



3<sup>rd</sup> Cahier of  
Artistic  
Research

**A Model for  
Artistic  
Research**

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Cahiers of Artistic Research 3

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A model for Artistic Research

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# 3<sup>rd</sup> Cahier

# ***Exordium***

The series of *Cahiers of artistic research*, created at IMPAR, University of Aveiro/INET-md, respond to the responsibility and the need to offer - first and foremost to our students, but also to the broader academic community - consistent guidance to assist the conception, design and development of artistic research projects. The aim of this series of *Cahiers* is to establish an alternative path for artistic research. Firmly grounded in the articulation between declarative and procedural knowledge, the *1st Cahier* took the first steps along this path and constitutes an attempt to clearly define *when research is artistic research*. The second *Cahier* was published in January 2019 to complement the epistemological foundations proposed in the first *Cahier* launching two premises whose distinctive feature is to dictate the inextricable complementarity and complicity between artistic production and its respective clarification.

Resuming, it was proposed that clarification should be understood as a written contribution - possibly reinforced by other media - which would have the dual function of improving our aesthetic experience and elucidating on the consequent mythopoetic reconfiguration. The mythopoetic reconfiguration would result from a process of reflection that should specify the relevance of the artistic intervention - within the social/artistic fields in which it intervenes - and would be based on four steps: scepticism, criticism of old mythopoetic constructions, ethical decisions and, finally, systematisation. It was suggested that clarification should be recognized as a contribution to knowledge according to its potential to promote empathetic communication. Emerging from the articulation of narrative and paradigmatic modes of knowledge, material thinking was suggested to be clarification's mode of knowledge.

Material thinking is grounded on embodied meaning, is communicated in co-presence only, and therefore appeals to empathy. It follows that artistic research does not necessarily depend on the traditional academic research methods of observation and analysis, which belong to the paradigmatic mode of knowledge.

## **Structure of this volume**

Built in a two-dimensional text that juxtaposes narrative and paradigmatic modes of discourse<sup>1</sup>, this *3rd Cahier* proposes artistic research as a trans-disciplinary field dedicated to artists interested in triangulating different modes of knowledge to realize the full potential of their artistic practices. This volume is structured in four parts. First, we present a short overview of the main points discussed in the *2nd Cahier*, adding some new inputs concerning the processes of knowledge production and communication. Secondly, we look more closely at the notion of mythopoetic configurations: the role they play within humanity and their relationship with artistic research. Thirdly, we discuss the role of gestures in the process of reconfiguring new mythopoetic narratives, elaborating on the notion of *Exemplarization* proposed by Lehrer (2012). Finally, in the fourth part, we present an explanatory model for artistic research based on the intersection of three fundamental spheres: Ethics, Remix Culture and Aesthetic Appreciation.

<sup>1</sup> All quotes and figures included in the this volume were used according to the guidelines of the European Union Intellectual Property Office <https://euipo.europa.eu/ohimportal/en/web/observatory/faqs-on-copyright-pt>

# A Model for Artistic Research

In the *2nd Cahier* we established two premises for Artistic Research, making the choice to go beyond the limits of paradigmatic mode of thought, crossing the threshold of Reason, to investigate artistic communication in its own terms, from within its domain of mythopoetic meaning. This choice is caused by a deliberate reaction to the ideological assumption that reason alone is sufficient to shape a territory of no matter what research field. As practical and effective as it has proven to be, reason imposes abstraction, which makes it useless, to explore such a peculiar, specific mode of communication that is characterized by being *direct, non-mediated by a linguistic system, and grounded on empathy*. Reason alone is unable to explore adequately (and academically) the singularities, particularities and subjectivities of the artistic field.



# *1 Research is Artistic Research when paradigmatic and narrative modes of knowing are somehow articulated*

*Goldmund: The primordial image of an authentic work of art is not an existing real figure, although it may provide the motif or the pretext. The primitive image is not of flesh and blood, but spiritual. It is an image based on the soul of the artist. Inside me, Narcissus, there are also such images, which I hope one day to give shape to. Perhaps then I can show them to you.*

*Narcissus: Magnificent, And so, my dear, you entered, without realizing it, into the domain of philosophy and revealed one of its secrets (...) You spoke of "primordial images" of images, therefore, which exist nowhere else but in the creative spirit itself, although they may be concretized and manifested in matter. Long before an artistic image becomes visible and becomes reality, it already exists as an image in the soul of the artist! Now this image, this archetype, is nothing else but what the ancients called an "idea". (...)*

*Well then, by accepting the existence of ideas and archetypes, you enter a spiritual realm, in our world of philosophers and theologians, and you admit that in the midst of the confused battlefield of life, in the midst of this endless and absurd macabre dance of physical existence, there exists the creative spirit.*

*It is precisely to this spirit within you that I have always addressed myself, ever since you came to me when you were just a little boy. In you this spirit is not that of a thinker, it is that of an artist. But it is still a spirit, and it is he who will show you the way out of the obscure turmoil of the world of the senses, beyond this eternal tearing between voluptuousness and despair.*

*“Narcissus & Goldmund” by Herman Hesse (1932, pp. 306-307)*

We are proposing an alternative path for artistic research that is not satisfied with the mere crossing of disciplines (from philosophy and psychology to art history and philology, symbology, anthropology, and others) and its juxtaposition to an artistic product, because it would remain in the realm of *representation*. Here, we are adopting Deleuze's conception of *representation*, launched back in 1968 in his book *Difference and Repetition*: we perceive and order our world via the recognition recurring to pre-loaded "clichés", as a default behavior. Peterson (2018) explained both how representation is entangled with our perception, conditioning it, and how it can be disrupted:

Your brain is organized in such a way that instead of going through all the difficulty of having to look at something in itself, you look at what you suppose to be there. If you can be satisfied with this, much better, but the thing itself is always much richer than your perception. In part this is why you make mistakes, but in part it is also why we continue to accumulate wisdom in the world. There is always something else to be discovered. You can show this even in a religious sense to some degree, because you can say that there is an element to the transcendent that generates in people a sense of religious significance. You can do this scientifically by administering to people substances that break down the inhibition of perception by memory, and then it establishes the point where the transcendent tends to reveal itself-sometimes overwhelmingly. This is not some kind of fiction. What is transcendent is more real than the reality you perceive. (Peterson, 2018, n.p.)

It has been argued from different approaches and perspectives that artistic experiences may reveal the transcendent (Scruton, 2009; Small, 1998; Steiner, 1986; among many others). To understand that art is not in objects or performances but in the way in which they are perceived is to place the experience of the transcendent on a level of perception, which makes it compatible with all the above approaches, suspending their differences and endorsing what they have in common.

## *2 The experience of the transcendent occurs on a level of perception, since art is not in objects or performances but in the way in which we perceive them*

*The evolution of what we call species is the evolution of species of consciousness and when we stop to identifying with these transient modified states, we know ourselves as that pure consciousness and that is freedom of all constructs, including the constructs that there is something called mind; including the construct that there is something called body and including the story that there is something called universe. That is a human story.*

*If you say I'm a body, which one are you talking about? You don't have the same body you had today, that you had two years ago, or when you were a baby, or when you were a teenager. If you say you are a mind, which thoughts are you identified with? if you say we live in space-time, what happened yesterday? Where is yesterday now? where is five minutes now? where is a second ago now? you see? all experiences are ungraspable whether it is a thought or an emotion or a sensation or a perception, you can't grasp it.*

*You can't grasp 'past', you can't grasp 'future', and you cannot grasp "now"! Before I finish the sentence the first part of my sentence is over. That is why Wittgenstein said we are asleep. Our life is a dream. But once in a while we wake up enough to know that we are dreaming.*



*So, what I would like you to do right now is listening to me, just be aware of that which is listening (silence). That awareness is the only reality, because it is not in time. Time is also a construct.*

*So, please wake up because the dream has turned into a nightmare, right? What is our collective dream? It is violence, it is terrorism, it is eco-destruction, it is climate change, it is the extinction of species, it is mechanized death and now the scenario that if we don't wake up, consciousness itself will say the human species was an interesting experiment, but it didn't work.*

*The universe doesn't exist! it is in you, you are the universe, the body is in you, the mind is in you, the universe is in you (...) reality cannot be a system of thought, a religion, a science or philosophy. It has to go right to the heart to the source of thought and therefore no science, no philosophy, no theology no religion can give us access to reality.*

*I have to get rid of every construct, every story, you know? Having said that, I end with a quote from Lord Krishna who says "Curving back within myself I create again and again. I create the mind, I create the body and I create the universe." You are the universe.*

*Deepak Chopra in the Science and Nonduality Conference (2017, n.p.)*

*<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SF4OxulBDuk>*

The art interventions to be considered would be those that defy representation, those that we cannot recognize, those that have something that is imperceptible - something that doesn't fit the production model of perception in which sense data (sensorial information) is ordered by submission to conceptual form (Deleuze, 1968). The great criticism that Deleuze makes to the work of abstract art is the fact that it is directed only at the brain, missing the sensation, that is, the direct action on the nervous system (Deleuze, 1981). In his terms, art would belong to a meeting type of perception where we are forced to experience the "being of the sensible". Art cannot be recognized, it can only be sensed. Art splits perceptual processes, deviating from conceptual ordering in a "transcendent exercise". As we understand it, Scruton (2018) seems to be referring to the workings of this very same "transcendent exercise" when making a parallel with our interpersonal understandings:

I take a position, which I also attribute to Kant, that we have a very clear negative understanding of it [the transcendent]. We have advanced to the edge of our thinking in so many areas, knowing that although there is nothing that we can say, somehow the truth nevertheless... has not run out.

I think this negative view needs to be combined with a more positive view, one that tells us that there are other paths, perhaps not through thinking, but some other way of crossing that barrier, as if we were landing in the realm of the transcendent and knowing it from within.

This is something we understand very quickly in interpersonal relationships. When I address you I know I am addressing something that is also addressing me but from a place that I could never be - I could not see myself through those eyes and I cannot capture what is seeing me through those eyes.

Yet there are leaps of imagination that can put me in your point of view and from that point of view I can end up understanding exactly what I am, but in a completely different way than simply the empirical knowledge I have of myself. We can adapt this kind of interpersonal understanding to all the other aspects of our world that are mysterious. Music for example (...). (Scruton 2018, n.p.)

