for supervision in practice-led postgraduate research and coursework degrees continues to grow (Brien, Owens, Pittaway &Waters 2017). In Australia in 2015, 26 universities (of 43 accredited universities) offered PhDs that include creative artefact and exegesis (Arnold 2015: 158). The new focus in ERA on impact also holds the potential for further avenues that artistic practice might be valued in institutions. On the other hand, funding for artistic research is sparse (Wilson 2017: 7). As funding is a key measure of

academic success, a lack of funding has flow-on effects for the ways universities manage artists and value their work.

Wilson's (2017) comprehensive account of artistic researchers in Australian universities includes extensive interviews to provide an overview of the current tertiary climate. However, Wilson is not a practicing artist-academic, which, as she acknowledges (2017), allows her a distanced stance. To augment Wilson's account, this paper relies on two practicing researchers' lived experience of the current complex tertiary climate. The sharing of stories offers both an opportunity for early career researchers to feel less isolated in their experiences, and to reflect on some pragmatic ways of navigating these tensions from the perspective of practice-led researchers operating inside the institution.

Methodology

Following Josie Arnold (2012; 2015), the authors take an autoethnographic, 'mystory' (Ulmer 1985) approach to addressing these philosophical and structural tensions and practical imperatives. This approach is in keeping with the notion of 'self as data' established in practice-led research, and analyses and interprets autobiographical experiences as a form of data (Arnold 2015: 165). In this paper, we wish to reflect on our experiences in order to gesture towards a framework for supporting early career creative arts research. Ariella Van Luyn is an early career researcher who has been employed at two regional universities as a lecturer in creative writing; Robyn Glade-Wright is an Associate Professor in visual arts, also at a regional university. Here, Van Luyn's story demonstrates some of the difficulties in the transition between practice-led research PhD and early career research work within tertiary institutions, while Glade-Wright's story offers insight into how her visual arts practice offers new modes of knowledge. Both authors focus on early career researchers, with contrasting perspectives from an early career researcher (Van Luyn) and a more senior academic (Glade-Wright). The conclusions drawn are relatively modest, and focus only on artist-academics in tertiary settings; it is beyond the scope of this paper to make generalised conclusions or to discuss artist-academics outside of tertiary settings. Further research into the experiences of other artist-researchers engaged in creative practice-led research at different stages of their careers would be hugely valuable in understanding the artist-researcher's transition into academic life.

Ariella Van Luyn's story: a rocky transition from creative arts PhD to early career researcher

'Before I begin, I want to acknowledge the privilege I hold in having the experiences I've had, having access to education and being able to have the capital to voice this narrative. I am aware of the lack of diversity in Australian arts in general (Ang and Mar 2016), and my recent experience at the AAWP conference (2017) also emphasises the difficulties for artist-researchers working as casuals or outside tertiary settings.

 wanted to be a writer since I was about eight; my parents encouraged me but also cautioned me to be sensible. Trying to heed their advice, I applied for a double degree in law and creative writing at university – but I was really drawn to the promise of creativity in the writing degree. I knew I couldn't sing, draw or dance, but I'd been writing since forever.

I hated law, but it took me a year of moping over Contracts textbooks and general suffering before I dropped out. To my anxious and people-pleasing mind, it felt like flinging myself into the abyss. To skip over a number of personal and existential crises: I went on to complete an Honours degree and PhD in creative writing using practice-led research methodologies. I remember thinking when I first started Honours – which I'd never heard of before that year – I wanted to learn to be a better writer, and the university and the mentorship of my

supervisor, who had taught me as an undergraduate, felt safe and known. I was also lucky enough to get a scholarship and enough teaching work to sustain my study. What I also discovered was that I enjoyed research and the way it stretched my mind, and that's how I conceived of my creative practice.

At the end of the PhD, I felt so terrible that I went to a GP, who diagnosed me as having an 'adjustment disorder' brought about by the realisation, which I had been delaying with all this study, that I couldn't be a writer full-time, and that I was unlikely to get a job teaching at a university. But somehow, I did manage to find work at a regional university teaching academic and creative writing. Around the same time, the historical fiction novel from my PhD was shortlisted for the Queensland Literary Awards. I started to think that maybe I really was the exception to the rule.

