

# Cahiers of Artistic Research 1

## **When is research artistic research?**

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### **Title**

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# Preface

The communication platform IMPAR - Initiatives, Meetings and Publications in Artistic Research aims to disseminate the knowledge produced in the area of Artistic Research at or linked to the University of Aveiro. Events related to Artistic Research, such as 'Circ\_' (Cycle of Lecture Recitals on Artistic Research) or the international conference series, 'Hands on Research' for example, are announced and archived on this platform, which also houses publications such as the proceedings from PERFORMA conferences and, more recently, the journal ÍMPAR - Online Journal for Artistic Research in Music<sup>1</sup>.

"Cahiers of artistic research" respond to the responsibility and the need to offer - first and foremost to our students, but also to the broad academic community - consistent guidance to assist the conception, design and development of artistic research projects. The aim of this series of *Cahiers* is, thus, to establish an alternative path for Artistic Research. Firmly grounded in the articulation between declarative and procedural knowledge, the first steps along this path are an effort to clearly define as to when research is artistic research. The first *Cahier* of the series begins by referring to the current context of Higher Music Education and to the need for full and clear explanations of how research can be involved with musical practice. Failed attempts at Artistic Research are also discussed and confronted with what the authors believe to be founding principles, the foundations for Artistic Research.

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<sup>1</sup> ÍMPAR - Online Journal for Artistic Research in Music is a bi-annual peer-reviewed publication complemented by the regular publication of special thematic editions, through calls for papers, by invitation or resulting from academic events such as the aforementioned conferences.

Forthcoming publications in this *Cahiers* series will include topics such as the premises and prolegomena for any future Artistic Research (AR), in addition to the presentation of models discussing most current misconceptions surrounding AR, evaluation criteria and pedagogical implications of AR.

#### Editorial Board

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# Prelude

The authors of this series of Cahiers are researchers from the "Creation, Performance and Artistic Research" study group of the University of Aveiro's branch of INET-md (Instituto de Etnomusicologia - Centro de Estudos em Música e Dança), one of four branches that comprise this research centre. The University of Aveiro annually receives applications from a large number of artists - instrumentalists, singers, conductors and composers - many of whom teach at national and foreign universities. These artists are interested in pursuing doctoral and master degrees, hoping that their know-how can somehow become part of their own individual research projects. However, it has been difficult for these professionals to find a way to integrate or to articulate their vast artistic experience and knowledge with their research projects. Thus, when they begin to design the first draft of their research proposal, many of these proposals are doomed from the outset.

Because of the demands associated with the current perspective of research excellence, notions of knowledge production are pre-determined in music and other art institutions, conditioning the proposals formats, as if a template was imposed to shape not only their structure and format but also their content. In fact, Higher Music Education institutions too often adopt formats that impose inflexible structures for their students' research proposals - contextualization, problem, research question, objectives, methodologies and expected results - that may only serve to entangle them in the polarized and cyclic debate featuring both formalist musicologists and ethnomusicologists. The first are focused on the supremacy of musical texts, and the latter assert the importance of investigating the context (historical, sociological, psychological and political aspects) for a critical understanding of musical practices. Immersed in such a debate, musicians, for example,



have often reacted assuming ideological positions, which tend, in turn, to also be polarized: either avoiding academic environments with the ideological claim that higher music education institutions are not prepared to incorporate artists, or accepting the current demands of the established areas with the ideological assumption that research is limited to traditional and well-established approaches. This latter position leads practical musicians to abandon or drastically reduce their hours of instrumental practice, compromising their artistic careers.

On the other hand, with the advent of the Bologna process and the competitive relationship established among institutions with regard to the attribution of degrees and the insertion of professionals from the artistic field in the academic context of postgraduate studies (mainly in response to what has already occurred in the USA), some European institutions eventually accepted and linked to AR any forms of academic-artistic production which proffer alternatives to the traditional standards of musicology and ethnomusicology. In this case, there is often no distinction between what is artistic production and what is AR - which induces immense frustration, especially for those professionals who are committed to the challenge of defining AR as an autonomous, credible and specific field of research.

In seeking an alternative within this debate, different voices started to assert the importance of AR as a natural research domain that would absorb artistic projects, promising harmonious articulation between research and artistic production. This promise has been polemic and problematic, due to the ambiguity that somehow restricts a deep understanding of what AR is, (or could be).