If one would relate this quote with Deleuze's "differential theory of the faculties" in *Difference and Repetition*, Scruton's transcendent would correspond to the intensity, which is for Deleuze the difference in itself that bursts the limits of the faculties (sensibility, imagination, memory, and thought) and opens to a different kind of perception. Deleuze called meeting this type of perception that happens when suddenly the agreement in recognizing the "same" object among all the faculties - the common sense - is disrupted by the "violence" of an artistic intervention transmitted through sensation. Such an artistic experience provokes a "discordant harmony" that tears apart the subject. This fractured subject "has to pick up the pieces", put herself together, and, at this point, she is forced to think and, consequently, has to reconfigure her old established mythopoetic configurations. This means we are constantly trying to "synchronize" ourselves and the world beyond ourselves (Abreu, 2014). However, we are, at the same time, constantly challenged by interventions that stimulate the discordant harmony (as mentioned above), which are responsible for a temporary sense of loss and incredulity. These uncomfortable feelings are of paramount importance to expand our awareness, allowing us to refine our capacity for synchronicity.

### *3 Artistic Research projects contribute to knowledge production through empathetic communication expanding our individual and collective awareness of ourselves, of the world and of ourselves in the world*

*After all, we have to keep thinking. And the world today is not much to allow thinking. The world of clips, of sentences, the world of media, people are very manipulated. The mainstream oppresses everyone.*

*We have to promote more the interpersonal encounter, eyes to eyes, face to face, body to body, because that's how we were built, and humanity was born from it.*

*The tendency to synchronize is a global phenomenon (...) for example, two clocks if the pendulums are out of sync the tendency is that the pendulums synchronize.*

*Synchronization is the natural tendency; it is the tendency for me to have the same states as others; it is the tendency for me to imitate others; it is the tendency for me to interact with others and function at the same rhythms. Therefore, synchronization is what connects us.*

*If I'm talking to an audience, I'm trying to make people have the same states of mind as mine. So, I'm trying to synchronize the mental states of others with my mental states. That's what we do every day, we try to synchronize, like in a dance where people meet and miss each other and go from a moment of synchronization to trying another synchronization again.*

*There is a time when we are completely out of sync with everything, with other people and we don't have any relationship, but at those times we feel completely empty (...) The synchronization is a dance, because it has several elements that dance among themselves.*

*Genes also have relationships and interactions with each other, besides organs and cells people also dance with each other. That is, a relationship is a synchronicity between two people; that you can lose, or that you can win (...) it is a tango with consonances and dissonances, with encounters and dis-encounters. We always try to find the consonance, to seek the encounter. This search for consonance has to do with the body, but it also has to do with the brain. One of the important things that the brain does is to try to find consonance between various pieces of information. At the end of the day, to make everything work at a more or less harmonious pace.*

*J. L. Pio Abreu in RTP 2 (2015, n.p.)*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctv\\_hEKv1Fc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctv_hEKv1Fc)



We believe that both rational and mythopoetic discourses may be involved in it, and even challenge and motivate each other, but one has to be very careful to handle the threads that weave a still fragile fabric that can be distorted, if its materiality is not attended to, and broken, if the care that the intangible and the ineffable demands is not taken into account (Santiago 2019). The way we perceive this fabric, which corresponds to a reformulation of Carter's notion of material thinking (Carter 2004), was made clear by José Gil when he explained how dance is meaningful to us: "Dance is in the full domain of meaning, making its gestures immediately felt, without passing through language (...) but a danced gesture does not only transmit an explicit meaning (even if 'of transition'). It also conveys an unconscious meaning" (Gil 2001, pp. 113-115). The meaning of an artistic intervention is only conceivable and consummated in the empathetic meeting between its materiality and intangibility and the recipients, involving deep unconscious dimensions.

On the other hand, concepts do without unconscious dimensions; the purpose of the process of conceptualization is to erase them, to get rid of them. Concepts in verbal language are perceived as part of a totally symbolic and autonomous system. To find the meaning of a concept, there is no need to go outside the verbal language system and look at its reference; one only has to look for the right words and combine them properly into a dictionary-like definition. Attempts to verbalize the ineffable in this way or to rationalize material thinking are doomed to fail completely, since they are pursuing abstraction, which inevitably moves away from what it is essential for artistic communication to occur, that is: mimesis, empathy, embodied meaning.

*4 Meaning of an artistic intervention is only conceivable and consummated in the empathetic meeting of its materiality and intangibility with the recipient, involving deep unconscious/embodied dimensions*

*[...] listening [to a sonata] goes much further than the ear: it goes in the body, in the muscles, through the strokes of its rhythm, and as in the viscera, through the voluptuousness of its melody. It would seem that each time, the passage was written for only one person, for whom it is played.*

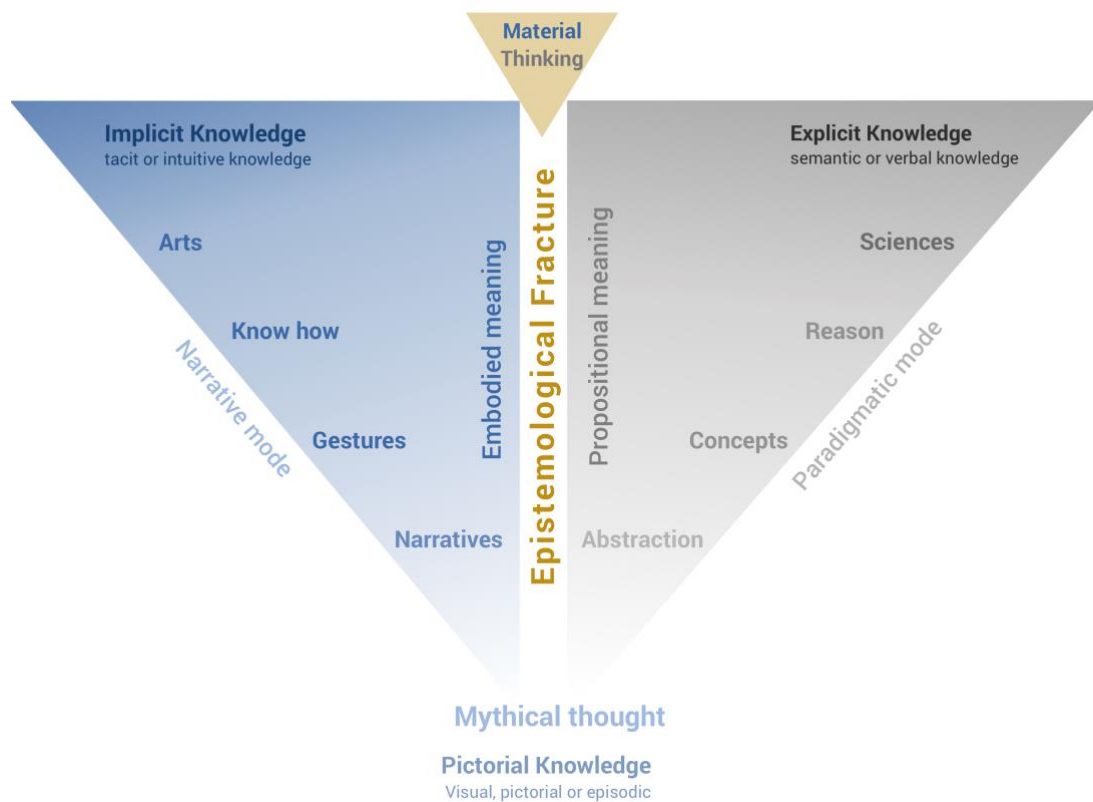
*“L’Obvie et l’Obtus” by Roland Barthes (1982, p. 260)*

Embodied meaning is here understood as meaning that has to be re-enacted to be represented, that is, meaning that is creatively re-constructed recurring to our stock of deep rooted personal unconscious emotional memories, (Donald, 1991). In this perspective, artistic researchers should be more attentive not to fall into the deceptive trap of conceptual abstraction, either when they concentrate mainly on crossing different disciplines, or when they try to conceptualize the embodied meaning of an aesthetic experience. The purpose should not be to convert artists in anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers or anything else, but recognize their contributions, as said by Carter (2004), to a common process of becoming, i.e., expanding our individual and collective awareness of ourselves, of the world and of ourselves in the world.

As we made clear in the *2nd Cahier*, we are assigning to artistic research the mission of exploring a specific field of knowledge which is constituted by pre-structured meaning, where the singularities were not submitted to the reductive operations of abstract thinking, including sensory (visual and sonic), kinetic, intensive, affective, and rhythmic modulation features, all of which feed material thinking. We are suggesting that a fundamental pillar for any aspiring artistic research project should be to contribute to knowledge production through the empathetic communication of the most sacred asset of any artist: the representations of their vivid experiences, which correspond to the *exemplars* proposed by Lehrer (2012). We are interested in exploring what is at play in artistic communication, that is, the material thinking involved and the mythopoetic reconfigurations implied.

We have been talking about two modes of producing and sharing knowledge within the Academia: the traditional paradigmatic mode, used in all sciences, from natural sciences to social sciences and humanities, and the narrative mode, the exploration of which we are proposing as a path for developing artistic research. However, human knowledge is much broader than that. Obviously, knowledge is not confined to the Academic world and in order to function individually and socially we need to rely on much more than just the knowledge validated at the Academia. On the other hand, these two academic modes of knowledge production could not possibly exist if they were not rooted in cognition, that is, in an incommensurable common denominator that facilitates all individual knowledge and all interpersonal and intercultural communication. It is part of being in the world to accumulate knowledge without effort just by living and going through activities as basic as seeing and talking, categorizing and comparing, wanting and acting, thinking and deciding, among others (Pöppel, n.d.). This mode of knowing, through which knowledge about the world around us is accumulated without time-consuming reflection, is the basis of all knowledge and it is often referred to as Pictorial Knowledge, including sensory and topological knowledge, episodic present and past memory. Pictorial Knowledge is the ground that sustains all meaning constructions, be it Mythical Thought - enabling the construction of our subjectivities and intersubjective connections -, Implicit Knowledge - action oriented knowledge, creating, doing -, or Explicit Knowledge - verbal mediated categorization and abstraction. We have to keep in mind though that the different modes of knowledge have to be understood within a frame of functional interdependence obeying the principle of complementarity (Pöppel, 2006).

