Literature Review: Practice Research

Phil Crockett Thomas, for the Distant Voices project[i]

In this paper I discuss some of the literature on arts-based practice research that seems pertinent to our project, and suggest some resources for further enquiry. I also briefly consider the parallel turn towards participation in the arts, using the work of Jeanne Van Heeswijk as an example.

Introduction: defining practice research

'Practice research' refers to a collection of approaches to undertaking research through creative arts practices, such as music, dance, or creative writing. In such approaches arts practice is both a primary mode of research, and an important means of disseminating the research. This research takes place both within and outside of academic institutions, and is differently configured across academic disciplines. There has now been twenty years of debate on the 'definitions, positions and relevance of art as a form of research' (Hope, 2016, p. 74). Practice research is described variously as practice-based, practice-led, practice-as-research, arts-based, research-creation, or artistic research. In this review, I will employ the term practice research to refer to all of these approaches. In doing this I follow the intervention made at the 'Future of Practice Research' symposium at Goldsmiths College (2015), where delegates proposed practice research as an umbrella term in response to concerns that researchers doing similar work were being pulled into differently named schools, leading to unnecessary fragmentation, competition, loss, or duplication of research.[ii]

Although it now primarily refers to research undertaken through creative practice, practice research has previously been used to refer to a wider set of approaches incorporating or analysing the arts. For example, in the mid-1990s, Christopher Frayling attempted to classify it as either: research *into* art and design (artwork is the topic of interest), research *through* art and design (art is the method of enquiry), or research *for* art and design (the art is the research) (Frayling, 1994 in Hope, 2016, p. 74). In a paper from 2016, Sophie Hope updates Frayling's model by analysing a series of practice-based projects to demonstrate the blurring between these categories in practice – for example, writing fiction might be both the method and the object/result of the research. Or painting as might also produce knowledge about painting as an art form. As we can see, a key consideration for practice research has been articulating the value of theorising through or *as* creative practice, versus the more traditional use of theory to analyse the products of art practice, or use of artwork to illustrate theory. This does not mean that Practice Research now eschews theories developed within other disciplines, on the contrary, practice researchers tend to be explicitly interdisciplinary in their engagement.

Robin Nelson argues that artists have always engaged in practice as a form of enquiry, but that the shift towards thinking of practice in terms of 'research' might not have happened without the academic institutionalisation of studio-based fine arts and performance practices (Nelson, 2013, p. 3). This has been characterised by for example, increasing numbers of practice research PhDs and recent calls to better define the value of practice research in

relation to research audits such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the U.K. Those advocating for practice research often articulate its value in the different kinds of knowledge produced, in comparison to more traditional forms of research.[iii] For example, in 2007 Estelle Barrett argued that 'practice-led research is a new species of research, generative enquiry that draws on subjective, interdisciplinary and emergent methodologies that have the potential to extend the frontiers of research' (Barrett, 2007, p. 1). Today practice research is firmly established within the academy, although it is not universally accepted as a legitimate form of research, or in common use across all disciplines.[iv]

Natalie Loveless draws parallels between the experience of contemporary practice researchers with those of earlier feminist interventions into the academic canon. She argues that the inclusion of feminist research has often been tokenistic, with institutions failing to address 'the epistemological and ontological structures that deny it research status in the first place' (Loveless, 2015, p. 53). Nelson suggests that part of the problem is that the term 'research' has different meanings in artistic and academic contexts. As such, practice researchers that had previously been artists and applied for 'research and development' funds for creative exploration were not tasked with demonstrating a contribution to knowledge (whether it made one or not) (Nelson, 2013, p. 25). The differing expectations within academia can be frustrating for practice researchers. In their helpful annotated bibliography of resources available to practice researchers Stone et al. (2017) offer a series of commonly considered questions arising from practice research, which simultaneously illustrate the anxiety around what qualifies creative practice *as* research:

> + In what circumstances does creative practice constitute research?
> + On those occasions that it does, how does practice constitute research?
> + What terms should be used to describe Practice Research methodologies?
> + How can and should Practice Research methodologies be documented?
> + What are the research outputs of Practice Research and how should they be understood?
> + What, if any, is the role of writing in a Practice Research project? (Stone et al., 2017, p. 1)

These questions reveal the onus on practice researchers to demonstrate both a high level of reflexivity and skill in articulating what qualifies their practice as research, as well as whatever their individual project substantively explores. I make this point simply to stress that this demand to demonstrate your research is knowledge producing is generally not a requirement for researchers working within older and more established academic disciplines. Practice researchers have differing approaches but are united by the epistemological assumption that 'creative practice can be a form of knowledge and that this knowledge can be made relevant and accessible to others beyond the creative practitioner' (Stone et al., 2017, p. 1). The possibility of this communication is transformed into an imperative in the following passage from Melissa Trimingham:

> [Practice Research] is doing itself no favours by claiming that 'all practice is research'. All practice is relevant to research but does not necessarily contribute to research until it is subject to analysis and commentary, using a language that aims to be as clear and unambiguous as possible. We cannot afford to dispense with the most basic (and moral) of research intentions: put simply, it must be for the benefit of others apart from the researchers themselves.

> Artistic insight is not necessarily a research outcome. Neither is communication through a work of art the same as research communication (Trimingham, 2002, p. 54).

Trimingham's paper dramatizes the conflict within practice research around the expectation that researchers should attempt to translate the knowledge generated through practice into forms of discourse which are more familiar to the academy, and therefore more accessible to other researchers.[v] Hope wryly suggests that 'what is common among artists resident in the academy is perhaps the need to frame practice as an enquiry that is validated, trustworthy and "useful" beyond the benefits of the practice/practitioner themselves' (Hope, 2016, p. 84).

Hope's work is exemplary in thinking through the complexity of the power relations involved in the academy's growing interest in practice research. For example, the effects of social scientists increasingly applying creative methods in their work without always having a well-developed artistic practice to draw upon. Jo Collinson Scott warns against the instrumentalisation of music by non-arts disciplines to 'add emotional force (or indeed a bit of fun) to the communication of specific subjects, or as an add-on intended merely to attract a wider or non-academic audience' (McNeill and Collinson Scott, 2018). She explains that for her, music research 'is for the purposes of exploring and researching a subject from a different (creative) perspective, by different means and with different results' (McNeill and Collinson Scott, 2018). Michael Guggenheim identifies the paradox of postmodern critiques of scientific knowledge opening the way for sociology to embrace more creative methods such as drawing and ethnographic writing, whilst the younger sub-discipline of visual sociology has prioritised 'documentary' arts practices such as photography through an anxiety about being accepted as sufficiently scientific and objective (Guggenheim, 2015; see discussion in Thomas, 2018).

There are clear differences between the guides and handbooks aimed at researchers based in disciplines such sociology, anthropology and criminology who wish to employ visual or creative methods as part of their research (for example: Knowles and Sweetman, 2004; Knowles and Cole, 2007; Pink, 2007; Leavy, 2009; Rose, 2012; Back and Puwar, 2013; Brown and Carrabine, 2017), and the guides to articulating and assessing art practice as research (Bagley and Cancienne, 2002; Barrett and Bolt, 2007; Barone, 2012; Nelson, 2013; Barrett and Bolt, 2014). Here, the differing disciplinary contexts play a large part in determining the mix of resources, methodologies, and frameworks favoured by each. For example, the dominance of text within the social sciences, combined with the challenge of capturing the liveness and ephemerality of performance perhaps explains the lack of attention to dance and music as a social research method in introductory guides aimed at social researchers (Norris, 2013). For the remainder of this review I will continue to focus on literature which discusses practice research.

