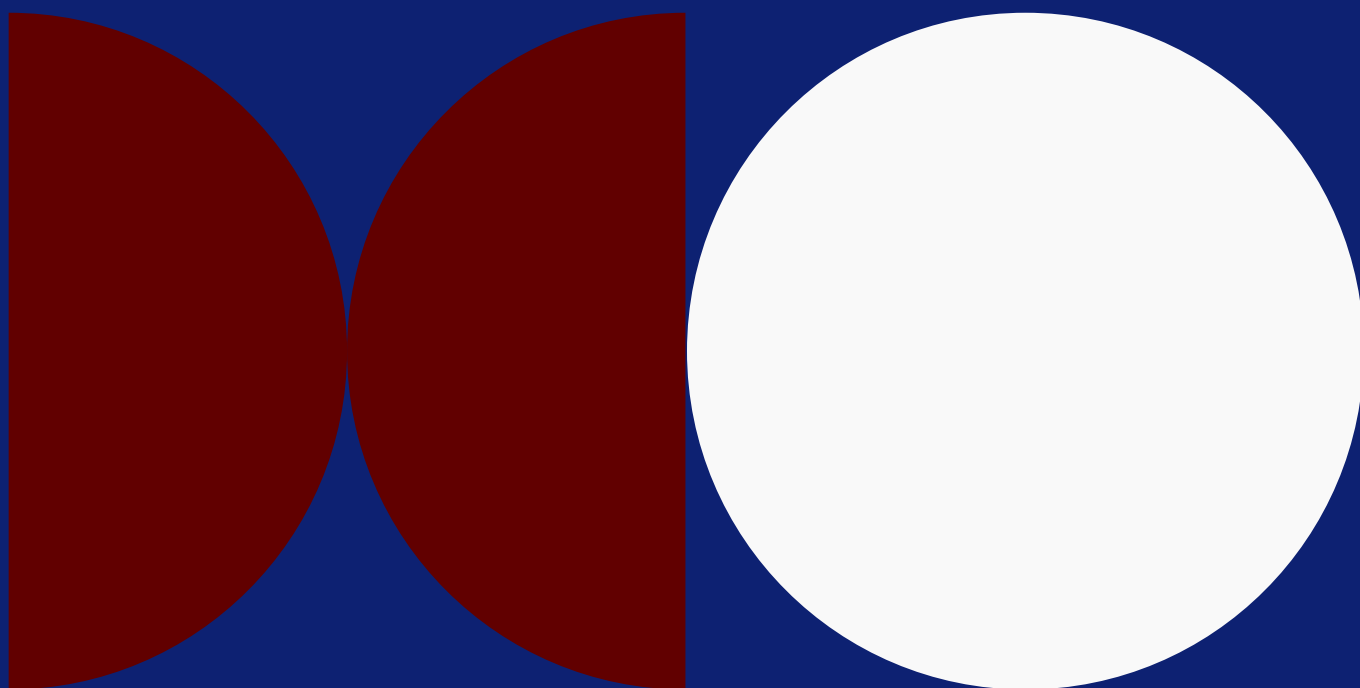


Research review 2023

Artistic research



Research review 2023: Artistic research

VR2306

Dnr 3.5 - 2022-05069

ISBN: 978-91-88943-82-8

Swedish Research Council

Vetenskapsrådet

Box 1035

SE-101 38 Stockholm, Sweden

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Foreword

This report includes recommendations for initiatives to promote research in artistic research in Sweden, based on analysis of the current situation and trends for research in the field. Together with reviews of other scientific fields, this report will form the foundation for the Swedish Research Council's strategic work.

The research review has been produced by the Committee for Artistic Research via a work team consisting of Cecilia Järdegar and Johan Redström, Committee Members, and Maria Hellström Reimer, Scientific Adviser for Artistic Research. Åsa Eklöf and Monica Svantesson, Research Coordinators, assisted in the process, as did Justiina Dahl, Senior Research Officer, Department of Research Infrastructures, and Sumithra Velupillai, Senior Research Officer, Strategic Data Resources Unit. The work started in 2021 with a summary of statistics supplemented with a text mining analysis of applications submitted 2014–2021. During spring 2022, two open hearings were arranged, and thereafter sector reviews were obtained from external subject experts. Valuable contributions during this stage was provided by Åsa Andersson Broms, artist and Senior Lecturer, Royal Institute of Art, Professor Martín Ávila, University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, Kristina Hagström Ståhl, director, author and translator, Fredrik Nyberg, author and a panel member of the Swedish Research Council's Committee for Artistic Research, Monica Sand, Research Adviser, Faculty of Fine, Applies and Performing Arts, University of Gothenburg, and Professor Stefan Östersjö, Luleå University of Technology, Piteå School of Music.

A preliminary version was the subject of an open internet consultation during the period 19 September–7 October, where the research community had the opportunity to comment. The review has also been commented on by the Board of the Swedish Research Council at meetings on 8 June and 10 November 2022. The Swedish version of this text was thereafter adopted by the Committee for Artistic Research in December 2022. The Committee would like to thank all who in various ways have contributed to and at various times provided valuable comments on this research review.

Stockholm, December, 2022

Cecilia Sjöholm, Chair, Committee for Artistic Research

Maria Hellström Reimer, Scientific Adviser, Committee for Artistic Research

Stefan Svallfors, Secretary General, Scientific Council for Humanities and Social Sciences

Summary

Artistic research investigates fundamental issues concerning the relationship between sensory experiences, forms of expression and modes of interpretation. Based on practices developed within the artistic field that materially explore the creation of meaning and values, it is research that develops at the intersection between the individual, society and the public sphere.

In a contemporary world characterised by cultural and social transitions, and by ever more sophisticated flows of stimuli and expressions that accelerating technology make possible, there is great need for practice-based artistic research. This research review shows that, over the last decade, artistic research has addressed these challenges and actively contributed to identifying and investigating the existentially vital research questions that an insecure future gives rise to, such as co-creation and the public sphere, reality and fiction, exploration and learning. The review also shows that this has often been done in cross-disciplinary collaborations that have experimented with and integrated artistic and scientific competences in order to contribute to both conceptual and methodological development.

Besides available statistics, the research review is also based on qualitative documentation collected via hearings, sector reviews and internet consultation. It provides an overview of how artistic research in Sweden is conducted, organised and funded. What emerges is research that is undergoing strong development; research that is both positioned internationally and is conducted in environments that attract international researchers. Particularly strong areas are highlighted, but also fundamental aspects in need of strengthening. The review therefore points out a number of measures that could contribute both to utilising the potential that already exists, and also to stimulating long-term quality enhancement.

Strengthening the basic preconditions by increasing the currently very limited budgetary framework for undirected, researcher-initiated research is crucial. New calls for research environment support are also necessary. This support form triggered a large response in the 2022 call. Infrastructural initiatives adapted for the area are also a basic precondition for the continued methodological development of artistic research. The review also highlights the need for renewed investment in research-level education, through new graduate school initiatives and investment in art didactics research.

The review clearly shows the thematic engagement, preparedness and possible contribution of artistic research in relation to current societal challenges. From the viewpoint of the participation of artistic research in – and contribution to – the research community as a whole, it is therefore of great importance that cross-disciplinary programmes and calls clearly also include artistic approaches. This,

however, requires an adaptation of the formats for assessment and evaluation of research so that they also do justice to artistic research results.

Finally, the research review recognises the important research ethics role played by artistic research, as a questioning exploration of the borderline between the individual sphere and the public sphere, the subjective viewpoint and the general viewpoint. The review indicates the need of support forms and contexts for artistic research that enable researchers from different fields to develop ethically sustainable approaches together. This is research that has an important role to play in the discussion about the ethical dimension of knowledge development, and the ethical responsibility of research.

