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*Published in:*  
SYNNYT/ORIGINS

Published: 01/08/2017

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Please cite the original version:*  
Kallio-Tavin, M. (2017). Arts-based and artistic research meets communities. SYNNYT/ORIGINS, (1), i-iv.

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# Arts-based and artistic research meets communities

Editorial

*Mira Kallio-Tavin*

## Abstract

Both arts-based and artistic research provide rich sources for contemporary studies. Research interests connected to individuals, groups, and communities benefit from varied research practices, attitudes, and methods. The epistemology and methodology of arts-based and artistic research are used in this special issue. This issue was developed following the 4<sup>th</sup> Arts-Based and Artistic Research Conference, held June 28–30, 2016, in Aalto University, Helsinki on the topic *Rethinking Arts-Based & Artistic Research – and Global/Local Communities*. This is the first of two issues dedicated to the topic.

## Bio

**Dr. Mira Kallio-Tavin** works as a senior university lecturer of international art education and serves as the Head of Research in the Department of Art and the Chair of the international masters' program Nordic Visual studies and Art education (NoVA) at the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture in Helsinki, Finland. Kallio-Tavin has developed arts-based research methodology within a social context and in relation to the questions of dialog, community, ethics and philosophy of contemporary art and its education. Her research area focuses on questions of diversity, social justice, critical animal studies, embodiment, disability studies, and arts education beyond anthropocentrism.

The history of artistic and arts-based research is young; for example, doctoral level research in the arts became possible at Finnish art universities only at the beginning of the 1980s, and the notion of “arts-based” as a recognized epistemology and research method is even younger. There are multiple overlapping and conflicting notions, definitions, and active discourses on arts-based and artistic research in the art, design, and art education fields. All of the notions are important and add richness and diversity to the conversation.

Arts-based project authors are often interested in making a societal impact, even if the societal impact is complex and difficult to determine. Typically, arts-based research authors are concerned with social, societal, cultural, educational, philosophical, or psychological issues, which are explored through art practice (Kallio, 2008; 2009; 2010; 2013; Suominen, Kallio-Tavin & Hernández, in press). Artistic research, on the other hand, aims to learn about the artistic processes and the artists’ art-making to enhance the researchers’ artistic views and to produce high quality art (Hannula et al., 2014; Rinne, 2016). Both types of research are important. Artistic research is part of basic research, which establishes and develops artistic research knowledge characteristics. These research methods bring knowledge and ask questions that might be missed using more traditional scientific research modes.

Criticality, openness, and self-reflectivity are at the core roles of artistic and arts-based research (Eisner 2008; Hannula et al. 2005). Subjective knowledge constructed through individual and artistic experience will be transformed into critical research knowledge, accessible to others, through critical and transparent reflective analysis. The hermeneutical circle or a similar concept is often used, which involves examining experiences to evoke new ones. Through the research circle of experience, it is therefore possible to discuss, arrange, and alter research knowledge. Personal and subjective experiences will become commonly shared experiences and will be used as tools. The researcher, hence, offers herself/himself to the research project as an *instrument*. The subjective knowledge constructed through individual and artistic experience transforms into critical research knowledge through critical and reflective analysis.

This special issue adds to the developing field of artistic and arts-based research and takes part in the field’s active discourses. This issue is focused on communal thinking and collaborative projects with groups and communities. Andrea Inocencio’s and Ana Marqués Ibáñez’s articles explore their artistic

collaborative projects with immigrants. Marqués Ibáñez's arts-based research is conducted in the school context, as is María-Isabel Moreno-Montoro's and Guillermo Abolafia-González's, whose research tackles the developing teacher identification with Roma students. Maria Letsiou explores aesthetic mapping as a method of documenting a living inquiry of places and people. María Martínez Morales looks at the collective memory of a neighborhood through its artistic action. Pei-Hsuan Su searches for innovative technology in the context of cultural representation. Art educators Henrika Ylirisku, Tiina Pusa, Marja Rastas, Heikka Valja, and Mikko Sallinen investigate new visual art education contexts through arts-based research, including embodied experiences around martial arts and orienteering. Rebekah Rousi tackles artistic research issues, asking when and where art performance stops. Alison Shields examines artistic ways of thinking within the context of contemporary painting practices. Rait Rosin explores contemporary art education events aimed at local people. Anastasia Seregina's and Oskar Christensson's article views the transdisciplinary nature of arts-based research from the consumer culture perspective. Joanne Weber's article addresses the transdisciplinary intersection between artistic practices and disability studies.

In this special issue, ten submissions take the form of a research paper and three manuscripts are written as visual essays. The authors, as well as the congress participants, have varied backgrounds: from practicing artists-researchers, to art educators, to scholars inside and outside of art and design. This publication's authors include established artists, post-doctoral researchers, students, and professors.

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