The ambiguities and difficulties embedded in the definitions of AR and the multiplicity of research projects, all very different from each other, but all claiming to be good examples of AR, has generated huge turmoil in this area and, consequently, has been paving the way to an epistemological blind alley. One clear symptom of this epistemological blind alley is *methodolatry* (Chamberlain, 2000): since AR remains resistant to the attempts to define it, there is a general tendency to resort to methodologies in the search for validation, support, security and credibility. The amount of books on AR methods that have been published in recent years is remarkable. In sum, we live in a situation where we have strong and robust means to achieve weak and vague purposes.

Observing and analysing how artists came across AR, in the European landscape, may help to explain a great deal of this odd situation. Curiously, an interesting opposition can be drawn between the two processes by which AR entered both in the Universities' realm - Academia - and in the realm of Conservatoires: in the former (Universities), artistic research followed a bottom-up approach and, in the latter (Conservatoires), it followed a top down orientation.

AR had a *bottom up* approach at the Universities, because the demand for it emerged when musicians were called to teach their 'métier' and to share their *know how* at universities. Musicians in general did not hold academic degrees since they had their training in Conservatoires, and consequently, they were hired as invited teachers. In an attempt not to be excluded from Academia's logic, musicians have turned part of their work into conventional research products, typical of other academic areas (articles and books), neglecting what actually enables

them to gain access to the place they occupy as teachers and researchers within their respective institutions. As far as music is concerned, this situation establishes a huge contradiction: musicians enter the university because of their value as performers but are later evaluated not on the basis of their artistic career, and therefore their practice, but on their careers as researchers, focusing on their theoretical knowledge.

AR followed a *top down* orientation at the Conservatoires because the demand for it emerged along with the implementation of the Bologna Process. In some countries, these institutions received university status. Teachers were granted the right to a doctorate in arts. In other countries, conservatoires have been and are being forced to develop research and research centers, and to ensure that the majority of the faculty hold PhDs. Conservatoires have tremendous difficulties in changing from a model based on vocational training without research to a model based on academic education and research. In this process, universities claim the right to confer a doctorate degree in arts, citing their vast and long experience. However, this unquestionable experience of the universities opposes a very questionable inexperience in conferring degrees in arts. Furthermore, the criteria or the ways of validating the artistic knowledge produced through practice are not (yet) defined.

In our approach, we did not intend to formulate an absolute definition that would allow us to judge what is and what is not Artistic Research, but rather to point out and develop an alternative path to escape from these contradictory and problematic situations. Undoubtedly, Artistic Research poses an epistemological problem in bringing together two different

modes of knowledge, and it is evident that ignoring these two modes or underestimating their differences will be always a source of misconceptions and misunderstandings.

When is research artistic  
research?

Defining artistic research in a concise and unequivocal way seems to be as difficult as establishing boundaries and rules with which to frame it. Possibly because of this, some authors have been more interested in discussing when research can be considered artistic research than in proposing a clear-cut definition (Klein, 2017). In line with this point of view, this proposal represents an effort to launch the ground stones upon which an alternative path for Artistic Research may develop. Instead of an assertive, closed definition of Artistic Research, we are, in this first *Cahier*, launching the foundations on which to build, in the following *Cahiers*, a set of premises and principles - prolegomena - aimed at guiding the development of research projects. This alternative pathway will gradually progress along with (and because of) the growing set of research projects departing from these premises and principles. But first, we would like to highlight a number of introductory points, using examples, in the hope of further clarifying this matter.

As a first example, let's imagine a classically trained trumpeter who verifies that his interest in mixing elements (e.g. rhythm, melodic patterns) of a specific type of folk music from his country with western art music is also shared by an extensive number of trumpeters. Thus, he decides to explore some of these elements in the performance of a given piece which was inspired by such folk music. In his attempts to do so he verifies the inexistence of sources and information. He then decides to visit some communities where this music is performed in order to understand: (i) its characteristics, (ii) who are the agents involved, (iii) the main musical features involved and (iv) most importantly, how he could explore the elements of folk music in the performance of a written piece for trumpet. In his visits to



the aforementioned communities, our imaginary musician takes notes on specific points of interest and also talks with several community members in order to collect information that could help him to reach his goals. After some time doing this and reflecting on the information collected, he is finally able to give satisfactory answers to all the questions that motivated him to visit those communities.