In the following explanatory model (see figure 1), it is represented this ground of Pictorial Knowledge and Mythical Thought from which the two academic modes of knowledge emerge as complex constructions, diverging and causing an epistemological fracture between them. This model schematises the content of our *2nd Cahier* showing, primarily, that all modes of knowledge are based on mythical thought, and, thereafter, representing how they may differ epistemologically from one another:



**Figure 1.** Epistemological fracture: Explanatory Model

The model was mainly conceived to represent the epistemological fracture between the two modes of knowing that are in use within Academia. But,



concomitantly, it seemed relevant to clarify the relation of these two modes with the three modes of knowing defined by cognitive scientists. First, one should be aware of the distinction between knowledge and mode of knowledge (or mode of knowing). The former corresponds to represented and somehow archived information, and the latter corresponds to the different processes (or modes) through which knowledge is produced. As it is shown in the figure, for example, the paradigmatic mode operates through abstraction procedures to develop concepts and reasonings that in the end will produce Explicit Knowledge. Divergently, the narrative mode operates through creating narratives combining gestures and embodied procedures that in the end will produce Implicit Knowledge. But both are departing from the same common ground of multiple fictions that rule our everyday lives developed through Mythical Thought, which was, in turn, built upon our “basic” Pictorial, Visual and Episodic knowledge.

The sharp-witted clarification of the relevance of artistic interventions, articulating somehow Explicit and Implicit Knowledge, will produce Material Thinking.

## Mythopoetic configurations

Naturally, one could say, we attribute to each individual it's own 'subjectivity', but there is an ideological tendency to believe that each subjectivity corresponds to a closed entity, to a leibnizian monad that is a unique construct resulting from accumulated individual experiences. Each subject would construct his/her subjectivity from a unique point of view, different from all the others, and the deeper one would dig into their unconscious cognitive levels the more specific personal stuff one would find. Most probably because of this ideological view, all that is labeled as subjective tends to be condemned to get low credibility, it is looked upon as unreliable, since it is not generalizable. This has (de)generated in another ideological dichotomy: what is scientific is true and what is subjective is false. Coherently with these assumptions, academics have channeled their efforts to eradicate all traces of subjectivity from their discourses. Mythical thought and narrative discourse were almost totally banished and the Academia gave in to the heaviness of the overwhelming rationality that has been characterizing our cultural imaginary. Now, if one understands, as we do, that Art represents an effort to share artists' subjective, vivid experiences, how would it be possible for Academia to simultaneously embrace art and eradicate subjectivity?

Historically, when mythical thought was definitely overtaken by rationalization (which would become itself a new myth), all fields were somehow affected: in painting, elements of proportion and perspective became crucial; in literature, a new type of novels came to replace the old

mythopoetic narratives; in music composition, more complex rational structures were pursued; in music performance, a tendency to concentrate mainly on skills development, reproducing and perpetuating institutionalized interpretation models; and so on. However, mythical thought was not (and could never be) completely banned. Mythical thought (or fiction) was and has been indispensable for the emergence and survival of human societies and it is in fact the ground upon which rational thought itself could occur and flourish, as Harari made quite clear:

How did Homo sapiens manage to cross this critical threshold [referring to a threshold of 150 individuals], eventually founding cities comprising tens of thousands of inhabitants and empires ruling hundreds of millions? The secret was probably the appearance of fiction. Large numbers of strangers can cooperate successfully by believing in common myths. Any large-scale human cooperation – whether a modern state, a medieval church, an ancient city or an archaic tribe – is rooted in common myths that exist only in peoples' collective imagination. Churches are rooted in common religious myths. (...) States are rooted in common national myths. Two Serbs who have never met might risk their lives to save one another because both believe in the existence of the Serbian nation, the Serbian homeland and the Serbian flag. Judicial systems are rooted in common legal myths. Two lawyers who have never met can nevertheless combine efforts to defend a complete stranger because they both believe in the existence of laws, justice, human rights – and the money paid out in fees. (Harari, 2014, p.32)

There is, thus, a huge fabric of beliefs and convictions that not only permeates and grounds all our abstractions, rationalizations, and scientific discourses but also enables

human societies to function effectively and efficiently. They somehow constitute what we commonly designate as “reality”. This fabric of beliefs and convictions is systemic but changeable, and the arts have played an important and consistent role in those changes reconfiguring old-established mythopoetic configurations.

The inter-subjective is something that exists within the communication network linking the subjective consciousness of many individuals. If a single individual changes his or her beliefs, or even dies, it is of little importance. However, if most individuals in the network die or change their beliefs, the intersubjective phenomenon will mutate or disappear. Inter-subjective phenomena are neither malevolent frauds nor insignificant charades. They exist in a different way from physical phenomena such as radioactivity, but their impact on the world may still be enormous. Many of history’s most important drivers are intersubjective: law, money, gods, nations. (Harari, 2014, p. 111)

Members of a society or social group, no matter whether we consider a small village or a continent, a group of football fans or a congregation of artists, all share and are somehow united by having common memories, beliefs, convictions, moral codes, in a word, common fictions. We should not underestimate the power and the influence of such fictional realities:

Unlike lying, an imagined reality is something that everyone believes in, and as long as this communal belief persists, the imagined reality exerts force in the world. (...) Most millionaires sincerely believe in the existence of money and limited liability companies. Most human-rights activists sincerely believe in the existence of human rights. No one was lying when, in 2011, the UN demanded that the Libyan government respect the human

rights of its citizens, even though the UN, Libya and human rights are all figments of our fertile imaginations. Ever since the Cognitive Revolution, Sapiens has thus been living in a dual reality. On the one hand, the objective reality of rivers, trees and lions; and on the other hand, the imagined reality of gods, nations and corporations. As time went by, the imagined reality became ever more powerful, so that today the very survival of rivers, trees and lions depends on the grace of imagined entities such as gods, nations and corporations. (Harari, 2014, p. 36)

Although there are many who do not accept that we are conditioned by an imaginary order, Harari (2014) showed convincingly that this imagined reality shapes our world (e.g., determining how we live, how we built our houses); it shapes our desires in conformity with its dominant myths as well (the popular desire to take a holiday abroad); and, most important, these collective shared fictions are not confined to an individual subjective mind, they are supra-individual, they are intersubjective and they will persist in spite of the eventual rebellion of singular individuals. Millions of strangers had to be convinced in order to change the imagined order (Harari, 2014, pp. 107-110).

In a world where the myth that reason and truth are necessarily concomitant, any other way of producing knowledge tends to be excluded, and therefore it seemed appropriate to us to remind our readers how these fictional realities still rule our world, irredeemably. The point is to show how our lives are not only dependent on fiction, but they are only possible, they only exist because of human capacity to imagine, to create narratives and fictional realities. These fictional realities, these omnipresent mythopoetic configurations, which may involve millions of

people, are mutable and have, in fact, changed over the last few centuries and even, at a more rapid pace, in recent decades. Maybe the arts had some influence, together with a multiplicity of other factors, in provoking these changes, but they were most likely strongly motivated by changes in the balance of socio-economic tensions, disruptive events, the emergence of new ideas, fictions and myths propelled by writers, intellectuals, opinion makers, politicians, etc..

Fictions hold together religions, nations and corporations using narratives, telling stories with strong symbolic power. They are narratives in declarative discourse, mostly, but symbols and gestures are used too, and their dissemination is assured by the intersubjective communication network, reaching and conditioning all individuals.

Values, beliefs, fears, desires, convictions, stories, symbols, moral codes, etc. are the source material feeding these fictions, these imagined realities, these mythopoetic configurations. Thus understood, these mythopoetic configurations are raw material for artistic creations. Indeed, as it has been seen in the past, creative productions may intentionally or unintentionally influence individual behavior, intervene in environmental and social issues, transform the established order. The above referred source materials are charged with symbolic meanings (social, cultural, and aesthetic values) and if an artist can afford to be inattentive or irresponsible to these implications, an artistic researcher should not.

When developing their work, artistic researchers are inevitably involved with ethical issues, with ethical decisions concerning choice of materials, techniques, target audiences, repertoire choices, stylistic choices, interpretative choices but also issues concerning where, how, to whom and with what purpose. Artistic projects are often motivated by self-imposed challenges, which result from a concern, from the need to address a gap or a creative question, a social, political or aesthetic problem. Although neither the ethical issue nor the aesthetic value should be overshadowed by each other, both may play an important role in clarifying the relevance of a particular artistic research project. When creating an illuminating narrative that promotes our understanding of an artistic intervention (we will discuss this in more depth in the following section), artistic researchers should consider, thus, the ethical issues involved, since artistic outputs are always social interventions, cultural/political actions.

But why should artistic researchers clarify their artistic interventions, within the Academia?

First, because all artistic interventions are ethnic. This means that the recipients, who share the socio-cultural context of an artistic output (or who are more familiar with that context), will be better suited to get emotionally involved, to empathize, to intimately disclose an aesthetic experience.

## *5 All artistic interventions are ethnic*

*The wonder of nature resides in a man's heart, and to see it you must feel it. Children can distinguish objects, but they cannot know the relationships that bring them together, nor hear the sweet harmony of their concert. It requires an experience that they have not yet acquired; it requires affections that they have not yet experienced to feel the impression that results from all those impressions together. [...] What kind of emotion must the chirping of the birds give them if they do not yet know the depths of delight and love?*

*"Emilio o de la educación" by Jean  
Jacques Rousseau (2011, p. 174)*



However, there will be as many levels of involvement with the socio-cultural context of an artistic intervention as there are individuals. This would constitute by itself a strong argument to promote clarification. But it should be the kind of clarification that helps our emotional involvement, that enhances our aesthetic experience. It seems at the same time natural and crucial that the contents of any clarification within an artistic research project should at least assert if what was convincingly challenging and relevant at the onset of the proposal had, at the end of the project, an equally convincing and relevant artistic response. In such a manner, the clarification of an artistic intervention would adequately respond to the academic demand for knowledge sharing.