Describing process and methodology

Practice research approaches often emphasise processes of emergence, discovery, and reflexivity. For example Barbara Bolt uses the notion of 'materialising practices' to describe the productivity and performativity of practice research throughout its lifetime (Bolt, 2004). Similarly for Hope, artistic practice is an ongoing process, rather than something that comes about from the point of a definition of a research problem or question. She writes:

This does not mean the process is any less rigorous, rather that the theory and analysis come at different points within the practice and it is not always easy to separate them out. Intuition and improvisation stem from tacit practices that have been practised over time. The researcher-practitioner is able to draw on knowledge of previous iterations of practice to intuitively follow the next steps. This involves a process of acknowledging the subjective, embodied knowledge this requires while also attempting a reflexive interrogation of one's own relationship to the research being carried out (Hope, 2016, p. 77).

The concept of 'tacit' knowledge as mentioned here by Hope is present in many accounts of the process of practice research. Often used in reference to the work of Michael Polanyi (1966, 1958), tacit knowledge comprises forms of 'know how', and bodily practices which are not commonly framed as knowledge, for example riding a bike, or dancing a pirouette. Tacit knowledge might be difficult to translate into words, and therefore harder to identify (and value) as knowledge. Arts based approaches are often assumed to be more accessible to audiences than traditional academic research. Donal O'Donoghue questions this, writing 'there are different degrees of access, some which provide richer possibilities for meaning making and understanding than others' (O'Donoghue, 2009, p. 365). He discusses the case of a highly controversial art installation which was physically encountered by a large number of people, but conceptually inaccessible to most of this audience because of the way it was framed by the media, and by the artist-researcher. He asks:

> How do arts-based researchers create the conditions for others to interpret and understand their research findings/outcomes? … Is it enough for arts-based researchers to … present open-ended data so that readers can arrive at multiple and perhaps contradictory interpretations? (O'Donoghue, 2009, p. 365).

Robin Nelson argues that writing is vital to the endeavour of practice research because although 'a research inquiry can be evident in the practice, it is not typically self- evident' (Nelson, 2013, p. 27). He writes that although sympathetic to the 'if I could tell you I wouldn't have to dance it' argument, he argues that writing is able to discuss the context of the work's production and reception in ways that might encumber the work itself. This 'complimentary writing' assists 'in the articulation and evidencing of the research inquiry' (Nelson, 2013, p. 36). For another influential take on the relationship between writing and practice see Bolt's discussion of Paul Carter's (2004) notion of 'material thinking' (Barrett and Bolt, 2007). Searching for a way to describe the interaction between practice – understood as complex and multi-layered, and a research enquiry which needs to be clearly articulated in a written form, Nelson employs the metaphor of practice researchers following a 'clue', or 'clew'. Drawing on the etymology of the word, the clew is like a thread that the researcher weaves through their project, leaving a trail for others to follow into the work (Nelson, 2013, pp. 10–11). For a fascinating discussion of the difficulties of writing practice, and writing about practice see Jo Collinson Scott's 'An Introduction to "Schizoanalysis"'(Collinson Scott, 2015) which draws inspiration from clinical models of schizophrenia to attempt to write differently about listening.[vi]

Many artists and practice researchers have turned to poststructuralist philosophy to help articulate and enrich their work, in particular the collaborative texts of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a, 2004b). Emphasising the knot of theory and

practice, Deleuze claims 'praxis is a network of relays from one theoretical point to another, and theory relays one praxis to another. A theory cannot be developed without encountering a wall, and a praxis is needed to break through' (Deleuze and Foucault, 2004, p. 206). There is a number of interesting texts which develop models for Deleuzian practice research (e.g. O'Sullivan, 2006; Hickey-Moody and Page, 2016; Attiwill et al., 2017). My doctoral project drew on the work of Deleuze and Guattari, but also on Science and Technology Studies (STS) to describe my process of 'translating' empirical data into fictional and filmic 'compositions' (Thomas, 2018; Crockett Thomas, forthcoming).