Fast forward a year: several publishers had rejected my novel on the grounds that it did not have sufficient narrative drive. Yet, the manuscript's multiple narrative threads and focus on the everyday lives of characters little-known to history had been one of the ways the creative work responded to my research investigating how oral history might inform historical fiction. Scholarship in oral history points to how oral narratives draw attention to the personal significance of the past, advocating the possibility of multiple versions of historical events, following Lyotard's suspicion of linear Grand Narratives in history and science (1984). But I figured that, as other colleagues had published research-informed creative work, the problem must be with the novel itself, and its commercial appeal. I knew I'd probably have to start again because –clearly – it was just going to take me a lot longer than everyone else to learn how to be a good writer.

By this stage, I felt exhausted by job, which seemed unsustainable. When I sought guidance about fitting creative work into academic practice, I heard statements like, 'I've given up my creative practice in favour of traditional research', 'You can't be a research leader and do creative work', and, 'Don't focus on your practice, you want to be a real researcher, don't you?' At this early stage of my career, I found myself facing the possibility that creative practice-led research was unsustainable in my current position, and my old anxieties about being unable to sustain my writing surfaced again. This was deeply distressing to me on professional, personal and spiritual levels. It seemed to invalidate my undergraduate and postgraduate learning, a process that I continued to facilitate in my teaching as a lecturer in writing. My identity was closely aligned to the notion of myself as a writer and artist, as well as a researcher, and the artistic practice of creative writing added significance and value to my life.

So, perhaps unsurprisingly, against some of the advice I received, I decided to write a second novel, which continued my exploration of the relationship between history, fiction and narrative, *Treading Air* (Affirm Press, 2016). I published an academic conference paper on the development of the novel and continued to work on a paper about my creative process. After the novel's publication, I felt increased support and recognition of my work from colleagues and management at the university. In this process, I also came to see – arguably a bit late in the game – the ways in which creative work could be deeply enriched by research; in the post-writing reflection, I understood how the ideas in which I had immersed myself in my PhD informed the choices I made in the second novel.

Personal stories are not static; already I'm aware of the multiple versions of drafting I've done on this one, as the act of narrating a life causes me to rethink its meaning. Reflecting now, in a permanent position at another regional university where I have to evaluate prospective practice-led research projects, parts of my story make me uneasy: my initial motivation was more about developing my creative practice and not about how it might be

enriched by research – I saw the exegesis as a difficult thing I had to do in order to pass – and that this was propelled by unrealistic beliefs about the likelihood of the success of my creative work post-PhD, my capacity to earn a living from it, and the commercial value of the PhD novel. I can't tell whether I was in denial, or if I held a subconscious belief I was the exception to the rule, or if somehow these messages were not delivered clearly to me. I also see the ways some of my rigid ideas about creativity worked against me; I have since come to conceive of research and academic writing as modes of creative work in themselves, and expanded my definition of the kind of work an artist does behind-the-scenes of creative production.

I acknowledge that I am deeply attached to culturally inherited ideas that conceptualise creativity and art as special, magical and spiritual acts. I recently read a chapter (Holbrook and Hundley 2017) in a book called *Bad Ideas about Writing* that pointed to the way myths about writers can be damaging, particularly the belief that writing is a magical process that happens independent of hard work. Okay, so sometimes it feels like that to me when I'm writing, but as Csikszentmihalyi has observed, 'flow' states are usually only achieved after intensive study in the discipline area (1990). In such states, an artist does not have any opportunity to reflect until after the experience, when the 'self the person reflects on is different from before' (1990: 66). I wish I could have understood this distinction earlier, and also that I could travel back and give my younger self a piece of advice elegantly summed up by Holbrook and Hundley: 'writers should see their work as part of an ongoing career, where they improve through continued effort and frequent submissions'; this is a 'self-forgiving stance that undercuts portraits of writers as obsessed with their own personal failures and the imperfections of their work' (2017: 58). I say this with some irony, as my own story reveals my emphasis on these aspects of my career. Yet, in researching and developing this paper, presenting it at the 2017 AAWP conference, and talking with Robyn, I've also come to see the ways that my feelings were not only a result of my own culturally-inherited bad ideas about writing, but also a result of structures in my workplace that have been largely invisible to me in the past.'