1 Introduction

Artistic research is a broad and varied area of knowledge, with its foundation in the explorative and experience-based practices developed within the artistic field, for example in visual arts and lens-based media, music, design and architecture, dramatic art, literary forms of expression and in different forms of curatorial and cross-disciplinary collaborations.¹ This is a form of research that actively uses curiosity and societal engagement as the starting point, that tests and articulates the sensory experiences, concepts and linguistic phenomena that enable knowledge development. By focusing on forms of expression and modes of interpretation, artistic research also stands in a special relationship to the development and capacity for renewal of democratic society and the public sphere, as well as to the crucial issue of meaning and value creation. The sphere of interest of artistic research therefore coincides with parts of humanities research, as it relates to fundamental, existential and social issues, at the same time as it also – in its focus on material conditions and experimental opportunities – has a lot in common with technological research and development.

This research review should therefore be seen as a time-bound section from a multi-faceted and thematically composite research field in constant motion. The intention is not to provide a comprehensive picture or to territorially demarcate artistic research through mapping. Instead, the ambition is to show tendencies and challenges by making a broad inventory of Swedish artistic research over the last decade – focusing on the last five to seven years – and to make a number of recommendations for strengthening artistic research in the future. The review is therefore primarily forward-looking, with the expressed intention, based on the strong development that the area has experienced, to point out what is now needed to enable Swedish artistic research to take the next steps.

The research review uses the Swedish Research Council's previous review of artistic research, published in 2019, as the starting point.² Several of the descriptions and recommendations made four years ago are still highly relevant. At the same time, the relatively rapid development of the field, as well as a

¹ The debate on how that which, in the framework of the Swedish Research Council's activities, is known as 'artistic research' should be designated and demarcated continues to be intensive. For a wider review, please see *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts* (2010), an anthology funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and edited by Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson; the recently published anthology *The Postresearch Condition* (ed. Henk Slager, 2021); the Swedish anthologies *Methodos: Konstens kunskap, kunskapens konst* (ed. Magnus William-Olsson, 2014), and Fredrik Nyberg's and Niclas Östlind's *Konstens kunskap* (Art Monitor, 2021). A policy document that has been widely spread is also [The Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research](#), compiled by a number of European actors in the field and published in 2020.

² [Research Overview 2019. Artistic Research](#). The report and appendix are available in PDF format on vr.se

changed societal context, has led to the emergence of new questions, areas of friction and pathways.

The new review has been compiled based on a broad range of sources, consisting of annual statistical follow-up from the Swedish Research Council a combined quantitative-qualitative review of the research funded interviews with other research funding bodies sector reviews obtained from subject experts input from the research community obtained during two open hearings during spring 2022 and through internet consultations in conjunction with the publication of a preliminary version in September–October 2022.

The review is divided up into three main sections. The first provides a contextualising description of artistic research. This section also provides a picture of what the preconditions and the funding situation for artistic research are today, and how the responsibility is divided up between the Swedish Research Council, higher education institutions (HEIs) and other funding bodies. It also provides a thematic review of developments in artistic research over the last 5–7 years.

The second, analysing section identifies the challenges facing the field as well as the opportunities for qualitative development that can be discerned. Here, structural aspects directly linked to the scope and design of research funding are dealt with, but also issues relating to the infrastructural position, integrity and possible participation of artistic research in a wider research landscape.

The third and concluding section presents recommendations for the artistic research field that the Committee for Artistic Research has chosen to formulate for the coming 5–7-year period. This section also proposes concrete measures that could fundamentally improve the basic preconditions for artistic research, strengthen its quality and knowledge relevance, as well as its opportunities to contribute to ever more important cross-disciplinary research.

2 Artistic research today – preconditions, focuses and quality

Over the last 20-year period, Swedish artistic research has experienced rapid development, and become part of the university system. Third cycle higher education has developed, both by the establishment of an artistic doctoral degree, and also through investment in graduate schools. Institutional prioritisations and structural changes in higher education have also contributed to stabilising the long-term preconditions for artistic research, as has increased knowledge exchange, nationally and internationally.³

The external funding made available by the Swedish Research Council has been crucial to this positive development, and even if the research funded by higher education institutions has been consolidated, the importance of external funding has not decreased in recent years. Instead, it can be noted that research in the artistic field in relation to teaching continues to be under-funded, with very few senior positions, including faculty-funded research.

Research does not benefit from employment formats, which according to the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance's (*Högskoleförordningen*) regulation of employment on an artistic basis shall be limited in time, often 3–5 years, with some possibility for extension.⁴ The preconditions for carrying out ground-breaking and high-quality research are also affected by the research either being scattered across several small environments, where it is dependent on the externally funded or self-funded projects of individual researchers, or entirely linked to a third cycle higher education course with a fragmented and insecure relationship to research at advanced level. The wide thematic range of the field also makes it difficult to survey from a quality point-of-view and, as in humanities and social sciences research, there is often a lack of follow-up of the faculty-funded research. For this reason, the artistic research funded by the Swedish Research Council continues to be crucial for the quality and development of the research. This also applies to the long-term strategic work of the Swedish Research Council's through the Committee for Artistic Research,

³Section 2 of the [Swedish Higher Education Act](#) (Högskolelag) states that “National government, as principal, shall arrange higher education institutions for
1. education that rests on scientific or artistic grounds, and tried-and-tested experience, and 2. research and artistic research as well as development work.” The same section further states that “[wh]at is hereafter stated about research shall also apply to artistic research.” The wording of the law here recognises an important relational, but not mutually exclusive, differentiation.

⁴ See *Högskoleförordningen*, the [Higher Education Ordinance](#), Chapter 4, Section 10. The fact that the primary employment format on the labour market should be permanent positions has been recognised in Government Bill 2009/10:149 and by the [Swedish Association of University Teachers and Researchers \(SULF\)](#).

and the quality work carried out within the framework for the annual review of grant applications.

2.1 Funding of artistic research – prominent patterns

The Swedish Research Council is still the only research funding body that explicitly supports artistic research. The approval rate, in particular for project grant applications, is therefore an important measure of how the preconditions are changing over time. As shown in Figure 1, the approval rate for artistic research applications continues to be very low, despite the 50 per cent increase in the appropriation for artistic research that was decided by the Government in conjunction with the most recent Government research bill.⁵ A corresponding percentage expansion in the number of applications has, however, meant that the approval rate for applications is more-or-less unchanged.

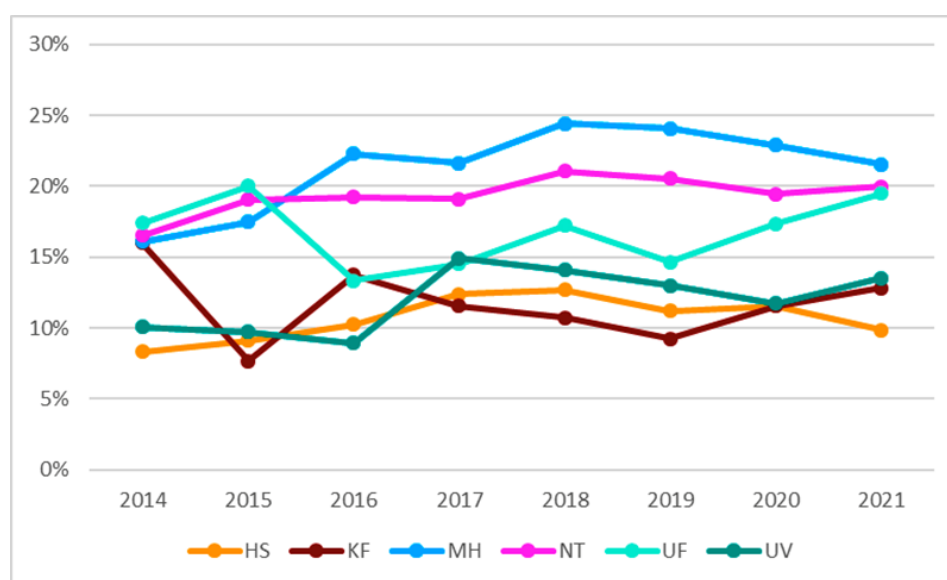


Figure 1. Development of the approval rate in artistic research compared to other scientific fields. For the field of artistic research as a whole, the approval rate varies relatively much over time – between 16 and 8 per cent during the period 2014–2020 – and landed on 13 per cent in 2021 (HS=Humanities and social sciences, KF=Artistic research, MH=Medicine and health, NT=Natural and engineering sciences, UF=Development research, UV=Educational science).