Sophie Stévance and Serge Lacasse (2015) reflect on one of their collaborative projects involving a group of participants engaged in music making (e.g. writing, performing, recording), academic researcher (e.g. musicologists, ethnographers), and those who entered the project as practice researchers. Although people brought distinct skills to the project, their roles changed and began to overlap significantly throughout the process of collaboration. As such, they argue that practice research (which they prefer to term 'research creation') 'is not the discipline of the researcher-creator; rather, it should be considered from the point of view of the project around which many skills are coalesced (whether within a single individual or distributed among a group)' (Stévance and Lacasse, 2015, p. 3). This collaborative model of practice research involving collaboration between people with different specialisms corresponds to Stévance and Lacasse's sense of academic and artistic research as 'two distinct epistemological processes [academic research] tending toward the general, [and artistic research] toward the singular' (Stévance and Lacasse, 2015, p. 1).

Action Research

Many practice researchers draw on concepts developed within action research, finding affinities with its aims and practices. For example, Karen Keifer-Boyd suggests that her own 'social justice approach to arts-based research involves continual critical reflexivity in response to injustice' (Keifer-Boyd, 2011, p. 3). Trimingham draws on Kurt Lewin's (1948) '"hermeneutic-interpretive" spiral model' as developed within action research to describe her process of undertaking practice research. In this model progress is understood to be looped: throughout our research we repeatedly return to our research problem with new understanding gleaned through our practice which in turn, transforms the problem (hence a spiral rather than a circle) (Trimingham, 2002, pp. 56–8). Nelson notes that this circularity models the understanding within hermeneutics that the question you ask largely determines the answer you get (Nelson, 2013, p. 53). Again drawing on action research Trimingham invokes the idea of the 'double hermeneutic' to describe the process of the researchers' and participants' experiences both affecting the developing research (Trimingham, 2002, p. 59).

A/r/tography is an approach to practice research developed by education researchers associated with the University of British Columbia, and in particular with Rita Irwin (Irwin and De Cosson, 2004; Irwin et al., 2006; Irwin, 2013). Rather than a fixed methodology, 'a/r/tography is an inquiring process that lingers in the liminal spaces between a(artist) and r(researcher) and t(teacher)' (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 902). The slashes in their name reflects their interdisciplinarity, and a desire not to privilege any one of the aspects of their roles as artists, researchers, and teachers. They emphasise that these practices are the 'processes by

which one's life is lived' (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 902). Here they draw a parallel with action research approaches in which 'who one is becomes completely caught up in what one knows and does' (Carson and Sumara, 1997, p. xvii; in Springgay et al., 2005, p. 902). They argue that practice research needs to be understood as a method in its own right rather than an extension of existing qualitative research methods, suggesting that practice research:

> entails moving beyond the use of existing criteria that exists for qualitative research and toward an understanding of interdisciplinarity not as a patchwork of different disciplines and methodologies but as a loss, a shift, or a rupture where in absence, new courses of action unfold (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 898).

Practice research ethics and audiences

In the edited collection *Ethics and Visual Research Methods* (2016) Deborah Warr et al. discuss the ethical issues foregrounded by practice research. For example, the increased potential for research participants to be exposed to criticism via their participation in creative activities which are then shared with audiences (Warr et al., 2016, p. 10). Warr has previously discussed similar issues in the context of working collaboratively with disadvantaged and stigmatised people for a durational project (Warr, 2004). Although not writing about practice research Liz Tilley and Kate Woodthorpe's (2011) discussion of the tensions between the need to maintain confidentiality, and anonymity as a research ideal, with the desire to credit participants for their work is pertinent to creative collaborative research with marginalised and stigmatised groups.