This example, which is somehow very simple, is presented here to illustrate the essence of the purpose of research (at least, the ideal model propagated in higher education music institutions): to seek something. The existence of a clear focus (i.e. a specific type of folk music from a given country); an objective (i.e. finding out parameters to perform a given piece of music ); a problematic (i.e. lack of information and inexistence of sources that restrict the achievement of the proposed aim); research questions (i.e. where is that type of folk music performed, how is it performed, who are the agents involved, what are the main musical features involved and how could one explore the elements of folk music in the performance of a piece for trumpet), methodological procedures (i.e. interviews and field notes); a reflection on the sources collected; and, finally, a satisfactory answer to each question addressed, which in this case is presented as a verbal argument, constitute the usual procedures common to research produced in any other field. When the process of “seeking something” is conducted with an ethical, skeptical and systematic attitude then it should be considered academic research (Robson, 2011).

The model described above, which has been widely accepted across the world as a core element for policy makers assessing

research degrees, research projects and research institutions, is based on two pillars that are common to any research project, regardless of the philosophical position adopted: observation and analysis. Essentially, a researcher has been considered as someone who is expert in observing and describing “reality” (regardless of the meaning this word may have) and possibly because of this Steiner (1993) referred to research as a theoretical activity that is somehow restricted to the academic environment. The model that we are describing has its value and certainly did not emerge by chance, but it is most probably not suitable for artists. In contrast to researchers, who were educated according to the model here discussed, artists, typically, are not so interested in observing and describing reality. Artists are often more interested in creating new realities. This perspective is clearly illustrated by Robert Musil (1943) in the fourth chapter of his novel *The Man Without Qualities* where the author discusses the importance of cultivating the “sense of possibility” instead of only valuing the “sense of reality”. This could also be viewed as the capacity to imagine how everything could ‘just as easily be’, and to attach no more importance to what is than to what is not. The author also suggests that “the consequences of such a creative disposition may be remarkable, and unfortunately they [the artists] not infrequently make the things that other people admire appear wrong and the things that other people prohibit permissible” (Musil 1943, p.13). To summarise, an artist is, above all, more interested in creation (the sense of possibility) than on observing and describing things (the sense of reality).

Although this point could be considered reasonable at first glance, one could easily reject this perspective claiming that research and creation are different activities with different purposes. Moreover, creation is, almost always, supported by

observation while researchers may also conduct experimental activities in their projects where they conceive new things. However this point of view has been strongly contested by some authors who do not share such a perspective. The first, perhaps, was the Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668-1774) who asserted invention as the only true intellectual act. He proposed the word *ingegno* as the ability to connect disparate and diverse things to refer to the purpose of invention. Following the same line of thought, Vico grouped invention, imagination and memory as similar activities and positioned the artist as myth-maker. Myths, according to Vico, are the materialisation of abstract ideas through their vivid figures of speech. In other words, the artist, through the capacity to perceive analogies existing between matters far apart and, apparently, most dissimilar, mythopoetically creates 'poetic wisdom' that reveals myths, which are non-negotiable and no longer sustainable (Carter, 2004). Artists, in a broad sense, establish new relationships with materials and with degraded environments promoted by myths, allowing for the emergence of new ones. When this process is revealed through a discourse adequate to the creative process, it enables societies to understand how they were formed, and this is essential knowledge for societies' sustainability.

Thus, artists are interested in the sense of possibility, as described by Musil, whilst researchers (mainly those who follow the model described above) may conduct experimental activities, but these must be observed and systematically described. The point of convergence between these two activities resides in the fact that both culminate in knowledge production, which can be verbalised through propositions in traditional academic research and materialised through works of art, in performances, compositions, paintings and sculptures,

whose pertinence is clarified through written arguments. This juxtaposition of media is fundamental for the emergence of *material thinking*. According to Carter (2004) material thinking occurs in the making of works of art, when artists dare to ask the simple but far-reaching question: what matters? What is the material of thought? To ask these questions is to embark on an intellectual adventure peculiar to the 'making' process. Carter (2004) suggests that material thinking 'enables us to think differently about our human situation, and, by displaying in a tangible but non reductive form its inevitable complexity, to demonstrate the great role works of art can play in the ethical project of becoming oneself (collectively and individually) in a particular place' (Carter 2004, p. XII). This line of thought is also shared by Steiner (1993) who asserts that any artistic creation is a critical act. The construct of a creator is a critical statement of the world. It is responsible criticism (or, as he suggests, 'answerability'), which consists of an attitude engaged with artistic material, seeking to clarify its real meaning through procedural and declarative knowledge. Dante or Proust are perhaps the most pertinent documented examples of analytic, systematically informed thinking. Their skills allowed them to assimilate artworks, interpret them and present their critical view through new artistic creations, as re-signified reading based on their experience of the referred work. As Steiner highlights, the most useful criticism of Shakespeare's *Othello* is that which is found in Boito's libretto for Verdi's opera and in Verdi's responses to Boito's suggestions.