## ***6 Clarification in Artistic Research enhances our emotional involvement, deepening our aesthetic experience.***

*As an example of how clarification may enhance our engagement, we invite our readers to watch a video in which Australian guitarist John Williams clarifies his interpretation of the piece 'Sevilla' by Isaac Albéniz. Click on the following link to see the video:*

*[John Williams infuses Flamenco into Sevilla with Paco's help](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXK7tgTsaGI)*

*(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXK7tgTsaGI>)*

But, in order to share knowledge, artistic researchers have to produce it in the first place, and, to understand knowledge production within artistic research, we feel now the need to invert the perspective. In the next section, thus, the focus will be on the individual. First, we will be looking at the construction of subjectivity and then looking at how artists create knowledge in the procedural mode, exploring intense, expressive and empathetic gestures, but aiming to awaken recipients' (e)motional, metaphorical projections and thus their intimate, imaginative processes of creating meaning.

## **Gesture, empathy and mythopoetic reconfigurations**

One cannot escape the fact of being part of a society or a country, and this implies sharing their imagined orders, their myths and their fictions. Nevertheless, our strongest emotional ties occur within the smaller social groups to which we belong (such as families, friends, co-workers, organizations devoted to a common goal, communities, etc.). The smaller these groups are, the deeper are the embodiment levels of the fictions that hold together their members. Group members share stories, experiences, narratives, habits, perspectives, codes, feelings, expressions, expectations, gestures and so on, and all of that is raw material that feeds our subjective constructions, our subjectivity.

We wrote in the *2nd Cahier*, after Damasio (1999), that "the sense of self emerges in the form of a narrative; it is a story we tell ourselves" (Correia & Dalagna, 2019, p.7). In continuous (re)construction this life-long story that we tell ourselves constitutes our "subjectivity". It is a narrative that is inextricably entangled in the meshes of intersubjectivity, on the one hand, and that is nurtured by an amalgam of unique personal experiences, on the other. Gestures best represent this double affiliation because they are supra-individual and intersubjective before they become individual expressions. This may seem paradoxical, but only apparently, if one realizes that each "subjectivity" is constructed overtime within pre-existing communities:

If our planet has seen some eight billion people, it is difficult to suppose that every individual has had his or her own repertory of gestures. Arithmetically, it is simply impossible. Without the slightest doubt, there are far fewer gestures in the world than there are individuals. That finding leads us to a shocking conclusion: a gesture is more individual than an individual. We could put it in the form of an aphorism: many people, few gestures. (...) A gesture cannot be regarded as the expression of an individual, as his creation (because no individual is capable of creating a fully original gesture, belonging to nobody else), nor can it even be regarded as that person's instrument; on the contrary, it is gestures that use us as their instruments, as their bearers and incarnations. (Kundera, 1991, p.6)

“Gestures” are different from “concepts” because they do preserve the two distinctive dimensions of the narrative mode of thought - tacit and symbolic - and they do that because they have to be re-enacted every time to be perceived. More, if gestures inhabit the intersubjective as, in fact, they do, if they are “more individual than an individual”, that is, “many people, few gestures”, then we have grounds to believe that this procedural knowledge is shareable.

## ***7 Generalization in Artistic Research is accomplished through the supra-individual and intersubjective dimensions of gestures***

*I write about Agnes, I try to imagine her, I let her sit on a bench in the sauna, walk around Paris, leaf through a magazine, talk with her husband, but the thing that started it all, the gesture of a woman waving to a lifeguard by the side of a pool, it must seem as if I had forgotten that. Does Agnes any longer wave to anyone in this manner? No. Strange as it seems, I believe that she has not done so for many years. Long ago, when she was very young, yes, in those days she used to wave like that. At that time, she was still living in a Swiss town surrounded by mountaintops silhouetted in the distance. She was sixteen and went to the movies with a school friend. The instant the lights went out he took her hand. Soon their palms became sticky, but the boy did not dare let go of the hand he had so daringly grasped, for that would have meant admitting that he was perspiring and ashamed of it. And so, they sat with clammy hands for an hour and a half, and let go only when the lights came back on. He tried to prolong the date, leading her down the streets of the old part of town and then uphill to the courtyard of an old cloister teeming with tourists. He obviously had thought out everything in advance, because he led her quite briskly to a deserted passage, under the rather trite pretense that he wanted to show her a certain painting. They reached the end of the passage, but instead of a picture there was only a dark brown door, marked with the letters WC. The boy had noticed the sign and stopped.*

*She knew perfectly well that he was not very interested in paintings and that he was only looking for a scheduled place where he could kiss her. Poor boy, he had found nothing better than a dirty corner next to a lavatory! She burst out laughing, and to make it clear that she wasn't laughing at him she pointed out the sign. He laughed, too, but he was seized by hopelessness. It was impossible to hug and kiss her with those letters in the background (all the more since this was to be their first, and thus an unforgettable, kiss), and so he had no choice but to turn back with a bitter sense of capitulation.*

*They walked silently, and Agnes was angry: why didn't he simply kiss her in the middle of the street? Why did he have to lead her instead down an obscure passage to a lavatory where generations of old and ugly and smelly monks had been relieving themselves? His embarrassment flattered her, because it was a sign of his bewildered love, but irritated her even more, because it testified to his immaturity; going with a boy the same age seemed like lowering oneself: she was only interested in older boys.*

*But perhaps because she thus was secretly rejecting him and yet knew at the same time that he was in love with her, a sense of justice prompted her to help him in his amorous efforts, to support him, to rid him of childish embarrassment. She resolved that if he couldn't find the necessary courage, she would. He was walking home, and she planned that the moment they reached the gate of her house, she would throw her arms around him and kiss him, which would no doubt make him stand stock-still, completely flabbergasted.*

*But at the last moment she lost the desire to do so, because his face was not merely sad but forbidding, even hostile. And so, they merely shook hands and she walked off down the garden path to her door. She sensed that the boy remained standing motionless, gazing after her. She felt sorry for him once more; she left for him the compassion of an old sister, and at that point she did something quite unpremeditated; as she kept on walking she turned her head back toward him, smiled, and lifted her right arm in the air, easily, flowingly, as she were tossing a brightly colored ball.*

*That instant when Agnes suddenly, without preparation, lifted her arm in a flowing, easy motion was miraculous. How was it possible that in a single fraction of a second, and for the very first time, she discovered a motion of the arm and of the body so perfect and polished that resembled a finished work of art? In those days a woman in her forties used to come to see her Father. She was departmental secretary, and she would bring papers for him to sign and take other papers back with her. Even though these visits had no special significance, they were accompanied by a mysterious tension (Mother would always turn silent), arousing Agnes's curiosity. Whenever the secretary was leaving, Agnes ran to the window to watch her inconspicuously. Once, as to take heading toward the gate (thus walking in a direction opposite to that which Agnes was to take somewhat later, followed by the gaze of her unfortunate school friend), the secretary turned, smiled, and lifted her arm in the air in an unexpected gesture, easy and flowing.*



*It was an unforgettable moment: the sandy path sparkled in the rays of the sun like a golden stream, and both sides of the gate jasmine bushes were blooming. It was as if the upward gesture wished to show this golden piece of earth the direction of flight, while the white jasmine bushes were already beginning to turn into wings. Father was not visible, but the woman's gesture indicated that he was standing in the doorway of the villa, gazing after her. That gesture was so unexpected and beautiful that it remained in Agnes's memory like the imprint of a lightning bolt; it invited her into the depths of space and time and awakened in the sixteen-year-old girl a vague and immense longing. At the moment when she suddenly needed to say something important to her school friend and had no words for it, that gesture came to life and said on her behalf what she herself was unable to say. I don't know how long she kept using it (or, more precisely, how long it kept using her), but surely up to the day when she noticed her sister, younger by eight years, tossing up her arm while saying goodbye to a girlfriend. When she saw her gesture performed by a sister who had been admiring and imitating her from earliest childhood, she realized that the gesture did not fit an eleven-year-old child.*

*But more important, she realized that the gesture was available to all and thus did not really belong to her: when she waved her arm, she was actually committing theft or forgery. From that time on she began to avoid that gesture (it is not easy to break the habit of gestures that have become used to us), and she developed a distrust of gestures altogether.*

*She tried to limit herself to the most important ones (to nod “yes” or to shake “no”, to point at an object her companion had failed to see), to use only gestures that did not pretend to be her original expression. And so, it came to be that the bewitching gesture of Father’s secretary walking down the golden path (which bewitched me when I saw the woman in the swimsuit take leave of the lifeguard) had completely gone to sleep in her. And then one day it awoke. It happened before Mother’s death, when she was staying two weeks in the villa with her sick father. As she was saying good-bye to him on the last day, she knew that they wouldn’t see each other again for a long time. Mother wasn’t at home and Father wanted to see her to her car, which was parked in the street. She forbade him to accompany her beyond the door and walked alone over the golden sand past the flower beds to the gate. She had a lump in her throat and an enormous yearning to say something that could not be expressed by words, and so without quite knowing how it happened she suddenly turned her head and with a smile tossed her arm in the air, easily, flowingly, as if to tell him they still had a long life ahead of them and would still see each other many more times. An instant later she recalled the forty-year-old woman who twenty years earlier had stood in the same place and had waved at Father in the same way. That upset and confused her. It was as if two distant times had suddenly met in a single second and two different women in a single gesture. The thought passed through her head that those two women might have been the only ones he had ever loved.*

*“Immortality” by Milan Kundera (1991, pp. 23-25)*

The challenge here proposed is to go beyond the limitation of believing in the myth that only through abstract generalization, through abstraction can we obtain trustful knowledge. If mythical thought is as old as humans, if it has always governed our lives, if it is responsible for “many of history’s most important drivers” like “law, money, gods, nations”, why should we not explore it as raw material to create knowledge?