As shown in Figures 2 and 3, gender equality between men and women is relatively good in this research field, however there are more female applicants. With relatively few grants awarded, the approval rate per gender is difficult to analyse, but across the entire eight-year period 2014–2021, the approval rate for men is 10 per cent, which is lower than that for women, at 13 per cent. Figure 4 shows that if participating researchers are included, the gender distribution in the projects is more even.

⁵ [Forskning, frihet, framtid – kunskap och innovation för Sverige](#) (Govt Bill 2020/21:60 Research, Freedom, Future Knowledge and Innovation for Sweden).

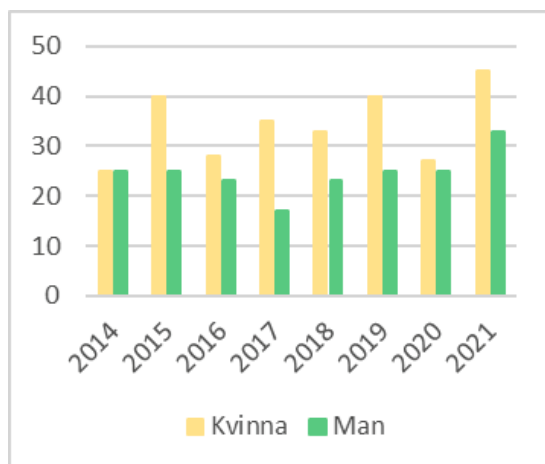


Figure 2. Number of applications for project funding per gender (Female/Male) in artistic research 2014–2021.

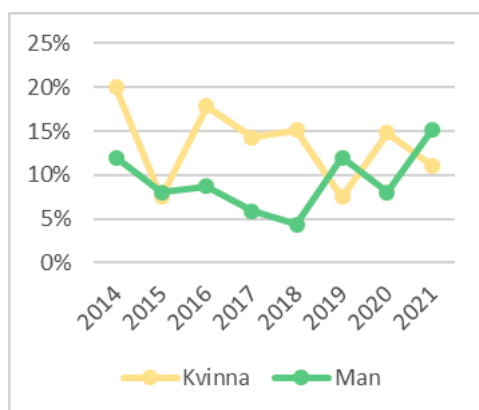


Figure 3. Approval rate for project funding per gender (Female/Male) in artistic research 2014–2021.

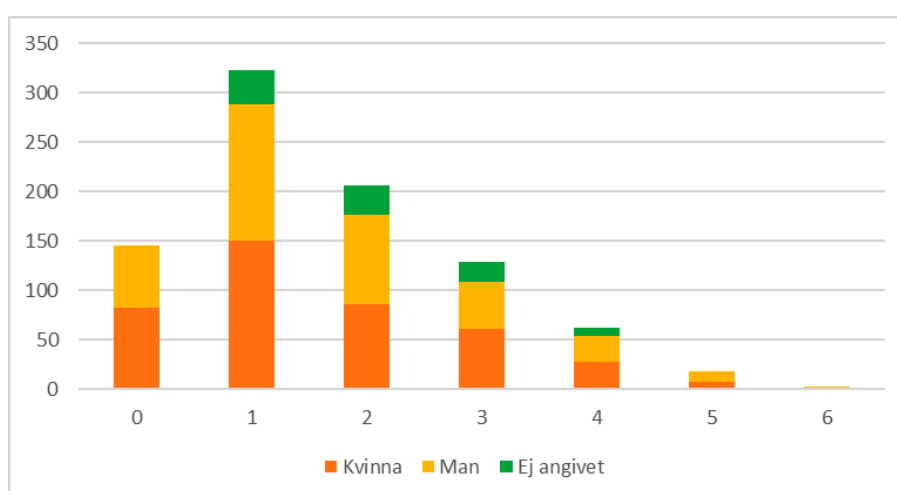


Figure 4. Number of participants and the gender distribution (Female/Male/Not specified) of participants, 2014–2021.

Most of the grants allocated annually by the Swedish Research Council for artistic research are project grants. This is a prioritisation of researcher-initiated

and thematically open artistic research founded on a trust in curiosity-driven exploration, based on deep and varied engagement with complex questions and spaces for action. The review that follows of the last decade's research in this field provides support for this approach, and can be used to argue that entirely researcher-initiated research is not contradictory to research that addresses societal challenges and transformation needs.

What emerges is also research that to a large extent is collaborative. Of 1 220 applications during the period 2014–2021, 829 applications included three or more applicants (see Figure 4). The statistics summary does not show changes over time. But in the follow-up sector reviews carried out, increased complexity and cross-disciplinarity are emphasised as a cause of what could be perceived as a gradual shift from individual projects to collaborations. If we look at the subject codes⁶ that researchers are encouraged to state to classify applications, then artistic research is dominated by projects focused on “visual art.” As much as 33 per cent of the funding for undirected projects grants go to the visual arts area, while projects classed as “music” are allocated 23 per cent. The areas “literary forms of expression,” “architecture,” “design” and “dramatic arts” are each allocated between 7 and 9 per cent. Other subject areas mentioned are “film,” “gender,” “climate research” and “history of technology”.

However, there is reason to try to see beyond this classification, as it does not entirely reflect how the artistic research field relates to demarcations and research themes. Visual arts, for example, is a very wide area. In addition to different visual forms of expression and techniques, it also includes three-dimensional and multi-medial forms of expression, installations and process-oriented experiments. Projects classified as visual arts often combine or experiment with forms, methods and materials across the different areas of art, and often overlap thematically with other disciplines. This applies, for example, to artistic music research, which often has clear technical study features. This also applies to research in architecture and design, which in recent years has ever more related to climate issues.

As a complement to the statistics based on the subject coding, an **automated topic modelling**, or what is known as a ‘text mining analysis’ was carried out, based on titles, abstracts and key words, of 441 of the total of 476 applications from the period 2014–2021. The modelling was carried out as a pilot project. The ambition was to produce documentation for further interpretation and discussion of the themes that have engaged researchers in the artistic field over the last seven-year period, using the rich material that the applications represent in terms of division of research topics as the starting point (for a more detailed presentation of the topic modelling, please see the appendix).

The word clusters that emerged (Figure 5: the clusters are represented by the three most frequently used words) could then be compared, both with the SCB/Statistics Sweden codes used, and also with the patterns that emerge from a

⁶ When applying in Prisma, up to three subject codes are stated, according to [the standard for separating research fields drawn up by SCB/Statistics Sweden](#).

qualitative review. Using the different artistic practice areas as the starting point, the comparison could verify the existence of cross-sectorial themes and research questions shared by many researchers.