Carter (2004) also recognizes the difference concerning traditional researchers and artists, but adds a key point to this confrontation in suggesting that the capacity to emulate ideas is fundamental for creative work or artistic research. According to

him, this capacity has been underestimated, mainly in academic contexts, as a consequence of an artistic debate centered on outsiders' perspectives. As stated above, in the Prelude section of this Cahier, artists have been forced to engage in a discouraging exercise in order to progress in their careers, particularly in educational environments, that is, to put into words what they have created, to write the inefable.

*“Critics and theorists interested in communicating ideas about things can not emulate it [the making process]. They remain outsiders, interpreters on the sidelines, usually trying to make sense of a creative process afterwards, purely in the basis of its outcome. They lack access to the process and, more fundamentally, they lack the vocabulary to explicate its intellectual character. For their part, filmmakers, choreographers, installation artists and designers feel equally tongue tied: knowing that what they make is an invention that cannot easily be put into words, they find their creative research dumbed down (...) Media reviewers oversimplify the symbolic function of the work of art. Academic critics err in the opposite direction, treating the work (whether performance, painting, video or sound composition) as a cryptic panacea for a culture’s ills. The result is the same: under-interpreted, or over-interpreted, the meaning of the artwork is detached from the matrix of its production (...) This is doubly unfortunate, as it perpetuates a Romantic myth about the creative process - that it cannot stand up to rational enquiry - and (while admitting that the products of material thinking can ‘talk’) cedes the terms of the debate to outsiders.” (Carter, 2004, p.XI)*

The notion of material thinking could be seen, at first glance, as a reaction to the key principles (observation and analysis) of

the scientific paradigm that is still dominant in the academic environment, but this is not absolutely true. The author seems to be more interested in criticizing a paradigm more focused on discourses about art that emphasize the artist as an outsider. Nowadays, some authors suggest that both academic activities - i.e. research oriented by a sense of reality and research oriented by a sense of possibility of creating new mytho-constructions - also suffer from the lack of *ingegno* (Berg & Seeber, 2017; Santos, 2015; Greenwood & Levin, 2005, Steiner, 1989). According to them, this lack is mainly caused by constant pressure due to a need for publications, funding, commitment to certain methodologies (e.g. ethnography), instead of focusing on the purpose of research, and the need for reaching professional standards (e.g. research a specific topic or playing a certain type of repertoire). This point of view was also popularized by Robert Pirsig (1974) who emphasized the lack of invention in the sciences and the lack of intellectual engagement in the arts. Fulfilling the lack of invention supported by an intellectual discourse that emerges through a research process and that brings to light constructions which enable us to rethink our myths, could be the great contribution of material thinking for those artists in Academia. However, this notion is still misunderstood, even for many of those involved in artistic research.

In order to further clarify this notion, we would like to discuss yet another example in which musicological research and artistic production are inextricably articulated (as they should be in artistic research), but their findings and results are so robust that they may obnubilate the act of criticism at a mythopoetic level. According to our alternative path for Artistic Research, the relevance of the act of criticism is essential: we propose that research is artistic research when such an act of



criticism both deconstructs an old mythopoetic configuration and constructs a new mythopoetic configuration.

Deconstruction is more frequently based (and expressible) in declarative mode (verbal propositional meaning) and construction is more often based in the procedural (embodied meaning). This example will also be used as a pretext for discussing the concepts of "knowledge" and "validation" in the field of artistic research, showing how easily (and indeed, how frequently) we value artistic research for what it is not.

The research project in question consisted of the creation of a musical performance based on a new approach to the transcription of J.S. Bach's violin sonatas (BWV 1001, 1003, 1005) and on a phenomenological (reflexive) analysis of the whole process by Marques (2015). Considering the existing transcriptions, recordings and interpretative approaches relating to these violin sonatas for the guitar - in which the interpreters systematically modify several aspects of the manuscript emphasizing the harmonic nature of the guitar and thus yielding to a predominantly idiomatic perspective - this interpreter/researcher explores an alternative approach that is not subservient to an idiomatic transcription for the guitar and that explores the guitar's possibilities to incorporate technical and expressive resources of the Baroque era. This work articulated musicological research (analysis of transcriptions by different interpreters and by J.S. Bach himself; analysis of transcriptions and respective recordings by prestigious guitar players of the violin sonatas; analysis of recordings by referential baroque violinists) and performance experimentation (exploration of many different technical/expressive resources at the guitar, with the baroque violin as a reference, including "campanella" effects, in order to somehow match the duration of the notes on the violin, for example).