It would be consonant with *an alternative culture of knowledge* as it was Henk Borgdorff’s suggestion: “Through its focus on the singular, the aesthetic-affective, the transgressive, the unforeseen, artistic research should exemplify an alternative culture of knowledge” (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 5). The implications of this are that artistic interventions can only qualify to contribute to this alternative culture of knowledge if they fulfil the following four criteria:

- If they seek *empathetic* reactions,
- If they communicate through *expressive gestures*,
- If they *challenge* our old mythopoetic configurations,
- If they intervene *pertinently* in the respective artistic domain

Artistic experiences demand a leap into an imagined reality, a *conscious* leap into fiction. When it comes to artistic experiences, one should be induced to operate in a narrative mode, linking doing and thinking, unconscious levels of embodied meaning and mythical thought. It is impossible to clarify these experiences if one moves to a

paradigmatic mode of thought. Abstraction (conceptual, paradigmatic discourse) is reductive, leaving aside the two most important dimensions of the narrative mode of thought: the tacit (unconscious dimensions of meaning) and the symbolic (mythical polysemic associations).

Although it may generate both declarative and procedural knowledge, the aim of artistic research would be to promote our understanding of the artistic interventions in their own terms, that is, in the narrative mode. Mainly operating in a narrative mode, artistic researchers would simultaneously create and clarify a specific knowledge. In other words, artistic research would produce *shareable* material thinking. But how can this knowledge, which is more felt than understood, more enacted than represented, be shareable?

Material thinking is knowledge to be felt and thought of *in presence, in the moment*, it is a sensorial, particular, subjective experience. This does not mean, however, that generalization may not take place. We are sensitive to Lehrer's argument that "the contents of the painting can be experienced repeatedly" (Lehrer, 2004, p.2). According to this author, there is a paradox between aesthetic experience and the notion of ineffability.

Description of the content of a work in language, though providing useful information for many purposes, seems to leave out something essential to what a work of art is like. This leads philosophers to say that the content of a work of art, even a representational painting, is ultimately ineffable. There is a point to speaking about the ineffability of the content of a work of art - of a painting for example - but it leads to a paradox when one adds that

the ineffable content can be known to an observer and appreciated many times over as being the same content. How can the content be known and recognizable repeatedly and be ineffable? (Lehrer, 2012, p. 11)

The author suggests that there is an important issue missing from this discussion. The experience of work of art results in a specific type of representation (different from representation in verbal language, for example), which is an *exemplar* to stand for a class of experiences of which it is a member. A conscious experience of a color can serve as an *exemplar* that exhibits what the color is like. This exemplar is like a psychophysiological mark that allows to define a conceptual mark, in which this *exemplar* is also part of the content. The *exemplar* allows us to represent a class of objects that are part of the conceptual mark. Lehrer called this process *exemplarization*, which is a process that “yields a representation of content in terms of an experienced particular that stands for other particulars. *exemplarization* involves generalization of a particular.” (Lehrer, 2004, p.1)

Worth noticing though that this generalization is not reductive. *exemplarization* is not abstraction; i.e., one can only recognize blue color if it fits her *exemplar*, and not from verbal explanations given by others. Obviously, we are not suggesting that all experiences result in *exemplars*, because the latter require conscious engagement, as it happens in empathetic communication. This is a fundamental pillar for understanding the difference between aesthetic experience and ordinary perceptions (Lehrer, 2012). The following example illustrates this point:

## *Painting*



**Figure 2.** “*L'origine du monde*” by Gustave Courbet 1866  
(Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France)

*Photo musée d'Orsay / rmn Retrieved from:*

*<https://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/index-of-works/home.html>*

*L'Origine du Monde*, a painting by Courbet (...) It is a painting of a female sex organ. It confronts us in the Musée d'Orsay. It says, "Look!" Try not to. You will fail. But what then? Prurient interest is blocked by the confrontation. It is not a pornographic experience, however accurate the representation. There is a sensory confrontation and interrogation. What does it mean? That confrontation and interrogation lead to the experience of it as art. You interpret it. Carole Schneeman in her recent feminist work, *Interior Scroll*, show us how (...) We do not fall from heaven, we fall from there. All of us. The origin of our life, of our world. It must be sacred. We hide from the sacred biology of our origin. "Not from there please." "Yes, from there." The sensory experience marks the content of the origin of us all. That is art. So, what does art do? It chats with us on the edge of experience. (Lehrer, 2012, p. 6)

The thesis asserted by Lehrer, grounded on the premise that *art reconfigures or transforms experience by creating content*, brings some light on the debate about how artistic researchers produce knowledge. Knowledge produced by artistic researchers is not grounded on abstractions or intellectual propositions, as we have been stressing, but on the emergence of *exemplars*. It is rather the opposite: *exemplars* are the source from which concepts are formulated and allow us to expand our awareness of ourselves, of the world and of ourselves in the world.

## ***8 Art reconfigures or transforms experience by creating content and generating “exemplars” through conscious engagement with empathetic communication***

*The year before, at an evening party, he had heard a piece of music played on the piano and violin. At first, he had appreciated only the material quality of the sounds which those instruments secreted. And it had been a source of keen pleasure when, below the narrow ribbon of the violin-part, delicate, unyielding, substantial and governing the whole, he had suddenly perceived, where it was trying to surge upwards in a owing tide of sound, the mass of the piano- part, multiform, coherent, level, and breaking everywhere in melody like the deep blue tumult of the sea, silvered and charmed into a minor key by the moonlight. But at a given moment, without being able to distinguish any clear out-line, or to give a name to what was pleasing him, suddenly enraptured, he had tried to collect, to treasure in his memory the phrase or harmony—he knew not which—that had just been played, and had opened and expanded his soul, just as the fragrance of certain roses, wafted upon the moist air of evening, has the power of dilating our nostrils.*

*Perhaps it was owing to his own ignorance of music that he had been able to receive so confused an impression, one of those that are, notwithstanding, our only purely musical impressions, limited in their extent, entirely original, and irreducible into any other kind. An impression of this order, vanishing in an instant, is, so to speak, an impression sine materia.*



*Presumably the notes which we hear at such moments tend to spread out before our eyes, over surfaces greater or smaller according to their pitch and volume; to trace arabesque designs, to give us the sensation of breath or tenuity, stability or caprice.*

*But the notes themselves have vanished before these sensations have developed sufficiently to escape submersion under those which the following, or even simultaneous notes have already begun to awaken in us. And this indefinite perception would continue to smother in its molten liquidity the motifs which now and then emerge, barely discernible, to plunge again and disappear and drown; recognized only by the particular kind of pleasure which they instill, impossible to describe, to recollect, to name; ineffable; - if our memory, like a laborer who toils at the laying down of firm foundations beneath the tumult of the waves, did not, by fashioning for us facsimiles of those fugitive phrases, enable us to compare and to contrast them with those that follow.*

*And so, hardly had the delicious sensation, which Swann had experienced, died away, before his memory had furnished him with an immediate transcript, summary, it is true, and provisional, but one on which he had kept his eyes fixed while the playing continued, so effectively that, when the same impression suddenly returned, it was no longer uncapturable. He was able to picture to himself its extent, its symmetrical arrangement, its notation, the strength of its expression; he had before him that definite object, which was no longer pure music, but rather design, architecture, thought, and which allowed the actual music to be recalled.*

*This time he had distinguished, quite clearly, a phrase which emerged for a few moments from the waves of sound. It had at once held out to him an invitation to partake of intimate pleasures, of whose existence, before hearing it, he had never dreamed, into which he felt that nothing but this phrase could initiate him; and he had been filled with love for it, as with a new and strange desire.*

*With a slow and rhythmical movement, it led him here, there, everywhere, towards a state of happiness noble, unintelligible, yet clearly indicated. And then, suddenly having reached a certain point from which he was prepared to follow it, after pausing for a moment, abruptly it changed its direction, and in a fresh movement, more rapid, multiform, melancholy, incessant, sweet, it bore him off with it towards a vista of joys unknown. Then it vanished. He hoped, with a passionate longing, that he might find it again, a third time. And reappear it did, though without speaking to him more clearly, bringing him, indeed, a pleasure less profound. But when he was once more at home he needed it, he was like a man into whose life a woman, whom he has seen for a moment passing by, has brought a new form of beauty, which strengthens and enlarges his own power of perception, without his knowing even whether he is ever to see her again whom he loves already, although he knows nothing of her, not even her name.*

*Indeed, this passion for a phrase of music seemed, in the first few months, to be bringing into Swann's life the possibility of a sort of rejuvenation.*

*He had so long since ceased to direct his course towards any ideal goal, and had confined himself to the pursuit of ephemeral satisfactions, that he had come to believe, though without ever formally stating his belief even to himself, that he would remain all his life in that condition, which death alone could alter. More than this, since his mind no longer entertained any lofty ideals, he had ceased to believe in (although he could not have expressly denied) their reality. He had grown also into the habit of taking refuge in trivial considerations, which allowed him to set on one side matters of fundamental importance.*

*Just as he had never stopped to ask himself whether he would not have done better by not going into society, knowing very well that if he had accepted an invitation he must put in an appearance, and that afterwards, if he did not actually call, he must at least leave cards upon his hostess; so in his conversation he took care never to express with any warmth a personal opinion about a thing, but instead would supply facts and details which had a value of a sort in themselves, and excused him from shewing how much he really knew. He would be extremely precise about the recipe for a dish, the dates of a painter's birth and death, and the titles of his works.*

*Sometimes, in spite of himself, he would let himself go so far as to utter a criticism of a work of art, or of some one's interpretation of life, but then he would cloak his words in a tone of irony, as though he did not altogether associate himself with what he was saying.*

*But now, like a confirmed invalid whom, all of a sudden, a change of air and surroundings, or a new course of treatment, or, as sometimes happens, an organic change in himself, spontaneous and unaccountable, seems to have so far recovered from his malady that he begins to envisage the possibility, hitherto beyond all hope, of starting to lead — and better late than never — a wholly different life, Swann found in himself, in the memory of the phrase that he had heard, in certain other sonatas which he had made people play over to him, to see whether he might not, perhaps, discover his phrase among them, the presence of one of those invisible realities in which he had ceased to believe, but to which, as though the music had had upon the moral barrenness from which he was suffering a sort of recreative influence, he was conscious once again of a desire, almost, indeed, of the power to consecrate his life.*

*But, never having managed to find out whose work it was that he had heard played that evening, he had been unable to procure a copy, and finally had forgotten the quest. He had indeed, in the course of the next few days, encountered several of the people who had been at the party with him, and had questioned them; but most of them had either arrived after or before the piece was played; some had indeed been in the house, but had gone into another room to talk, and those who had stayed to listen had no clearer impression than the rest. As for his hosts, they knew that it was a recently published work which the musicians whom they had engaged for the evening had asked to be allowed to play; but, as these last were now on tour somewhere, Swann could learn nothing further.*

*He had, of course, a number of musical friends, but, vividly as he could recall the exquisite and inexpressible pleasure which the little phrase had given him, and could see, still, before his eyes the forms that it had traced in outline, he was quite incapable of humming over to them the air. And so, at last, he ceased to think of it.*

*“Swann’s Way”, Vol. 1 of “Remembrance of Things Past” by Marcel Proust (1931, pp. 321-326)*

When we experience an artwork, we are confronted with the freedom to decide how to conceive our world and ourselves. As Lehrer suggests:

Every tyrant knows that freedom is coiled at the center of art like a snake. Art contains the existential freedom of choosing how we represent the world and ourselves, undoing the dictates of political power and social control. You see a painting, you read a poem, you hear some music, and you experience the freedom to use that conscious experience to reconfigure bondage of conformity into the creative choice of the content of your world and yourself. The tyrant can tell you what you have to believe. The experience of art shows that you are free to conceive your world and yourself in another way. (Lehrer, 2012, p. 4)

As *exemplars* are “behind” language (since they are raw meaning, oblivious to the reductive operations of abstraction), their reconfiguration depends essentially on gestures and body language.