Revealing institutional hierarchies of knowledge

Van Luyn's story demonstrates that early career researchers are at a vulnerable stage of their career when they first transition into the norms of university life; often the gap between the ideal, which they strive for, and the reality is not immediately obvious. In addition, they lose the guidance of supervisors. The shift from PhD candidate to early career researcher can be difficult because it signals a transition from dependent to independent researcher, as well as increased time constraints and difficulties accessing funding (Laudel and Glaser 2008; Coates et al. 2009). This is also the case for practice-led research post PhD. Indeed, Bell describes the relationship between creative work and traditional scholarly outputs in academic work as a 'marriage of inconvenience' (2009: 252) because, while in theory creative work should be more nuanced due to its underpinning by research, in reality it is 'compromised by the constraints of teaching and conventional research' (252). Institutionally, despite critiques of positivist modes of knowledge, 'a hierarchy of paradigms still privileges the quantitative sciences' (Nelson 2013: 52). Further, Shane Strange points to the way that the academy as a 'capitalist social relation' is often mystified (2012). While the marketplace, government, policy, art, research and creativity seem autonomous within the system, their 'tensions wend their way through discussions of, and resistances to, many formulations of practice-led research' (Strange 2012: 5). Strange argues that when the artist-researcher experiences difficulties trying to situate their subjectivity within a research paradigm, it is because of the 'fragmented, definitional social world of capital' (2012: 1). This is evidenced starkly in the ways academic research is measured and allocated funding.

Australian government funding priorities emphasise the way value is attributed to more traditional research modes over arts-based methods. Wilson observes that while, on the surface, art is accepted as research in universities, there are hidden underlying beliefs that emphasise the dichotomy of art and research (2017: 77). Indeed, in Australia, 'national research measurements assume a stereotypical and perhaps mythical model of science-based research as linear and objective upon which to base their assumptions and expectations (Wilson 2017: 6). Additionally, until 2009 in Australia, government funding had excluded research that led to an artistic output (Wilson 2011:72). It is hardly surprising then that management and mentors, particular at cash-strapped regional universities, might suggest, as some did to Van Luyn, that early career researchers abandon their creative practice.

Further, while institutions might recognise research-informed creative outputs as legitimate, they also emphasise the importance of publication. As Van Luyn's story demonstrates, commercial publishers are likely to have different interests in the value of a work than artist-researchers, leaving little room for healthy attitudes about rejection. Further, these imperatives have the capacity to shape university structures in ways that early career researchers are likely to feel but may not understand – and thus potentially internalise – when commencing work.

Yet, these institutional knowledge hierarchies are deeply problematic. In advocating for arts-based research, Barbara Hawkins and Brett Wilson (2017) critique the separation of art and science. They argue that elevating scientific research as more valid and reliable is grounded on the assumption that scientific research is objective, while arts research is subjective. Hawkins and Wilson (2017) point to the philosophical shift in both arts and the philosophy of science to an understanding that both modes are subjective, which replace simplistic notions of scientists discovering a knowable world. Yet, these institutional divisions have real impacts on the ways creative practice-researchers may relate to tertiary settings, and how their work is received in the university.

Institutional hierarchies are also problematic because of the way they marginalise non-Western ways of knowing. For example, Arnold, while emphasising the valuable contributions of scientific ways of knowing, argues that:

> Storytelling through the arts is the most ancient of human discourses … Many such stories have been designated as fictional by Eurowestern knowledge brokers, and this is particularly evidenced in the academy. As such, they have been discredited or even ignored within knowledge structures except as an object of study by credentialed academics. For example, Indigenous Australian beliefs, mores, rules, regulations and societal practices have long been published by white claimants as myths and legends. (2016: 6)

Here, Arnold points to the way Western colonial values are still reinforced by academic institutions, to the exclusion of non-Western voices and ways of knowing.