The artist Hito Steyerl is critical of what she sees as the probable effects on the creative daring of artistic research in becoming an academic discipline, writing 'a discipline is of course disciplinarian; it normalizes, generalizes and regulates; it rehearses a set of responses' (Steyerl, 2010, p. 1). Similarly, Barbara Bolt considers the fate of the 'aesthetic alibi' in the reframing of creative practice as artistic research. By the aesthetic alibi she refers to the special license historically afforded to art to offend or challenge social norms (Bolt, 2016, p. 187). Drawing on the philosopher Jacques Rancière's (2010) valorisation of the aim of political *dissensus* rather than consensus, she concludes by arguing that:

> (A)rt's beneficence lies in its capacity to create trouble, discomfort and dis-ease. The question that this raises is *not* whether it is ethical to create discomfort but whether it is ethical *not to do so*. The question for both artistic researcher and ethics committees is how this can be negotiated to minimize harm to participants but still maintain the power and efficacy of the art. There is no point if art loses its power as a site of engagement for ethical debate. Artistic research must maintain its capacity to illuminate some of the critical ethical issues of our epoch' (Bolt, 2016, p. 197).

Art and the collaborative and participatory turns

Of relevance to our discussion of practice research is the concurrent turn towards participation within the arts. Since the 1990s, previously marginal 'community art' practices have become more central, and related practices have proliferated under the umbrella term

'participatory art.' Like community art, this is work that has an explicit emphasis on collaboration, participation, community, dialogue, or the social, and tends to take place *outside* the artist's studio. The definition, politics, and degree of collaboration in such works is sharply contested, so I will borrow Claire Bishop's definition of participatory art 'in which people constitute the central artistic medium and material, in the manner of theatre and performance' (Bishop, 2012, p. 2). In these kinds of practice:

> The artist is conceived less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of *situations*; the work of art as a finite, portable, commodifiable product is reconceived as an ongoing or long-term *project* with an unclear beginning and end; while the audience, previously conceived as a 'viewer' or 'beholder,' is now repositioned as a co-producer or *participant* (Bishop, 2012, p. 2).

A first point to make about this is that participatory practice, whilst not obviously fitting the needs of the art-market (although the market has shifted somewhat to accommodate this work), fits well with the requirements of academic research councils and arts funders that projects have demonstrable social impact. Participatory art practice has also come closer into contact with academic disciplines such as sociology and anthropology through its search for social and political concepts and methods to develop and analyse their work (Bishop, 2012, p. 7).

An important early text on the shift towards participation within the arts was the curator Nicholas Bourriaud's (1998) *Relational Aesthetics*, in which he posited the significance of a new mode of art practices which take as their material and subject matter human relations and social context (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 113). For example, works which consist of creating new social spaces and encounters, and conviviality. Positing this as a radical shift in art production and reception he writes:

> The possibility of a relational art (an art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space), points to a radical upheaval of the aesthetic, cultural and political goals introduced by modern art… In other words, it is no longer possible to regard the contemporary work as a space to be walked through (the "owner's tour" is akin to the collector's). It is henceforth presented as a period of time to be lived through, like an opening to unlimited discussion (Bourriaud, 2002, pp. 14–15).

Bourriaud suggests that accordingly such works should be judged 'on the basis of the inter-human relations which they represent, produce or prompt' (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 112). An important critique of relational aesthetics from Claire Bishop (2012, 2005) concerns the question of *whom* is brought into relation through this work. For example, the work of the artist Rirkrit Tiravanija often consist of cooking for and entertaining fellow art world professionals e.g. gallerists, reviewers, funders, and artists, and then exhibiting the empty kitchen space. Writing about his installation *untitled 1993 (flädlesuppe),* Bishop argues that 'in intensifying convivial relations for a small group of people (in this case, the exhibiting artists), it produces greater exclusivity vis-à-vis the general public' (Bishop, 2012, p. 209). This paradox gets to the heart of why participatory practice research is so challenging and exciting – what kind of relations do we want to produce through our work, and why? For an example of work which is intended to create publics beyond the art scene, the Subtramas group (Diego

Del Pozo, Montse Romani, and Virgina Villaplana)[vii] conduct artistic research around questions of collaboration, radical pedagogy, and social activism. Writing that they 'seek to create conditions where viewers become political subjects comprising new kinds of publics' (Del Pozo et al., 2016, p. 443) they make use of methods like 'walking assemblies' where an assembled public takes turns to lead a discussion of sociopolitical topics, whilst walking together.

