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Practice-led Research and the Myth of Rigour

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The process of determining creative works as rigorous productions of new knowledge is complex. As artists-academics, we assert that practice-led research is distinct from other disciplinary research, in the very form of rigour and evaluation processes in which these creative works require. Contextually, our premise is underpinned by broader university implications of creative research being measured against the criteria of traditional research, with its quality metrics often preferencing the Sciences (Eisner 2015). We therefore, emphasise creative research as holding its own *creative rigour*, encompassing complex intersections of academy and industry.

Academia

Typically, the notion of rigour in research is linked to the readers' ability to audit

For the practice-led researcher to be successful, they need to

the processes and actions of the researcher in light of their outcomes (Meyrick, 2006).

Traditional research comes with long established expectations for how these processes and actions are framed, in order to make the methods of research as transparent and open to scrutiny as possible (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2005). For the practice-led researcher, the very nature of situating an enquiry within the researcher's own creative practice begins to blur existing lines established by more traditional forms of qualitative research. While the parallels remain clear to the practitioner, they are not always as evident to the outsider.

Situating practice-led research in academia, creative works are presented as institutional artefacts that are conceptually and theoretically anchored in their creative enquiry (Barrett and Bolt 2003). However, these creative artefacts also offer discoveries that are intuitive-based, experiential and subjective in their personal artistic agency. This personal agency, can carry its own criticality that takes on a broader socio-cultural resonance (Rogoff, 2008). This research skill-base can be rigorous too, as it requires, an astute intuitive and idiosyncratic self-knowledge involving risk-taking as a means of exploring the unknown (in a creative form that may also be not known).

In contextualising this often unpredictable and slippery creative platform for exploring the unknown, Berridge (2006, p. 3) states: "this in-between, risky space is one where anything can happen, yet it is bounded by the rules of academe." If risky enough, creative research can also challenge the status quo (Freeman 2007) and expand its very notions of creative rigour, across academic and industry contexts.

Industry

Along with the shared emphasis between art making and research practice, creative research is interconnected with industry as an indicator of the creative works' rigour, impact and esteem. Practice-led research often requires the researcher to maintain a high level of professional creative practice, and to subject that practice to a different set of expectations from industry and audience. This brings with it additional layers of review that simply do not apply to traditional research. In turn, the commercial impact and success of these research outcomes are measured by the academy as key ERA metric for assigning value. This means that for the practice-led researcher

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Reflections

To address resistance to the idea that creative practice can take on a critical form, we re-assert the importance of our conceptualisation of a creative rigour within the context of practice-led research. The complexity of creative rigour is aligned with practice-led research occurring or revealing itself in the process of the artist's creating; in the very act of doing (Haseman, 2006), or "knowing through making" (Mäkelä 2007). This method of performativity becomes the enactment of not a singular but of differing realities (John Law & John Urry in Berridge, 2006). We therefore, argue that creative rigour is multifaceted as it entails the act, critical

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application and artistic embodiment of the making processes. It is from this nuanced space that research discoveries are realised in the form of creative artefacts. In turn, via the public exposure and reception of these artefacts, practice-led research outcomes provoke critical discourse from both academia and industry, challenging and validating the very notion of creative rigour in practice-led research.

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