While these knowledge hierarchies marginalise certain kinds of knowledge and ignore contemporary awareness of the subjective nature of research, the culture of research measurements and the pervading hierarchy of scientific research in tertiary education adds constraints to the continuation of creative arts research beyond the PhD that the emerging artist-academic may feel bodily and psychologically. Van Luyn's story demonstrates the ways that internalised and unquestioned cultural ideas of creativity can be both hugely motivating and restrictive, and that funding models privilege certain modes of knowledge. In these difficult contexts, how might practice-led research be nurtured post-PhD?

The first step is to foreground that it is almost necessarily a condition of creative arts research that practitioners must grapple with theoretical conceptions about the nature of knowledge, and to draw attention to these often-hidden hierarchies that devalue artistic practice. Perhaps

this could be better conceived of as part of the artist-academics' function in the academy. Creative work-as-research may continue to occupy an uncomfortable position in the academy because it unsettles definitions of research. It seems almost a necessary condition of creative arts research that practitioners must grapple with theoretical conceptions about the nature of knowing. Indeed, Estelle Barrett believes that 'practitioner-based research involves considering the essences of traditional research models in order to understand, critique and appropriate them according to need' (2010: 138). Sullivan concurs, stating that 'facing the unknown and disrupting the known is precisely what artist-researchers achieve as they delve into theoretical, conceptual, dialectical and contextual practices through artmaking' (2009: 62). Similarly, Arnold believes that 'the creative practitioner brings to the academy new dimensions of what knowledge itself consists of, and how this contributes to learning' (2012: 11). Yet this often puts artist-academics in uncomfortable positions because they do not conform to expected modes of research production.

One of the first ways to nurture practice-led research at an individual level is to learn to acknowledge and sit with these anxieties in academia, acknowledging that feelings of discomfort or inadequacy are not by default the fault of an individual. In addition, explicitly acknowledging that processes of developing writing skills, both academic and creative, and the revision of understandings – for those privileged enough to have the opportunity to do so – does not cease once the PhD is completed. At a wider level, the continued discussion of the sometimes-invisible knowledge hierarchies is integral. A related problem is how creative work can not only critique knowledge hierarchies but also function as a mode of generating new knowledge.

Robyn Glade-Wright's story: the persistent artist in the academy

'My family told me I could not be an artist as I would never make a living from art, however, I enrolled in an Arts degree in the late 1970s and travelled to Europe and America. During my degree, I visited an exhibition of Jackson Pollock's large-scale paintings in a large decommissioned church in Cologne and was mesmerised by the work. This moving experience was in stark contrast to the controversy that had raged in Australia a few years earlier, regarding a public institution's purchase of Pollock's painting 'Blue Poles.' From the moment I saw the exhibition my worldview changed. I realised that art can be highly significant and cultural values in Australia differed from those of other countries. This formative experience strengthened my commitment to the arts.

When I joined the academy in 2002, I was conscious of being a misfit, despite the recent sale of my Master's research in Appearance Retention to a carpet manufacturer. Following a PhD in 2006, I was unsure how to function in the academy given my passion to make art, the demands of high teaching loads, new subjects that stretched my expertise and the explicit direction from a manager that non-traditional outputs would not be counted in workload calculations. Despite these factors, making art was seemingly 'innate' to me and it was a means by which I could address physic disturbances. I have long wanted to live my life for a purpose I thought to be a good one and making art spoke to this aim.

A knotty question for academics who undertake creative arts research relates to how creative practice can justify a claim of contributing new knowledge. I answered this call by undertaking research into how people experienced works of art, and if or how their view of a topic altered. I also investigated the aesthetic hook of beauty and how my use of it was subversive to gain attention for the delivery of a haunting or disturbing message. I was able to nut out and recognise where new knowledge about art had been created through a process of writing and publishing articles about my creative work and the work of others in the field.