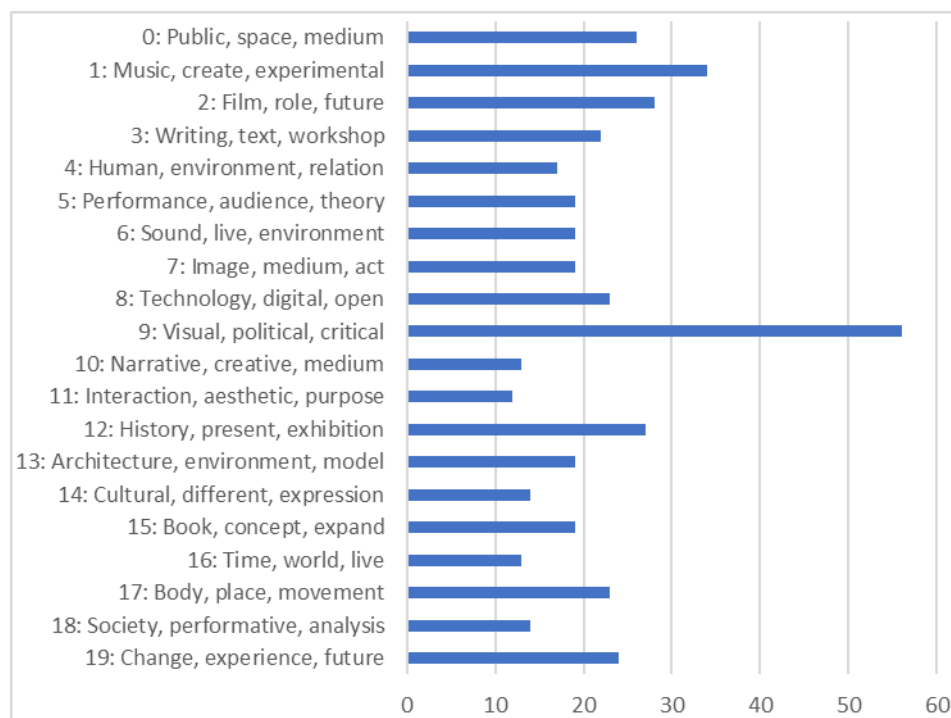


Figure 5. Number of applications per theme following topic modelling based on English abstracts in applications, 2014–2021. The number of topics has been set at 20, and each topic is shown on the Y axis (represented by the 3 most important of the 10 words given the greatest weight for the topic). The X axis shows the number of applications with the highest value in each topic (only one value per application). All the words included in each theme are shown in Table 1 in the appendix.

Although – based on the SCB/Statistics Sweden coding – visual arts is the area that has the highest approval rate, and therefore can be regarded as the dominant area, a thematically and methodologically varied field emerged. For example, in addition to the word “visual,” the field can also be described with the words “political,” “film” and “future” (Topics 9 and 2). Conversely, a theme including the words “history” and “experience” can be linked to several SCB/Statistics Sweden codes (Topic 12). The theme that emerged using words such as “public,” “space” and “place” (Topic 17) also seemed to develop across the artistic research field. One exception was the cluster around the concept of “music” (Topic 1), where the 34 applications had been coded by SCB/Statistics Sweden exclusively as “music”.

It is important to point out that the topic modelling does not reflect the entire artistic research field. Instead, it reflects the research as it is expressed within the framework for the application process and the call for undirected project grants. At the same time, it is not unreasonable to assume that the application texts are consciously worded indicators of the themes that are currently engaging artistic researchers. The relative correspondence with the topics that are also mentioned in both general and the academic discourse can also be interpreted in different

ways. The interpretation nevertheless suggests that researchers in the artistic field tend to identify early on the questions, frictions or issues that are known as “wicked problems,”⁷ and that today motivate a broader and more creative approach.

2.2 Research within the field over the last 5–7 years

Through the in-depth statistical analysis of the applications, a view emerges of an artistic research field that is varied in terms of content and methods, but also thematically engaged in dialogue with other research fields. In the in-depth sector analyses of the field that the subject experts have contributed, the importance of collaboration between multiple higher education institutions is emphasised, in several cases as a result of the national graduate schools in design, art, architecture and landscape architecture, which in the early 2010s paved the way for the development of Swedish artistic research. Over the last decade, several third cycle higher education programmes, an increased number of post-doctoral positions, more research-focused positions and increased international exchange have contributed to a greater epistemological and thematic range, which at the same time can be seen as a consolidation of the field.

A clearly emerging common theme for the field of artistic research is **creative processes**. In contrast to research focusing on history of art, based on analysis of works of art, artistic research is usually carried out by exploring a more-or-less “own” practice. In terms of basic artistic research, this research has in recent years both developed greater depth, and also been problematised in practice. Today, it includes projects where the practices of forming expressions, of exploring modes of interpretation and of trying out the subject positions of art, but also of knowledge, constitute the focus of attention.

Research within the field has therefore differentiated, and moved in epistemological, sociological and experimental directions. An increased focus on theory formation and concept development, with emphasis on experience-based, embodied, situated and articulating processes of creation has driven collaborations and movements across disciplinary boundaries. In addition, a clear shift in emphasis can be noted in recent years, from artefacts or works as epistemological objects, to experiential events, processes or procedures. This also means that the focus of the research has, to some extent, shifted from individual creation to forms for co-creation.

Considerable research efforts are currently being put into developing spaces or methods that support collaborative creativity. These include ethno-musicological research, visualisation and media-focused research, phenomenologically-focused

⁷ The concept of “wicked problems” is generally ascribed to the design theorists Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber, introduced in the text “Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning” (1973), republished in Nigel Cross’ *Developments in Design Methodology* (1984). Synonyms proposed are “insidious,” “treacherous,” “resistant” or “unmanageable” problems.

research into improvisation, and research into situated and embodied “learning-by-doing” or “reflection-in-action”. Methodologically, the research into creative processes is currently displaying a great range. It includes aesthetically laborative research, with emphasis on material staging and perception, linguistic or narrative experimenting, empirically or perceptually-oriented interaction between humans and the environment, and the development of communicative, creative margins, test processes or prototype procedures. It is important to note that artistic research into creative processes in many cases overlaps with practice-oriented, innovation-focused research in other academic fields. It is also in close dialogue with exploration that is carried out within the independent art field, which has contributed to a development where questions about knowledge paradigms, academic freedom and artistic integrity have come to occupy an ever more central position.

The concepts of **representation and performativity** have a prominent place in artistic research. In recent years, representation has been explored in three different, but linked, ways. The first is intimately associated with the exploration of creative processes and ties in with a mimetic and semantic problems involving questions of visualisation and documentation. The second relates to issues about the rendering of research results, and thereby about the potential position of artefacts or artistic works as objects of knowledge. The third aspect is contextual and relates to representation in the sense of social visibility.

If the first two meanings have been and continue to be central, the third understanding has become ever more important. Several research projects have been motivated by the need to explore the conditions for visibility and for ‘making visible,’ including the mechanisms that make bodies, groups, perspectives or phenomena invisible or marginalised. Artistic research therefore often develops in dialogue with gender studies, post-colonial, post-human or other representation-critical theory formation, where performativity has become a methodologically unifying concept. In an artistic research context, performativity gains its relevance as a way of exploring the effects of representational practices, that is to say, how symbolic actions in a broad sense do not just represent, but also produce, enact or stage contexts or worlds.

This is therefore a theme that is explored not only on the basis of performative art forms, such as dramatic art or dance. The theme is also explored in a large number of often thematically formulated projects, where “performativity” is understood as and explored through activation of material, spatial and time-related conditions, social distinctions and power systems. Historiographical or historically contextualising artistic research has been particularly important in this respect, in particular for the development of “reconstructionist” and situating interpretation practices, such as re-photography or forms of historical “re-enactment,” sometimes bordering on forensic research. The performative approaches also include a forward-looking, transformative potential. The potential is expressed in an increased number of projects, where artistic research by means of the focus of its forms of expression develops in a speculative, visionary or “norm-creative” direction.