This process led to the development of a personal fusion of cultural references and expressive qualities that stimulated her imagination in the emotional exploration of sounds and sound structures and led her to the creation of an emotional narrative, a plan of action that would be resumed, rebuilt, and revived in turn, in different contexts and conditions, everytime she would perform these works. Briefly, the starting point of this research project was: how to create an interpretation on a harmonic instrument (guitar) of Bach sonatas originally written for a predominantly melodic instrument (violin), being faithful to the score and to historically informed performance practices and, in this way, contradicting the generalised idiomatic tendency of the majority of guitarists?

In this case, articulation became a central element in the research, simultaneously exploring aspects related to Baroque practice, namely the articulation of the Baroque violin - in light of the current knowledge of the interpretive practice of this period - and aspects related to the exploration/expansion of the technical/expressive resources of the guitar in order to somehow 'emulate' the violin.

As a professional guitarist and a researcher, the aim of the author was mainly to observe, analyse and reveal the process of creating an original performance, responding to a research question, that is, as a matter of necessity, a lacuna. In this sense, the research as a whole can be seen as fulfilling all the three criteria for artistic research proposed by Borgdorff (2007): 1) The project is intentionally research; 2) Research involves new contributions; 3) The aim is to increase knowledge and

refine understanding. However, this is too vague: although these three points do qualify to define research, they do not bring to the surface the specificities which make research be considered *artistic research*, in our view. The project that we are describing had, in fact, a surplus of results to fulfill Borgdorff's criteria, since it consisted of:

- an analysis of the transcriptions by J.S. Bach;
- an analysis of several transcriptions by several guitarists of reference;
- an analysis of the recordings by several guitarists of reference;
- a systematization of the technical/expressive resources of baroque interpretation on the violin;
- an adaptation/exploration of these baroque technical/expressive resources for the guitar;
- a new approach to the transcription of these sonatas;
- a description/discussion of the performative choices;
- an original performance of the violin sonatas on the guitar.

These results constitute a desirable contribution to musicological knowledge, even in several different domains like analysis, transcription, performance studies, performative practices etc. Besides these musicological results - which are within the scope of the traditional epistemological model of musicological research - there is still an additional gain: this research also proposes and tests an innovative interpretative approach to the violin sonatas on the guitar, a new artistic product (a musical performance), which somehow also contributes to the expansion of knowledge, but *it is a meaningful knowledge that cannot be attained by any other means!* In sum, the example here discussed, as it was

presented here, seems more “observation-oriented” research than “creation-oriented” research.

There is no doubt that artists investigate to create their works or interpretations, but what transforms artists into academic researchers is their additional effort to reveal and reflect upon their contextualizations, their pathways, their methodologies, their experimentations, and eventually, to do so in articulation with the revelation of their creative processes, their artistic, non-discursive and performative qualities, in order to contribute not only to the expansion of the *knowledge-about-phenomena* but also to the *understanding-in-action* of their artistic productions.

This sharing will be all the more credible and relevant the more intense the aesthetic experience that results from this process. The appreciation/validation of artistic productions becomes, thus, an ineluctable factor to be considered and causes a definitive fracture in the traditional epistemological models (cf.: Correia 2013). However, it remains subjective, or intersubjective since it is *empathetically* shareable - the aesthetic experience happens *in presence*, it is contextualized, circumstantial and dependent on the investment of both parties (creator and audience). As Deleuze wrote, "the perception of a musical phrase results less from a kind of reminiscence of memory than from an extension or contraction of a kind of meeting perception" (Deleuze & Guattari 1980: 364).

Thus, to validate such a research project only on the basis of the musicological knowledge generated along with the description/analysis of the creative process is to yield to the

"dominant foundational, formulaic and readily available codes of validity" (Lather, 1986, p. 676). Meanwhile, the aesthetic appreciation of the artistic product, although it is fairly accepted as knowledge production by many, cannot be evoked because of its ineffable nature. Nevertheless, one must bear in mind that it is a powerful subliminal force that sustains the declarative manifestations that it provokes. At the same time, however, the mere juxtaposition of the results of these two modes of knowledge production is too vague to become a significant trait that in itself would characterize the specificity of Artistic Research. In our view, Artistic Research needs more than juxtaposition, it requires that these two modes of knowledge work together, and become deeply articulated.