Postulating that material thinking has gestural nature, makes it shareable, communicable. Its communication process though has no medium or vehicle to pass a message on, like verbal language does. Instead, in its communication process, the function of the artist (performer, creator) is to awaken similar gestures in the recipients (listeners, public) who recognise themselves when enacting them, at the subliminal level of the patterns of their bodily experience. Although being shareable and intersubjective, material thinking remains an individual, particular, subjective, vivid experience.

Different modes of knowing, different ways of sharing knowledge. For example, in the context of a phenomenological analysis of a musical performance, the description of phenomena in verbal language implies inherently an abstraction giving up gestures' tacit and symbolic dimensions. The result is a disembodied discourse in paradigmatic mode, which is intended to be represented and understood by all in the same way, but not (re)enacted or felt. The readers of these descriptions - not the recipients to whom the musical gestures were originally intended by the artists - have no access to the direct, immediate, empathetic communication process, which is crucial to experiencing and appreciating music meaning.

Once we fully acknowledge the significance and the importance of the ritual dimension typical to artistic experiences, it is unavoidable to take into consideration the disposition of the participants (both creators and recipients) to imagine fictional worlds, to participate in games of make-believe. Artistic interventions have the power to generate games of make-believe, where neither the objectivity of our fictional worlds is compromised nor the spontaneity of our imaginings is lessened (Walton, 1990). Obviously, this disposition may have a direct influence on our mythopoetic configurations. This capability of inducing imaginings becomes even more apparent and undeniable if one considers the social and ritualized dimension of live performances. In fact, it does not matter if one takes the perspective of the audience or that of the performers, performances imply definitely a

collective participation in games of make-believe. As Damasio suggests:

I have always been intrigued by the specific moment when, as we sit waiting in the audience, the door to the stage opens and a performer steps into the light; or, to take the other perspective, the moment when a performer who waits in semi-darkness sees the same door open, revealing the lights, the stage, and the audience. I realised some years ago that the moving quality of this moment, whichever point of view one takes, comes from its embodiment of an instance of birth, of passage through a threshold that separates a protected but limiting shelter from the possibility and risk of a world beyond and ahead. (Damasio, 1999, p.3)

The capability of inducing imaginings seems to be a *sine qua non* condition to trigger aesthetic experiences. This has implications, though. It brings forward an irreducible incompatibility imposing two divergent road paths, one to aesthetic experiences (understood here as empathetic communication), and another to conceptual art. The consequences of this split, of this divergence should not be overlooked if one seeks to explore how music and the arts create meaning and of which kind. It could be argued in favour of conceptual art that new forms of intelligibility create new forms of sensibility. While we fully agree, we are convinced that, in terms of artistic research, we should wait for these new forms of intelligibility to be *felt* in order to enter the artistic domain.

In fact, this finding, which could be a prolegomenon in itself - *the capability of inducing imaginings is a sine qua non condition to trigger aesthetic experiences* -, was for us a kind of revelation, an awakening. For the sake of



explanatory reasons only, we are tempted to force an analogy with Emanuel Kant's reaction to David Hume's "attack" on metaphysics. Replacing a few words, the famous quote taken from the Preface to Kant's *Prolegomena to any future metaphysics* could be adapted as follows: *We freely admit that it was the remembrance of Conceptual Art which, many years ago, first interrupted our dogmatic slumber and gave our investigations in the field of artistic research a completely different direction.*

In tune with the general trend towards abstraction that has gone through the last centuries, art criticism has also progressively become involved in higher levels of abstraction cultivating paradigmatic discourse and has ended up *contaminating* the artists themselves. Friedrich Nietzsche considered rational thought as a 'disease' and men would be sick animals, for reason is imperfect and inevitably reductive. Ironically, art has always been the domain par excellence where mimesis (tacit dimensions) and mythical thought (symbolic dimensions) flourished, a heartland where Nietzsche himself saw the ultimate possibility of redemption of the bodily wisdom, so to speak. Conceptual Art, in this perspective, would not be so much a vanguard movement leading to the *new* and the *original*, but much more a desperate conservative and retrograde effort of the old hegemonic Reason to usurp a territory where traditionally the body has always been sovereign. A territory that has always been its opposition, which has always represented an institutionalized resistance to rationality.

***9 Although being shareable and intersubjective, material thinking remains an individual, particular, subjective, vivid experience.***

*From self-observation and from observing audience reaction I would be inclined to say that we all listen on an elementary plane of musical consciousness ... We respond to music from a primal and almost brutish level - dumbly, as it were, for on that level we are all firmly grounded... and all the analytical, historical, textual material on or about the music heard, interesting though it may be, cannot – and venture to say should not – alter that fundamental relationship.”*

*“Music and Imagination” by Aaron Copland, (1961, pp.13-14)*

The body has been persistently the symbolic matrix in the art universe.

In conceptual art the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work. When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. (LeWitt, 1967, pp. 79-83)

It is not only *all of the planning, decisions and the execution* that become superficial - *a perfunctory affair* - but also all that belongs to the sphere of the aesthetic as we understand it - the gestural component, the correspondent creativeness with which each recipient *re-enacts* those gestures and the empathetic communication between individual subjectivities. When we wrote above that we made the choice of understanding art as communication, we also chose to define the type of *direct* communication that would underpin our aesthetic experiences. By giving up gestures, their re-enactment and empathetic communication the conceptual art fails the aesthetic appreciation. We do not conceive aesthetic appreciation without a creative meaning construction by the recipients, without embodied meaning disclosure.

*10 Aesthetic appreciation implies a creative meaning construction by the recipients based on embodied meaning disclosure*



**Figure 3.** *Diego Velázquez “Las Meninas” 1656. Museo del Prado. Retrieved from <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/las-meninas/9fdc7800-9ade-48b0-ab8b-edee94ea877f>*

*The painter is standing a little back from his canvas. He is glancing at his model; perhaps he is considering whether to add some finishing touch, though it is also possible that the first stroke has not yet been made. The arm holding the brush is bent to the left, towards the palette; it is motionless, for an instant, between canvas and paints. The skilled hand is suspended in mid-air, arrested in rapt attention on the painter's gaze; and the gaze, in return, waits upon the arrested gesture. Between the fine point of the brush and the steely gaze, the scene is about to yield up its volume. But not without a subtle system of feints.*

*By standing back a little, the painter has placed himself to one side of the painting on which he is working. That is, for the spectator at present observing him he is to the right of his canvas, while the latter, the canvas, takes up the whole of the extreme left. And the canvas has its back turned to that spectator: he can see nothing of it but the reverse side, together with the huge frame on which it is stretched. The painter, on the other hand, is perfectly visible in his full height; or at any rate, he is not masked by the tall canvas which may soon absorb him, when, taking a step towards it again, he returns to his task; he has no doubt just appeared, at this very instant, before the eyes of the spectator, emerging from what is virtually a sort of vast cage projected backwards by the surface he is painting. Now he can be seen, caught in a moment of stillness, at the neutral center of this oscillation.*

*His dark torso and bright face are half-way between the visible and the invisible: emerging from that canvas beyond our view, he moves into our gaze; but when, in a moment, he makes a step to the right, removing himself from our gaze, he will be standing exactly in front of the canvas he is painting; he will enter that region where his painting, neglected for an instant, will, for him, become visible once more, free of shadow and free of reticence. As though the painter could not at the same time be seen in the picture where he is represented and also see that upon which he is representing something. He rules at the threshold of those two incompatible visibilities.*

*The painter is looking, his face turned slightly and his head leaning towards one shoulder. He is staring at a point to which, even though it is invisible, we, the spectators, can easily assign an object, since it is we, ourselves, who are that point: our bodies, our faces, our eyes. The spectacle he is observing is thus doubly invisible: first, because it is not represented within the space of the painting, and second, because it is situated precisely in that blind point, in that essential hiding-place into which our gaze disappears from ourselves at the moment of our actual looking. And yet, how could we fail to see that invisibility, there in front of our eyes, since it has its own perceptible equivalent, its sealed-in figure, in the painting itself? We could, in effect, guess what it is the painter is looking at if it were possible for us to glance for a moment at the canvas he is working on; but all we can see of that canvas is its texture, the horizontal and vertical bars of the stretcher, and the obliquely rising foot of the easel*

*The tall, monotonous rectangle occupying the whole left portion of the real picture, and representing the back of the canvas within the picture, reconstitutes in the form of a surface the invisibility in depth of what the artist is observing: that space in which we are, and which we are. From the eyes of the painter to what he is observing there runs a compelling line that we, the onlookers, have no power of evading: it runs through the real picture and emerges from its surface to join the place from which we see the painter observing us; this dotted line reaches out to us ineluctably, and links us to the representation of the picture...*

*The full text is to be found in “Les mots et les choses” by Michel Foucault (1966).*

*Here we refer to the English version that was published in Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2005*

We believe that the key to have access to the deeper levels, where mythopoetic reconfigurations are grounded, is precisely this process by which the recipients, affected by empathy, re-enact gestures and create subjective meaning constructions. Mythopoetic configurations are deep rooted in our unconscious cognitive levels (tacit dimensions) and, thus, as we wrote above, only through a creative and active re-enactment can we understand their meaning or succeed in changing them by reconfiguring them. In one of Harari's quotes here above, it is written that:

If a single individual changes his or her beliefs, or even dies, it is of little importance. However, if most individuals in the network die or change their beliefs, the intersubjective phenomenon will mutate or disappear. (Harari, 2014, p.111)

We believe that artistic interventions have potentially the power to provoke changes, if not mutations, to make beliefs disappear or even to reconfigure old mythopoetic configurations of a community, be it a large or a small one. To achieve this degree of influence artists (and, notably, artistic researchers) must operate with gestures, at levels where meanings are embodied. Only exploring their own subjectivity, their vivid experiences and molding the material to make it expressive of this *subjective vividness*, may artists create artistic interventions which eventually will have the potential to affect, to communicate gestures, and the power to provoke a mythopoetic reconfiguration. One can only intervene in the *intersubjective communication network* when reaching its embodiment level.