A particularly central research theme is therefore **method**, in the sense of **experiment, criticism** and not least **didactics**. Artistic research is often characterised by a consciously pluralistic approach to method. On the one hand, it explores experience-based methods as alternatives to disciplinary scientific systematics. On the other hand, a preoccupation with method in an experimental sense can be noted, as innovation of methods and working processes, where the purpose is often optimisation in a qualitative sense. A review of the research in relation to method also indicates a continued expansion of methodological approaches and a parallel methodological concept formation; a change that is met with both enthusiasm and criticism, within artistic research as well as beyond.

It can be established that awareness of, reflection on and reporting of methods has become increasingly important in artistic research. This development is closely linked to the knowledge claims of artistic research, and the demands for responsibility, transparency and accountability that differentiate artistic research from artistic practice. That an increasing number of research projects begin with or reference previous artistic research can also be seen as a precondition for the continued qualitative development of the field. More and clearer channels for publication and exposure improve continuity and collegial dialogue, and it is therefore important to take seriously the need, as formulated by researchers within as well as in close proximity to the field, for a significantly more pronounced citation culture.

However, the intensive engagement in methodological issues also has its explanation in the close and entirely central link between artistic research and learning. Artistic research has a clear didactic feature, in various ways linking experience-based learning to creative action. Several research projects in design, visual art, and musical and literary forms of expression have focused on methods developed, tested and applied in teaching. Historically, this research has been linked to conceptions of art as a form of practice-led, intuitive, tacit or embodied knowledge transfer; ideas that have increasingly been both further explored and problematised.

In the work on the review, the knowledge-critical approach that characterises many artistic research projects has been emphasised as an important, deepening contribution to what historically has historically been vocational training. Art didactics research has contributed to broadening the view of artistic competences, which has increased the opportunities for arts graduates to maintain dialogues across academic disciplines, while at the same time occupying an active and critical position in a complex public sphere. With increased knowledge requirements in the artistic field and a deepened and more intensified exchange across disciplinary boundaries, there is a greatly increased need for didactically focused artistic research.

Artistic research focusing on **materiality and technology** is carried out principally in collaborative experimental projects, but also in applied trans-disciplinary constellations with partners outside academia. The latter shift is particularly noticeable in research and development of digital tools for

materialising ideas, in research relating to visualisation or interpretation of sensory data, and in research into transmediality and hybrid materials. New fields, such as digital humanities, science and technology studies, feminist techno-science, and critical software studies, have developed at the intersection between artistic research, computer science and culture studies. At the same time, artistic research is developing within or in close dialogue with both the independent arts field and the experience industry, where new technologies, such as 3D visualisation, augmented reality and immersive environments have created entirely new preconditions and needs for artistically experimental research. One example of this is “The Royal Wax Printer,” a project at the Royal Institute of Art, that develops 3D printing in sculptural wax, which opens up new possibilities in casting.

Other environments that are at the forefront with good infrastructural preconditions are textiles and fashion. This applies in particular to the fields of smart textiles and telematic creative processes, where network technologies are used to develop hybridity and interaction. Research into hybrid architectural or sculptural materials and forms, as well as acoustic environment research, is also prominent. This applies equally to futures research, where artistic materials and approaches contribute to the formulation of both questions and concepts, for example by problematising simulation and modelling practices. The rapid technological development does, however, mean that the need for knowledge is increasing. Although Swedish research is at the forefront in purely technological terms, with several infrastructural initiatives in the visualisation area for example, artistic experimental research has not been able to benefit from this. The strategic investments made into cross-disciplinary experimental research environments around the turn of the century have certainly been further developed locally at higher education institution level, but new infrastructural initiatives are necessary if Swedish artistic research is to compete internationally.

As a theme, **public space** including **new public spheres** occupies a central position in artistic research, often with a historiographical basis and strong links to democracy and welfare research. The research has been stimulated further with the development of a national “Policy for Designed Living Environment”⁸ and initiatives for applied sustainable societal development and research, both nationally and at EU level, for example linked to the European Commission’s initiative “New European Bauhaus.”⁹ In recent years, a number of research projects have interpreted conceptions and visions of the urban public sphere in different media, primarily film, literature and oral story-telling. Artistic research has also been influenced by and influenced research in neighbouring areas, such as cultural geography and ethnography, which has contributed to methodological renewal and differentiation.

⁸ Prop. 2017/18:110 (Govt. Bill) “Policy for Designed Living Environment”.

⁹ See the [New European Bauhaus](#) website and the [Swedish Arts Council's](#) information about the initiative.

The review shows that the research theme has developed significantly in the last decade, not least through critical cartographic explorations of new, hybrid, multi-sensory or collaborative observation and documentation methods that address the aesthetic, social and political dimensions of mapping. Another central area relates to the expression of urban public spaces, where several acoustics-oriented projects have contributed with research into sonic practices and sound qualities. Other projects have explored the voices, traces and narrative aspects of public space, both their factual and fictitious dimensions, with a more or less clear focus on participation and democracy. Further areas of research are play and games as artistic, democratic and inter-generational platforms, and research that actively relates to issues concerning social mobilisation and monitoring. Many projects have developed a performative approach, through which new public spaces are produced and reproduced, often in a hybrid sense, both physically and virtually. In addition, artistic research on the theme of public space is primarily carried out in cross-disciplinary collaborations, often in close dialogue with engaged local actors both in cities and in the countryside.

As already mentioned, **artistic climate and futures research** is an example of a thematic area that has developed considerably in recent years and led to the establishment of new interdisciplinary research environments. It is a broad area in need of coherent but at the same time action-oriented knowledge building. Here, artistic research has been able to contribute not only materially and technically, but also conceptually, by challenging anthropocentric worldviews.

Several research projects have aimed to scrutinise the intersections between humans and the environment critically, and to re-formulate sustainability discourse by developing new ways of registering, documenting, interpreting and mediating climate change through translations between different media, and also to raise questions relating to structural and behavioural change through interventions in different everyday contexts. New forms of data collection or multi-media formats for annotation, auditive or visual recordings, comparative re-photography or transversal writing and story-telling are other examples of how artistic research approaches issues relating to the normative and speculative aspects of knowledge in practice. In this sense, it is no coincidence that artistic research has been given space in the field of climate research. Instead, it has to do with the need to express, in different ways – with both strong reliability and expanded imaginative ability – abstract ecological and planetary connections, scale divergences, rapid changes and unforeseen or disregarded consequences. Interdisciplinary research environments and programmes have been established at a number of higher education institutions with a focus on environmental humanities or post-human studies, and with artistic, practice-based research as a central feature.

2.3 Swedish artistic research in international comparison

Swedish artistic research has had a certain advantage internationally, through relatively stable basic funding. The research environments that have been developed have also been successful in terms of attracting international

researchers and doctoral students. Several Swedish artistic research environments are driving forces in or contribute actively to Nordic and international collaborations, in particular in terms of strategic development of the field.

An assessment of the results and impact of the research is more difficult to make, as continuous follow-up is lacking. The introduction in 2021 of career support for junior researchers in the artistic field has further strengthened internationalisation. Some environments have developed considerably through international initiatives, and here should be mentioned the PARSE Platform (University of Gothenburg)¹⁰, which through its journal and recurrent conference has meant a lot and inspired initiatives in other places. This also applies to the Nordic collaboration around VIS Journal (Stockholm University of the Arts and the Norwegian Artistic Research School)¹¹. Research in musical interaction based in the research cluster GEMM (Gesture, Embodiment and Machines in Music) at the Piteå School of Music is an international leader, with Studio Acusticum, the University Organ and, by extension, the “Global Hyperorgan” as a very important and internationally recognised infrastructure.¹²

In design research, the Nordes collaboration¹³ has been important for the development of participatory design; an area where Sweden is leading. As previously mentioned, Swedish fashion and textile research is of the highest international class, through the Textile Fashion Centre at the University of Borås. The Umeå Institute of Design at Umeå University is also prominent internationally, not least through the strong research environment “Things that Change.”