The Dutch visual artist and curator Jeanne van Heeswijk has developed a number of exciting and influential collaborative projects of varying scales, of which I will now briefly describe a few.[viii] I suggest that her approach, although neither framed as practice research nor taking place within the academy, has much to offer participatory practice research. Working at the intersections of urban design, public policy and art, common to her practice is the creation of public spaces, hospitality, and group enquiry. Often an invited outsider, Van Heeswijk immerses herself in communities for considerable periods of time, often years. Spending time talking and being with people is central to her research, she describes this as 'creating a field of interactions' (Van Heeswijk, 2017) from which the research questions and design emerge. There is a strong emphasis on skill sharing and community building throughout her work. An important part of her practice involves bringing together, training, and supporting a team of local artist-researchers for each project, which, helps to explain why some of these projects have continued after the official end of the project and her departure.

For example, *Het Blauwe Huis* (*The Blue House)*[ix] (2005-2009) took over a building in a new development and used it as a space to create public dialogue through collaborative artistic and architectural projects, that intervened in the surrounding urban development. Her project *2Up2Down/Homebaked* (2010-)[x] in Liverpool was developed in collaboration with residents living in Anfield: a part of Liverpool largely cleared and designated for demolition at some unspecified future time. In response to their research questions including 'what does it mean to live well?', and as an attempt to take ownership of their area – left to fall in to total disrepair by the city council, the participants in the project developed a successful community-run bakery and cafe, which is now funding the purchase and renovation of local empty properties as a housing cooperative. They also created new public spaces, a community kitchen, and meeting space. The project trained local students to use social research methods, and trained new caterers and builders, creating local jobs. It is important to acknowledge that this work has required enormous effort and time, and has not been easy to sustain. The community group have to negotiate with the local council and stadium, both with vastly superior resources. The project was funded by the Liverpool Biennial, and initially had to defend its status as 'art' to its funders (Van Heeswijk, 2017). Van Heeswijk describes her practice as:

> "a call for sociality", in which relational processes can produce "nonhierarchical forms of distribution of resources" within a self-organised community of interested subjects. She also articulates an interest in the maximisation of "potential within (these) communities for open dialogue, communication, and collective action" (Van Heeswijk 2005 quoted in O'Neill, 2011, pp. 34–5).

She suggests that 'an engaged practice will not only address issues through debates but can at the same time mobilize existing local, physical, and socio-cultural capital, and use it as the "performative basis for a city under development' (Van Heeswijk, 2012). *Philadelphia*

Assembled (2014-)[xi] was originally meant to be a retrospective of her work at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, instead she made a new citywide piece which embodied the ethos she'd developed throughout her career. It began with a desire to understand the relationship between the city and the Museum, which is a private institution. She was very aware that as a white European she was seen to represent the 'white' art institution in a 'black' city. So, she began the project by asking those she knew to introduce her to 'someone they thought she should meet in Philadelphia' (Van Heeswijk, 2017). Through these snowballing introductions she undertook 600 conversations in one year, often using a book of Philadelphia's labour laws as a point of engagement. From these encounters, themes emerged such as 'sovereignty', and 'sanctuary' which formed the basis for thematised working groups who created their own mini-projects. Van Heeswijk insisted that the budget for the project (including her artist's fee) be redistributed so that everyone who participated substantially would be paid equally for their time. She also budgeted for childcare and food for all groups, describing this budgeting as part of her art practice (Van Heeswijk, 2017). There were many conflicts within the working groups, for example in the 'sanctuary' group the diversity of participants led them to ask: 'is it possible to create an *intersectional* safe space, or can we only have safety through exclusion?' (Van Heeswijk, 2017). Through the process of examining their common values and aims, they ended up creating a citywide training programme around working with people with trauma. The sovereignty group included people that refused to recognise the state's sovereignty, or declared their own personal sovereignty, again causing a great deal of conflict and debate. Groups chose to work in spaces in the city that could amplify their knowledge, and deepen their research through testing out their ideas. Interestingly, the groups moved from not wanting to be involved with the art institution towards wanting to 'hack' it and temporarily take it over. Van Heeswijk is clear this was made possible by some people involved in the project already being part of the institution. The museum did not make it easy, for example they were unwilling to lower the $20 entry fee, so the project had to buy 20,000 group tickets at $2.50 each. The institution was also unhappy with exhibiting the project's timeline of personal acts of resistance, because it was impossible to fact check (Van Heeswijk, 2017). I have included these descriptions of Van Heeswijk's projects because I am inspired by the way they seek to empower participants to shape and take ownership of their contribution, but still come together to create a coherent project. There is also learning to be found here in terms of how to negotiate with institutions and funders, and how to work on critical projects with unlikely partners.