An example of this occurred when I researched the impact on participants who made a shape to commemorate the annual extinction of a plant or animal species and placed it in a large work of art. Participants reported an emotional reaction to 'seeing' the magnitude of extinction (27,000 per year) and leaning that extinction is a current problem (Glade-Wright & Sorin 2015). In addition to knowledge of facts, such as the magnitude of extinction, the arts can enrich us by enabling us to work out how we think and feel about emergent situations (Webb & Brien 2012: 192). The arts provide information in a form that interacts with our emotions in a space that enables us to reflect on our experience at our own pace and potentially challenge our understanding and our ethical being-in-the world (Mathieu 2014: 214). The results of the exhibition research confirmed the philosopher Gordon Graham's proposition that arts are a 'valuable source of knowing and understanding' (2005: 52). This point may seem obvious, but artist-academics find themselves explaining, justifying, and researching this reality.

Over time, my understanding of the cognitive function of art grew. I recognised that terms used to describe significant works of art, which Graham notes, including 'illuminating', 'insightful' and 'profound', are 'cognitivist terms that aim to convey the works contribution to our understanding of experience' (2005: 58), and, I suggest, their contribution to knowledge. I was also impressed by John Bellamy Foster's claim that 'science and art are two preeminent fields of inquiry into nature, each operating according to its own distinct principles' (2016). Foster defined 'nature' as having 'three primary interrelated meanings: (1) the intrinsic properties or essence of things or processes; (2) an inherent force that directs or determines the world; and (3) the material world or universe, the object of our sense perceptions – both in its entirety and variously understood as including or excluding God, spirit, mind, human beings, society, history, culture, etc' (2016). Given that art and science serve different ends, it was clear to me that both areas are necessary and valuable and therefore worthy of pursuit, even if some people as late as the twenty-first century remained committed to ideas of rationalism. Over the past few decades, contemporary arts have benefited from the changes heralded by postmodernism with refinements in integrity making space available for artists to address personal, social and political concerns in a manner that can connect with others around the globe. The stage has been set for artists to make work that intersects with that of other disciplines in the university.

From 1990, governments started to recognise the importance of creativity and the need to include all economic activity. In articulating the new knowledge in the field of practice-led research in the arts, I investigated and published information regarding various aspects of practice including brain activity in relation to mesmerizing patterns, the impact of emotional packing when sending messages and the fact the arts enable people to come to know information in their own time and via reflective understanding. For example, the statement 'war injures and kills innocent children' is not as affective as viewing the well know photograph by Nick Ut in 1972 of a Vietnamese girl running while being burned with napalm. My research found that the mechanism at play in the creation and reception of the arts could be communicated both in text and verified through examples of practice. My conjecture on theories could be supported by my creative work. This is not to suggest that the creative work was passive data for reflection and analysis. Indeed, the making of art can involve surprising solutions. In all creative work, there is a combination of generating ideas and recognising ideas with potential to be the most effective for the given purpose. Recognising the good ideas requires analytical thinking and this can be hauled from a visual form into text. Indeed, my creative works do not feel as if they are complete until I undertake the analysis. The process is reflexive in the sense that analysis of the creative process provides understanding that can support and impact both the creative work and the concept of

art. Therefore, the method of creating works is generative of new knowledge of practice and of art as is analysis of the works' reception.

All of this helped me to hold onto my artistic practice, despite lack of recognition from some quarters. I'd describe myself as a persistent artist in the academy.

Knowledge claims in practice-led research in a university context

Glade-Wright's story demonstrates a number of the rich challenges in undertaking practice-led research in the university context. The first is how to translate the knowledge inherent in the artwork and make a claim for new knowledge. Another is the value and transformative potential of artworks. Glade-Wright also aims to articulate how research is a mode of thinking through the difficulties encouraged in developing art. Similarly, Webb and Brien have wondered what creative writing can contribute to knowledge, citing a distrust for writing stemming from the time of Plato, who rejected the poetic arts as a madness that disrupts rational thoughts (2012: 190). They conclude that the creative product is not an 'argument but a way of seeing' (191), and that knowledge may emerge through artworks and then philosophy (192). Glade-Wright, too, articulates the iterative relationship between theory, research and creative practice, giving early career researchers an understanding of the way writing research papers can be presented as a way of 'nutting out' problems in practice.

Having acknowledged that governmental measurements of research value are problematic but nonetheless have real impact on researchers, it is useful to use these definitions as a starting point for nurturing practice-led research post-PhD. ERA defines research as 'the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings.' (Australia Research Council 2018: 9). How can, and do, non-traditional research outputs/research-informed creative works create new knowledge?

