The Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research

Introduction

Artistic Research (AR) is practice-based, practice-led research in the arts which has developed rapidly in the last twenty years globally and is a key knowledge base for art education in Higher Arts Education Institutions (HAEIs). The *Vienna Declaration* is intended as a policy document addressing political decision makers, funding bodies, higher education and research institutions as well as other organisations and individuals catering for and undertaking AR.

The declaration aims at (1) presenting a clearer, better articulation of the concepts and impact of AR within the Frascati Manual - the OECD classification manual for collecting statistical research data. This clarification will assure the realisation and acknowledgement of successful research activities in the field, and, consequently, contribute to (2) the restructuring of funding policies and programmes at regional, national, European and global levels in such a way that they support AR in line with the sciences and humanities, and (3) the securing and embedding of practice-based third cycle studies in Higher Arts Education, in all countries across Europe, to further develop AR and underpin the contemporaneity of the curriculum.

The *Vienna Declaration* signatories represent the major players currently active in the field of AR in Europe: the largest discipline-representative organisations of HAEIs, the most important disciplinary organisation representing the key initiatives in AR; the two international arts-specific discipline quality assurance bodies and international policy organisations.

Today there is a rapidly growing number of doctoral / PhD programmes all across Europe dedicated to AR, supported by: an increasing number of international peer reviewed scholarly journals in the discipline; a growing number of ERASMUS+ and Horizon 2020 projects in the field; and a large quantity of scholarly publications globally disseminating AR.

Key features of Artistic Research

Excellent AR is research through means of high level artistic practice and reflection; it is an epistemic inquiry, directed towards increasing knowledge, insight, understanding and skills. Within this frame, AR is aligned in all aspects with the five main criteria that constitute Research & Development in the Frascati Manual. Through topics and problems stemming from and relevant to artistic practice, AR also addresses key issues of a broader cultural, social and economic significance.

AR is undertaken in all art practice disciplines - including architecture, design, film, photography, fine art, media and digital arts, music and the performing arts - and achieves its results both within those disciplines, as well as often in a transdisciplinary setting, combining AR methods with methods from other research traditions.

Context

HAEIs operate predominately within a research context and have a responsibility to conduct AR. It is also common for HAEIs to interact with related enterprise Research & Development, and to contribute directly to the creation of intellectual property in arts, entertainment and media through research practice. For these reasons HAEIs - which often have a government mandate - are required to offer learning and teaching programmes that are built on state-of-the-art knowledge.

The impact of AR reaches beyond the higher education sector and connects to a variety of professional fields and communities, in particular to the cultural and creative industries as well as to the education and social sector. AR is well suited to inspire creative and innovative developments in sectors such as health and wellbeing, the environment and technology, thus contributing to fulfilling the HEIs' *'third mission'*. AR must be seen as having a unique potential in the development of the *'knowledge triangle'* - education, research and innovation - in order to increase the contribution of higher education and public research institutions to innovation, social commitment and economic growth. Historically, AR has sustained a focus on the impact that its research has in a variety of contexts outside the academy - whether this be in society, culture the economy or the natural environment.

Infrastructure & Access to Funding

As AR is still a relatively young field, receiving support and funding is yet to be resolved in several countries. This means that AR in general does not have equal access to research funding as other fields of research or is not at all eligible to apply for research grants or scholarships. However, there are exceptions which could serve as a model to establish internationally comparable research infrastructures and cultures all across Europe and beyond. These funding channels should include support for the continuous development of the research infrastructure, e.g. supervisory training, project-based individual research outputs, quality assessment processes and the creation of permanent repositories where research can be made more discoverable and accessible in the public domain, to attain the required sustainable standard.

HAEIs have been increasingly driven to conduct AR, and in a maturing sector the development of the research environment is essential. This objective is just as important as the research outputs and their impact, and this has become a high strategic priority. This environment requires funding for: educating the next generation of researchers through doctoral programmes; ensuring appropriate physical and virtual infrastructures as well as archiving and disseminating means; building links with business and enterprise in order to stimulate the impact of research.

AR incorporates many aspects and features that are not, or not solely, text based, such as artefacts, movements and sounds. Researchers need a variety of presentation platforms that combine these aspects and features in relevant forms and thus deviate from or expand the standard format of journal articles and/or research repositories/archives.

Evaluation & Recognition

AR is validated through peer review covering the range of disciplinary competences addressed by the work. Quality assurance is undertaken by recognised independent, international QA bodies and assures the standards described in the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015) for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Existing doctoral programmes in AR follow established standards as described in the *Florence Principles* 2016 which, in turn, are based on the policy documents of doctoral education within the *Bologna* education process (e.g. the *Salzburg Principles* 2005 & 2010 published by the EUA).

Claim for Action

The signatories of this paper ask for the following actions to be taken by all relevant parties:

- To support and work towards the establishment of AR as an independent category within the Frascati Manual, establishing the opportunity for harvesting research data and statistics from the AR field;
- To ensure that funding policies and programmes both at national and international level include AR, provide the necessary resources and infrastructure, as well as cater for the existence of expertise in AR on the relevant decision-making panels;
- To ensure that the range of AR outputs is fully recognised at national and international level and eligible for formal quality assurance and/or career assessment procedures;
- To ensure through appropriate legislation the creation of legal frameworks that permit Arts HEIs to offer 3rd cycle study programmes and relevant degrees in AR.

AEC, Cilect / GEECT, Culture Action Europe, Cumulus, EAAE, ELIA, EPARM, EQ-Arts, MusiQuE, Orpheus Institute, SAR