It is clear that practice researchers are conflicted about the fate of art practice within the academy, however, the flipside of valid fears about institutionalisation, instrumentalisation, and conformity, is that universities can offer semi-autonomy, mentorship, and the resources required to support artists in sustained periods of research and creation. Nelson suggests that the interdisciplinarity of practice research can be a source of inspiration, in that 'creativity arises in the frisson of encounter between different approaches to research or knowledge paradigms' (Nelson, 2013, p. 28). I end with a provocation from Van Heeswick's paper 'The Artist Must Decide Whom to Serve'. Invited to speak on the topic of the artist as 'Autonomous or Instrumentalised?' Van Heeswijk asks:

> Why do we have to talk again about this binary position when, in my opinion, autonomy and instrumentalisation are no longer oppositional strategies. The title [of the panel] presumed that an autonomous outside position is still possible and that working together with different partners such as local governments, councils, or social housing organizations invariably means that the artist is going to be instrumentalised. My concern has more to do with how, working

with my skills as an artist within the complexity of our cities, I can put myself to work. (Van Heeswijk, 2012, p. ?).

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[i] Distant Voices (2017-2020) aims to explore and practice re/integration after punishment through creative collaborations (primarily songwriting) and action-research. It is a partnership between the universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and the West of Scotland, and the Glasgow-based arts charity Vox Liminis. The project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ref: ES/P002536/1). The project website is: https://www.voxliminis.co.uk/projects/distant-voices/. Phil Crockett Thomas is the project's research associate.

[ii] The conference led to the creation of a website which hosts a number of interesting reflections and useful resources relating to the conference and subsequent work, see: https://futurepracticeresearch.org/.

[iii] Some frame this as a question of practice 'revealing' things that other research approaches cannot, eg. Bolt and Barrett (2007), but uncomfortable with the implication that there is truth to be discovered here, I prefer to think of this as a question of thinking about methods as differently assembling knowledge.

[iv] For a comparison of the development of practice research in a number of national contexts see part two of Nelson's (2013) *Practice as Research in the Arts*. Relatedly, Jenny Wilson has written an in depth study of the attitude to practice research in three Australian universities (Wilson, 2018).

[v] In Trimingham's paper the practitioner is implicitly imagined to be undertaking a solo research endeavour, and the question of how value is produced in a project such as Distant Voices which creates a community of researchers as part of its practice, is worth considering further.

[vi] For a development of this work which involved Collinson Scott writing collaboratively with voice-hearers see/ hear http://www.listeningtovoices.org.uk/.

[vii] http://subtramas.museoreinasofia.es/en/subtramas.

[viii] All notes on Van Heeswijk's work come from a talk I attended (Van Heeswijk, 2017) unless otherwise indicated.

[ix] http://www.jeanneworks.net/projects/the_blue_house/.

[x] http://www.2up2down.org.uk/.

[xi] http://phlassembled.net/.