Putting it in practical and simple terms, artists identify a problem, an issue or a gap that concerns them, or disturbs



them, and react critically creating narratives, artistic interventions, remixing, intentionally, expressive gestures which will trigger emotional responses in the recipients and interfere with their symbolic constructions, their mythopoetic configurations. It does not matter if this problem, issue or gap is identified before, during or after practice. What will determine its relation to artistic creation and eventually to artistic research is the raw materials they are working with: are they concepts or gestures? As we wrote above: *data collected from any field of knowledge may inform and inspire artistic creation and, consequently, artistic research.* Concepts are not an exception: either deduced from observation and analysis or from other concepts' combinations, concepts and conceptualizations may also inspire artistic creation processes. But one must be very careful and be aware that only when the focus is on *livingness* and *intuition* - *on the subjective experience* - may artistic creation and artistic research take place.

A reconfiguration is not like a political revolution, but it is much more like a political reform, a small readjustment, a new arrangement of old material eventually adding some new material. In other words, reconfigurations need pre-established configurations to reconfigure. These mythopoetic configurations are intersubjective fictions and they do not exist, obviously, outside of the individuals' subjectivity. The difficulty in verbalizing them has to do with their unconscious, embodied meaning dimensions. As we hopefully made clear, these unconscious, embodied meaning dimensions are crucial since they are the reason why we need art and artistic research. Aesthetic experiences have the power to interfere with our old established mythopoetic configurations and

reconfigure them, as they perform at the deepest levels of meaning production. The creative work of an artist or artistic researcher reaches the aesthetic realm if they go deeper into the exploration of their subjective impressions, that is, if they reach those unconscious levels of meaning at first, and if they manage to express through their artistic intervention the reconfiguration that was motivated by their scepticism and criticism, as a result.

The reconfiguration can be understood considering it as similar to the process of remix, further discussed by Navas (2010). Remix in artistic research relies on mythopoetic narratives rather than in the experimentation with the objects' materiality, since the former are the ones that will define the knowledge production. *The exploration of new possibilities is not on the materiality of objects but on the meaning associated with them.* In fact, to be eligible as artistic research, this meaning exploration should result from a critical attitude towards the limitations of the 'old-established' meaning configurations that are somehow associated with the materials or the objects.

Summarising, the focus is NOT on constructing new assemblages per se, but on stimulating, through empathetic communication, the expansion of consciousness in the recipients.

For the sake of clarifying our view, we will comment on this quote taken from the presentation text of the project, coordinated by Paulo Assis, *Experimentation vs Interpretation:*

In place of a heuristic approach, there is an exploration of potentialities contained within a given score. The performer wanders creatively through such a landscape, using and training the imagination with the goal of breaking free from the past and constructing new assemblages. (MUSICEXPERIMENT21 - Experimentation versus Interpretation, n.d.)

If our suggestion, for artists and artistic researchers, to deepen the exploration of their subjective impressions is considered a heuristic approach, then we fully recommend it, since, for us, 'an exploration of the potentials contained within a certain score' are interesting insofar as they intentionally *affect* meaning, that is, insofar as they are mainly an exploration of the vividness of a subjective experience. We would agree though with the second statement of this quote if "constructing new assemblages" corresponds to relevant new meaning configurations, that is, to mythopoetic reconfigurations.

## **A model for artistic research**

Having established ten prolegomena and after all that has been written above, we are now better equipped to clarify properly what differentiates our proposal for artistic research. A quick look to all the names related to artistic research shows the variety of different views and approaches: practice-based-research; practice-as-research; practice-led-research; research-led practice; research-through-practice; experimentation among others. These designations alone show that it is a hard task to distinguish them and even harder to define clear cut frontiers between them.

With the help of an explanatory model it will become clear that our view defines a territory for artistic research and a number of features that will constitute a minimum common denominator for all kinds of artistic research projects. In our view, the territory delimited for artistic researchers to explore is made up of our fictions, our mythopoetic configurations, our fictional worlds, especially those to which we are deeply emotionally attached. It is a territory where they must look skeptically at old configurations that connect us intersubjectively, at fictions taken for granted, or at all kinds of prejudices and preconceptions, and critically question them and work hard to find creative ways to artistically suggest effective reconfigurations. Projects should have, in our view, some common features which constitute a condition *sine qua non* to their

identification as AR projects. These features are the inclusion of:

- a) an artistic intervention
- b) the respective clarification on its pertinence.

Synthesizing, we have been referring, thus, to three domains or articulating three spheres to frame artistic research projects:

Ethic Sphere - All decisions concerning principles and means and all choices concerning actions and preferences when developing an artistic research belong to this sphere. Not being aware of these decisions and choices or of the possibility to choose (reading only, reproducing established models when performing) is somehow still an option towards the conventional, traditional codes, and, thus, it is still a choice. From an artist researcher it is expected a critical attitude in relation to all aspects of her activity. Among all artists, it seems to be particularly difficult for musicians - who were brought up in the Western Classical Music tradition and therefore trained to repeat perpetually old established models mainly focused on skill acquisition - to suddenly assume a sceptical attitude towards their activity and begin to criticize ethically and aesthetically all the decisions embedded in traditional interpretation models. Artistic researchers produce knowledge when creating and *music performers should also become sceptical in order to become creative.*

## ***Example - Proposal of an artistic Research project***

***Proponent:*** PhD candidate Alonso Torres  
Matarrita

***Institutional affiliation:*** University of Aveiro,  
Doctoral Program in Music

***Title:*** *Reconquering the past: Composition strategies to renew calypso in Costa Rica*

### ***Part 1 - Ethics sphere***

*Recently, there have been some initiatives to rethink the diversity of Costa Rican identities. This includes the diffusion and acceptance of other musical manifestations such as indigenous or afro-descendant music as part of our heritage, and some composers have been interested in working with this music as an influence. These include calypso. This musical genre was developed in the Atlantic region of the country, among the black workers from the Caribbean Antilles who came to work in the construction of the railroad to the Atlantic at the end of the 19th century and their descendants. It is a song genre, cultivated in the Antilles and the Atlantic coast of some countries such as Panama and Costa Rica, with a danceable rhythm although that is not its main function. The calypsonian, who often composes and interprets calypso, comments on everyday events or stories of his own with a satirical and humorous tone, showing his wit and rhyme. Since the eighties, calypso has been gaining popularity and recognition as a national heritage, but there are still few musicians interested in continuing it.*

*The general objective of this work is to renew Costa Rican calypso through the contribution of contemporary erudite music. More specifically, to re-signify the colonising influence of Western erudite music in the musical practice of Costa Rica, to promote the discussion about the importance of calypso as part of the Costa Rican musical heritage and to contribute through artistic creation to the process of country's identity re-examination.*

Remix Sphere - Artistic production is here understood as a continuous process of reinvention, a continuous process of *remix*. One should be aware that originality and innovation are always grounded on and building upon prior creations. It is about critical deconstruction; artistic research as an alternative way that allows the development of new artistic possibilities based on critical and non-conformist attitude, and, responsibly clarifying its process and achievements.

Unlike the reviewer, the literary critic, the academic vivisector and judge, the executant invests his own being in the process of interpretation. His readings, his enactments of chosen meanings and values, are not those of external survey. They are a commitment at risk, a response which is, in the root sense, responsible.  
(Steiner, 1986, p.8)

In the process of their work, artists do not just mould the materials unequivocally making them expressive of a pre-existent idea. It is an interactive process in which artists mould the materials and are moulded by them. In this deep sense, artists work with materials creating new combinations but, as Steiner pointed out, responsibly, with a purpose, assuming ethical decisions.



## *Part 2 - Remix sphere*

*When wanting to use Costa Rican calypso as working material in composing erudite music, the most usual way would be to take "materials" (rhythms, melodies, sound aesthetics and others) from calypso and transform them using contemporary techniques. In addition to the problems surrounding the cultural re-colonization that this generates and the nationalist implications, these types of transformations often obscure the possibility of recognising these materials by ear. If, on top of that, one works without a singer, the instrumental treatment leaves out the text, a fundamental element in this type of music.*

*That is why this project poses a reversed dynamic. Instead of feeding contemporary music with calypso materials, I propose to feed calypso with contemporary music materials. Composing rhythmic calypsos, with lyrics, rhyming, enriching them with elements from the contemporary languages of erudite music that somehow "update" the musical practice of calypso and bring it to a higher level of richness, without losing its literary properties or the possibility of creating meaning in a wide audience.*

*Other musical genres have already gone through similar hybridisation processes. We can mention records such as "Saergent Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" in the rock or "Panis et Circensis" of the Brazilian tropicalist movement. These productions moved outside the spaces of classical music, and although in essence we can say that they are "popular music", the complexity of the composition and its arrangements extends the sound palette beyond the conventions of their respective genres.*

*An artistic research methodology will be employed, seeking to deconstruct and reconstruct mythopoetic configurations around calypso, erudite music and the construction of Costa Rican identities. After a study of bibliography relevant to these topics, the language of calypso will be deepened by memorizing the interpretation of lyrics and music from a body of representative songs. In addition, contemporary music works with elements of interest will be analyzed and brief studies of the application of the techniques present in these works will be composed. A minimum of 5 original calypsos will then be composed, including the lyrics and their arrangements.*

Aesthetic Sphere - Aesthetic appreciation seems to have been the most forgotten or avoided of all three domains in most artistic research projects. This is understandable since aesthetic appreciation, in performative arts, happens in the temporal unfolding of communication processes which involve, in order to performer and recipients to connect, a different kind of perception:

The perception of a musical phrase draws less on a sort of reminiscence memory, rather on an extension or contraction of a sort of meeting perception. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980, p.364)

Moreover, aesthetic appreciation is based on empathy, on subjective personal meaning constructions but not excluding intersubjectivity. This is obvious, since empathy already implies intersubjectivity and, therefore, all personal constructions of subjective meaning triggered by artistic interventions are embedded in intersubjectivity. Meaning in performative arts seems to happen within this meeting type of perception, where both performer and recipient react spontaneously to the expressive materials and to the general ritualised atmosphere, influencing each other's experiences in a collective and creative meaning production process, which takes place in the moment.