The deep articulation of these two modes is what we call *Material Thinking* and like any other way or mode of thinking, it is about making meaning. Material thinking is meaning production that results from an indissociable articulation between declarative and procedural knowledge. It is critical thought urging for change and for the new, deconstructing how something was or has been done and what it meant, and re-making it, in a different way, giving it a new meaning. But both these meaning constellations, old and new, or a significant part of them, are embodied meanings. Their roots are deeply grounded in the unconscious cognitive and they open up to infinite symbolic meaning associations. There will be certainly an enormous amount of shared intersubjective meanings, from unconscious archetypes to ideological presuppositions and stereotyped amalgams. Similarly, there will be also a substantial sharing of subjective symbolic constructions. These constellations, combining subjective, intersubjective and propositional meanings, are hereby understood as *mythopoetic inventions*.

In our view, research is Artistic Research when an artistic production generates a new mythopoetic construction critically deconstructing an old one. Going back to our guitar example, besides the existence of an artistic product - which may provoke an inefable aesthetic experience - juxtaposed with musicological research there was nothing to testify the specificity of AR. What was missing was a clear-cut clarification of the pertinence of this artistic production: did it deconstruct a mythopoetic well-established construct in order to propose new symbolic functions, a new mythopoetic construction?

In the present discussion of the performance's symbolic functions, one should consider a balance between the two extremes according to Carter (2004), as cited above: *under-interpreting* - like media reviewers do, oversimplifying the symbolic function of the work of art -; and *over-interpreting* - like academic critics do, treating the work (whether a performance, painting, video or sound composition) as a cryptic panacea for a culture's ills. In any case, we would risk answering positively to the above question, since a well-established *mythopoetic* construct was deconstructed and a new construct was proposed. In fact, there is a long tradition of guitar performers trying to reach the social status that famous romantic piano performers had conquered in the early 20th century. This desire stimulated the search for scores that could be transposed for guitar and through these transcription processes the original scores were 'sacrificed', so to speak: notes and new harmonic features were added, as well as long *accelerandos*, pulse fluctuations, excessive vibrato, prominent bass lines etc. This "romantic" interpretation period was followed by the "modern" interpretation period. If the old interpretations were too distanced from the original texts and



showed traces of excessive romanticism, the more recent ones, although closer to the sources, seem to be less flexible and too accentuated, very equal, impersonal, geometric (cf.: Marques 2015). Listening to these recordings one can recognise the described characteristics as belonging to one or another interpretative tendency, but what we want to emphasise is the particular meaning constellation or mythopoetic invention that both of these interpretative tendencies imply, the imagery they suggest to the listeners, generating emotional narratives and fictional worlds. To emphasize the relevance of this engagement in '*games of make-believe*' (cf.: Walton 1993), we should recall how they allow us to reinvent ourselves, how they enable 'us to think differently about our human situation (...) and play in the ethical project of becoming oneself (collectively and individually) in a particular place' (Carter 2004, p. XII).

From the above, we can conclude that in this project a whole symbolic construct was criticized and deconstructed, showing how and at what expense those mythopoetic constructions (the romantic and the modern one) conditioned both performers and listeners alike. Also a new construct was proposed: an imaginary 18th century interpretation on the modern guitar, which in itself is already a materialised fiction (there was never a baroque guitar like there was for instance a baroque flute; the lute is too different an instrument to be properly considered a baroque guitar). It is as if J.S. Bach would have dedicated a transcription of his violin sonatas to the modern guitar. In practical terms, the proposed interpretation not only closely follows the original score (without adding notes for the sake of harmonic richness) but also what has been gradually established as baroque performance practices and resources, striving for a coherence in terms of phrasing and articulation in

particular, and thus not falling in the 'trap' of choosing the more idiomatic solutions for the guitar. But, again, the symbolic shift is the main point, which has deep implications at all levels, first manifested, in the work of the performer, establishing a new contextualization and conditioning the re-creation of the interpretation: new metaphorical projections within a new mythopoetic constellation.

Taking all these considerations into account, we propose that artistic research happens when there is this 'double move' of deconstructing an old mythopoetic configuration and of contributing to the construction of a new symbolic constellation. What we understand as 'material thinking' is what can be shared in the articulation of the understanding of this shift and the embodied aesthetic experience of the artistic production. The referred project, in terms of Artistic Research, should be valued for this *felt* symbolic shift and not only because of either the musicological findings or the aesthetical appraisals. These latter components make it richer but do not define it as such.

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