What is an artistic project that contributes to new knowledge?

Artist-academics are engaged in not just conceptualising new artworks but also artistic projects, in the sense that a 'project' is a useful container for thinking about the aims, justifications and methods for engaging in creative work and its actual effects. On some level, all artwork is informed, on some level, by research. A writer of historical fiction might conduct archival research into a time period to write a scene, or a visual artist might investigate the best material to create a sculpture. Yet this background research does not, by itself, create new knowledge; rather, it uses existing knowledge for practical purposes. Similarly, Nelson makes the 'distinction between habitual (or formulaic) practices and those in which intelligence and innovation are manifest' (2013: 61). In other words, in arts-research work, the practitioner must be doing something different to their previous work. Further, Mottram believes that in this context, research might involve 'investigating what art is, how it arises, or what it does'(2009: 229). In advocating for arts-based research, Hawkins and Wilson provide another useful definition:

> if your work is challenging, probing, or bringing into question an established conceptual model, then you are doing research. If you are proposing a conceptual model in an emerging field, then you are doing research. (2017: 83)

These definitions suggest that artistic projects that arise from understanding the processes and effects of new work, or that engage in artistic practice to challenge existing ideas, or explore emerging ideas, are useful ways of conceptualising the project of artistic research. In Glade-Wright's case, questions about how artwork might raise awareness of mass extinctions, and the effect that the artwork had on audiences, were modes of conceptualising the artwork as research.

Such approaches allow an acknowledgment of the way knowledge can be generated through practice, but that the processes, effects, and challenges must be made explicit. Creative practice, in and of itself, is a form of tacit knowledge (Barrett 2010: 43). Maarit Anna Mäkelä calls this 'knowing through making' (2007). Paul Carter describes how innovation through practice might happen:

> the condition of invention is a perception or recognition of the ambiguity of appearances…in general, a double movement occurs, of decontextualisation where found elements are rendered strange, and recontextualisation, where new families and structures of association are established. (2010: 15)

Carter (2010) notes that in philosophy this is the Socratic method, but the practice-based process is to mediate this materially, to allow for the unpredictable and differential situation to influence what is found. Such processes reflect individual researcher's subjectivities. Indeed, Barrett believes that the subjective approach is part of artistic researcher's 'innovative dimension' and that artistic work has a 'capacity to bring into view particularities of lived experience that reflect alternative realities that are either marginalised or not yet recognised in established theory and practice' (2010: 145).

Yet in order for this new knowledge to be communicated with others, and for knowledge through making to be challenged and extended, it needs to be developed in tandem with research, explication and analysis. Mäkelä states that 'the crucial task for each practice-led research project is to give a voice to the artefact' (2007: 163). Arnold argues that this process need not be didactic: 'Rather, acting together, the artefact and exegesis bridge the Cartesian binary, offer new models of knowledge to the academy, and enrich the artistic practices of the practitioners themselves' (2012: 11)

In the practice-led PhD, these acts of explication and analysis are partly the function of the exegesis: but what does this look like in a time-squeezed, post-PhD context? Glade-Wright's story shows how she adapted the creative work plus exegesis model in a university context by using academic papers to 'nut out' the way the artwork could contribute new knowledge. She later conducted audience surveys to qualify and quantify the effects of her work. Nelson states that,

> the relation between arts practices and any accompanying writing to articulate and evidence the research inquiry involves more than a willingness, or otherwise, of practitioner-researchers to write complementary commentaries … it is a continuous interaction between various modes of knowing. (2013: 58)

In other words, the relationship between the research and the creative work is iterative (Smith & Dean 2009). Conceptualising research papers as steps in a larger artistic project that allow iterative cycles of knowing is a useful way to think about organising arts-research work. In this way, the 'artist' self and the 'academic' self need not be divided. Indeed, Wilson (2017: 55) documented how many artist academics feel divided, some hiding their artistic identity while working in the university sector. Both Glade-Wright and Van Luyn expressed how their artistic identity is integral to their long-term motivations and wellbeing, stating also that distress resulted when they were advised not to pursue their work. Hiding an artistic identity was not a sustainable mode of operating within the academy.