The perception of a musical phrase, for example, seems to make forgetfulness work, not appealing to the conscious operations involving 'extended memory' (Damasio, 1999) and this seems to be a necessary condition for *becoming* to happen. The “musical momentum” takes place in a live performance where the

performer plays thus the role of operator of the moment. Not in the sense that the performer creates the “musical momentum”, but in the sense that she operates the dissolution or the suspension of the ego-centred activity, opening thus to the imaginative operations of the unconscious cognitive and involving mimetically the audience in these operations, if conditions are favourable. The musician, responsively (Steiner, 1986) acts in an effort to make meaning “sensible”, that is, in an effort to establish a corporeal complicity with the listeners and hopefully to give them the opportunity of experiencing musical becoming and, consequently, mythopoetic reconfigurations.

The possibility, impact and effectiveness of aesthetic experiences lies in this process of direct, immediate and empathetic communication where an emotional narrative is triggered, generating a symbolic dimension.

But this symbolic dimension is like raw meaning prior to any verbal structuring and infinitely resilient to translation. Due to the nature of aesthetic experiences, artistic research escapes definitions in the sense of declaring *what* it is, but is likely to have a minimal characterisation describing *when* it happens and a clarification on its pertinence.

## *Clarification*

*The relevance of this work lies in its contribution to the discussion of various topics such as the construction of Latin American identities in the face of the challenges of post-modernity and the possibility of traditional music transcending conservative folklorism and nostalgic contemplation by inserting itself into contemporary processes of cultural production. It is also a criticism of the hermeticism of those musical avant-gardes that, in an obsession to move away from the established, renounce the codes shared by a good part of the public, increasingly restricting the public's possibility of accessing the creation of meaning.*

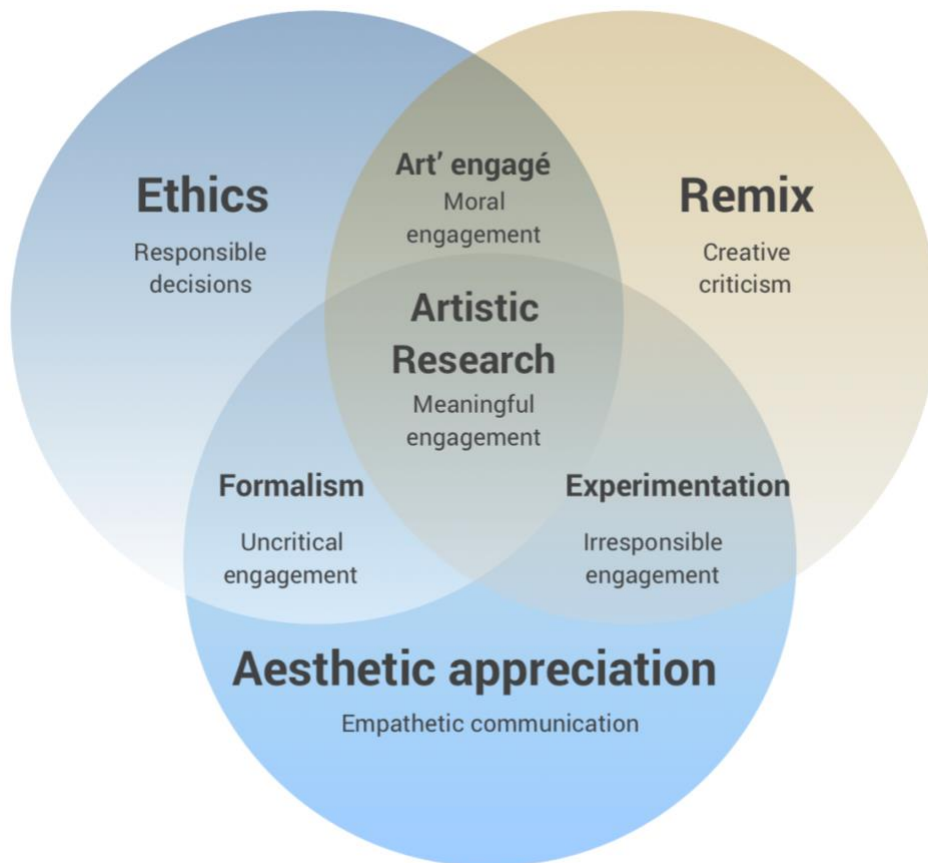


Figure 4. A model for artistic research

### **When research is NOT artistic research**

In line with what we are proposing, artistic research takes place only when these three spheres happen to intercept, which obviously means that all three spheres have to be contemplated in an artistic research project.

When the Aesthetic sphere is NOT contemplated in the research project, more or less ethical decisions can be made to transgress established rules or moral codes

aiming social transformation, as well as more or less transformations may be applied to the material, its forms and structures, remixing and recreating. But it will fail the “matchpoint” since the intense empathetic communication with the public, which would open the way to mythopoetic reconfigurations, will not happen. The project would be situated in the intersection between ethics and remix spheres, as an *art engagé* project.

When the Ethics sphere is NOT contemplated, the research project will fall in the intersection between the two spheres of Remix and Aesthetic Appreciation. Not motivated by skepticism and criticism towards established, traditional codes and practices, it will be mainly focused on experimentation and exploration, that is, on the mere “reproduction” of an artistic product. No mythopoetic reconfiguration will take place, thus, since the old-established configurations were not questioned or challenged.

When the Remix sphere is NOT contemplated, the research project will fall in the intersection between the two spheres of Aesthetic Appreciation and Ethics, which corresponds to an ethical decision in favour of preserving the existing structures, that is, in favour of formalism. Removing the Remix Culture sphere is refusing to go into the creative process of moulding the materials (remixing) and be, thus, condemned to repeating models, forms and structures. Only through the transgression implied in this process of generating new *exemplars* may mythopoetic reconfiguration take place.

Sequitur



More than defining a path for artistic research we are assigning a mission for artistic researchers who will eventually accept the challenge. It is a mission to explore a vast territory that, although it has always been there, is so intimately close to us that we tend to not see it, we tend to ignore it. But it reveals itself promptly when one becomes aware that our inner self and our subjectivities are stories we tell ourselves, and that the way we relate to each other, that is, the network of our intersubjective connections consists of an intricate amalgam of narratives, which configures the fictional worlds in which we live, which configures the reality we may possibly know.

We call mythopoetic configurations to our sense of reality, that is, to this network of narratives in which embodied and symbolic (implicit and explicit) meanings are entangled configuring our 'vision of the world', and we assign to artists researchers the mission of re-configuring these old-established configurations. These configurations and reconfigurations are meaning constructions, but, as we hope to have made clear, they are not mere representations in a semantic level. They are mythical thoughts, profoundly grounded in embodied meaning requiring a different type of representation that has to be re-enacted by the recipients to be understood. Due to their capacity for empathetic communication artistic interventions may provoke these mythopoetic reconfigurations, preferably with responsible critical creative actions.

Assuming the ethical decision of considering artistic interventions as communicative gestures, as outreaching actions aiming to share meaningful experiences with others, we are proposing to artistic researchers to explore their irreverence, their concerns and non-conformities in relation to all aspects of their activity but also in relation to all that surrounds them, especially those aspects that seem pertinent and relevant to both individuals and social groups.

At this representation level, one of the key issues of this *Cahier* is the merging between subjectivity and intersubjectivity, between supposedly-individual entities and their network connections. This syncretism, so to speak, is the most overt expression of yet another deeper syncretism described in Quantum Physics (Main, 1993) according to which we are not individual, physical entities but waves of energy that interact with each other. Centuries of hegemonic reason and verbal/propositional language cultivated a tendency to hide this ability, mistrusting empathy, vibrations and energy waves; and yet, like all living organisms, we communicate abundantly through them and even create, based on them, our (fictional) sense of reality and intersubjective network. We are primarily trained to find reasons and rationales to support our choices and decisions and not to develop the awareness of what we are, that is, interacting waves.

In this sense, artist researchers, who would accept our challenge, would be more like quantum physicists who prefer to explore how waves interfere and interact - hence empathetic communication - than to consider exploring

particles - hence individual entities. We are interacting waves and because waves can not be separated we are connected to everything. With MEG (magnetoencephalography) our brain activity can be read outside of our head, which confirms that our thoughts and moods are not confined to our body; they are waves and, as waves, they will be naturally entangled with other waves from whoever shares the same context, that is, the same field, the same vibration field.

The intuition of quality seems to emerge from this profound vibrational attunement between understanding, feeling and doing, from this empathetic relation between artistic interventions and recipients. This dynamic understanding of quality is pre-intellectual, since it is recognised before abstraction and conceptualisation, and constitutes the deepest connection that one may experience: it is total commitment, extreme personal involvement; it is a holistic experience.

It is often said that art is supposed to be a useless activity, non-pragmatic. We believe that art that matters - quality art - will provoke deep-grounded mythopoetic reconfigurations affecting our sense of self, our being-in-the-world, our action-in-the-world. All these domains are unreachable for sciences' reductive methods and discourses, but are crucial for our individual and collective continuous regeneration and, eventually, for our survival.

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