In the climate field, Swedish researchers have been dominant in the development of artistically-oriented research perspectives. One example is the research carried out within the framework for The Seed Box, a “collaboratory” that combines environmental humanities and artistic research at Linköping University.¹⁴ The strong research environments “Architecture in Effect” and “Architecture in the Making” (Formas 2011–2017), which were coordinated by the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) and Chalmers University of Technology, but gathered researchers from nine Swedish universities, have had echoes internationally.¹⁵

The research has also benefited from a fully-funded third cycle higher education programme, which has attracted very competent applicants from across the world. One example is Malmö University, where the research environment “New Media, Public Spheres and Forms of Expression” has driven the

¹⁰ See [PARSE](#) Research Publishing Platform.

¹¹ See [VIS Nordic Journal for Artistic Research](#).

¹² See [Studio Acusticum's](#) website.

¹³ See [Nordes](#) and in particular the [digital article archive](#) established.

¹⁴ [The Seed Box](#) is an example of a cross-disciplinary research environment with strong features of artistic research, funded by Mistra and Formas.

¹⁵ See the two-volume text *Architecture in Effect* (Actar, 2020).

development of advanced artistic research at the intersection between art, design and technology. EU funding from the Marie Skłodowska-Curie programme has also entailed a reinforcement in many places, and Swedish artistic research has also recently been recognised by the European Research Council (ERC), through the award of a Starting Grant¹⁶. Successful Swedish participation with artistically experimental overtones can also be noted in projects funded via the EU's framework programme Horizon Europe, primarily in the design and technology field.

2.4 Research infrastructure preconditions

The Government's research bill "Forskning, frihet, framtid – kunskap och innovation för Sverige" ("Research, freedom, future – knowledge and innovation for Sweden")¹⁷ addresses artistic research in a separate section. The text under the heading "Den konstnärliga forskningen behöver strategiska förstärkningar" ("Artistic research needs strategic reinforcements"), concerns the issue of infrastructure. It establishes that good access to research infrastructure is as important a precondition in artistic research as it is within scientific research:

"Artistic research is often carried out in highly specialised laboratory environments, workshops, studios, and stage environments. As for other research fields, the transition to an open science system and rapid digitisation places new demands on technical infrastructure. This can, for example, entail that analogue craft needs to be combined with digital technology. The issue is therefore strategically important for the development of the field. Infrastructure for artistic research is part of the assignment to the special reporter who is to submit proposals for developing the organisation, governance and funding of research infrastructure at national level (Dir. 2020:52.)."¹⁸

This assignment was then entirely ignored in the report that followed (SOU 2021:65).¹⁹ Artistic research is only touched upon in one comment, namely that the needs of this area differ from those identified in natural and engineering sciences. This is remarkable, considering the major infrastructure needs in artistic research that clearly overlap with those of the technology field, but also with those that have been identified in the humanities.

At the same time, there are basic preconditions that are specific for the field of artistic research, and that require national coordination and funding. The definition of research infrastructure of national interest has so far constituted an obstacle. Medium-sized infrastructural investments, which do not fit within the framework for individual higher education institutions, such as advanced

¹⁶ The grant was awarded to Tintin Wulia, of the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts at the University of Gothenburg, for the project "Things for Politics' Sake: Aesthetic Objects and Social Change" (2023–2028).

¹⁷ Prop. 2020/21:60 (Govt. Bill).

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 135 (translation from the Swedish).

¹⁹ [SOU 2021:65 Stärkt fokus på forskningens infrastruktur](#) (Strengthened focus on research infrastructure).

experiment environments and laboratories, fall between chairs in the current funding system. Over the last seven years, only three applications for infrastructure support have been commented on by the Committee for Artistic Research, and, of these, only one had specific artistic research relevance (“The University Organ – a national infrastructure for multi-disciplinary research,” Application No 2019–06549); an application that was not awarded funding.

2.5 Publication, dissemination and acquisition of qualifications

The position of artistic research between academia and public cultural life has given rise to particular challenges in terms of publication, dissemination and, by extension, the acquisition of qualifications. It is easy to disregard the infrastructural importance of a developed system for publication and citation for the development of a knowledge field. Over the last decade, a lot has happened, both positive and negative, in relation to publication of artistic research. Many new international and Nordic-focused journals have been started, and digital, openly accessible publication platforms have been developed. New multi-media publication formats have become possible, as has publication with multi-media appendices or other supplementary material.

Archives for scientific publications, such as DiVA, have established the category “artistic output,” which creates new, albeit still limited, opportunities for citation.²⁰ Another example is the international open access platform Research Catalogue (published by the Society for Artistic Research), with 20 000 registered users.²¹ If we regard publication in general, then Swedish practice-based artistic research is at the forefront. This applies not least in architecture and design research, with frequently cited articles, anthologies and conference contributions in important journals, as well as active participation in and organisational responsibilities for international conferences. Swedish artistic music research has also been published frequently and achieved great international distribution via highly-ranked journals.

The open digital platforms do, however, offer new opportunities to articulate and share the media-specific and transmedia aspects that characterise artistic research results, and which are sometimes lost by using text-based, location-specific or works-bound presentation forms. At the same time, it is important to question how the greatly expanded publication opportunities impact on the perception of merits, skills and experiences and the assessment of quality and

²⁰ A search on 20 August 2022 produced 1 564 hits in DiVA. The search result says very little about artistic research results, however, and even risks being misleading, as researchers from applied and cross-disciplinary projects in particular often are doubtful about the category “artistic output,” or alternatively choose publication channels and exposure formats that are not reported or specified in archives such as DiVA.

²¹ See [Research Catalogue](#). The platform is used with great success by Swedish researchers, which is manifested by the fact that the 2021 prize for the best “exposition” of the year was awarded to Jacek Smolicki, of Linköping University, for his research into listening.

competence. Even though the media expansion is welcome and necessary, there is a risk of a development similar to that in other fields, where publication stress, rankings and citation indices have created an unhealthy view of qualifications. The Committee for Artistic Research here welcomes the international initiatives being made to broaden the view of research publication and merit assessment. However, the Committee simultaneously wants to emphasise the importance of a general reform of the view on publication, sharing and assessment of research results, from the current focus on quantity to an emphasis on the content quality and experience of research practice.

3 Challenges and opportunities

3.1 Research funding – foundations and prospects

As the media landscape, the democratic public sphere and cultural life change, the need increases for long-term guaranteed, artistically innovative, practice-based and critically scrutinising research. Despite a positive development and an increase in direct government funding of 50 per cent compared to 2020, the approval rate in artistic research has not increased more than marginally, due to a greatly increased number of applications. At the same time, the artistic research field is facing a number of challenges over the coming years. The most important one is to safeguard the opportunities to carry out independent and unrestricted research; a challenge that is simultaneously reliant on the development of strong research environments and access to adequate research infrastructure. This requires an increase in the approval rate. It is important to note the qualitative tipping point that a low approval rate actually entails. Rather than increasing the competition, too low an approval rate risks having a directly negative effect on quality development, by hollowing out trust in the funding system. If too many carefully prepared applications of good quality must be sifted out, there may in the end be very small differences that determine whether a project is awarded funding or is rejected, which greatly impacts on researchers' motivation to further develop and deepen their ideas (see also the Research Review for Humanities and Social Sciences).

Increased funding allocation is therefore necessary to safeguard development, both in the short and the long term. In addition to increasing continuity, the link between senior research and education is strengthened. This will ensure growth and continued competence development, which in turn can form the basis for increased cross-disciplinary collaboration with other research fields. While open project grants should continue to form the backbone of research funding, it is also essential for the development that artistic research is included in special initiatives. Greater participation in and contribution to targeted cross-disciplinary research projects can enhance the importance and societal impact of artistic research. Here, the Committee also sees an important task in working towards expansion of artistic research through collaborations with other research councils and research funding bodies, for example within the framework of the national research programmes.