Nonetheless, the practitioner's knowledge of their own work is limited, while their reading of their own work is not the only or definitive version of its meaning. For example, Sullivan argues that knowledge is produced in an interaction between artist, setting and reader/viewer: 'in this instance, knowledge embedded in practice, knowledge argued in a thesis and knowledge constructed as discourse within the institutional setting all contribute to new

understanding' (2009: 47). Practice-led research only has the capacity to generate certain kinds of knowledge and insights.

These qualities of practice-led research have a number of implications for practice-led research undertaken by early career researchers. As Glade-Wright's story also demonstrates, such processes take an extended period of time; her arts project developed over a number of years and iterative phases. Further, Glade-Wright turned to other modes of research, such as audience surveys, to complement her own reflections on the artistic process. Finally, Glade-Wright's story demonstrates the ways that artistic research is transformative for both the researcher and the audience of the creative work. Indeed, as Sullivan states, 'the reflexive tradition of the arts enables both the artist and the viewer to participate in an exchange that is mediated by an artwork whereby change and transformation often results' (2009: 50). Such transformations provoke constant revisions of knowledge claims; the nature of knowledge is not stable.

Reflections

This paper concludes not with definitive answers but rather questions for areas of further inquiry, which could be drawn out through further investigation and reflection on creative practice research post-PhD. The first step towards a framework for nurturing artist-academics in the academy is perhaps to continue to challenge culturally held beliefs that artists are not researchers and therefore do not belong in the academy. Indeed, it could be argued all research is a creative process: the very definition of research given by ERA is one of *creation*. In practice, the background research an artist might engage in, or their habitual practices, should be distinguished from art-as-research. Thus, through a process of shifting tacit knowledge that develops in the process of making an artwork, to explicit knowledge through research and reflection, artists may generate new knowledge.

The second step may be to accept and value this kind of research's self-reflective, subjective, and questioning modes of knowing. Engaging in this kind of work can be confronting to individual researchers because of the limitations of its modes of knowing, and the way it questions the nature of what can be known, and what counts as knowledge (narrative, sensory details, texture, and so on). It is important to acknowledge that any resulting discomfort can be a result of often invisible knowledge hierarchies. Yet such questions form part of the important work of research in the university.

A third step could be to devote space and time for academics to develop as practitioners as well as researchers and to consider how institutional policies, such as workloads, might reflect this. Most academics struggle with time constraints and the competing demands of teaching, research and service requirements. Arts-researchers may feel this acutely because not only do they need to engage in teaching and develop traditional research outputs but also develop practice. For early career researchers, there is a sharp transition between working on creative and academic work with a supervisor, and the independent writing after the PhD. This transition requires an acknowledgement both at an institution and individual level that learning and growth is a continuous and time-consuming process.

In addition, it may be useful to continue to re-think the sometimes artificial or self-imposed divisions between creative work, academic work and teaching. Teaching can be a space to share insights and think through ideas; both authors have observed that students seem to respect visual arts teachers who have a visible practice, and they explicitly draw on their practice to inform their teaching. Further, lectures can be a space to test out ideas. For example, Glade-Wright presented a lecture on the nature of knowledge through the arts,

which later became the basis of sections of this paper. Research papers can also inform the development of, and reflection on, arts projects.

Van Luyn and Glade-Wright's experiences suggest it is valuable spending time in articulating research questions at the beginning of an arts project. As Glade-Wright's story demonstrates, research questions may usefully investigate how art might be a means of creating impact, which might be answered through the generation of artworks, reflection on the process, and nature of the artwork, alongside other qualitative and quantitate modes of research such as audience surveys and interviews. At other times, creative work can be developed in response to identified dilemmas in attempting to implement an artistic vision, or in the literature of creative arts or other disciplines. Lastly, artist-researchers need to learn not to suppress creative impulses as part of their acculturation into the academy; research questions can still emerge from an enthusiasm for practice (Haseman 2009). Passion and creative enthusiasm should form the heart of research endeavours, which can result in sustainable academic careers for artist-researchers.

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