Dialogues with four representatives of other funding bodies do, however, show that much work remains in terms of the positioning and formulation of artistic research in relation to other research. Artistic research can contribute with important problem formulation, representation-critical, conceptual and expressive competence in relation to the challenge-based and transformation-oriented research that is necessary today. But if specific cross-disciplinary initiatives are too strictly targeted – sometimes also with specific requirements for measurable impact – then artistic innovation and experimentation are at risk of being discounted in favour of the clearly evaluable. The Committee

therefore considers that thematic calls should be formulated as openly as possible, and with a clear inclusion of artistic research, in terms of both research problems, process and type of results.

Swedish artistic research is, however, facing some threshold problems in relation to cross-disciplinary calls or calls in international competition. With a lack of institutional support and developed networks, many researchers in the artistic field perceive larger applications as being administratively difficult to master, and sometimes as direct obstacles to their creativity. To receive cross-disciplinary programme or environment support requires not only research-focused networking – not least of an infrastructural nature – but often also experience and preparedness in terms of co-creation and research leadership, which the smaller artistic research environments often lack.

With adequate support, however, opportunities can open up for artistic research, for example within the framework for the platform S+T+ARTS, which aims in particular to link together technology and artistic practice to address societal, environmental and economic challenges.²² Even though Swedish artistic research is strong internationally in some areas, it is important to consider that continued internationalisation is making ever greater organisational and epistemological demands. It is also important to consider that the number of researchers with third cycle higher education who have experience of carrying out long-term research in the field is still low. Knowledge of international funding opportunities needs to be radically improved, as does the support required to develop partnerships and to write competitive applications.

3.2 Research infrastructure – accessibility and participation

Swedish artistic research has, in an international perspective, been favoured in terms of basic funding, and has therefore had a certain infrastructural advantage. This advantage has been partially eroded, as funding and infrastructure for artistic research is being expanded on an ever-increasing scale internationally. On the one hand, this creates new incentives for extended international networking, broadened recruitment and development of not just cross-disciplinary, but also inclusive, research environments. On the other hand, new infrastructure initiatives that enable technological and materially advanced and competitive artistic research of a fundamental, experimental and applied nature is needed. A common feature of all these challenges is that they underline the need to formulate long-term needs, beyond individual projects and across higher education institution borders.

One problem today is the definition of the concept of “research infrastructure.” To date, the concept has not included the type of infrastructure that is necessary for artistic research, including physical infrastructure. The idea of what a “national need” means also needs to be reassessed. Artistic research is a comparatively small research field, but at the same time a field of national interest which shows strong development. An investment in the field in an

²² See S+T+ARTS, <https://starts.eu>.

infrastructural sense does not only have to cover specifically artistic resources, such as stages, experimental workshops, special repositories or technologies. It can also be about making existing research infrastructure accessible for artistic researchers, and explicitly about regarding artistic researchers as participants in the future development of research infrastructure. As things are now, artistic research is instead left entirely outside, and this despite its basic infrastructural requirements often overlapping with those of both technology and humanities.

There is therefore a need for medium-sized research infrastructure of a type that can be linked to a particular higher education institution, but that often requires national collaboration to be sustainable. At the same time, accessibility in more large-scale contexts can also be of interest, and then from a philosophy of knowledge and/or experimental perspective. The residency programme at ESS in Lund on the theme of “Nanocosmic Investigations” is an interesting example.²³ Other interesting examples are the cross-disciplinary projects with artistic overtones that have been included in polar research, for example in the initiative “The Arctic Circle.”²⁴ In a larger infrastructural perspective, it means that small initiatives can provide great benefits as far as artistic research is concerned.

3.3 Research ethics – research theme and responsibility issue

A common factor for artistic research and artistic practice is that it actively explores borderlands between the individual and the public, the prevailing and the possible, and subjectivity and sociality. The special relationship between artistic exploration and the public sphere is also ethically charged historically and covers thematically central issues that relate to artistic integrity, intellectual property rights and freedom of expression, among others. The “arm’s-length distance” principle that is usually applied in cultural governance, based on the idea that ethical considerations form part of responsible and creative artistic- and cultural practice is therefore of relevance in relation to artistic research.

The tightening of the Ethical Review Act that has occurred over the last few years has, however, led to uncertainty about how artistic research is impacted. The preliminary work on the new legislation expressed an intention to differentiate between research on scientific grounds and research on artistic grounds, based on the wording of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance. With reference to “insufficient background documentation for including artistic research, which differs from scientific research by being based on artistic practice,”²⁵ the suggestion was to exempt artistic research from the requirements for ethical review. Yet, as evident in this research overview, artistic research can

²³ See [ESS Art Residency Program](#).

²⁴ See [The Arctic Circle Expeditionary Residency Program](#).

²⁵ See [the Council on Legislation’s proposal circulated for comment “Etikprövning av forskning – tydligare regler och skärpta straff” \(“Ethics review of research clarified rules and tougher penalties”\)](#), 18 July 2019 (p. 18). See also the [Swedish Higher Education Act 1992:1434, Chap. 1, Section 2](#) and [Govt. Bill 2018/19:165, “Etikprövning av forskning – tydligare regler och skärpta straff.”](#)

include all types of exploration that result in, rather than is exclusively based on, artistic forms of expression. In addition, artistic research is also often cross-disciplinary, developed through collaboration or participation and often based on open questions. This means that artistic research can include procedures, methods and studies that, based on a more over-arching research perspective, would fall under the Ethical Review Act. Uncertainty about what is to be tried according to the legislation is therefore considerable, not just among researchers but also among the public agencies involved²⁶.

When research practices are digitised, new ethical challenges also arise, for example relating to the principles for “open science,” or to the distinction between working papers, “original data,” and results. For artistic research, which is often based on broad documentary materials obtained during experimental forms and often linked to ethical issues relating to knowledge, democracy and empowerment,²⁷ the requirement justified by research ethics of open access to research data and protection of personal data (GDPR) constitute a significant challenge. Even if the underlying ambitions in relation to open access, as expressed in the ‘FAIR principles’²⁸ about findability, accessibility, interoperability and reusability are highly relevant in artistic research, the definition of ‘research data’²⁹ and its application in the context of ethical review may have serious consequences for both artistic practice and artistic research on documentary grounds. Clarification as to whether qualitative and often context-dependent research material can be made subject to general requirements for data management and open access, as well as whether it falls under the definition of ‘research data’ at all, is therefore necessary.³⁰ The differences between various research fields are significant, and in the field of artistic

²⁶ In communications with the Swedish Ethical Review Authority and the Ethics Review Appeals Board, it has come to light that even if the distinction that is made in the Council on Legislation’s proposal circulated for comment has not been specifically considered, discussions have been held concerning what type of studies can be thought to be included or excluded from the requirement for ethical review. The interpretation discussed is that studies that are based on what could be considered as “own artistic practice” do not constitute research in the sense of the law, but that studies in the field of artistic research that can be seen as variations of research in sociology, political science, modern history, psychology or anthropology or similar, do, on the other hand, belong under this definition, and should therefore not be excluded from ethical review.

²⁷ See for example the artistic research programme [Living Archives](#) (Malmö University College 2013–2017), funded by the Swedish Research Council within the framework for the cross-disciplinary call “The challenges of a digitised society”.

²⁸ See also the Swedish Research Council’s compiled information on FAIR research data [here](#).

²⁹ See the publication [“Lär dig mer om öppen tillgång till forskningsdata”](#) (“Learn more on open access to research data”) (Vetenskapsrådet 2018, p. 6). See also [“Vetenskapsrådets samordningsuppdrag om öppen tillgång till forskningsdata 2022”](#) (“Swedish Research Council’s coordination mission concerning open access to research data 2022”)

³⁰ See [“Vetenskapsrådets samordningsuppdrag om öppen tillgång till forskningsdata 2022”](#) and the survey presented as appendix.

research there is still a lack of necessary support functions and infrastructures for open accessibility.

Overall, it is the firm view of the Committee for Artistic Research that the preconditions for ethical review of artistic research must be clarified. It should be made clear whether it should be subject to ethical review, and if so, when and what, and also how ethical responsibility is allocated. In the Government bill that preceded the tightening of the legislation, it is stated that “it must be contingent upon every higher education institution to define more clearly, within the framework stated in the proposed regulation, what decisions require scientific or artistic competence.”³¹ At the same time, it is of great national and international importance that the artistic field can develop unified principles, not least to counteract growing uncertainty when it comes to the relationship between independent research, the public sphere, freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Recognition of the ethical dimension of knowledge, of who has the opportunity and the right to produce knowledge for and about whom, is fundamentally positive, and a possible argument for the importance of artistic research. Several of the comments the Committee has received on draft versions of the research review point out that an increased focus on ethics can contribute to both conceptual and methodological development, which can have a positive effect in terms of the relevance and impact of artistic and practice-oriented research. The fact that ethical issues are central to artistic research and often constitute a research theme in themselves imposes strong demands on research ethics, but also clarifies the limitations that may follow from a juridification of ethics; something that risks greatly limiting the opportunities to carry out experimental, testing and documenting research. There is thus a need for further knowledge and support for individual researchers and projects, but also for development and clarification of the frameworks and practice at the public agencies and higher education institutions involved.

³¹ Prop. 2018/19:165, p. 58 (Govt. Bill).

4 Recommendations

In order for Swedish artistic research to take the next important steps in its development, the fundamental financial and infrastructural preconditions must be strengthened in a way that is sustainable in the long term. This work also includes developing the interplay between first and second cycle higher education, third cycle higher education, and research, and driving forward the discussion about acquisition of qualifications, career paths and excellence. The field is facing considerable epistemological challenges of great importance for its continued development. This applies in particular to the meaning of and preconditions for experience-driven, practice-led and experimental research, knowledge sharing and follow-up of previous research, as well as the development of research ethics and interaction with other fields.

The research-focused career paths in the artistic field are today few, with many time-limited senior positions without research funding, under-developed supervisor training, sporadically advertised doctoral student positions and few post-doctoral positions. Reinforcement of the career opportunities therefore requires continued reinforcement of artistic research infrastructure in a broad sense and safeguarding of the opportunities to carry out senior-level research in dynamic research environments. This also requires assigning greater value to third cycle higher education in the field, which in a longer perspective could justify a reconsideration of the exemption from the requirement for a doctoral degree that currently applies to projects grants within the artistic field. The last few years have shown a higher approval rate for applicants with doctoral degrees, which underlines the importance of third cycle higher education for long-term quality improvement. At the same time, the exemption still offers opportunities for higher education institutions to carry out an experience-based transition towards research.

Ahead of the coming period, the Committee for Artistic Research would like to make a number of recommendations of strategic importance.

Strengthen the basic conditions for artistic research through increased and guaranteed funding. Swedish artistic research is currently undergoing a vital development process, which is both strengthened by and reinforcing research in several other fields, and the calls issued attract a broad and varied corps of researchers to formulate urgent research questions in new ways. The very limited budgetary framework is, in this respect, not just acting as a brake, but also as an uncertainty factor that makes artistic research vulnerable, and that risks significantly reducing the motivation of researchers. A large budget injection is needed to enable environment grants to be consolidated without affecting open project grants, so as to safeguard the opportunities to carry out senior artistic research, strengthen its integrity and promote its long-term development.

Develop research infrastructure that is adapted for and accessible to artistic research. The generally accepted definition of research infrastructure of national interest does currently not address the needs that are developing in artistic research. At the same time, accelerating technical development, an intensified media landscape, and distributed forms of innovation and value-production create a much-increased need of both critical and artistically advanced research. Special support must be provided for the development of medium-sized infrastructure at the intersection between artistic, humanities and technological research. The funding of infrastructures that are currently, in terms of size, considered not to justify either local or national support, such as archives, laboratory environments, stages, and so on, must be solved if the needs of the field are to be fulfilled.

Work towards the development of strong research environments that take a leading role in international contexts. An important part of the work towards long-term development of artistic research is the build-up of research environments that has begun in a number of places. This requires networks and support functions to be established, but it is also dependent on the opportunities for in-depth research and broadened experience of research leadership. There is a need for competence development and information that make it possible and attractive for artistic researchers to build up research environments and to apply for and be awarded cross-disciplinary research funding in both national and international competition. This is development work that, in addition to general reinforcement of the funding, is also dependent on expanded and more active collaboration between higher education institutions and between research funding bodies in relation to closing the gap between basic, experimental and applied research, and thereby promote the development of excellence.

Earmark separate funding to reinforce third cycle higher education via a new initiative for graduate schools. The national graduate schools that previously existed in the field of artistic research were of great importance for the field's development in terms of environments, networks and research competence. Because most artistic research environments are small in relative terms, graduate schools contribute to creating a larger context and a critical mass for both doctoral students and supervisors. National and international graduate schools are necessary for the emergence of strong research environments, and a new initiative for third cycle higher education would be of great strategic importance in the field of artistic research.

Widen the scope for cross-disciplinary collaborations with a clear artistic research focus within the framework for specific initiatives and national research programmes. The thematic review of artistic research clearly shows its relevance and its contribution to our understanding of complex societal phenomena. But in order for artistic research to contribute to such cross-disciplinary and thematic calls, these must be worded and reviewed with an openness to artistically-focused research in terms both of problem formulation and method and also type of results.

Develop adapted formats for assessment and evaluation of artistic research.

To safeguard the development of artistic research, the evaluations that are necessarily carried out must be clearly linked to the questions, ways of working, goals and results of the research field. As artistic research is often carried out in new fields that do not follow established academic demarcations, or are in the process of being established, the quantitative result measurements used in other fields are not usually applicable in the context of artistic research. Development of other qualitative grounds for assessment is necessary, as is clearer national follow-up of the direct funding by higher education institutions of artistic research, and of how funding is allocated based on quality, diversity and gender equality aspects. The international initiatives now being made to reform and broaden the view of research assessment can be of great importance to artistic research. At the same time, it is important to defend and develop the practice that, for example, is used in the review of applications for artistic research funding, where the focus is on content-related and qualitative assessment of artistic research relevance, as well as on competence and feasibility in relation to the project in question.

Create arenas for discussing research ethics and research integrity.

A potential, partial exemption of artistic research from the requirement for ethical review does not make the need for critical and collegial research ethics reflection any less necessary. On the contrary, the need to both discuss and actively explore the meaning of good research ethics, ethical responsibility, artistic and academic freedom instead increases. To strengthen both the awareness of research ethics and the integrity of research, special initiatives are needed, both for research that, like artistic research, tests the social, material and spatial premises of knowledge, and also for transparent contexts and clear support functions that enable responsible review and follow-up.

Small funds – big benefits. As a concluding viewpoint, the Committee for Artistic Research wishes to emphasise that funding of artistic research in terms of actual amounts is extremely limited, and that the Swedish Research Council is currently the only funding body that expressly supports Swedish artistic research. The primary argument for securing and increasing the support for the research field is the rapidly growing need for experience-focused basic research into materiality and mediation, with a focus on preconditions, opportunities and limitations. An investment in artistic research can, through a small increase in funding, unlock a knowledge potential that has not yet fully been realised.

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